

MINUTES

Commission on Research

October 9, 2025

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Zoom

Present: Jan Helge Bøhn (presiding), Gibran Ali, Thomas Archibald, Thomas Bell, Kirk Cameron, Rebecca Cockrum, Joseph Gaeddart, Ron Gibbons, Dan Givens, Randy Heflin, Daniel Hindman, Andrew Krum, Daniel Lobree, Laurel Miner (for Dan Sui), Corinne Noiro, Albert Pan, Daniel Pauly, Jorge Reyes, Manisha Singal, Connie Stovall, Michelle Theus, Quinn Thomas, Stella Volpe, Jeff Walling, Caitlin Woodson

Absent with Notice: Alberto Cano, Ehren Hill

Absent: LaTawnya Burleson, Ishveen Kaur

Guests: Lynn Byrd, Sara Lucy, Barry Miller, April Myers, Karen Roberto

Jan Helge Bøhn called the meeting to order at 3:31pm. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. Motion carried.

2. Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of September 11, 2025

Jan Helge Bøhn noted that these minutes have been voted on electronically and can be publicly accessed on the CoR SharePoint site:

<https://virginiatech.sharepoint.com/sites/UniversityGovernance/COR>

3. New Business

Karen Roberto, Executive Director of the Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment (Review Chair) and Jorge Reyes, postdoctoral representative on the CoR, presented on the Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science (ICTAS) Five-Year Review. The presentation included a brief overview of the review process, stakeholder groups interviewed or surveyed; as well as the process used to analyze the data and identify common themes. The committee did not identify any major critiques of ICTAS during their information gathering efforts and committee deliberations, but developed six recommendations for consideration to enhance the sustainability and continued success of the institute, as well as to reauthorize the institute. Prior to the meeting, commission members were provided with the final report submitted by the ICTAS 5-Year Review Committee. At the conclusion of the presentation, the floor opened for discussion. The commission voted to approve all of the recommendations made by the committee.

4. Presentation

Lynn Byrd, Director of Human Resources for the Office for Research and Innovation, presented on the Research Faculty Rank Review Project. The intent of this project is to develop and implement a structure for research faculty, excluding postdoctoral associates and professorial ranks, that supports the recruitment, retention and promotion of research faculty. This project is guided by senior leaders and informed by stakeholders across campus, and is supported by peer benchmarking as well as

surveys of current employees in relevant ranks. The project is currently in the framework development stage, which Lynn provided an in-depth presentation of, to include the job architecture, career track options, and job titling. With updates to the research faculty rank, the Faculty Handbook will need to be updated; specifically in chapters 2 and 6, by replacing descriptions for non-professorial research faculty ranks with an overview of research professional faculty and how the structure will be managed; additional information will be provided outside the handbook. The presentation concluded with next steps for the project and updating the faculty handbook in Fall 2025 and Spring 2026. Lynn opened the floor for questions. Jorge Reyes asked if postdoc transition to research faculty has been taken into consideration while planning for these changes. Lynn responded that one of the goals of the project is to more easily align into career pathing and development when moving out of a postdoctoral position.

5. Other Items

- Jan Helge Bøhn gave an update on the Workgroup on Global Distinction Fellowships. With the goal of bringing eminent scholars to Virginia Tech to enhance scholarly capacity and impact, the workgroup is asked to study, formulate, and recommend a vision and plan for implementation, including opportunities, roadblocks, and potential solutions, both in the short and long-term. The workgroup is expected to meet on a regular basis in the fall and spring semesters, and will provide the commission interim reports and then a final report at the April 9, 2026 meeting. Bøhn opened the floor for discussion. Of note, Albert Pan mentioned that there are institutions that currently have these types of programs that we can look to as an example and Tom Archibald closed the conversation with the reminder that the core goal of this fellowship is to have global recognition.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:57pm.