

MINUTES

Commission on Research
November 13, 2025
3:30-5:00pm
Zoom

Present: Jan Helge Bøhn (presiding), Gibran Ali, Thomas Bell, Kirk Cameron, Alberto Cano, Rebecca Cockrum, Yancey Crawford, Joseph Gaedert, Ronald Gibbons, Randy Heflin, Ehren Hill, Daniel Hindman, Atharva Shashank Kokane, Andrew Krum, Daniel Lobree, Albert Pan, Daniel Pauly, Jorge Reyes, Manish Singal, Connie Stovall, Daniel Sui, Quinn Thomas, Stella Volpe

Absent with Notice: Thomas Archibald, Corinne Noirot

Absent: LaTawnya Burleson, Dan Givens, Ishveen Kaur, Michelle Theus

Guests: Kim Borkowski, Lynn Byrd, Stacy King, Laurel Miner, April Myers

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 October 9, 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. Other Items

- Jan Helge Bøhn provided an update from the Global Distinction Fellows Working Group. The group has focused initially on the primary motivations and value of bringing internationally-recognized scholars to Virginia Tech for extended visits, especially in the context of the Virginia Tech Global Distinction initiative, as well as on what features will be useful for making this opportunity attractive to those global scholars. The benefits include enhancing Virginia Tech's international reputation through increased awareness by the visitors of VT's strength of scholarship and the opportunity to establish or expand collaborative scholarship with them. Key features for attracting top scholars to VT include covering travel costs, arranging travel, providing a stipend, and arranging housing opportunities. Several mechanisms for such visits are possible, including extended research collaboration during the visit, working jointly on proposal opportunities, and hosting international workshops and conferences on VT campuses. The working group would appreciate further input from the Commission members on these topics.
- Laurel Miner shared with the commission that the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute Five-Year Review officially kicked-off last month. The review committee, chaired by Pamela VandeVord, Director of Research and Scholarship at the Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Sciences, was formally charged by Dr. Sui and will be guided by Policy 13005 in conducting the review of both the institute and its director, Dr. Doerzaph. Other members of the committee include Eileen Van Aken, Department Head, Industrial and Systems

Engineering, Eric Paterson, Executive Director, Virginia Tech National Security Institute, Ralph Buehler, Professor, Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning, Tombo Jones, Director, Mid Atlantic Aviation Partnership, Jeffrey Walling, Associate Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (Commission on Research Representative), and Steve Dellenback, Vice President, Research and Development - Intelligent Systems Division, Southwest Research Institute (External member). The committee is currently developing tools to receive feedback, including surveys and interviews; they will also be meeting with Dr. Doerzaph to receive an overview of the institute. Additional updates will be provided to the commission as needed throughout the process. It is anticipated that the review report will be completed in Spring 2026.

- Laurel Miner and Lynn Byrd provided an update on the Research Faculty Leveling Project and discussed the proposed changes in the Faculty Handbook. The primary change to the handbook will be to reflect the consolidation from four ranks (research associate, senior research associate, research scientist, and senior research scientist) to one rank (research professional faculty). The new research faculty structure is anticipated to include six levels within the rank, as well as a number of job classifications to reflect the disciplinary or scholarly focus of the role. Miner and Byrd also shared the anticipated timeline for moving the changes to the faculty handbook through governance, which will include first reading at the Commission on Research at its December meeting.

4. Announcements

- Jan Helge Bøhn announced that the Office of Faculty Affairs would like to invite a member of the Commission on Research to participate in the committee reviewing nominations for the Academies of Faculty Service and Leadership this semester. Daniel Hindman volunteered to serve on the committee.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:28pm.