Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2015

Place: Pamplin 32

Time: 5:15 p.m.

Chair: Bernice Hausman

Minutes: Rebecca Miller

Attending: Monty Abbas, Robin Allnutt, Susan Anderson, Richard Ashley, Godmar Back, Joseph Baker, John Barrett, Virgil Centeno, Benjamin Corl, Rami Dalloul, Charlene Eska, Felicia Etzkorn, John Ferris, Leon Geyer, Hans Gindlesberger, Rosemary Goss, Ralph Hall, Bernice Hausman, Aki Ishida, David Jacobsen, Chad Lavin, Jenny Lo, Gerald Luttrell, Rebecca Miller, Sakiko Okumoto, Jim Parkhurst, Mayur Patil, Anita Puckett, John Richey, Susanna Rinehart, Scott Salom, Christine Kaestle (for Tina Savla), Hannah Scherer, Heinrich Schnoedt, Deborah Smith, Jim Spotila, David Tegarden, Dam Thorp, Eric Vance, Bruce Vogelaar, Layne Watson, Philip Young

Quorum (42 attendees) was met, with exactly 42 senators in attendance.

Guests: Rector of the Board of Visitors, Deborah Petrine

Meeting purpose: Regular Faculty Senate meeting

Agenda items: Approval of the agenda

Guest, Rector of the Board of Visitors, Deborah Petrine

Approval of minutes from the March 17, 2015 meeting

Old business

New business

Elections and positions for 2015-2016

Meetings through the end of the Spring 2015 semester

Faculty Senate President Bernice Hausman called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Agenda item 1: Approval of the agenda

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

Agenda item 2: Guest, Rector of the Board of Visitors, Deborah Petrine

Faculty Senate Vice President Rami Dalloul introduced Rector Petrine.

Rector Petrine spoke for a few minutes about her experiences at Virginia Tech as a student, all the way through her current position as Rector of the Board of Visitors. She spoke about the significant role of faculty in the life of the university, and opened the floor for questions from senators. The Q&A session that followed focused on a number of specific themes:

Tuition increases

Senators asked if the Board had ever voted to turn down a tuition increase, and Rector Petrine indicated that the Board voted to turn down a tuition increase during her first year on the Board. Senators also asked how much (percentage) of a tuition increase would go into increasing salaries for faculty. Rector Petrine and President Hausman indicated that only Dwight Shelton would be able to respond to this question, but that President Hausman would be working with Dwight Shelton to identify this number.

During this part of the discussion, Rector Petrine also invited faculty members to attend Board of Visitors meetings, since they are open, so that faculty can have a better sense of the discussions taking place and the comparison of peer institutions that often occurs during meetings.

Faculty salary and benefits

Rector Petrine mentioned that faculty salary increases get voted on in June. Senators suggested that tuition support for faculty, staff, and students would be a valuable additional benefit for Virginia Tech employees.

Senators indicated that they were interested in working with Jack Finney in order to develop a benchmarking document or presentation where items such as childcare, maternity leave, tuition remission, and other benefits for Virginia Tech employees are compared with those of peer institutions.

Components of a comprehensive research university

Discussion of Virginia Tech's status as a comprehensive research university focused around two specific items: the role of institutes at Virginia Tech and growth in the arts and humanities.

Faculty senators expressed dissatisfaction with the indirect/overhead rate on grants, which are higher because of the research institutes on campus. Faculty who are not associated with these institutes pay the same overhead rate, which is not helpful for the unassociated faculty.

Faculty senators and Rector Petrine agreed that continuing a focus on growing arts and humanities programs would be helpful for the future of Virginia Tech. It was suggested that we work on educating admissions officers, high school students, and development officers on the quality and value of Virginia Tech's arts and humanities programs.

Role of faculty in university governance and Board activities

Faculty senators were interested in understanding how the Board agendas are set, and Rector Petrine indicated that many agenda items are recurring ones that no one has much control over, although she did state that she has added several items to the agendas for the past few meetings.

Senators were also interested in the process for communicating with the Board. Rector Petrine stated that the Board's role is not to micro-manage, but to oversee the University. The Board will not undermine the authority of the President.

Rector Petrine was also unfamiliar with the idea of shared governance, but was intrigued by it. She listened to information about the disparity in the role of faculty at VT, versus our SCHEV peers, in shared governance.

The Association of American Universities

A brief discussion about what Virginia Tech would need to do in order to become a member of the Association of American Universities identified a number of areas where Virginia Tech would need to grow, including:

- More fellowships and recognition in the social sciences
- More membership in National Academies
- Publications, citations, and scholarly impact growth

Agenda item 3: Approval of minutes from the March 17, 2015 meeting

Faculty senators offered minor suggestions for revisions to the minutes. Minutes for the March 17, 2015 meeting were approved as amended by unanimous decision.

Agenda item 4: Old business

Pathways update

A Pathways compromise meeting was held during the morning on March 31, 2015. President Hausman represented the Faculty Senate, and reported that a number of items were agreed upon. See the Faculty Senate Scholar site for full revisions.

The Faculty Senate had two days to propose more flexibility in the implementation window of 2 years that would include something to address the integrate outcomes (Ethics and Global). President Hausman asked senators how the revisions should be communicated. Since there wasn't time at the meeting to develop the revisions, President Hausman asked whether this communication should take place via email.

Following this discussion, senators discussed how Faculty Senate representatives to University Council should vote. In order to offer some guidance to senate representatives, the Faculty Senate held a straw vote on whether or not the Pathways proposal was implementable as it currently stood. Senators were asked to vote on the phrase: The Pathways proposal is not implementable as it currently stands.

Votes included 28 in agreement with this statement, 3 opposed to this statement, and 4 abstentions. Overall, the Faculty Senate did not feel that the current Pathways proposal was implementable, and that the official Faculty Senate position should be that it cannot support it.

The Faculty Senate would like integrative outcomes pushed into the implementation plan. The Senate is supportive of the changes that have already been made in the Pathways proposal, and feel that additional changes are also critical.

Finally, it was mentioned that if University Council is voting on a different document than it previously received, someone needs to walk members through those changes.

Faculty governance survey

Eric Vance and Wornie Reed reported on the Faculty Governance Survey:

- 662 responses
- 85% responded that there should be a faculty body at VT that represents true shared governance
- 85% responded that enhanced shared governance would improve academic excellence

Basically, 85% of survey respondents believe that we should function like our SCHEV peers.

One faculty senator noted that he heard discussion about the survey feeling biased and that the questions were leading.

Agenda item 5: New business

Reports from Commissions and Committees

Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies

The CGSP representative announced that PhD diplomas from Virginia Tech will no longer have a department or program name on them. If a department specifically requests that the name be added, it can do that, but the default will be that PhD diplomas will only say "Virginia Tech" on them.

There is also text about self-plagiarism being added to the Graduate Student Handbook.

Commission on Faculty Affairs

The CFA representative announced that the Assistant Vice President of Research is trying to draft a resolution to resolve some gaps and clarify some language related to intellectual property, particularly as it relates to graduate students.

Issues of topical concern

Faculty senator Philip Young led a discussion about the role of impact factors in faculty evaluation and promotion. He stated that this is an issue about research assessment, and that he wants feedback from senators about whether or not this is something that the Faculty Senate should actually address.

Information and a discussion about the impact factor are available in a forum on the Faculty Senate Scholar site; Philip Young encouraged senators to participate in this discussion.

Agenda item 6: Elections and positions for 2015-2016

There are available positions on committees and commissions. Information about open positions is available on the Faculty Senate Scholar site.

There are also two open Faculty Senate offices: Secretary-Treasurer and Vice-President. 2015-2016 is likely to be another lively year, so please consider serving!

If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else, please send those nominations to Rami Dalloul (rdalloul@vt.edu).

Agenda item 7: Meetings through the end of the Spring 2015 semester

April 14, 2015: Ken Eriksson with report from Task Force on Reconciliation/Ethics/Review committees; discussion of elections and candidates for positions; report of governance task force and survey task force on shared governance survey.

April 28, 2015: Scott Midkiff from IT would like to discuss the timeline and process for implementing a new course management system to replace Scholar. There is already a handout in the April 28 meeting folder. Scott also suggests faculty look at materials at https://www.tlos.vt.edu/NextGenerationLMS/

Another topic for the April 28 meeting could be the meeting time of the senate and whether we could adjust it to address the myriad problems associated with meeting after 5pm, or at least develop a strategy to address this problem.

We still have an invitation out to the President to attend Faculty Senate. As a result, we can't as yet cancel any of our meetings for the rest of the semester. The April 28 meeting may be short. The content of the May 12 meeting is unclear, but we may have a reception for the provost.

There will be meetings with the candidates for the provost position late in the semester (hopefully). Provost interviews will take place in late April and early May. There is time set aside for the candidates to meet with Faculty Senate, but they are not Faculty Senate times. There will be 3 candidates coming in.

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 14, 2015, 5:15 p.m. in Pamplin 32

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.