Commission on Faculty Affairs
Minutes
September 24, 2004

Members attending: Mara Baker, Carlyle Brewster, William Greenberg, Sam Hicks, Pat Hyer (for Mark McNamee), Sean O'Keefe, Susanna Rinehart, Dennis Welch, Devin Weller (for Summet Bagai)
Guests: Elizabeth Creamer, Peggy Layne, Susan Willis-Walton

Rinehart called the meeting to order with two items on the agenda: 1) ADVANCE faculty survey, 2) Proposed SGA Resolution on faculty evaluations. A motion was made and passed to adopt the agenda and approve the minutes of September 10, 2004.

ADVANCE Faculty Survey:

Elizabeth Creamer, Peggy Layne, and Susan Willis-Walton provided the CFA with an overview of the upcoming ADVANCE Faculty Survey. Elizabeth Creamer, Director of Research and Assessment for the ADVANCE grant, explained the survey would be distributed online in October following an initial pilot. [*Subsequently the date of distribution has been changed to January*.] The survey is different than the climate survey that was done five years ago through the Provost's Office. The goals of the ADVANCE grant serve as the focus of the survey, including: hiring practices, leadership development, career opportunities and advancement, work life issues, and departmental environment. Data collected from the survey will allow ADVANCE to determine what issues need more attention. Some items will assist in measuring change over the life of the grant program. Survey results will be shared widely with various commissions, the Advance work groups, and administrators.

Participants will be full-time instructional and research faculty. Part-time faculty and administrators will not be included. The survey will be distributed to faculty who work at the Blacksburg, as well as other locations.

Susan Willis-Walton, Co-Director of the Center for Survey Research, explained that the survey will be distributed via email. The introductory message in the email will be from Provost McNamee and will encourage faculty participation. The CSR will guarantee that no responses can be tracked back to a specific individual.

The CFA provided feedback regarding the survey. Responses for questions might be revised to include a variation in rating scale. Currently, the majority of survey questions ask participants to rate answers from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A rating scale that ranges from always to never might serve as a better indicator on several questions. Suggestions were also made regarding the order of questions. A better response rate might be achieved if questions faculty find easier to answer were placed first. The CFA also asked for clarification regarding the contract terms of the survey and whether survey results will be reported back to department heads. Faculty asked if it were possible to receive a copy of the survey in printed format. This would allow them to review it and

think about their responses before inputting them online. The Center for Survey Research can include in the initial email notice a link that will allow faculty to request a printed copy.

SGA Resolution on Faculty Evaluations:

Devin Weller, substitute for Sumeet Bagai, introduced the proposed SGA resolution regarding faculty evaluations. Students do not feel end of semester evaluations are a useful tool for improving the classroom environment. Evaluations conducted in the middle of the semester would allow students to give meaningful feedback and would have a direct impact on the class in which they are enrolled. Faculty and students would be able to build a relationship that would enhance the classroom experience. The SGA did not want to specify a format for the evaluations. They do not want mid-semester evaluations to be included in the faculty dossier as part of the promotion and tenure process.

The CFA agreed mid-semester evaluations are a useful tool. The CFA suggested the SGA write a letter to the faculty encouraging them to use mid-semester evaluations and stressing the importance of them. This would be well received by faculty and more likely to have a direct impact than the proposed resolution which would modify the Faculty Handbook. The letter could be circulated to individual faculty as well as department heads. Terry Wildman, Director of the Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching (CEUT) would be an excellent resource. The CEUT offers several workshops regarding evaluations. The SGA would be well served in contacting CEUT and including the dates of the evaluation workshops in the letter to faculty.

The next meeting will be on October 8, 2004 in 325 Burruss.

Recorder: C. Amelink, Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs
Minutes
September 10, 2004

Members Present: Susanna Rinehart, Pat Hyer (for Mark McNamee), Sheryl Ball (for Lay Nam Chang), Mike Kelly, Carol Burch-Brown, Sean O'Keefe, Carlyle Brewster, Leon Geyer, Bill Greenberg, Sam Hicks, Mara Barker, Marcus Ly, Sumeet Bagai

Guest: Janine Hiller

Chair Susanna Rinehart invited members to introduce themselves and to identify the group they represent on the commission. She then reviewed the charge of the commission, which is very broad. A broad set of faculty-related issues had been identified by members of the Provost's Office in consultation with the Faculty Senate officers, and this was shared with the academic affairs committee of the Board of Visitors in August. Rinehart suggested that the list made a good starting point for topics that CFA may wish to address this year.

Several additional topics were also likely to be on the agenda including the certification by employees of business conduct standards and the proposed electronic faculty activity reporting. The certification process is expected to move forward this fall. However, members have not seen the latest draft of the document, nor the exact statement to which employees were to certify. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to request that the latest draft be shared with the commission.

Action: The chair will contact the lead administrators on the certification project to obtain a copy of the latest draft for commission review and an update on the status of the project.

Topics for upcoming meetings:
 • Tim Mack will be invited to describe the electronic faculty reporting project and to share some early drafts of the format and gather feedback.
 • Elizabeth Creamer will be invited to the Sept. 24th meeting to describe the upcoming faculty-wide survey being conducted by the Advance project. The survey will distributed to instructional and research faculty university-wide and address a number of issues including job satisfaction, departmental and university concerns, and work-life issues, among others.

Computer Privacy:

Janine Hiller and Leon Geyer served on the task force last year that was charged with developing a computer privacy policy. The current draft was distributed in advance to commission members. Hiller provided an overview of the development of the document over the last two years. An earlier version of a computer privacy policy had been developed by a committee composed primarily of Faculty and Staff Senate members following a controversial incident involving confiscation of a faculty hard drive as part of an investigation by campus police. However, aspects of the first draft caused concern among administrative units responsible for audit and other investigatory procedures, as well as the offices that would have had a role in authorizing access according to the new policy. A task force was formed last year, chaired by Kay Heidbreder in the Legal Counsel's Office, and including several members of the original group, faculty and

classified staff, as well as representatives of Personnel Services, the police, information technology, and audit.

The group began with the draft already developed and reviewed documents from other institutions with similar purposes that had been identified by the original committee. Related laws, such as the Freedom of Information Act and recent court cases, as well as related university policies (audit, information technology protocols, etc.) were also studied. The framework of the original document seemed too complex, and the committee opted to follow more closely the simpler UVa model. However, the purpose statements of the old and new versions are virtually the same. That is, the policy exists to identify the balance between the state policy that no employee should have any expectation of privacy in their electronic communication and the university's core values of protecting the freedom of intellectual inquiry. In its essence the policy states that the university will NOT routinely monitor or access employee's electronic communications except in certain narrowly defined circumstances. The policy identifies the process that will be followed when access or monitoring is required.

On-going access or monitoring may be necessary in some departments based on the nature of work. In such cases, a written departmental policy must be developed, approved, and disseminated to employees so that they are aware of this departmental expectation/practice. The need for on-going access or monitoring is most likely to occur in administrative offices. If such a policy is needed in a department affecting tenure-track or continued appointment faculty then they must be allowed input to its development.

Single-time access may occur for business necessity and this is addressed by the policy by requiring authorization of the department head (or higher authority) in cases where the employee is not reasonably available.

Access or monitoring in the case of possible violations of law or policy will require a written request and approval by the senior manager (dean or vice president).

In closing her overview, Hiller commented that the committee discussed at great length and repeatedly a variety of issues that stemmed from a gap in employees' understanding of what the state policy is (*no expectation of privacy*), which is also the standard in the corporate world and supported by recent court decisions, and employees' beliefs or desires that all electronic communication be considered strictly private. Widespread dissemination of the policy and education of employees will be an important aspect of its implementation.

Sam Hicks began the discussion by asking about the statement in the policy that states that the policy "does not create any additional or new legal rights." Hiller responded that this statement is important for legal reasons. In essence, state policy still prevails and employees could not sue if the university granted access without their permission. The value of the new policy is to put on record procedures for handling appropriately issues of access and monitoring when they need to occur.

Bill Greenberg described the incident that occurred to him involving last minute requirements to put together a major grant proposal when a collaborator was not available and material on his computer might have been needed. Greenberg proposed language that could be added to the policy to allow colleagues to access each other's

computers in such instances. Hiller commented that there is nothing whatsoever in the policy to stop colleagues from giving each other permission to access their computers, however, such access really should not be assumed. Password protection has been added to many faculty computers just to prevent such unauthorized access. A sentence included in the first draft of the policy appeared to provide an appropriate way to address the situation and this will be added to the draft.

Another commission member wondered how the policy would have worked in the original incident, and she expressed concern that the Patriot's Act creates a difficult atmosphere for many scholars who might feel they could be targets based on their ethnicity, activities, or research areas. Section 3.1 of the draft which requires a written request and rationale for access in the case of investigation of a possible violation of law or policy. A search warrant is not required, particularly since many violations of law or policy are not matters for the police. In response to a question about whether files stored on *privately-owned* computers could be accessed under this policy, Hiller responded that the policy addressed *university-owned or provided* equipment (including those purchased on grants and contracts) or communication, not those purchased by personal funds.

Hicks wondered whether the policy would lead to different policies by department and whether that was a good thing. Hiller responded that, yes, the policy presumed that some departments may adopt a policy of universal access in order to accomplish their work, and others would not. These differences may fall mostly along administrative versus academic lines, but the policy allowed such differences but requires that the expectations be clear to employees in the unit.

Sean O'Keefe raised a question about what happened to files after they had been accessed. Who would see them? Could they be copied and shared, or even published without the owner's consent? Following a discussion of this concern, a suggestion was made to add a clause addressing the ultimate disposition of files to the sentence defining what was needed as part of the written request for access under section 3.1.

Susanna Rinehart raised the concern about the blur between work and personal life for most faculty and whether it was reasonable to try to confine professional work to specific hours or university equipment. In teasing out these issues, it was suggested that these were more appropriately addressed by the "acceptable use" policy, already in existence. Hiller also commented that faculty members needed to learn to establish clearer boundaries between their work and personal lives when it came to what was stored on university-owned equipment. For example, employees should not be storing personal finances or tax programs on university-owned computers. Such material could be accessed by others through the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; this has already occurred in cases of contested divorce, for example.

In discussing next steps for the policy draft, Hyer noted that the draft will be shared with the Commissions on Staff Affairs and Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs. Distribution of the draft to the Faculty Senate, along with a preamble similar to Hiller's presentation at this meeting was suggested. Comments could then come back to Rinehart to be discussed at a later CFA meeting before voting on the policy.

Action: Hyer to prepare minutes from meeting and share with Hiller to see if some sections could serve as the preamble for Senate distribution. Hyer to make corrections

to document suggested by commission. Rinehart to distribute to Senate and receive written comments.

Other Issues:

The commission then talked about other issues that may need addressing this year, including progress in achieving faculty salaries at the 60th percentile, the adequacy and future of child care initiatives, how to provide funding to support faculty leaves when staffing is so short, graduate student support, and concerns about support of research in fields not likely to achieve significant sponsored dollars.

Action: Distribute a copy of the presentation made to the August BOV meeting by Karen DePauw on graduate education priorities.

The meeting was adjourned.

Recorder,

Patricia Hyer
Associate Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs
Minutes
October 22, 2004

Members attending: Mara Barker, Pat Hyer (for Mark McNamee), Sean O'Keefe, Susanna Rinehart, Sheryl Ball (for Lay Nam Chang), William Greenberg, Sam Hicks, Carlyle Brewster, Marcus Ly, Michael Kelly, Dennis Welch

Rinehart called the meeting to order with four items on the agenda: 1) Computer Privacy Proposal, 2) proposed Faculty Handbook changes for appointments with tenure, 3) 'Stop-the-clock' provisions in tenure system, 4) SGA proposal for mid-semester faculty evaluations. A motion was made and passed to adopt the agenda; the minutes from September 24, 2004 were approved.

Rinehart updated the CFA on the agenda for the November meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Visitors. Dean Depauw will give a progress report on the business plan for graduate education, including proposed increases in subsidies for health insurance and plans to make Donaldson Brown into a graduate life center. Faculty salary increases and diversity issues are also on the agenda. Rinehart also asked the group to begin thinking about sabbatical leave issues and what might be done to encourage and allow more faculty members to participate when staffing is still so short in some departments.

Computer Privacy Policy Proposal:

CFA revisited the draft policy including several suggested changes from the CAPFA. The draft had also been circulated to Faculty Senate members, but only one set of comments were received; these were carefully reviewed for possible changes. The role of student employees was discussed. When students are employed, they are subject to the policy. When they are using their own computer equipment for their own personal work, the policy is not relevant. This issue had already been addressed by CAPFA by adding a sentence to the definition section to include student employees and volunteers. A few minor editorial changes were suggested and adopted. A motion was made to approve the document pending any major concerns from the Commission on Staff Affairs which was to discuss it in the next few days for a second time. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Proposed Faculty Handbook changes:

Provost McNamee asked the CFA to review proposed changes to Section 2.5.1 of the Faculty Handbook, General Procedures for Faculty and Administrative Appointments. Changes made to the last paragraph would establish prior approval by the provost for a proposed appointment *with tenure*. CFA had no objection to the change and agreed that it did not require formal approval.

‘Stop-the-clock’ Provisions in Tenure System:

Hyer reviewed the current policy that allows an individual who is in a tenure-track position to request a one-year extension of their probationary period in cases of childbirth or serious personal circumstances that impeded their professional development. Tables summarizing the number of cases by gender and the justifications for the extensions were distributed and discussed. Over the last decade it has been far more common for women to request the extension for childbirth. While the fear of having such a request held against them at the time of tenure review is somewhat diminished, a number of women still report that use of the policy is not straightforward or even well accepted in some departments. Some department heads appear not to know about the policy; some have left responsibility for covering classes during the absence to the pregnant faculty member. Promotion and tenure committee chairs have cautioned individuals against using the policy, and there is concern that some internal or external reviewers expect MORE productivity for having had an extra year. Summary tables presented at the meeting are found following the minutes.

Hyer asked for input from the CFA in regard to actions that could be taken to encourage better and more consistent implementation of the policy, which is generally quite progressive. For example, it strongly affirms support for faculty members experiencing family-related obligations; it allows men to apply for the extension for family-related reasons; and it does not prohibit a second extension if there is an additional child or other compelling circumstances. CFA suggested advertising the policy better. Brochures could be put in departmental offices or included in materials that are complied for recruiting packages. Promotion and tenure committees who evaluate individuals need to understand the policy and apply appropriate standards in evaluating dossiers. An article could be submitted to *Spectrum* that highlights the policy and what it is used for similar to the summary that was distributed to the CFA. Departments and administrative offices can publicize the policy on relevant websites. It would also be helpful to reference the policy in the Promotion and Tenure Guidelines that are circulated to faculty.

SGA Proposal for Mid-Semester Faculty Evaluations:

Due to time constraints Rinehart suggested that she would meet personally with the SGA representatives in regard to the mid-semester evaluations.

The next meeting will be on November 12, 2004 in 325 Burruss.

Recorder: C. Amelink, Office of the Provost

Stop The Clock Summary Tables

Number of cases per year:

Year	# women	# men	Total requests
1997	4	2	6
1998	2	3	5
1999	4	0	4
2000	2	3	5
2001	5	5	10
2002	2	2	4
2003	11	4	15
2004 (as of October)	6	2	8
Total	36	21	57

Summary Reasons for Tenure-Clock Extension by Gender

	Women	Men	Total
Childbirth	20	0	20
Completed degree late	3	2	5
Ext Circum – Job (delays in setting up research lab/equipment; change in college; change from extension appt, etc.)	2	3	5
Ext Circum – Personal (ill family member, death of spouse or family members, adoption of spec needs children)	5	3	8
Late initial appointment (initial appointment in late Nov/Dec but tenure clock started in Aug.)	0	3	3
Leave without pay	1	2	3
Medical reasons (stroke, cancer, back injuries/disability)	4	3	7
Reduction in prior service credit	1	5	6
Total Cases	36	21	57

Tenure Outcomes for Childbirth and Family-Related Cases Only:

	Women	Men	Total
Received tenure	10	1	11
Denied tenure	0	0	0
Separated from Univ prior to tenure decision	1	0	1
Mandatory Yr Not Yet Reached	14	2	16
Total Cases	25	3	28

3 individuals have received two one-year extensions (each extension counted separately above).

Only two individuals (one woman/one man) have been denied tenure from among all whose mandatory tenure date has been reached.

Commission on Faculty Affairs Minutes
November 12, 2004

Members attending: Sheryl Ball (for Lay Nam Chang), Mara Barker, Leon Geyer, Sam Hicks, Aaron Powell (for Marcus Ly), Susanna Rinehart. Guests: Tim Mack, Associate Dean for Information Technology & Distance Education, Agriculture, Human and Natural Resources Information Technology and Craig Woods, System Administrator/Developer, Agriculture, Human and Natural Resources Information Technology

Rinehart called the meeting to order with two items on the agenda: 1) Updates 2) Presentation by Tim Mack on the Faculty Electronic Annual Reporting System. A motion was made and passed to adopt the agenda.

The CFA asked that the tables related to the 'Stop-the-clock' provisions in the tenure system presented at the last meeting by Hyer be included with the minutes from the October 22, 2004 meeting. Pending this revision the minutes were approved. Members also asked that this provision be returned to at a later date for further discussion.

Update on Previous Agenda Items:

Rinehart updated the CFA on the status of recent agenda items. Since the University Council meeting was cancelled, the Computer Privacy Policy will not be presented until the December 6th meeting.

Rinehart met with Sumeet Bagai, President of the SGA, regarding mid-semester faculty evaluations. The SGA is still considering adding language to the Faculty Handbook that would recommend the use of mid-semester evaluations. They are also drafting a letter explaining the importance of such evaluations. CFA will help disseminate this letter to faculty. Rinehart will meet with SGA representatives again to determine what their next steps will be. Members of the CFA suggested the new faculty orientation held in the fall should place additional emphasis on the Faculty Handbook. There should be an opportunity during the orientation for new faculty to meet with senior faculty so additional emphasis could be given to key points included in the Handbook but also to pedagogical issues.

Presentation by Tim Mack on the Electronic Faculty Reporting System:

Tim Mack, Associate Dean for Information Tech. & Distance Ed., Agriculture, Human and Natural Resources (AHNR) Information Technology, presented the Faculty Electronic Annual Reporting System (FEARS).

Mack gave a brief history regarding the development of FEARS. The Provost charged the AHNR department with creating a web-based application that would allow faculty to submit annual faculty reports electronically. The Provost had previously considered a system at Clemson University but after further review felt the application fell short in

several areas. The Provost has asked developers to create a system that could save the faculty time while simultaneously providing administrators with the information they needed by acting as a database of faculty activities.

The system will allow multiple goals to be achieved [additional information and handouts were provided]. The system will save faculty time by automatically capturing data from the University, such as courses taught, student evaluations, and sponsored programs and grants. Having this information prevents faculty from having to re-input the data into annual reports. Faculty will be able access their own data and update it for annual reports as well as export it for use in other venues such as dossiers. FEARS will allow also achieve several administrative goals by allowing faculty activity data to be reused and repurposed by departments, colleges and the university. The system will provide individual, department, and college-wide data summaries on faculty activities. Faculty data will be able to be collapsed into a single, university-wide database that can provide accurate and current information on a range of topics including publication and presentations, instructional activities and innovations, graduate education, and service/outreach to the profession and the community. FEARS will provide required benchmarking data for SACS reviews and federal reporting requirements.

Three units have agreed to pilot FEARS. It is expected the system will be ready for use Fall 2005. While the system is being piloted and in its developmental phase, input from faculty is welcome. Developers are seeking to create a consensus-based system. Developers are looking at a way for departments to access different features in the system to meet their own needs.

CFA members raised several concerns including the security of the information in the system. Mack reported that as you move away from the individual, some areas on the form are confidential. In addition, the individual would be given secure access so others could not edit their record. Additional concerns included the standardization of the faculty report form, and whether it would provide valid information on faculty members out of the departmental context. Mack agreed the form may result in departments standardizing their process, but the initial value-added features of the system will allow faculty members to save time and would allow faculty to define scholarly principles used for evaluation. Additionally, more features can be added over time, and convenience features may be developed to suit the needs of each department. Commission members inquired whether it would be more useful to give the system a wider vetting during the pilot phase. Mack agreed that a series of pilots will need to be done to work out glitches before the system goes into place in the fall. After the initial pilot, one or two faculty members from each department will be recruited to test the system and provide feedback. This will occur sometime in February. Rinehart inquired at what point Mack would like to meet with the Faculty Senate. Mack expects to present to the Senate in January and will discuss further plans with Rinehart.

The next meeting will be on December 10, 2004 in 325 Burruss.

Recorder: C. Amelink, Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs Minutes
January 28, 2005

Members attending: Sheryl Ball (for Lay Nam Chang), Brandon Bull (for Sumeet Bagai), Mara Barker, Leon Geyer, William Greenberg, Sam Hicks, Patricia Hyer (for Mark McNamee), Michael Kelly, Aaron Powell (for Marcus Ly), Sean O'Keefe, Peggy Quarterman, Susanna Rinehart, Dennis Welch.

Rinehart called the meeting to order with six items on the agenda: 1) Possible addendum to smoking policy, 2) Discussion of HB 1726, 3) Proposed retirement benefits for part-time salaried employees, 3) Business conduct standards and acknowledgement statement, 4) Designation of graduate faculty, 5) Faculty Handbook language. A motion was made and passed to adopt the agenda. Minutes from the previous meeting were approved electronically due to the winter break.

Possible Addendum to Smoking Policy:

Rinehart called CFA's attention to a recent request from a faculty member who wished to revise the university smoking policy. Currently smoking is prohibited in university buildings. The faculty member proposed revising the current policy so that smoking near exits and entrances of university buildings would also be prohibited. Other institutions have made similar changes to their smoking policies by restricting cigarette smoking within a certain distance of university buildings.

The CFA discussed the need to revise the current policy as well as the degree to which such changes would be feasible. Some members felt a revision to the policy could prove burdensome due to the difficulty of enforcing such a policy and/or relocating ashtrays. Others felt it could improve the air quality in buildings where cigarette smoke may move indoors from smokers who are located near doorways. No consensus was reached among members. Because the CFA was divided in regard to whether the smoking policy should be revised, the CFA resolved this issue would be better left to each department or administrative unit to decide.

Discussion of HB 1726:

House Bill No. 1726 is designed to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 23-4.3:1 that would require the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) to adopt guidelines relating to the textbook sales at public institutions of higher education. Brandon Bull, Student Government Association (SGA) representative and member of Virginia 21 (an advocacy group for Virginia students), was in attendance at the CFA meeting to explain the major tenets of the bill. Bull explained the bill has two main objectives, a) establish guidelines which would prevent faculty from entering agreements with publishers which would allow a faculty member to receive financial incentives by requiring the purchase of specific textbook for their classes, b) establish procedures whereby a listing of textbooks required for classes would be available to students at the same time it is made available to the university's bookstore.

CFA expressed their concern over the amount of negative attention the bill has generated for faculty in Virginia. Members asked whether Bull had any specific examples of faculty members in Virginia receiving financial incentives such as those outlined in the bill and in a recent Chronicle article. Bull explained the bill's authors and supporters did not have any examples of this occurring within our state. Virginia Tech has a policy in the Faculty Handbook that requires an approval process for faculty members who adopt a textbook they have authored for their classes.

Bull explained neither of the issues addressed by the bill have been an issue at Virginia Tech. However, there are several institutions in Virginia that outsource the university bookstore to private companies. These agreements often contain a clause prohibiting the university from sharing textbook lists with any other company; hence students and competitive stores do not have access to information about required texts sufficiently far in advance to comparison shop to find the best textbook price.

Members of CFA explained an additional concern they had in regard to the bill was the intrusive legislation that may result if the bill is passed. CFA asked Bull to consider revising language in the bill so that its scope would be limited to universities that engage in privatizing their bookstores. Members also provided several examples of how faculty at Virginia Tech inform students about textbooks required for their class before the start of the semester through class listservs or posting the information to their faculty/course webpage. Several members suggested it might be worthwhile to look into whether the online course registration software was able to post textbook information when students register in the same manner the system posts final exam dates for each course. Rinehart will report on this issue to the Faculty Senate. She also reiterated the CFA was willing to engage in dialogue with the SGA about student/faculty issues and encouraged the SGA to contact her directly if further concerns should develop.

Proposed Retirement Benefits for Part-Time Salaried Employees:

Hyer updated CFA on the recent developments in regard to retirement benefits for part-time salaried faculty members. The Benefits Committee has been working to develop a policy that would address the retirement benefits for roughly 60 people who are currently salaried part-time faculty members. About 15 are in instructional roles; nearly half are funded on sponsored grants and contracts, and 10 or so are employed in Athletics.

Virginia Tech recently received the authority from the state to manage optional retirement programs for faculty members. Legal Counsel has confirmed that this authority should allow us to proceed with providing the retirement contribution to part-time faculty members. (Part-time classified staff members already participate in VRS, thanks to recent legislation.) Providing this benefit should not impact the university budget in any significant way, and will have a negligible impact on sponsored projects since the cost would be absorbed in the fringe rate assessed for part-time employees. The Board of Visitors needs to give its approval for the university to undertake this initiative. Once approval has been granted the university hopes to be able to begin granting retirement benefits to part-time salaried employees as soon as Fall 2005.

Hyer also reminded members to fill out the Faculty Work/Life Survey if they had not already done so.

Business Conduct Standards and Acknowledgement Statement:

Hyer provided CFA members with an update on the Business Conduct Standards and Acknowledgement Statement. At the April 16th, 2004 CFA meeting Dwight Shelton, Bob Broyden, and Linda Woodard provided background information related to the development of the Draft Statement of Business Standards and Conduct. The Statement was developed in response to concerns raised by the Board of Visitors that faculty and staff may not be fully aware of institutional business practices and policies. However, faculty and staff are held accountable for knowing the business policies. The annual acknowledgement Statement is an attempt to insure employees are aware of the business practices and provide policy guidance on many different topics. During the initial meeting with Shelton, Broyden, and Woodard the CFA provided a great deal of feedback on how best to implement distribution of the Statement.

Based on the feedback provided by CFA, the acknowledgement Statement has been revised. The university plans to distribute the Statement and supporting materials electronically to faculty and staff starting February 8, 2005. Hyer distributed paper copies of what will appear electronically to the CFA. Employees will be expected to respond that they have read the Statement. Electronic distribution will allow the university to monitor who has acknowledged receipt of the Statement.

Designation of Graduate Faculty:

Dean of the Graduate School, Karen DePauw, mentioned the designation of graduate faculty during a presentation on the graduate school business plan at the recent Faculty Senate meeting. During the presentation Dean DePauw mentioned this faculty designation would allow the graduate school to develop plans with a consistent group of interested faculty members. Rinehart determined there was enough interest among the CFA to invite Dean DePauw to attend the next CFA meeting to talk more about this possible designation.

Faculty Handbook Language:

Rinehart will send sections of the Faculty Handbook that are in question to members of CFA electronically for further discussion at the next meeting.

The next meeting will be on February 11, 2005 in 325 Burruss.

Recorder: C. Amelink, Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs Minutes
February 18, 2005

Members attending: Sumeet Bagai, Mara Barker, Carlyle Brewster, Leon Geyer, William Greenberg, Sam Hicks, Patricia Hyer (for Mark McNamee), Michael Kelly, Susanna Rinehart, Dennis Welch. Guest: Karen DePauw

Rinehart called the meeting to order with three items on the agenda: 1) Possible designation of graduate faculty, 2) Joint meeting of CFA and the ADVANCE Policy Work Group, 3) Computer Privacy Policy. A motion was made and passed to adopt the agenda. Minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

Graduate Faculty Distinction:

Dean DePauw attended the CFA meeting to respond to questions about the creation of a Graduate Faculty. She has asked a committee of the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies (DRSCAP) to consider this possibility without having a specific model or approach in mind. The notion would be to identify a group of faculty members who are active in graduate education who could provide input to development of graduate programs. DePauw explained that creating such a distinction would help ensure quality in graduate programs and facilitate planning for the future of the graduate school. She is not interested in an elitist definition of faculty.

DRSCAP is preparing materials and a proposal that will eventually be shared with CFA and CGS&P. They are considering minimum qualifications for designation as a Graduate Faculty member, such as an appropriate terminal degree, a record of scholarly productivity, and a current record (3-5 years) of involvement with graduate education. Departments could then see which faculty members met the criteria and make recommendations to the committee. It has not yet been discussed who has final authority to appoint Graduate Faculty. The designation would provide assurance that faculty members who serve on committees would be active scholars and actively involved with graduate students. This is a current problem and one that leaves us vulnerable on assurances of quality for those participating on committees. In addition, Dean DePauw would have a group of faculty members who were intimately involved in graduate education on whom she could call as a resource. This would lead to better university wide communication on issues of graduate education. The intent is not to create more bureaucracy. Ideally, the only two levels of approval involved would be the committee at the graduate school level and departments that nominated faculty members for this distinction. This would avoid multiple layers of approval. A term limit as a graduate faculty member has not been discussed but it would be appropriate to consider setting a limit.

Members of the CFA sought clarification as to whether the Graduate Faculty designation would apply to all graduate programs or whether professional programs such as those found in the College of Business would be seen differently. DePauw explained the model she is proposing may not fit professional programs as it relates to departments that have a

thesis requirement as part of their degree requirement. In addition, CFA members sought clarification in regard to whether individuals who have a non-faculty appointment but would otherwise make a valuable contribution to a student's dissertation could serve on committees. Dean DePauw felt that in such an instance, individuals could submit their vita for review to be considered for approval to receive Graduate Faculty distinction and serve on committees.

CFA members voiced concern that a distinction such as this might cause elitism among faculty who view such a distinction as hierarchical. It would be best to avoid making instructors feel marginalized. An additional concern was that undergraduate education may suffer as a result of a focus on graduate education and recognizing faculty who work with graduate students. Dean DePauw responded by saying that this would not be her intent and would be very disappointed if such a distinction damaged undergraduate education in any way. The designation is meant to recognize faculty for the work they do and to provide assurances of quality, and is not designed to create a system of perks for such faculty.

Flexible Faculty Careers:

Hyer updated CFA on recent activities of the ADVANCE policy work group. The work group has proposed several policy changes that are designed to allow faculty to pursue more flexible career paths and ultimately improve their work-life. The activities of the work group are closely aligned with issues related to faculty work-life that are gaining national attention. The work group is looking to engage the university community in a conversation regarding the proposed policy changes. Hyer distributed an executive summary from the American Council on Education that lists several recommendations in regard to improving faculty work-life. The list of ACE recommendations would be one way to begin to define what actions need to be taken to initiate the broad, inclusive conversations the ADVANCE policy work group is trying to facilitate.

Because the policy changes proposed by the ADVANCE work group affect faculty life, the purview of the CFA, it would be beneficial to engage CFA members in trying to facilitate the changes proposed by the work group. Ideally, the two groups could work together to include more faculty in conversations designed to effect change in their work-life. Hyer and DePauw proposed a joint meeting of the two groups to accomplish this. The groups could also work together to make an inventory of what is currently being done to address issues and concerns relative to faculty work-life. The groups could also establish goals for what they would like to see happen, prioritize those goals, and develop a timeline for achieving them.

Members of CFA agreed that it would be appropriate for the CFA to work closely with the policy work group as the changes they are proposing affect faculty work-life. Members highlighted the fact that time to tenure is another issue surfacing at the university and nationally in conversations related to faculty work-life. The group will begin to consider how to engage faculty in a university forum. CFA members were in agreement that the conversation needs to be shared. If faculty are broken down into small

groups ideally notes could be taken in each and then distributed to the community as a whole. In addition, faculty need to know what problems the policies are trying to address. Problems, specific to the university, need to be clearly stated with supporting documentation.

CFA suggested there are several actions that could be taken by investing in certain areas. For instance, the administration could provide funding to hire additional faculty members so that the work load is reduced. In addition, funding could be provided for the policies that directly affect faculty work-life so faculty have an opportunity to use them. For instance, the administration could provide funding for the modified duties policy, currently under discussion. Hyer mentioned the administration is providing training for managers (including department chairs) so that they have an opportunity to learn how to deal effectively with work-life issues, such as stopping the tenure clock and dual career hires. CFA members suggested there were also simple things that could be done to encourage stress relief such as providing more opportunities whereby faculty could access recreational activities within the work day.

Two dates were proposed for the meeting: March 4th and March 18th. Hyer will send an email out to both groups to determine which date would allow more people to attend.

In addition, Hyer mentioned the Faculty Work Life Survey has received a 52% response rate. Faculty who have yet not completed the survey are encouraged to do so.

Computer Privacy Policy:

Rinehart updated the CFA on the status of the Computer Privacy Policy. A suggested change to section 2.2 of the policy by the Commission on Staff Affairs (CSA) was not included into the policy that CFA approved. Rinehart read the policy to CFA with the suggested CSA modification included. CFA unanimously approved the policy with the suggested change. The policy will go to University Council for second reading..

Sabbatical Work Group:

Greenberg explained the Faculty Senate has developed a work group to study the current sabbatical policy. The group would like to include members from the CFA. The first meeting will be on Tuesday, March 1st at 10:00 in 2390 Litton Reeves. If CFA members are able to attend, they are encouraged to do so.

Recorder:
Catherine Amelink, Graduate Assistant, Office of the Provost

Commission on Faculty Affairs
Minutes
April 8, 2005
Also attached are minutes from two joint meetings of CFA and the
Advance Policy Work Group held on March 4 and 18, 2005

Members attending: Brewster, Burch-Brown, Geyer, Greenberg, Hicks, Hyer, Kelly,
O'Keefe, Rinehart, Welch
Guests: Fain Rutherford, David Travis

The agenda for the meeting was approved with five items on the agenda: 1) Policy 1025,
2) Need for a faculty gathering place, 3) Yearly/Semi-yearly meeting with untenured
faculty, 4) Policy on start-up funds, 5) Updates and announcements. Minutes from the
previous meeting were approved.

Policy 1025 Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Prevention:

David Travis, Interim Director of the Office for Equal Opportunity, and Fain Rutherford,
Assistant Director/Compliance Officer, presented the revision of Policy 1025. Rinehart
explained that the policy was approved by the Commission on Equal Opportunity and
Diversity as the host commission, and CFA was being briefed with an invitation to
identify any concerns before introduction of the policy at University Council. Travis
explained that there were previously two policies in place, one that addressed sexual
harassment (Policy 1025), and the other racial, sexual, religious, and ethnic types of
harassment (Policy 1030). Both policies required revision in order to conform with
current law. The revised Policy 1025 creates a unitary policy regarding prohibition
against unlawful and discrimination/harassment on all grounds consistent with Virginia
Tech's non-discrimination statement. The policy also clarifies the rights and
responsibilities of those who are victimized and provides guidance to supervisors and
others who learn of unlawful discrimination/harassment. Revision of Policy 1025 brings
university policy in compliance with evolving case law and should contribute to a more
welcoming climate by clearly stating the university's intolerance of harassment and
discrimination.

Members of CFA raised questions in regard to whether and when the accused was
informed under informal versus formal procedures. Rutherford clarified that there can be
no real investigation of a complaint unless the accused is an informed participant.
Members raised concerns as to whether the 14 days allotted for an appeal was sufficient
time. Rutherford and Travis explained 14 days was used because it was consistent with
the time frame established for other appeal processes at the university. In addition, they
had never had problems or concerns raised previously about the time frame so the Equal
Opportunity Office felt the time allotted was sufficient.

<u>Need for Faculty Gathering Place:</u>

When the issue of a faculty gathering place was raised at an earlier joint meeting of CFA and the Advance Policy Workgroup, Dean DePauw expressed her willingness to incorporate related ideas and recommendations into the plans for the new Graduate Life Center. Several CFA members expressed the need for meeting rooms and a space to hold lectures or smaller open forums. There is also a need for a space that would allow for social gathering such as a small restaurant or bar. Because there seemed to be a great deal of interest from faculty for a designated space that would facilitate interaction among faculty members outside of their immediate department or college, Rinehart prompted CFA members to consider how this need might be met. Faculty members suggested the spaces found at UVA's Darden Business School, the University of Washington, the University of Tennessee, and the SAS institute might serve as prototypes. Members expressed the need for the space to be centrally located. Ideally the space would have offices for Faculty Senate officers and would have a larger room that departments and colleges could rent out for annual parties or receptions. Requiring faculty to pay dues as long as they were reasonable was not out of the question. Hyer pointed out that the university is trying to find space and funds for an adequate child care facility on-campus to address long-expressed faculty and staff needs; realistically, creating space for a faculty gathering space may not be as high a university priority at this point. Geyer explained he did not see the two ideas as mutually exclusive. The space could be combined to create a faculty/staff life center that would be more encompassing than just a child care facility or a faculty gathering space. Although several suggested that donors be sought for such a project, concern was expressed that donors typically preferred to fund scholarships and programs rather than buildings or faculty benefits. Hyer suggested if CFA members were serious about pursuing private gifts for such a facility, they should invite representatives from the Development Office to the next CFA meeting to talk about feasibility of this as a fund-raising priority. CFA members also suggested renovating current space. One idea was to convert the Torgersen Museum into a coffee shop. Rinehart will contact David Ford to determine whether this would be feasible. CFA members agreed to speak with faculty in their departments to gauge interest for a faculty gathering space.

<u>Yearly or Semi-yearly Meeting with Untenured Faculty:</u>

Geyer suggested additional language needed to be added to the Faculty Handbook that established yearly or semi-yearly face-to-face meetings between department heads and/or promotion and tenure committees and untenured faculty members. More frequent meetings would serve to demystify the promotion and tenure process for junior faculty and provide untenured faculty with a clear sense of whether they were meeting expectations for promotion and tenure. Meetings could be documented so all parties involved would have a clear understanding of the manner in which untenured faculty had been advised. CFA members recalled adding language to the Handbook last year that addressed these concerns. Members will check the Handbook to determine whether this is the case.

Start-up Funds Policy:

Hyer and Geyer will draft a statement that would address the allocation as well as forfeiture of start-up funds.

Updates:

Hyer updated CFA on several issues:
- o the proposed increase for promotion associated with advancement in rank – assistant professors promoted to associate will receive $3,000 instead of $2500, and associate professors promoted to fulls will receive $4,000 rather than $3,500. This change will be approved by the Board in June and will be applied to promotions in rank that were just approved.
- o Retirement benefits for part-time faculty will be taken to the Board for approval at their June meeting. The benefit would be effective with fall term 2005.
- o The Provost has funded a base salary increase for instructors to a minimum full-time salary of $31,000, still below the starting salary for new public school teachers in the county, but a considerable increase over the current minimum of $28,000. He is also funding special adjustments for the instructors to help deal with the compression that will result from moving the base upwards.
- o Textbook legislation discussed at an earlier meeting was approved by the General Assembly. It will not affect current practice at Virginia Tech as the university is in compliance.
- o There will be five focus groups related to addressing faculty work life issues held in April. The CFA will be very involved in this project.
- o Hokie Passport IDs which use the individual's social security number must be replaced by summer 2006 according to state law. A transition plan has been developed and employees will be assigned a random university ID number, not related to their social security number. In late April, employees will start receiving email notes asking them to go to the Hokie Passport office to replace old IDs.

The next meeting will be on April 22, 2005 in 1028 Pamplin with the Advance Policy Work Group.

Recorder: C. Amelink, Office of the Provost

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Joint Meeting of Commission on Faculty Affairs
and ADVANCE Policy Work Group
March 4, 2005

Members attending: Hyer, Zajac, Easterling, Geyer, Rinehart, Welch, McNabb, Ball, Haas, Barker, Kelly

The joint meeting of the CFA and ADVANCE policy work group was initiated to think through how to engage more faculty members in discussions about faculty work-life and proposals for making faculty careers more flexible. Hyer shared four major issues driving the conversation at the national level. These points, explicated at greater length, might be an opening presentation for a faculty forum to answer the question "Why is it important to deal with these issues?" The points are as follows:

1. The labor pool for faculty positions is changing. More women and minorities are receiving doctorates; their participation challenges the existing and often unquestioned norms concerning a faculty career..
2. There are differential opportunities and outcomes for women with doctorates in the academic labor market. Leaks in the pipeline exist at every stage, resulting in a diminished pool of talent for faculty positions. Some of reasons for this have to do with preferences about how to live one's life; others reflect climate issues.
3. There is a growing dissatisfaction among many faculty members, both entering and experienced, male and female, with what has been defined as the typical faculty career, particularly in science and engineering, where expectations for long hours in the lab are the norm.
4. Issues are acute for junior level faculty, but are also problematic for senior-level faculty. A 40-year career comprised of 55 hour weeks, week-in and-week-out, presumes a healthy adult unencumbered by personal or family care issues. This is not realistic; many cannot manage a faculty career as it is currently defined.

Members asked whether the academic environment differs from that of business. They questioned whether industry is doing more than academe to create a work life balance. Hyer explained that the work-life movement started within corporate culture and in that regard, many businesses are ahead academe in terms of addressing the issues.

Members suggested that in addition to the points presented there may be value in explaining that businesses that have implemented such policies have lower turnover and higher "return on investment" ratios. It would also be useful to include data from Virginia Tech that identifies the replacement costs associated with faculty we lose who opt out of the faculty career, or who change institutions to find one more supportive of their needs and interests. Members felt it would also be useful to highlight non-gender specific issues so that tenured male faculty would relate to the conversation and become engaged. In the conversations this group is planning for, we need to make it clear that work and family are not separate institutions – they are highly interdependent. The conversations need to focus on how policy changes will produce a stronger, more satisfied and productive faculty workforce – thereby enhancing faculty quality rather than compromising it.

Real change will require a cultural shift. There are some faculty members who feel the university needs to be more stringent in the promotion and tenure process. Many may feel that by making faculty work life more flexible, extending time to tenure, etc., we are lowering the bar. However, if we are to remain competitive in the recruitment and retention of the very best faculty, we need to address these issues.

Members agreed the tenure process as it relates to faculty work-life issues needs to be examined. For instance, having a range of time that allows faculty to obtain tenure rather than the six year period is one option. However, members concluded it might be too soon in the conversation to propose such an examination. Doing so may polarize too many people.

Zajac prompted the group to begin thinking about an action plan. The group considered using the matrix of ACE recommendations as a starting point for discussion. Along with the recommendations, specific examples of possible actions and current policies could be incorporated. Ultimately, the examples would target faculty at different stages in their career: changes in recruitment, improving the climate for all, and phased retirement.

Zajac presented two major questions that the work group needed to address. First, members need to consider how best to go about soliciting participation in the conversations. Second, the group needs to set priorities. As a group it would be best to decide what talking points we are going to provide to facilitators of the conversations. It might be useful to think of issues that have particular importance for Virginia Tech due to either geographic location or the Top 30 commitment.

Rinehart suggested that the issues related to faculty work-life are not easy to talk about. Many faculty may view issues associated with faculty work-life as a private matter. Furthermore, these may be issues that are unknown to faculty who are in the midst of experiencing stress associated with the very problems this group is seeking to address. It might be useful to publicly address issues of faculty work-life and use the proposed conversations to allow faculty to think about how the issues affect them on a daily basis. Members reflected on ways that personal and family issues had a serious impact on their own careers at various points in their lives.

If the group takes this approach, a useful conversation starter might be to highlight a common theme. One common theme might be that all jobs have increased in size over the past 10 years. Once the data has been presented it would be useful to highlight things already happening at the university to address faculty work-life issues in this regard. One new policy could be presented. For instance, the Modified Duties Policy might be introduced since it appeals to a broad range of faculty. Then facilitators could point to what other universities are doing. Faculty could be shown a spectrum of models so they understand that we are talking about implementing incremental changes to address faculty work-life issues.

The group discussed whether having the conversations within colleges was better, or if it would be better to have a university wide conversation. Since remaining time in the semester is short, it may be best to do a few focus groups. This would allow facilitators to get a feel for what issues might arise and would help the work group set priorities.

Members concluded the best way to go about doing this would be to invite a cross section of people to create dialogue. One way to do this is by creating focus groups that would

represent a range of faculty by rank and discipline. This would bring in differences across discipline and also highlight generational issues. One way to make sure junior faculty feel comfortable sharing their views would be to have two additional focus groups and invite just junior faculty. Doing the 4 or 5 focus groups this spring semester will allow momentum to build for the next academic year.

By the next meeting, March 18th, work group members will identify three to five faculty from their college (or other colleges) who should be invited to participate in the focus groups. Collectively we would look for a mix based on gender, rank, race, and receptiveness to the ideas will be provided. (The College of Architecture is not represented among the joint work group members or CFA, so nominations should be made for them too.). Focus groups will be held in April and facilitated by a team of CFA/ADVANCE work group members. An invitation to attend the focus group will come through the Provost's Office. Invitees will be asked to respond by acknowledging the times they are available from the dates and times listed. Hyer will then select 15-20 faculty members based on their response and ask them to show up for the focus group on a particular date and time. Ideally, 10-15 will actually attend with a goal of three focus groups and at least one that is just junior faculty. Refreshments will be provided during the focus group sessions. Facilitators will be provided with a mini-lesson on how to conduct focus groups. Note takers will be provided at each session.

Zajac will draft a purpose statement and two to three questions that can be used during sessions. She will also provide data that will be used to set the context for the conversation.

The next meeting will be March 18th from 3-5pm. Handouts will be sent to those who were not able to attend.

Recorder,
Catherine Amelink, Graduate Assistant, Provost's Office
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Joint Meeting of the Commission on Faculty Affairs
and the ADVANCE Policy Work Group
March 18, 2005

Attending: S. Aref, Ball, Brewster, DePauw, Easterling, Greenberg, Hicks, Hyer, Lane, McNabb, Olsen, Rinehart, Kelly, Zajac

CFA-Related Updates:
Rinehart brought up several items that need to be discussed at upcoming CFA meetings. Faculty feel the summer school salary needs to be examined in comparison to tuition being charged. Hyer reported that there have been several reviews of summer school in past years; she will see if there are plans to conduct another one. Rinehart provided an update on the recent meeting of the Faculty Senate. There was an interest expressed by Senators regarding faculty work-life issues, including the absence of a faculty gathering place. Having a designated area that would serve as a faculty club would help build a

sense of cohesiveness and allow faculty to relieve stress. DePauw mentioned that the new graduate life center in DBHCC might also serve the larger university community, not taking the place of a faculty club necessarily, but it could be a start. Faculty members present responded favorably to DePauw's suggestions. DePauw asked CFA to provide specific things they would like to see happen and the graduate school will build them into the overall plan for the graduate life center. The final item that will be discussed at upcoming CFA meetings is the draft Harassment Policy that David Travis will share with the group. Rinehart will send out an email about the March 25th CFA meeting date (subsequently cancelled, because of joint sessions).

Discussion of Focus Group Sessions:
Hyer provided a recap of the previous joint CFA/ADVANCE policy work group meeting. The plan is to try to have four focus groups this semester. Zajac presented a draft purpose statement for the focus groups. Rinehart suggested a broader conversation needed to take place, rather than focusing on one policy, such as the proposed modified duties proposal. DePauw recommended that the focus groups include conversations about how this university can begin to redefine and claim scholarship in different forms, which was included in the original ACE list of recommendations. Others suggested that the focus groups might start with a very general question. For instance, asking faculty if they are satisfied with the way their lives are currently shaped, might serve to facilitate more discussion initially and help uncover what the true issues are related to faculty work life at this university.

The question of whether to broaden the trigger questions for the focus groups or give them a particular policy idea and ask for their feedback was revisited. Rinehart explained that after the last Faculty Senate meeting she had a sense that focusing on one policy such as the Modified Duties Policy would drain the potential for a broader conversation.. At the Faculty Senate meeting just mentioning the quality of faculty work lives seemed to generate a lot of discussion and interest. The focus groups could be designed to gather information and allow the CFA/ADVANCE group to see which issues are most prominent.
Hyer asked the group for suggestions regarding an introduction or preamble if we shift the purpose of the focus groups. Members agreed a two to three minute introduction by facilitators that utilized the information from the American Council on Education about the quality of work life in general would allow focus groups to talk about their perception on the quality of faculty work life at Virginia Tech. Facilitators could then prompt participants to discern what those issues are for faculty at VT.

Members expressed interest in trying to get past a sense of division among faculty and to get them to see that issues regarding the quality of faculty work life are applicable to everyone. A discussion focused on an example policy, or a controversial topic, might not achieve this purpose. Conversations that get into how performance is evaluated (such as the nature of worthy scholarship), or finding alternatives to tenure, might steer the focus groups into divisive territory. Staying with the general topic of the quality of faculty work life allows all to participate, regardless of gender or stage of career.

Kelly suggested a cautious approach was needed when considering the purpose of the focus groups. As an institution, careful consideration needs to be given to how we change policies. Otherwise, we may be creating policies that divide people into male/female categories. If policies are not improved then actions taken by the work group may reinforce bias in the system and can make it easier for men to continue to receive tenure. This can have unintended consequences for a group that is looking to improve faculty work life.

DePauw suggested that the when considering issues around the quality of work life, the deep issue is the lack of imagination institutionally and how we understand research. Faculty need to begin to think differently. Other issues could be addressed if we took a different approach to evaluation and understanding research. Allowing this conversation to take place would allow other issues to rise to the surface.

Hyer asked how the focus group discussions will allow this joint work group to move forward with specific policy improvements on family work life issues. Hicks mentioned that many of the suggestions thus far seem to address long-term issues. The group needs to be concerned with more immediate issues, one of which is the great deal of stress faculty are currently under. This is having direct consequences on the quality of work life as it currently stands. A broader approach used for the focus groups would still allow people to identify immediate problems that could be addressed with immediate action. However, facilitators need to be mindful that we are attempting to uncover ways to reduce stress and guide conversations as such. Members agreed that the purpose of the focus groups should be directed at what can be done to make faculty work life better. This will prevent participants from using sessions only for venting. One question that might prompt a discussion such as this would be: What are the general issues around faculty work-life? Due to the time constraints, it was determined Hyer and Zajac will work on specific wording of questions and a purpose statement.

Members suggested creating an anonymous way to solicit information in addition to the actual focus group. Participants may need a more private way to bring up things that would not be revealed in a public setting. One way to do this may be index cards and a drop box in the room focus groups are being held. Another way could be to post the questions on http://survey.vt.edu.

Facilitators will be trained to conduct the focus groups. Focus groups should be taped and transcribed rather than using a notetaker if possible.

Greenberg questioned whether focus groups will address concerns of minority faculty. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to have a separate focus group possible so particular concerns are not lost.

An invitation to participate in the focus group will come from the Provost via email. Invitees will choose between a total of four times. Sessions will be 90 minutes. A variety of time & day of the week combinations was suggested.

Hyer will arrange for a facilitator training time and processing invitations/confirming attendance. The date of the first one will be the week of April 11th ; it would be best to avoid going later than April 25th to avoid end-of-year issues.

Recorder,

Catherine Amelink
Graduate Assistant, Provost's Office

Joint Meeting of Commission on Faculty Affairs
and ADVANCE Policy Work Group
March 4, 2005

Members attending: Hyer, Zajac, Easterling, Geyer, Rinehart, Welch, McNabb, Ball, Haas, Barker, Kelly

The joint meeting of the CFA and ADVANCE policy work group was initiated to think through how to engage more faculty members in discussions about faculty work-life and proposals for making faculty careers more flexible. Hyer shared four major issues driving the conversation at the national level. These points, explicated at greater length, might be an opening presentation for a faculty forum to answer the question "Why is it important to deal with these issues?" The points are as follows:

1. The labor pool for faculty positions is changing. More women and minorities are receiving doctorates; their participation challenges the existing and often unquestioned norms concerning a faculty career..
2. There are differential opportunities and outcomes for women with doctorates in the academic labor market. Leaks in the pipeline exist at every stage, resulting in a diminished pool of talent for faculty positions. Some of reasons for this have to do with preferences about how to live one's life; others reflect climate issues.
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Members suggested that in addition to the points presented there may be value in explaining that businesses that have implemented such policies have lower turnover and higher "return on investment" ratios. It would also be useful to include data from Virginia Tech that identifies the replacement costs associated with faculty we lose who opt out of the faculty career, or who change institutions to find one more supportive of their needs and interests. Members felt it would also be useful to highlight non-gender specific issues so that tenured male faculty would relate to the conversation and become engaged. In the conversations this group is planning for, we need to make it clear that work and family are not separate institutions – they are highly interdependent. The

conversations need to focus on how policy changes will produce a stronger, more satisfied and productive faculty workforce – thereby enhancing faculty quality rather than compromising it.

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Recorder,
Catherine Amelink, Graduate Assistant, Provost's Office