

MINUTES

Virginia Tech University Council: Commission on Student Affairs (CSA) Minutes

February 9, 2017

The meeting was called to order by Commission chair Mr. Matt Chan at 3:30 p.m.

In attendance

Susan Anderson, Travis Bauer, Julia Billingsley, Matt Chan, Alicia Cohen, Pat Finn, Amy Hermundstad, Byron Hughes, Alex Hyley, Delk Koolman, Jaclyn Marmol, Mairead Novak, Jeremy Hall for James Orr, Andrew Peck, Patty Perillo, Tara Reel, Evan Robohm, Chris Saunders, Liang Shi, Angela Simmons, Lauren Surface, Cameron Varano, Meghna Verna, Hannah Whiteman

Absent with notification

Ron Mechan

Attending guests

Joe Frazier, Luis Garay, Fred Lamb, Tracy Newton, Thanasis Rikakis, Gina Tamburro

Absent

Ben Calvo Rivera, Aliana Harrison, Meriam Nure

Approval of Agenda and Past Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. The motion carried. A motion was also made to approve the minutes for the January 26, 2017 meeting of CSA. The motion was seconded and approved.

Guest

Mr. Chan introduced guest Dr. Thanasis Rikakis, Executive Vice President and Provost, to the Commission. Dr. Rikakis gave a short introduction of himself and his role in the university, and entertained questions from Commission members.

Dr. Rikakis answered a question about the planned development of the Creativity and Innovation District, which included five phases of development. Dr. Rikakis elaborated that much of the development of the District would occur in spaces currently occupied by the Squires Student Center, the Graduate Life Center at Donaldson Brown, the Media Annex, and surrounding buildings. A new Living-Learning Community will be established within the District, with intentional placement of classrooms, faculty space, and event space including expansion of current ballrooms and auditoriums, all with the goal of facilitating student-faculty interactions. Later phases of the development include extended plans in the Roanoke campus and the National Capital Region, a Virginia Tech brand-renewal campaign, new student commons and centers located at where the University Bookstore and Cowgill/Burchard Hall are located, as well as more physical facilities for the fine arts.

Dr. Rikakis also answered a question regarding the development of the Roanoke Campus, which will expand with the planned integration of the Virginia Tech Carillion School of Medicine. The university plans to gain a strong foothold at Roanoke as an urban campus, integrating Virginia Tech's land grant mission and urban innovation. Planned expansion of the Roanoke Campus will mirror similar expansion at the National Capital Region. Dr. Rikakis also assured Commission members that the university is aware of the transportation difficulties as well as barriers to student service access, and that much of these concerns will be addressed by 2019.

Dr. Rikakis answered a question regarding the future direction of Virginia Tech, whether it would remain as a STEM-focused institute or it would transition into a comprehensive university. The Provost is adamant that Virginia Tech would remain as a "technical powerhouse," and will not be afraid to be known as a provider for the workforce. However, Dr. Rikakis emphasized that Virginia Tech's priority is to develop students who can reinvent themselves in the face of an uncertain future.

Finally, Dr. Rikakis addressed concerns from Commission members on how stakeholders of the university would be able to give input and feedback to current and future large-scale changes at Virginia Tech. Dr. Rikakis maintained that changes must be made by faculty, and not the administrators themselves, therefore buy-in is crucial. Virginia Tech is undergoing a transition where decision-making is being decentralized to the department and program level, where metrics for success are defined by the programs themselves. The Provost noted that his goal is to empower faculty to take leadership, but it is not necessary for “everyone to be on board,” and that he hopes stakeholders would maintain an opened mind so step up to the opportunity.

The Commission thanked the Provost for his time.

Committee Reports

Chris Saunders, CSA vice chair and representative to the Hokie Handbook Review Committee, reported that the Committee has met on 2/3, and discussed the web interface of the Hokie Handbook website, as well as surveying the Student Code of Conduct of Virginia Tech’s peers.

Mr. Fred Lamb, vice chair of the Student Budget Board (SBB), gave its monthly report to the Commission. The Board has received more than 350 funding requests for the year so far, and there are about 30 requests pending for decisions. For Registered Student Organizations, about 25% of the allocated budget remained for the rest of the year. Mr. Lamb addressed concern about the amount of funding left; that this disbursement trend is consistent to previous years. Mr. Lamb also reported that there is continued work to revise, improve, and streamline the SBB Policies and Procedures.

Constituency Updates

Ms. Julia Billingsley gave an update on Student Government Association (SGA) activities. The annual Hokie Day and the Virginia21 Campaign where students are to lobby on behalf of the university to lawmakers has taken place on 2/1 and 2/2.

Ms. Alex Hyler gave an update on Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) activities. Ms. Hyler reported that a special election has occurred, and she was elected as the President of GSA for the remainder of the 2016-17 term. At this point all positions within the GSA Executive Board are filled. Ms. Hyler also reported that the GSA is planning a town hall meeting on 2/15 to address the Executive Order from the federal government regarding immigration.

Mr. Delk Kookman gave updates on behalf of the Board of Visitors (BoV) student representatives. Mr. Koolman reported that applications for the 2017-18 BoV student representatives will close on 2/10.

University Council and Commission Updates

Mr. Chan gave a report from the University Council. The Council met on 2/6, with all Commission chairs giving a report of their agenda for the semester. The Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies introduced a resolution establishing a new Master of Science in Life Science degree with the concentration in Horticulture. The Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies introduced a resolution discontinuing the degree program of Economics in the Pamplin College of Business, noting that there will be a teach-out period, and all current personnel and functions within the Pamplin Economics program will be integrated to their counterpart in the College of Science. The Commission on Staff Policy and Affairs introduced a resolution to amend the Staff Senate Constitution, clarifying Staff Senator Terms. All three resolutions will return for a second reading and vote for approval in a later Council meeting

Mr. Saunders gave a report from the Commission on Equal Opportunities and Diversity. The Commission has voted on and approved a statement in response to the Executive Order from the federal government with regards to immigration. The statement has been uploaded for CSA member to peruse.

Mr. Andrew Peck gave a report from the Academic Support Committee. The Committee has met and considered two separate but related issues regarding the academic calendar. In recent years, Virginia Tech has had class off on Labor day, creating a situation where the fall semester and spring semester no longer having equal length. This violates the established University Calendar Criteria, and the Committee has been working with the University Registrar to explore options addressing this discrepancy. Other areas of concern include the logistical impact of having Labor Day off for the foreseeable future, and impact on athletics facilities and operating costs. Mr. Peck also reported that the Committee is looking to revamp Summer Sessions to reconcile the differences between the Virginia Tech’s and the Virginia Tech Carillion School of Medicine’s academic calendars. The current proposal will merge the two summer sessions into one summer term, but with options for courses to be taught over “part(s) of term.” This merger will also allow for the

summer term tuition and fees to be eligible for the Budget Tuition Plan. Graduate student members of CSA raised concern on how this merger will affect student service fees over the summer. Mr. Chan and Mr. Peck will work with CSA members to bring concerns back to the Committee, as well as to the Graduate School.

Division of Student Affairs Update

Dr. Angela Simmons gave an update from the Division. The Division has many events and programs planned for the upcoming weeks. These include an arts showcase, a collaboration between Housing and Residence Life and the Moss Arts Center; contest for the Family of the Year, multiple DSA scholarships available for undergraduate students, Keystone Fellows application, and the Off Campus Housing Fair.

Unfinished Business

Mr. Evan Robohm made a motion to approve pending amendments to the HokiePride Constitution; the motion was seconded. Mr. Chan and Dr. Simmons raised concerns about wordings within the document regarding HokiePride resource sharing. Mr. Robohm clarified that all sharing of resources would adhere to the proper guidelines set by Student Engagement and Campus Life, when applicable. The question was then called, and the amendments were passed unanimously.

Mr. Chan made a motion on behalf of the Student Budget Board to approve amendments to the SBB Policies and Procedures. Mr. Lamb summarized the changes to the Policies and Procedures: operating cost to charitable and philanthropic events can now be funded; exceptions to be given to organizations whose chief mission includes giving education demos related to food and beverages; tribunal for RSOs appeals can now be comprised of SBB members not present for the original deliberation; competition funding caps are now more flexible. Mr. Lamb addressed concerns raised last CSA meeting, and assured that if it is cleared that "food-related" equipment was not going to be used for food and beverages and the organization request the funding under the suitable category, the SBB should grant the request. The question was then called, and the amendments were passed unanimously.

Mr. Lamb announced SBB has rescinded the request for reallocation to the SBB budget.

New Business

Mr. Chan presented to CSA members Resolution CUS 2016-17A: Resolution to Amend Policy 1010. Mr. Chan noted he was made aware of this resolution being considered by the Commission on University Support, and that this resolution proposed to extend current university policy on smoking to "electronic cigarette or vaping device". Mr. Chan noted that Dr. Richard Ashley, Chair of the Commission on University Support, has initiated a survey and received overwhelming support from respondents in support of the policy change. Mr. Chan noted that in his conversation with other student leaders it was clear that there is a lack of awareness among the student population of the policy change proposal; this was then corroborated by Ms. Hannah Whiteman, President of the Residence Hall Federation, and Ms. Julia Billingsley, Chief of Staff of the SGA. Mr. Chan presented a summary compiling all impacted policy in the Hokie Handbook, which CSA has purview of, that would be impacted should Policy 1010 be amended; these include sections of the University Policies for Student Life, Housing and Residence Life Policy, and the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets Regulations. After some discussion, Mr. Chan announced that once he received the CUS survey link, he will distribute that link to CSA members. In the meantime, Mr. Chan and other student leaders will attend the next CUS meeting where the second reading and vote for approval will occur. Mr. Chan encouraged all CSA members to distribute the survey to their constituents, and that CSA will consider this matter again at the next CSA meeting for any possible next steps.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled CSA meeting will be held on February 23, 2017, in the Brush Mountain Room at Squires Student Center.

There being no further business, the motion to adjourn was made at 5:08 p.m. and was passed unanimously.

Recorder: Tracy Newton