Commission on Faculty Affairs
February 14, 2025
10:30 am – 12:00 pm
Burruss 330E and Zoom

Present: J. Lemkul (presiding), R. Fricker (ex officio), R. Gabriele, D. Agud (Faculty Senate), J. Lahne (Faculty Senate), K. Schneiderman (Undergraduate Student Senate), J. Hawdon (Faculty Senate), R. Jin (Faculty Senate), L. Learman (Dean), N. Connors (A/P Faculty Senate), R. Gaines (Faculty Senate), E. Lavender-Smith (Faculty Senate), A. Torres (Graduate and Professional Student Senate), K. Benson (Faculty Senate), J. McGlothlin (Faculty Senate).

Absent with Notice: V. Buechner-Maxwell (Faculty Senate).

Absent: K. Pitts (Dean).

Guests: E. Kim (Faculty Affairs), A. Myers (Policy and Governance), K. Johnson (Associate Vice President, IT Governance, Planning, & Strategy), P. Goldstein (Division of Information Technology consultant), MB Baker (Division of Information Technology consultant).

J. Lemkul called the meeting to order at 10:34 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 January 31, 2025.**

   The consent agenda was adopted without objection.

3. **Reports from Senates**

   - A/P Faculty Senate: Nothing to report.
   - Staff Senate: N/A (waiting for new representative).
   - Undergraduate Senate: The Senate approved budget and finance resolutions.
   - Grad/Prof Senate: The Senate is currently working on amendments to the GPSS constitution, which will likely be approved by the end of the Spring 2025 semester. At the next meeting there will be a second reading of CGPSP 2024-25A.
   - Faculty Senate: The Senate had first readings for CFA2024-25C, CFA2024-25F, and CFA2024-25I. At the last meeting, J. Lemkul presented a commission chair report on matters that CFA will address this semester.

4. **Unfinished Business**

Second Reading of CFA 2024-25C
Resolution to Establish a Discussion Forum Under the Purview of the Faculty Senate

J. Lemkul provided an overview of all recommended edits to CFA 2024-25C. These changes included: an additional Whereas statement with language modeled from a BOV statement in 2022-2023, modification of language (e.g., Faculty Senate will "facilitate" discussions, rather than "host"), and modification to the timing of future forums (from "periodic" to "occasional"). In

response to questions from A/P Faculty Senate, more specific information surrounding logistics and details will be included in the bylaws as opposed to being spelled out in this resolution. J. Lemkul provided a summary of the feedback he received from other senates, deans, and relevant stakeholders, all of whom expressed support for this resolution. The CFA agreed to further edit the revised Whereas statement in response to suggestions previously made by the BOV in a general discussion on freedom of speech and academic freedom. A motion was made to adopt the resolution as amended. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken on the motion as there was no further discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Second Reading of CFA 2024-25F
Resolution to Amend the Faculty Handbook to Include a Statement on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom

J. Lemkul provided an overview of all recommended edits to CFA 2024-25F. The final two Whereas statements were modified to include language that has been used by the BOV in the past, and the dates in which those comments occurred. J. Lemkul introduced a new preamble for the Faculty Handbook, which also includes language directly taken from previously approved BOV comments. The CFA agreed that the preamble should sit at the very beginning of Chapter 2 of the Faculty Handbook, as it relates to all faculty members. The commission and R. Gabriele further agreed that the preamble should constitute 2.0.1 of the Faculty Handbook, and all other information in Chapter 2 will be renumbered accordingly. Following some minor phrasing edits to the fourth Whereas statement, a motion to adopt the resolution as amended as made and seconded. A vote was taken on the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Second Reading of CFA 2024-25I
Resolution to Rename the Department of Biomedical Engineering and Mechanics

J. Lemkul presented the resolution for second reading. He reported that there were no further edits made to CFA 2024-25I, and that no comments or concerns had been raised by any relevant stakeholders. A motion was made to approve. The motion was seconded. There being no further discussion, a vote was taken on the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

5. New Business

First Reading of CFA 2024-25G
Resolution to Amend Articles V, VI, and XI of the Faculty Senate Constitution

J. Lemkul presented CFA 2024-25G for first reading. Proposed edits to Article V included clarification in having an elected faculty representative to the BOV. This language is currently being passed in other Senates in alignment with legislation recently passed by the Virginia legislature, and the CFA is proposing this change for purposes of clarity and consistency. Article VI, which defines the Faculty Senate Cabinet, was edited to include the chair of the Policy and Procedure Committee, and the elected chairs of the Commissions assigned to the Faculty Senate as standing members. The second proposed change to Article VI includes the ability of the President of the Faculty Senate to appoint up to three advisory members to the Cabinet as opposed to two. Since the Cabinet serves as a non-voting entity, the CFA recommended the removal of the term "non-voting advisors," as it is functionally incorrect. Proposed edits to Article XI include the amendment and approval process between the CFA and UC. The proposed operating procedure states that when the UC Constitution is amended, any content in the Faculty Senate Constitution that is directly replicated will be incorporated automatically as a

self-executing update. However, this will only apply for amendments that have been ratified by the Faculty Senate and approved through the governance process.

Discussion
Integration of VTCSOM Faculty into other Chapters of the Faculty Handbook

R. Gabriele introduced potential avenues for editing Chapter 12 of the Faculty Handbook, with the purpose of integrating VTCSOM into existing Faculty Handbook Chapters (e.g., Chapter 2.3.5). Those from administration and governance believe that this integration can be implemented as an administrative change, without the need for a resolution. Alternatively, if the CFA believes that any changes are substantial or require governance approval, the CFA can present all relevant edits to the UCC as a resolution. R. Gabriele highlighted three areas that may be worthy of a resolution: (1) Chapter 2.3 clarifying the two types of employment for VTCSOM faculty members and their policy obligations; (2) Chapter 2.6.7 outlining the tenure-to-title track faculty appointments unique to VTCSOM; (3) Chapter 5.1 broadening the definition of visiting faculty and adjunct faculty to be more inclusive, as not all visiting/adjunct faculty are full professors. The CFA agrees that while some elements of incorporating Chapter 12 into the remaining sections of the Faculty Handbook are administrative, approval of the aspects listed here would benefit from outside examination and discussion through the governance process. J. Lemkul will discuss the need for a resolution with the UCC on February 24, 2025 and will invite David Musick to the upcoming CFA meeting on February 28, 2025 for a potential first reading of this resolution.

Discussion
IT Shared Governance

J. Lemkul introduced the guests from the Division of Information Technology, K. Johnson (Associate Vice Provost, IT Governance, Planning, & Strategy), P. Goldstein (External Consultant), and M.B. Baker (External Consultant). K. Johnson provided an overview of institutional IT strategic planning processes to the CFA, which included the use of focus groups and seeking out faculty opinions. P. Goldstein then provided a presentation to CFA which included their approach, timelines, and resulting themes from their focus group research. There are currently six working groups that are trying to better coordinate IT processes and groups between departments, colleges, TLOS, and the library. Their group is aiming to move away from a fragmented model to a united concierge-type service with an integrated singular help desk that can provide information and redirect users as needed. They also hope to improve communications so that IT can become more proactive rather than reactive.

6. Announcement
The CFA members voiced their concerns about the future of faculty research given the current political landscape. R. Fricker and R. Gabriele provided guidance on how to facilitate ongoing conversations and reassure faculty members (especially junior faculty) that the university has mechanisms in place from the COVID era to support faculty members in any way they can (e.g., tenure clock extensions). They recommend that larger groups, such as the CFA and Faculty Senate, should communicate this message to all faculty, and for faculty to document any issues as they arise. R. Fricker volunteered to write a memo to consolidate this information, reiterate existing policies, and reassure faculty of university support.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:04 pm.