MINUTES

Faculty Senate
August 29, 2025
2:30 – 4:15 PM
Torgersen 1000 or via Zoom

Present: Justin Lemkul (presiding), Luke Achenie, Joe Adams, Diane Agud, Aaron Ansell, Richard Ashley, Azziza Bankole, Kristen Benson, David Bieri, Myra Blanco, Jan Helge Bøhn, Warren Booth, Bradley Bowen, Curtis Bower (alternate for Keith Stephenson), Anamaria Bukvic, Ryan Calder, Maria del Carmen Caña-Jiménez, John Clements, Sarah Clinton, Rebecca Cockrum, Nick Copeland, Carolyn Copenheaver, Margaret Cowell (alternate for Stephanie Smith – SPIA), Logan Dandridge, Naomi Dunn, Matthew Eatherton (alternate for Sherif Motaleb Abdelaziz), Bob Edmison, Matthew Eick, Candace Fitch, Rodney Gaines, Nicholas Goedert, Ann Gregus (alternate for Sarah Clinton), Wesley Gwaltney, Ramtin Haghnazar, James Hawdon, William Headley, Rebecca Hester, Daniel Hindman, Edna Jasso-Hernandez (alternate for Isis Quinlan), Ran Jin, Daniel Karolyi, Bryan Katz, Lara Khansa, Alex Kinnaman, Andrea L'Afflitto, Catherine Larochelle, Renee LeClair, Kimberly Loeffert, Charles Lowery, Jason Malone, Virginia Maxwell, Joel McGlothlin, Marc Michel, Rachel Miles, Phil Nelson, Gregory Novack, Sean O'Keefe (alternate for Jake Lahne), Mark Psiaki, Shelly Rhoads, Steven Rowson, Karen Schnatterly, Yi Shi, Ian Shoemaker, Chelsea Thompto, Jim Tokuhisa, Alp Tural, Cassie Wallwey (alternate for Nicole Pitterson), Jerald Walz, Hongyu Wang (alternate – Research Faculty), Jeff Warfford, Rebecca Weaver-Hightower, Erin Worthington, David Xie, Gordon Yee,

Absent with Notice: Jake Lahne

Absent: Biko Agozino, Manish Bansal, Mark Coggins, Cassandra Efkeman, Ihudiya Finda Williams, Mark Freeman, Scott Gartner, David Gregory, Aaron Gross, Leanna House, Eli Jamison, Sarah Karpanty, Evan Lavender-Smith, G.Q. Lu, Lakshmi Madhavan Miller, Eric Martin, Harold McKenzie, Ron Meyers, Sherif Motaleb Abdelaziz, Corinne Noirot, Albert Pan, Nicole Pitterson, Isis Quinlan, John Richey, Nino Ripepi, Syrenthia Robinson, Nazila Roofigari-Esfahan, Richard Shryock, Stephanie Smith (Communications), Stephanie Smith (SPIA), Keith Stephenson, Terri-Ann Wattsman, Boya Xu,

Guests: Laura Iancu, Demetria Somervell, Lijuan Yuan

Dr. Justin Lemkul, Faculty Senate President, called the meeting to order at 2:34. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Consent Agenda

The consent agenda, which included the following items, was approved:

- Approval of minutes from May 02, 2025
- Approval of agenda for August 29, 2025

2. Announcements and Updates

- Justin Lemkul shared updates from the June and August Board of Visitors (BOV) Meetings. Board materials are online and can be reviewed.

- June 2025: A faculty members' promotion and tenure case was deferred from June to a later date; it was not denied. No public details were provided by the Board. The application remains pending and will be reconsidered this year.
    - August 2025: (a) The Academic Resource Alignment committee delivered data and analysis to Provost Cyril Clarke. The Provost will review this information and use it to draft a plan for review by the committee. Two BOV members have been added to this committee. (b) The Rector of the BOV tasked the administration with proposing scenarios for incremental growth to reach 40,000 undergraduate students. Previously, the board as a whole requested two scenarios. This request by the rector is the third scenario request. A report is expected at the November BOV meeting. (c) Whit Babcock presented information and requested $52 million in additional funding for Athletics. (d) A report on compliance with the DEI resolution is due at the November BOV meeting. (e) An internal search for a new Provost is underway. Justin Lemkul is serving on the search committee and a BOV member has been added.
- The Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws provides that the Faculty Senate President appoint a Parliamentarian and members of the Policy and Procedures Committee. Justin Lemkul announced these appointments:
    - Jerald Walz will serve as Faculty Senate Parliamentarian.
    - Policy and Procedures Committee - Per the bylaws, the Vice President Faculty Senate serves as the Chair (Jim Hawdon). The following members were appointed.
        - Carolyn Copenheaver
        - Rachel Miles
- Jerald Walz
- Discussion followed that indicated an interest among senators in codifying election procedures for internal committees.
- The Artificial Intelligence Working Group has provided recommendations. These are available for senators to review on the Faculty Senate SharePoint site.
- Justin Lemkul provided an overview of updates to the Faculty Senate SharePoint including an introduction of new features. A new senator orientation was held over the summer that included information about expectations of Faculty Senators and important procedures. These can be accessed on the left side menu of the SharePoint site. Documents housed on SharePoint are only accessible to senators and alternates. Resolutions are public and available on the VT Governance website. Minutes are public after they are approved and are available online.
    - Suggestions were made for the Faculty Senate to provide centralized communication such as newsletters that senators could forward to their constituency or to include Faculty Senate information in the Provost's Office weekly email. There was limited discussion on the topic. Justin Lemkul will request information about the weekly email.
- President Sands is scheduled to attend the September 12 Faculty Senate meeting. Senators can solicit questions from colleagues and then submit the questions themselves using the form available on the SharePoint site before September 5.

3. New Business

Faculty Senate Cabinet Appointments

Justin Lemkul announced that seats for the Faculty Senate Cabinet need to be filled. In addition to ex officio members, the Faculty Senate Cabinet includes a senator from each academic college and University Libraries. Senators met briefly with colleagues from their respective colleges during the meeting to select their representative. The following were selected.

College of Architecture, Arts and Design – Chelsea Thompto

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences – Rodney Gaines

College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences – Aaron Ansell

College of Natural Resources and Environment – Daniel Hindman

College of Engineering – Luke Achenie

College of Science – Diane Agud

Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine – Mark Freeman nominated, will be contacted

Pamplin College of Business – Karen Schnatterly

University Libraries – both senators from the University Libraries (Alex Kinnaman and Rachel Miles) already serve on the Cabinet as ex officio members, no additional senator to be selected

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine – Renee LeClair

University Council Representative from the College of Science

Justin Lemkul reported that a Faculty Senate representative from the College of Science is needed for University Council. This representative must be a Faculty Senator and will serve a 1-year term. Meeting information was provided.

The floor was opened for nominations. Mark Michel was nominated. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed. A vote was conducted, and Mark Michel was elected to this position.

Appointments to Shared Governance Commissions

Justin Lemkul stated that representatives are needed for several shared governance commissions: Commission on Research (COR), Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs (CAPFA), Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies (CGPSP) [Following the meeting it was determined that an error had occurred in communicating vacancies. The correct committee is Commission on Professional Student Affairs (CGPSA)], and the Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs (CSPA). Information on terms and known meeting information was provided.

1. The floor was opened to receive nominations for a representative to COR. Dan Hindman was nominated. There being no further nominations, the floor was closed. A vote was conducted, and Dan Hindman was elected.

2. The floor was opened to receive nominations for a representative to CAPFA. Bob Edmonson was nominated. There being no further nominations, the floor was closed. A vote was conducted, and Bob Edmonson was elected.
3. The floor was opened to receive nominations for a representative to CGPSP [CGPSA]. Rodney Gaines was nominated. There being no further nominations, the floor was closed. A vote was conducted, and Rodney Gaines was elected.
4. The floor was opened to receive nominations for a representative to CSPA. Rachel Miles was nominated. There being no further nominations, the floor was closed. A vote was conducted, and Rachel Miles was elected.

Appointments to Shared Governance Committees

Justin Lemkul introduced the election of representatives to various committees and working groups.

1. Faculty Honorifics Committee. There are 4 vacancies for this committee. Requirements for each vacancy and term end date were provided.
    a. This seat must be filled by a recipient of the Alumni Award for Excellence in Extension. The floor was opened for nominations. No nominations were received. Senators were encouraged to ask colleagues who are eligible if they are interested in serving on this committee. Elections will be held at the next Faculty Senate meeting.
    b. This seat must be filled by a member of the Academy of Teaching Excellence. The floor was opened for nomination. Gordon Yee was nominated. There being no further nominations, the floor was closed. A vote was conducted, and Gordon Yee was elected.
    c. This seat must be filled by a faculty member holding a named professorship. The floor was opened for nominations. Lara Khansa was nominated. There being no further nominations, the floor was closed. A vote was conducted, and Lara Khansa was elected.
    d. This seat must be filled by a member of the Academy of Faculty Leadership. The floor was opened for nomination. No nominations were received. Senators were encouraged to ask colleagues who are eligible if they are interested in serving on this committee. Elections will be held at the next Faculty Senate meeting.
2. Campus Accessibility Working Group. The term, expected meeting days, and a link for additional details were provided. The floor was opened for nominations. Diane Agud was nominated. There being no further nominations, the floor was closed. A vote was conducted, and Diane Agud was elected.
3. Bookstore Advisory Committee. This new committee has requested one faculty representative. The term and meeting information was provided. The floor was opened for nominations. Greg Novack was nominated. There being no further nominations, the floor was closed. A vote was conducted, and Greg Novack was elected.

4. Commission Reports

Commission on Faculty Affairs

Jim Hawdon, Commission Chair, provided a brief overview of the commission’s goals for the year. These include review of the policy regarding non-reappointment of restricted positions; revision of part of the grievance process; creation of a subcommittee to review the promotion and tenure expectations document; review of collegiate faculty roles; and review of VTCSOM faculty representation in the Faculty Senate. Discussion followed, including a request that data collected in the study on collegiate faculty roles and duties be provided to the Faculty Senate.

Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies

Renee LeClair, Commission Chair, provided an overview of the commission's goals for the year which include a review of task force recommendations regarding unprofessional behavior; review of professional master's degrees including 4+1 accelerated master's degrees; diversifying funding resources; and reviewing recruitment policies.

Commission on Research

Jan Helge. Bøhn, Commission Chair, provided an overview of the commission's goals for the year. These include reviews of the Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science and the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute; focus on how to support VT Global Distinction efforts and the possibility of a program to host globally distinct faculty fellowships; post-docs and their representation in the governance system.

Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies

Jim Tokuhisa, Commission Chair, provided an overview of the commission's goals for the year, which include identifying barriers to student success with focus on policies that impact student success; policies affected by changes to the Banner system; creation of a policy on university text messaging for student academic correspondence; review of admission requirements that are able to be deferred; and exploration of a 2-day fall break from a student success perspective.

Commission goals and workplans are submitted to the University Council and may be adjusted during the academic year. They are currently available on the Faculty Senate SharePoint. Following presentation to University Council, they will also be publicly available on the governance website. Senators with additional suggestions that fall under the charges of one of these commissions can contact the commission chair.

5. Open Floor Discussion

- Materials and handouts provided at the new senator orientation will be made available for all senators.

- The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences is hosting an Exercise and Healthspan International Conference in June 2026. More information will be provided as it is available.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:12.