



Faculty Senate

Virginia Tech

Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

<https://www.facultysenate.vt.edu/>

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes April 18, 2025 @ 2:30 – 4:15 pm Torgersen 1000 or Via Zoom

Check-In:

Present: Rachel Miles (presiding), Luke Achenie, Biko Agozino, Diane Agud, Rick Ashley, Paul Avey, Kristen Benson, Jan Helge Bøhn, Anamaria Bukvic, Young Cao, Kevin Cheng, Sherwood Clements, Joshua Clemons, Carolyn Commer, Logan Dandridge, Maria del Carmen Caña-Jiménez, Candace Fitch, Rodney Gaines, Aaron Gross, James Hawdon, Rebecca Hester, Mantu Hudait, Scott Huxtable, Ran Jin, Sarah Karpanty, Alex Kinnaman, Andrea L’Afflitto (alternate for Kwok Tsui), Jake Lahne, Renee LeClair, Justin Lemkul, Kimberly Loeffert, Gary Long, Charles Lowery, G.Q. Lu, Luca Massa, Shelly Maycock, Joel McGlothlin, Harold McKenzie, Joe Merola, Ron Meyers, Marc Michel, Sherif Motaleb Abdelaziz, Phil Nelson, Gregory Novack, Albert Pan, Nicole Pitterson, John Richey, Nazila Roofigari-Esfahan, Steven Rowson, Karen Schnatterly, Richard Shryock, Stephanie Smith (Communications), Jay Teets, Chelsea Thompto, Jim Tokuhisa, Byron Tsang, Alp Tural (alternate for Bill Green), Bimal Viswanath, Jeff Walling, Jerald Walz, Terri-Ann Wattsman, Erin Worthington, David Xie, Yan Xu, Diane Zahm, Wei Zhang (alternate for Catherine Larochelle), Lizette Zietsman

Guests: E. Fanny Jasso-Hernandez, April Myers, Demetria Somervell

Absent with Notice: Bradley Bowen, Yuba Gautam, Evan Lavender-Smith, Stephanie Smith (SPIA), Angelica Witcher Walker

Absent: Azziza Bankole, Manish Bansal, Lisa Belden, Warren Booth, Virginia Buechner-Maxwell, Rebecca Cockrum, Mark Coggins, Nick Copeland, Carolyn Copenheaver, Kristy Daniels, Matt Eick, John Entwistle, Scott Gartner, Bill Green, David Gregory, Wes Gwaltney, Dan Hindman, Leanna House, Joseph Hughes, Eli Jamison, Casey Jim, Bryan Katz, Bryan Katz, Catherine Larochelle, Silvio Macias, Jason Malone, Eric Martin, Ali Mehrizi-Sani, Zhange Nicole Ni, Nino Ripepi, Syrenthia Robinson, Adrian Sandu, Ian Shoemaker, Eric Stanley, Keith Stephenson, Kwok Tsui, Shane Wang, Ashley Wilkinson

Call to Order by the President Rachel Miles at 2:33

Approval of Agenda and Minutes (Rachel Miles)

- Consent agenda was adopted:
 - Minutes for 04-04-2025 (Link)
 - Agenda for 04-18-2025 (Link)

Business Agenda

Updates and Announcements

1. The Faculty Senate has been informed that some educational institutions, including Rutgers University, the University of Massachusetts, and Indiana University, are advocating for the establishment of mutual defense compacts through the resolution process in their respective universities. These resolutions encourage college presidents to help establish mutual academic defense compacts with other higher education institutions.
 - a. Potential pros and cons of these compacts and actions that the Virginia Tech Faculty Senate could take in response were mentioned.
 - b. The Faculty Senate of Virginia will be meeting soon. This meeting is open to all faculty and could provide an opportunity to learn about the viewpoints other Virginia colleges have about the compacts.

Unfinished Business

2. Renee LeClair presented for second reading and vote CGPSP 2024-25C: Resolution to Update the Graduate Catalogue. This resolution provides recommendations for updates to the Graduate Catalog and is focused on three areas: amends information on pass/fail options; updates admissions criteria for international students; modifies language on repeating courses in a plan of study.
 - a. A motion was made and seconded to approve the resolution.
 - b. No discussion or questions were received from the floor.
 - c. Motion carried. (Voting: 49 Yes, 1 No, 2 Abstain)

New Business

3. Jim Tokuhisa presented the Commission Chair report for the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies (CUSP).
 - a. The commission has had an active year, with one of the biggest achievements being the revision to Policy 6305, Satisfactory Academic Progress for Associate and Undergraduate Students, which was approved through shared governance (CUSP Resolution 2024-25A).
 - b. The commission focused on a number of other important topics including a review of degree programs and majors at Virginia Tech, potential impacts of class size on student outcomes, foreign language requirements, a texting policy for university student communications, and Pathways.
 - i. Questions and discussion were held on the relationship between class size and student outcomes. The commission did not find data that could be used to inform actions on this topic. To gain actionable information, specific professors and courses would need to be polled for input.
 - ii. Senators introduced a related concern, problems with student attendance. There was lengthy discussion on this topic. It was suggested that the commission focus on this issue during the 2025-2026 academic year.
4. Joe Merola presented the slate of officers nominated by the Faculty Senate Cabinet for the 2025-2026 Faculty Senate:
 - i. President – Justin Lemkul
 - ii. Vice President – Jim Hawdon
 - iii. Operations Office – Alex Kinnamon
- b. An additional nomination has been received for the office of president: Rodney Gaines. Bios for both nominees for president are available in the Faculty Senate SharePoint site.
- c. The floor was opened for additional nominations; none were received.
5. Rachel Miles presented the nominees for Virginia Tech shared governance organizations.
 - a. Nominations have been received for (1) representatives to several shared governance commissions, committees, University Council, and University Council Cabinet, and (2) commission chair positions for the Commission on Faculty Affairs, Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and

Policies, Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies, and the Commission on Research.

- b. Nominations for representatives to the shared governance groups listed below are still needed.
 - i. Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies,
 - ii. Commission on Faculty Affairs,
 - iii. Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs,
 - iv. Commission on A/P Faculty Affairs,
 - v. Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs.
- c. The floor was opened for nominations.
 - i. Phil Nelson was nominated to serve as representative to the Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies.
 - ii. The Senate will continue accepting nominations to fill remaining university governance positions.

Open Floor Discussion

- 6. Concerns with the data currently being used by the university to inform decisions and drive change were expressed. Senators offered personal examples of data being used that is not considerate of the unique characteristics of departments. The PIBB model and Elements were mentioned as institutional examples. Lengthy discussion was held on this topic and included the following:
 - a. The work currently being conducted by the academic resource alignment committee. An update was provided by senators who serve on the committee. Committee membership includes a representative for every department under review. A consultant has been utilized in this process, and data collected has been sent to departments to gather further information. Review is expected to conclude this year. Committee goals include: (1) increasing global distinction; (2) determining whether courses are aligned with employment needs and Virginia Tech's mission as a land grant university.
 - b. A suggestion was made to form a working group to focus on this topic. It was noted that some of the data and information used to create the [Statement on the Responsible Use of Research Metrics](#), which was endorsed at the senate and university levels, may be helpful to review for this topic.
 - c. The final Global Distinction Steering Committee meeting was recently held. Rachel Miles provided information and feedback to the committee on behalf of the faculty and included many of the concerns mentioned during this discussion. The report is available on the Faculty Senate SharePoint site.
- 7. Additional open floor discussion topics included the following:

- a. Commissions set their goals at the beginning of the fall semester, and these guide their work for the year. Anyone who would like to suggest topics for Faculty Senate focus can provide that information to the Faculty Senate leadership.
- b. A brief overview of information presented during a webinar hosted by Student Affairs and the Graduate School was provided. The webinar focused on information regarding the current immigration situation and resources for students and employees.
- c. Follow-up discussion on a previous suggestion for a summer committee or work group be convened. This group would continue monitoring federal policies and engaging with the administration during the summer. The Faculty Senate will send out an email to gauge interest in serving on such a group.
- d. Faculty climate survey. The Faculty Senate cabinet has discussed the possibility of the sponsoring of a well-designed climate survey by an expert unit on campus to be distributed to all employees during the upcoming academic year.

Motion to adjourn and seconded at 4:15 p.m.