Commission on Faculty Affairs
Minutes
September 3 2010

Members attending: Debbie Smith (chair), Rich Sorensen, Tom Wittenberg, John Massey, Ranjana Mehta, Brad Klein, Sam Riley, Susan Sumner (representing Alan Grant), Bob Beichner, and Jack Finney

Agenda: Agenda for the meeting included four items: Faculty Handbook reorganization update, Student Perception of Instruction update, Update on the VTC School of Medicine and Research Institute, and Potential CFA Topics for 2010-11.

The minutes of the CFA meeting on April 9, 2010, were approved without change by email prior to the meeting.

Faculty Handbook reorganization
Jack Finney reported that the Faculty Handbook had been revised by integrating policies governing all faculty members. The Special Research Faculty handbook is now incorporated into the Faculty Handbook 2010, which is posted on the Provost's web pages. Numerous editorial updates were also completed.

There is also a taskforce in place for research faculty whose mandate includes making recommendations on research faculty policies that are unclear. The recommendations made by the taskforce will be brought before the Commission on Faculty Affairs in due course.

Student Perception of Instruction
Sam Riley briefed CFA members on the activities of the task force charged by Dr. Wubah, Vice President and Dean of Undergraduate Education, to develop a new teaching evaluation that would incorporate (a) student perceptions of instruction, (b) self-assessment, and (c) peer evaluations. The idea was to standardize the evaluation forms for the entire university.

The task force adopted and personalized an evaluation form from University of Minnesota. The evaluation form was customized for Virginia Tech and piloted electronically on forty undergraduate courses. The response rate was 72%. After evaluating the responses, changes are being made on the form to make it better and plans are underway to implement it in a single college by the end of fall semester. Susan Sumner proposed that the evaluation form be implemented at the College of

Agriculture & Life Sciences at the end of fall semester. The committee hopes to give Dr. Wubah its recommendations by the end of spring term 2011.

CFA members raised the issue of confidentiality and privacy safeguards put in place since the evaluation form was being piloted in an electronic format. Riley mentioned that only specific people will have access to the evaluation form after it has been submitted by respondents.

CFA members resolved that the chair and co-chairs of the taskforce be invited to attend the CFA meeting and brief the members. The chair agreed to write invitation letters for them to attend a CFA meeting scheduled for October 2010.

VTC School of Medicine and Research Institute
Jack Finney briefed members on the status of the VTC School of Medicine and Research Institute. The VTC School of Medicine and Research Institute is a partnership between Virginia Tech and Carilion Clinic.

Finney noted that the School of Medicine technically had no employees, and personnel employed by Carilion Clinic and Virginia Tech are assigned to the school of medicine. Efforts to foster collaboration between the partners are being pursued and will involve adjunct appointments across the partners. The VTC School of Medicine is in the process of pursuing accreditation from SACS.

Suggested Agenda Items for 2010-2011 CFA Meetings
Jack Finney presented the topic of clarifying year of eligibility for study-research and research assignment leaves as an agenda topic for the year. The present study-research leave and research assignment policy was not clear in the language when a faculty member is eligible for study-research leave and research assignment. The policy is not also clear on how to handle compensation for staff on study research leave and research assignment leave such as Fulbright scholarship or grants. The Provost's Office is working in introducing new wording for the faculty handbook.

No additional suggested Agenda items for 2010-2011 were made.

Recorder, Maxwell Awando