Date: Tuesday, January 20, 2015

Place: Pamplin 32

Time: 5:15 p.m.

Chair: Bernice Hausman

Minutes: Rebecca Miller

Attending: Monty Abbas, Marwan Al-Haik, Robin Allnutt, Susan Anderson, Nahum Arav, Richard Ashley, Godmar Back, Joseph Baker, Daniel Breslau, Robert Bush, Maria Belen Cassera, Virgil Centeno, Benjamin Corl, Richard Shyrock (for Alex Dickow), Felicia Etzkorn, John Ferris, Hans Gindlesberger, Ralph Hall, Bernice Hausman, Wat Hopkins, David Jacobsen, Bradley Klein, Chad Lavin, Jenny Lo, Gerald Luttrell, Joe Merola, Rebecca Miller, Sean O'Keefe, Megan O'Rourke, Jim Parkhurst, Mayur Patil, Anita Puckett, Wornie Reed, Susannah Rinehart, Hannah Scherer, Heinrich Schnoedt, Madeline Schreiber, Deborah Smith, David Tegarden, Dan Thorp, Eric Vance, Bruce Vogelaar, Jay Wilkins, Philip Young

Quorum was met with 44 attendees.

Guests: No guests in attendance

Meeting purpose: Regular Faculty Senate meeting

Agenda items: Approval of the agenda

Approval of the minutes from the December 2, 2014 meeting

Announcements

Old business

New business

Faculty Senate President Bernice Hausman called the meeting to order at 5:16 p.m.

Agenda item 1: Approval of the agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was seconded and passed by unanimous decision.

Agenda item 2: Approval of the minutes from the December 2, 2014 meeting

The minutes from the December 2, 2014 meeting will be approved during the February 10, 2015 Faculty Senate meeting.

Agenda item 3: Announcements

Faculty Senate President Bernice Hausman made three brief announcements:

The February 10, 2015 Faculty Senate meeting will be held in Fralin Auditorium and involve a report from the AAUP representatives who will be on campus that day consulting about shared governance and the VT AAUP chapter.

There will be a meeting 2-4pm on February 10, 2015 of the FS governance task force, the FS Cabinet, and the AAUP consultants to discuss shared governance at Virginia Tech. A few Cabinet members have reported that they cannot attend that meeting because they are in class. Please let your Cabinet member know if you can attend in his or her place. The College of Science and Pamplin both need substitutes, and other colleges might also. If you are particularly interested in attending that meeting, let President Hausman know. We can accommodate about 15 people at the meeting. Currently, we do not have Cabinet members from CNRE or CAUS, so it would be helpful to have a faculty member from those colleges attend.

President Sands is not available on February 24, 2015 for the faculty-wide discussion of salary and budget issues. Faculty Senate President Hausman is expecting a note from the Provost upon his return from the legislative session to discuss this meeting and to schedule it.

Other announcements
Eric Vance reminded senators that LISA (Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Statistical Analysis) is available to help researchers use statistics. LISA is again pushing for permanent funding this year.

Agenda item 4: Old business

Open discussion of Pathways curriculum

The open discussion centered around three main topics: (1) defining the role of Faculty Senate representatives on commissions, and whether or not those representatives could be asked to vote with the Faculty Senate, (2) editing the document that the Faculty Senate Cabinet developed as a response to the current Pathways proposal, and (3) attending the CUSP meeting.

Defining the role of Faculty Senate representatives
It was determined that Faculty Senate representatives on commissions are not required to vote in the same direction as Faculty Senate opinion. However, Joe Merola indicated that it would be appropriate to write a resolution to ask Faculty Senate CUSP representatives to vote "no" on the Pathways proposal in order to represent the position of the faculty. There was no interest in writing this resolution.

Editing the Cabinet's response to the Pathways proposal
The document brought to the Faculty Senate by the Cabinet is entitled *Proposal for discussion at Faculty Senate, re: Pathways curriculum before CUSP, 1/20/2014*. The full version of this original statement is available in the January 20, 2015 Meeting Agendas folder in the Faculty Senate Scholar site.

A number of edits were suggested to the document that the Faculty Senate Cabinet brought to the Faculty Senate. These included: adding subheadings to the document, changing the word "matriculate" to "graduate," and including an explicit recommendation that CUSP reject the document in order to

address concerns identified in the Cabinet's document. These document amendments are available as part of the full text of the resolution that was eventually adopted (below).

Rick Ashley moved that the Faculty Senate direct CUSP representatives to not only share the document with CUSP, but to also vote "no" on the Pathways proposal. The motion was seconded. After discussion, the motion was withdrawn by Rick Ashley.

Attending the CUSP meeting
In addition to editing and preparing a statement on the Pathways proposal, senators discussed who should attend and participate in discussion at the 1/26/2015 CUSP meeting. Since CUSP is an open meeting, it was suggested that the Faculty Senate President and Cabinet attend the meeting in order to present the Faculty Senate's resolution. Although there was discussion about writing a resolution that would require the Faculty Senate President and Cabinet to attend the CUSP meeting and present the resolution, it was decided that this was not necessary, and that senators would attend as they are able. President Hausman and available Cabinet members will attend as resources.

Resolution to send to CUSP

A motion to adopt the statement written by the Faculty Senate Cabinet and edited during the Faculty Senate meeting as a resolution was made and seconded. After discussion, senators agreed that the document needs some fine tweaking before sending it on to CUSP as a resolution, and that the President and Cabinet should be authorized to make edits. This change was accepted as a friendly amendment.

A motion to accept the amended proposal of the Cabinet with the understanding that the Cabinet is authorized to copy edit the document before sending it forward was made and seconded. After brief discussion, the Faculty Senate passed the resolution with a vote of 36 in favor, 2 opposed, and 3 abstaining.   The full text of the edited resolution is as follows:

> ***Faculty Senate Statement on the Revision of General Education at Virginia Tech***
> ***Passed by vote of the Faculty Senate, 1.20.2015***
>
> *The Faculty Senate cannot support the Revision of General Education at Virginia Tech (dated 11/17/2014 and hereafter referred to as the "Pathways proposal" or as the "proposed Pathways curriculum") for the reasons articulated below. The Faculty Senate respectfully requests that CUSP not pass Resolution 2014-15.H: Resolution to Revise Presidential Policy Memorandum No. 125 (University Core Curriculum/Curriculum for Liberal Education (CLE) (PPM 240)).*
>
> *The Faculty Senate recognizes the significant amount of work that has gone into the development of this curricular revision, over many years and on the part of both faculty and administrators across the institution. The Faculty Senate seeks to continue our collaboration with CUSP and the UCCLE throughout spring 2015 in order to ensure that the general education curriculum that is eventually approved inspires and energizes Virginia Tech faculty to take on the significant burdens of implementation.*

The Faculty Senate recognizes and applauds the following important and well-conceived elements of the proposed Pathways curriculum, which are new elements not currently included in the existing Curriculum for Liberal Education (CLE):

- *The creation of Pathways minors for those students who seek more integrated coursework to fulfill general education requirements;*
- *The opportunity to devise truly alternative Pathways curricula for exceptionally motivated students and faculty;*
- *The addition of computational and design thinking to the general education curriculum;*
- *The recognition that education in ethics is a necessary element of general education;*
- *The focus on active learning pedagogies and the need for varied pedagogical approaches to general education that nevertheless focus on engaging students in the learning process;*
- *The inclusion of assessable outcomes for all areas of the general education curriculum so that the university and outside accrediting agencies will be able to determine if the curriculum is indeed meeting its stated goals for general education; and*
- *The recognition that a traditional distribution model is necessary to allow transfer students (especially from Virginia's community colleges) and high school students with AP and IB credits to graduate from Virginia Tech in a timely manner.*

However, the Faculty Senate is concerned that the existing proposal is not specific enough in a number of areas to inspire widespread faculty approval. There are a number of points in the proposal that continue to raise concerns among the faculty; these concerns have been articulated to the Faculty Senate through its departmental representatives. While the Faculty Senate recognizes that the Pathways proposal has been in development at the university for a number of years, and that many faculty across the institution have worked on the proposal, it has been less than one full year since a written proposal has been available for comment and feedback from the faculty. The Faculty Senate, as a conduit for faculty concerns about the proposed program, believes that the faculty as a whole are not committed to the new curriculum as written.

The Faculty Senate cannot endorse a proposal for revision of the general education curriculum that has not been vetted properly by the faculty at large and which does not garner energetic enthusiasm from the faculty as an improvement over the existing curriculum. This is especially true since the faculty will be responsible for the initial burdens of implementation, which involve revising existing courses, developing new courses, and learning the complex new requirements for successful student advising. For some departments with a large number of courses in the existing CLE, this is a significant burden.

In particular, the Faculty Senate finds the existing proposal to be lacking in specific details that are necessary to gain the support of the faculty:

- *The need for assessment appears to have driven the kind of descriptive language used in the Pathways proposal, in ways detrimental to its stated goal for "a more robust and meaningful general education" for students. The need to include measurable learning outcomes in the discussion of the goals for each area of the proposed Pathways curriculum*

means that there are a small number of specific learning indicators that can be identified. As a result, the overall description of the Pathways curriculum is far less intellectually robust, complex, and stimulating than the existing aspirational goals of the CLE. The Faculty Senate finds the difference in the language of the existing CLE curriculum guides and the proposed Pathways curriculum to be troublesome, and would find it a problem if the stripped down language of the learning outcomes and indicators, as written, were to become the public face of Virginia Tech's general education curriculum. The Faculty Senate recommends that the UCCLE and/or CUSP explore ways to develop descriptive language for the new curriculum that is as robust, complex, and intellectually exciting as the existing language of the CLE. The limited number of assessable learning outcomes and indicators can then be abstracted from these broader descriptions, which will also serve to guide faculty in developing and revising courses. The aspirational goals and descriptions of the learning domains of the existing CLE are written in language that demonstrates a passion for knowledge and learning; the Faculty Senate believes that the new Pathways curriculum should likewise include language that conveys the faculty's enthusiasm for the content of the curriculum.

- *The relation of the Core Learning Outcomes to the Integrative Learning Outcomes in the proposed Pathways curriculum is unclear. The proposal states that "every Pathways course will address at least one of the Integrative Outcomes" (Revision General Education VT 11/17/2014, p. 10). Such a requirement demands significant revision of almost every course in the existing curriculum, because it means that each course must meet either the ethics or intercultural and global awareness learning indicators in addition to the learning indicators in its own area. The Faculty Senate is not certain that this is the best way to accomplish learning goals in these two content areas, especially since the requirement will be waived for transfer students who transfer in credits on the distribution model (Revision General Education VT 11/17/2014, p. 12). In addition, the document states that "clearly, competence in ethical reasoning [or intercultural and global awareness] can't be achieved in just one course" (Revision General Education VT 11/17/2014, p. 12), a rationale that seems to be meant to justify the distribution of these outcomes across the curriculum as a whole. However, it is not clear to the Faculty Senate that a basic foundational course in these areas is not necessary as an element of general education, to be augmented by integration of these topics in students' subsequent coursework in general education or their majors. In any event, it is clear to the Faculty Senate that more work needs to be done to clarify the value and place of ethical reasoning and intercultural and global awareness in the Pathways curriculum, as it is not confident that the existing structure is adequate to the demands of these learning outcomes.*

- *The implementation process and timeline in the Pathways proposal are, in the Senate's view, too ambitious for adequate scrutiny of courses and oversight of the curriculum as a whole. In particular, the Faculty Senate finds the language describing the streamlining of course approvals so that courses will be available for students entering in fall 2016 to be untenable. While it is to be expected that there will be some concentrated work leading to the implementation of the curriculum in any case, the Faculty Senate would like to see a more robust outline of this aspect of implementation. This outline should include a discussion of how the fast-tracking of approvals will drill down to the department level, where the most onerous work of revision and course development will occur. Such a discussion should also include more specific information about the support that will be made available to departments for faculty involvement in this effort.*

It is the view of the Faculty Senate that domain experts, selected at the department level, should be asked to participate in the refinement and revision of the existing proposal, whose overall scheme is largely acceptable. For example, ethics experts from across the university should be consulted concerning how to integrate ethics into undergraduate education. In another example, social scientists should develop both the broad aspirational goals of the social science area and be consulted on its specific learning indicators. The learning indicators and outcomes should be scrutinized to ensure that they are in sync and that both are related to broader descriptions of the learning domains and the significance and purpose of knowledge across the curriculum. In all areas, language in the existing CLE curriculum guide should be consulted to determine if it is still relevant to the Pathways curriculum and its objectives and, if so, incorporated.

The Faculty Senate recognizes that this request to CUSP to reject Resolution 2014-15.H pending further consideration, revision, and a broader discussion of the Pathways proposal among the faculty at large will delay implementation of the proposed program. The Faculty Senate does not make this request lightly. For such a significant revision of general education to be successful, the faculty as a whole must feel engaged in the process and confident that the proposed curriculum will be an improvement on the existing model. At present, the Faculty Senate does not believe that either is the case. The Faculty Senate pledges to continue to work with both the UCCLE and CUSP on the Pathways proposal, ensuring widespread faculty involvement in the process so that revisions to general education at Virginia Tech can inspire both faculty and students to excellence in this crucial area of undergraduate learning.

After passing the resolution, the Faculty Senate discussed how to send forward the resolution. Deborah Smith indicated that the resolution should be sent to the University Registrar's office for posting in "Resources" for the CUSP group. President Hausman stated that the Faculty Senate should send its resolution through the Faculty Senate representatives on CUSP.

A motion was made that President Hausman present the resolution at the CUSP meeting, and the motion was seconded. The motion did not pass.

A straw vote was taken to require President Hausman and available Cabinet members to attend the CUSP meeting to serve as support for the FS representatives to CUSP. The straw vote passed and President Hausman indicated her intention to attend.

Agenda item 5: New business

No new business was brought forward.

Next meeting: Tuesday, February 10, 2015, 5:15 p.m. in Fralin Auditorium

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.