

Commission on Faculty Affairs
November 1, 2024
10:30 am – 12:00 pm
Burruss 330E and Zoom

Present: J. Lemkul (presiding), R. Fricker (ex officio), D. Agud (Faculty Senate), C. Bartel (Staff Senate), J. Lahne (Faculty Senate), R. Gaines (Faculty Senate), J. Hawdon (Faculty Senate), N. Connors (A/P Faculty Senate), V. Buechner-Maxwell (Faculty Senate), R. Jin (Faculty Senate), K. Pitts (Dean), J. McGlothlin (Faculty Senate), L. Learman (Dean), K. Benson (Faculty Senate)

Absent with Notice: E. Lavender-Smith (Faculty Senate), A. Valop (Graduate and Professional Student Senate).

Absent: K. Schneiderman (Undergraduate Student Senate)

Guests: E. Kim (Faculty Affairs), D. Harris (Policy and Governance), A. Myers (Policy and Governance), Rachel Gabriele (Faculty Affairs), Kay Heidbreder (Legal Counsel)

J. Lemkul called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m. A quorum was present (50%+1 of current membership=8).

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Consent Agenda

- a. Review and Approval of Agenda.**
- b. Approval of Minutes from October 4, 2024.**

The consent agenda was adopted without objection.

3. Reports from Senates

- A/P Faculty Senate: Nothing to report.
- Staff Senate: Nothing to report.
- Undergraduate Senate: N/A.
- Grad/Prof Senate: N/A.
- Faculty Senate: The senate had their first readings of CFA 2024-25A, CFA 2024-25D, and UC 2024-25A. CFA Resolution 2024-25B was passed.

4. Unfinished Business

CFA 2024-25D

Resolution to Amend the Faculty Handbook Regarding Ethics of Intimate Relationships Involving Faculty

J. Lemkul presented the resolution for second reading and made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded. Other Senates expressed concern about the lack of disclosure protocol for intimate relationships (Section 2.36 of Faculty Handbook). The CFA agreed that this question can be addressed by the Ethics Committee when needed. The A/P Faculty Senate suggested that additional information be provided in the last paragraph to specify the mechanism of using or filing complaints. The CFA agreed that this information should be incorporated into the Faculty Senate bylaws, which govern the Ethics Committee operations. K. Heidbreder (guest, Legal Counsel) suggested that the policy be specified to apply to faculty only, as that is the scope of the Faculty Handbook; this recommendation led to the replacement of the word “employees” with “faculty” in the sentence regarding conflict of interest. K. Heidbreder also noted that current law protects students who may have been treated differently, not just the affected parties. R. Fricker will communicate with OEA about the connections between this policy and mandatory university trainings. R. Fricker will also work with Faculty Affairs to create an informative memo or FAQ with guidance for faculty on how to handle these situations. This

document will also be housed on the Faculty Affairs website, but it will not be attached to the resolution. A vote was taken on the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

CFA 2024-25A

Resolution to Amend the Faculty Handbook Description of Clinical Faculty Ranks

J. Lemkul presented the resolution for second reading and made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded. The only modifications to the resolution were copywriting edits and grammatical changes. J. Lemkul communicated that J. Edgin (Department Head, Psychology) expressed her satisfaction with the changes via email and thanked the commission for their efforts; there were no additional comments from any other constituency. A vote was taken on the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

UC 2024-25A

Resolution to Form a University Mission Initiative Committee to Recommend Updated Policies for Funding Doctoral Research at Virginia Tech

J. Lemkul presented the resolution for second reading and made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded. There was clarification that this resolution was originally CFA 2024-25F but was recently relabeled as UC 2024-25A per governance recommendation. There were no comments at the first reading of this resolution from Faculty Senate. Provost Clarke recommended bifurcating the deliverables to ensure a more reasonable completion timeline. The resolution was modified to state that initial budget projections will be presented by the end of Spring 2025, and all other policy recommendations will be delivered at the end of Fall 2025. GPSS provided extensive comments, and J. Lemkul responded to each concern via letter to GPSS president R. Mondal (Working Documents: 04c_GPSS_UC_2024-25A_jal_response). A vote was taken on the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

5. New Business

- Transparency of governance documents, P&T guidelines: The CFA wants to work with R. Fricker and Faculty Affairs to increase the transparency and availability of P&T documents. There is interest in creating a centralized repository of information while maintaining existing workshops and continuing education. This will be prioritized as a new goal for the Spring 2025 semester.
- R. Gabriele (guest, Faculty Affairs) solicited feedback from CFA members about removing Chapter 12 of the Faculty Handbook, integrating the content into other relevant chapters in the Handbook. She plans to bring a draft of this change to the CFA by Spring 2025, which will include an opening letter from the Provost and CFA.
- D. Agud asked for clarification on policies to review absence verification and communication with students. The CFA recommended she contact the chair of the Commission on Undergraduate Students and Policies (CUSP).

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 am.