

**Commission on Faculty Affairs  
Minutes  
December 12, 2008**

Members attending: Gary Long (chair), Mike Kelly, Jack Finney (for Dean Chang), Sam Riley, Debbie Smith, Dennis Welch, Sam Easterling, Brad Klein, Ed Lener, Patricia Hyer

Agenda for the meeting included four items: update on winter closing proposal, professors of practice resolution, PI removal resolution, and schedule for spring meetings of CFA.

The minutes of the CFA meeting on November 14, 2008 were approved with a minor correction to a name.

Winter Closing Proposal Update:

The proposed university closing for winter break was introduced at University Council. A number of staff attended the meeting to raise concerns, particularly about the moving of current paid holidays to the break period; some preferred the flexibility of determining when they used their holidays. A modified proposal was subsequently shared with the Staff Senate, which did not require moving the designated holidays; annual leave could be used instead. Ultimately, there was little support for an official university closing and the proposal has been withdrawn.

Professors of Practice:

Sam Easterling reported on the recent Faculty Senate discussion of the professor of practice ranks. Some members questioned whether we needed additional ranks and expressed concern about the proliferation of ranks. However, the “adjunct” ranks are used for those who are employed elsewhere and teach for VT on an as-needed basis; the instructor-rank series is not attractive to those experienced professionals for whom the professor of practice designation is targeted; and the clinical-rank series is not relevant for the those departments looking for experienced engineers, policy makers, building construction/developers, etc., to teach or supervise design or internship experiences for undergraduates. The professor-of-practice series is attractive for some departments that are looking for experienced professionals to help deliver instruction and/or outreach programs as a complement to tenure-track faculty.

Some senators also expressed concern that the professor-of-practice designation may be used to supplant tenure-track positions, particularly in the arts. Easterling responded that the potential to replace tenure-track positions already exists with the instructor ranks, so the new series does not create a new possibility. The proposed resolution explicitly leaves the decision to use this rank to the department and college.

Commission members discussed some minor changes to the resolution arising from the senate discussion. The updated resolution will then be sent to faculty senators in advance of their late January meeting for final comment. CFA can vote on the resolution at the next meeting on January 30<sup>th</sup>.

PI Removal Resolution:

Pat Hyer reviewed the concerns raised by the Commission on Research about the draft resolution on removal of a principal investigator. She met with commission chair, Bill Huckle, and Research Division administrators to talk through the concerns and prepare a written response to the questions. Several revisions were made to the resolution to address those concerns. Hyer will meet with the Commission on Research on January 28<sup>th</sup> to revisit and address questions. The revised resolution will also be shared with faculty senators for their information; the Senate already voted approval of the resolution in November 2007. CFA will formally re-approve the resolution at the January 30<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Spring Meeting Schedule and Items for Consideration:

Possible items for spring consideration include: report and recommendations from the university task force on teaching evaluations (Terry Wildman), briefing on faculty credentials requirements and work being done for certification for accreditation (Hyer), and demonstration of early work on the electronic faculty activity reporting system (late March/early April).

Spring meeting dates and locations are:

January 30, 1:30-3:00	325 Burruss
February 13, 1:30-3:00	President's Board Room, 210 Burruss
February 27, 1:30-3:00	325 Burruss
March 6, 1:30-3:00	President's Board Room, 210 Burruss
March 20, 1:30-3:00	325 Burruss
March 27, 1:30-3:00	325 Burruss
April 10, 1:30-3:00	President's Board Room, 210 Burruss
April 24, 1:30-3:00	325 Burruss

(Some meetings may be canceled if not needed to move items through University Council before the end of the semester.)

Recorder,  
Patricia Hyer