

Faculty Senate Minutes: Jan 17, 2012

Virginia Tech

7-9 pm, Pamplin 32

Attending: Markham, Ellerbrock, Roan, Vinatzer, Vlachos, Puckett, Kennelly, Burbey, Luttrell, Rinehart, Liu, Cloyd, Stivachtis, Zajac, Floyd, Chen-Yu, Bassett, Patil, Vance, Vollmer, McGehee, Abbott, Pollio, Renard, Lazar, Tam Martin, Cooper, Agud, Reichard, Jones, Back, Steve Martin, Maycock, Benham, Noirot, Hosig, Hein, Niewolny, Pencek, Merola

I. Introductions and call to order

II. Approval of agenda & minutes of Dec 13, 2011

Minutes will be available following this meeting and approved by email.

- Request to amend agenda for presentation by Pat Hyer re: revisions to Policy 13010 (<http://www.policies.vt.edu/13010.pdf>) regarding faculty conflicts of interest and commitment, to be presented immediately following approval votes on agenda and minutes (AGREED)
- Request to limit deliberation on that policy revision to 45 minutes (AGREED)

Pat Hyer summarized the need for policy. Complicated interplay between businesses and faculty. Federal policies changed for August 2012 and these changes are meant to reflect the requirements for the new policy. There are two documents attached - the first is the policy and the second is a summary of changes between old and new. Also difficult to find all of the current policies in one place - so the new policy is an attempt to pull all policies that were scattered around a number of different places (Faculty Handbook, BOV policies, etc.)

Prominent issue was the new NIH guidelines setting a much lower threshold at \$5,000. If you have stock in a company that is not valued yet, you must report all of that because of the potential for bias. Issue of breaking public trust if one is getting \$\$\$ from a company and one is doing research related to that company's interest.

Use the \$10K threshold (state limit) for people not involved in sponsored research.

Faculty owned businesses - address much more of what that means. How do we protect graduate students who may be funded by a PI owned company? (e.g. a subcontract from an SBIR) You end up with complex relationships under this situation. A number of

institutions prohibit employing graduate students for a consulting business. At VT, the person who owns the company cannot be the sole advisor of a graduate student. Need a co-advisor of equal or greater rank. This needs to be transparent and disclosed completely to the student with a document that outlines the issue and the protection for the graduate student. Committee for that student all should receive copies of the document and all can help with protecting the student.

A number of questions asked to help clarify situations.

What about a student going off on their own to consult, etc? They would fall under the conflict of interest policies if their own outside employment/consulting have a potential for conflict.

Travel paid for by a third party only applies to NIH researchers.

We need to do a better job of managing conflicts. Currently, we have some oversight committees put in place, but they have never met, etc. So, we need to have REAL oversight.

Situation of a faculty member teaching their own family members. We are not automatically prohibiting, but we require an outside person to review the performance.

As an institution, under definition of "family member" we are including partners and other relationships since these also have the potential for conflicts.

Faculty authored textbook section is already in the faculty handbook and repeated in this policy.

Faculty must be trained in COI policy at least every 4 years and before they can be awarded an NIH grant. This is sufficiently complex with a lot of risk, so all sponsored researchers will also be trained.

III. **Officer reports**

- National Capital Region Faculty Association (Pencek) Kitty Hancock, president of the NCRFA raised some concerns - 4 or 5 locations all over the region and it appears that access of resources depends on the location. Some may be disadvantaged because of their work location. This may apply to all kinds of external locations. Are NCRFA faculty adequately represented in various aspects of university life such as P&T decisions? Might be addressed at university level but not really practically at the College committee deliberation levels. Faculty may not even have a home department.
- Reminders re senate elections (officers)

- Solicit for FS officer candidates (for election at last regular spring meeting – likely April)
- FS departmental reapportionment of senate seats (FS Constitution Art II.3 and Bylaws Art I.D) Please bring an indication of the number of faculty in your department next year.
- Elections of senators for 2012-15 should be completed by March 15 (Bylaws Art II)
- Elections and nominations to governance by the senate should be at last regular spring meeting – likely April. (Bylaws Art IV) (Because last meeting may be mostly a social one without a full quorum).

IV. Reports from governance

a. Commissions and committees

b. University Council

c. Board of Visitors

Legislature is considering a bill requiring extension employees in each county.

There is a new commencement schedule starting this spring. Graduate commencement will begin at 8:30 AM in Cassell Coliseum and the University Commencement will be at noon, but with the possibility of delaying until 2 PM to avoid inclement weather.

The legislature is asking universities to study year - round use of universities.

V. Unfinished business

- Enhancing senate organizational capacity Pt 1: goals and functions of VT FS (Merola)
 - FS constitution: <http://www.facultysenate.vt.edu/Faculty-Senate-Constitution/faculty-senate-constitution.html>
 - FS bylaws: <http://www.facultysenate.vt.edu/Faculty-Senate-Bylaws/faculty-senate-bylaws.html>
 - FS in Faculty Handbook, sec 1.4.5: http://www.provost.vt.edu/documents/FHB_2011_chp_1.pdf
 - Schematic of FS in VT governance (dated in details): <http://www.facultysenate.vt.edu/Governance/faculty-senate-role-in-governance.pdf>
 - University Council (governance overall): http://www.governance.vt.edu/uc_constitution_and_by-laws.html

Merola asked all senators to review the documents and make sure we are operating according to our own policies and to see if there are any policy changes needed to operate more effectively. The most important issue, though, is what do we want Faculty Senate to be? How do we accomplish

that? How do we elevate the senate to have the respect of the faculty and the administration so that we can be an active and beneficial voice in the university community.

VI. **New business**

- Invited speakers: guidelines, potential spring invitations (Pencek)

Informational pieces are good for us to share with faculty, but not always accessible.

Need something other than meeting minutes - invited speakers should provide a simple "one pager" to bring back to faculty. If it is looking for our input, we want a question and answer period. If it is just PR, they should simply provide information.

Change of benefits was an important issue and we wouldn't have heard about it in any other way.

Enjoyed visitors for the past semester if they are limited in time.

Perhaps we need a vetting procedure to say if something we are interested in.

There is a goodwill benefit to inviting certain speakers in. More than revising our documents is our visibility. We don't communicate all of the achievements we make even if minor.

If we restrict too much who wants to speak with us, then we may miss important information.

Do we wish to hear from Dwight Shelton concerning the budget? (or someone else from the budget office?) We should invite visitors and give specific questions and not just get PowerPoint informations.

- Relations with Faculty Senate of Virginia (Pencek)
- FS meeting of 2011-12 – how social? (Pencek)

I. **Adjourn**