



Faculty Senate

Virginia Tech

Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

<https://www.facultysenate.vt.edu/>

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

December 6, 2024 @ 2:30 – 4:15 pm

Torgersen 1000 or Via Zoom

Check-In:

Present: Rachel Miles (presiding), Luke Achenie, Diane Agud, Rick Ashley, Paul Avey, Azziza Bankole, Kristen Benson, Jan Helge Bøhn, Warren Booth, Bradley Bowen, Anamaria Bukvic, Virginia Buechner-Maxwell, Young Cao, Kevin Cheng, Sherwood Clements, Joshua Clemons, Rebecca Cockrum, Carolyn Commer, Nick Copeland, Carolyn Copenheaver, Logan Dandridge, Kristy Daniels, Maria del Carmen Caña-Jiménez, Matt Eick, Candace Fitch, Rodney Gaines, Scott Gartner, Wes Gwaltney, James Hawdon, Dan Hindman, Scott Huxtable, Eli Jamison, Ran Jin, Bryan Katz, Catherine Larochelle, Renée LeClair, Justin Lemkul, Kimberly Loeffert, Charles Lowery, Amanda MacDonald (for Alex Kinnaman), Jason Malone, Eric Martin, Shelly Maycock, Joel McGlothlin, Harold McKenzie, Joe Merola, Marc Michel, Phil Nelson, Gregory Novack, Albert Pan, Nicole Pitterson, John Richey, Nino Ripepi, Jane Robertson Evia (alternate for Leanna House), Nazila Roofigari-Esfahan, Steven Rowson, Ian Shoemaker, Richard Shryock, Keith Stephenson, Jay Teets, Chelsea Thompto, Jim Tokuhisa, Byron Tsang, Kwok Tsui, Alp Tural (alternate for Bill Green), Bimal Viswanath, Jeff Walling, Jerald Walz, Terri-Ann Wattsman, Angelica Witcher Walker, Erin “Nikki” Worthington, David Xie, Diane Zahm

Guests: April Myers, Robert Perdue, Demetria Somervell

Absent with Notice: Biko Agozino, Yuba Gautaum, Mantu Hudait, Jake Lahne, Evan Lavender-Smith, Stephanie Smith (SPIA), Lizette Zietsman

Absent: Manish Bansal, Lisa Belden, Mark Coggins, Matt Eick, John Entwistle, Bill Green, David Gregory, Aaron Gross, Rebecca Hester, Leanna House, Mantu Hudait, Joseph Hughes, Casey Jim, Sarah Karpanty, Alex Kinnaman, Gary Long, G.Q. Lu, Silvio Macias, Luca Massa, Ali Mehrizi-Sani, Sherif Motaleb Abdelaziz, Zhange Nicole Ni, Syrenthia Robinson, Adrian Sandu, Karen Schnatterly, Stephanie Smith (Communications), Eric Stanley, Shane Wang, Ashley Wilkinson, Yan Xu

Call to Order by the President Rachel Miles at 2:33

Approval of Agenda and Minutes (Rachel Miles)

- Consent agenda was adopted:
 - Minutes for 11-22-2024 ([Link](#))
 - Agenda for 12-06-2024 ([Link](#))

Business Agenda

1. Updates & Announcements

- a. A Global Distinction Feedback and Implementation Subcommittee has been established and will be chaired by the President of the Faculty Senate, Rachel Miles. Faculty volunteers are needed to serve on the committee.
 - i. Volunteers have been received from the following colleges:
 - College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences – Jim Hawdon
 - College of Science – Gary Long
 - College of Architecture, Arts, and Design - Chelsea Thompto
 - College of Agriculture and Life Sciences – Kim Niewolny
 - College of Engineering – Ran Jin
 - VA-MD College of Veterinary Medicine – John Rossmeisl
 - ii. Representatives are needed for the colleges below. Faculty senators from these colleges are asked to contact Rachel Miles if they or a colleague would like to volunteer. Committee members do not have to be faculty senators.
 - Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine
 - Pamplin College of Business
 - College of Natural Resources and Environment

Unfinished Business

2. Rachel Miles introduced the election of two University Council representatives.
 - a. A nomination was previously received for David Xie to serve as representative for the College of Veterinary Medicine. David Xie was elected as University Council representative. (Voting: 57 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstain)
 - b. A nomination was previously received for Daniel Hindman to serve as representative for the College of Natural Resources and Environment. Daniel Hindman was elected as University Council representative. (Voting: 58 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain)

3. Jim Hawdon introduced for second reading and vote Updates to the Faculty Senate Bylaws. These updates focus on Article VIII, External Committees of the Faculty Senate, Section 1, Committee on Faculty Ethics.
 - a. Discussion during the Faculty Senate first reading included concerns with the complaint process. Based on this discussion, the language was changed, indicating that the Chair of the Committee on Faculty Ethics will receive complaints about alleged violations, instead of the Faculty Senate President. A process is included for instances in which the complaint is about the committee chair.
 - b. The remainder of changes made following the Faculty Senate first reading were minor and editorial in nature.
 - c. A motion was made and seconded to approve the Updates to the Faculty Senate Bylaws. There were no questions or discussion. Motion carried. (Voting: 56 Yes, 0 No, 3 Abstain)

New Business

4. Rachel Miles introduced Greg Beecher, Director, Talent Development, who presented results from the 2024 Campus Climate Survey.
 - a. The 52-question survey was presented to faculty and staff. Over 2,300 employees participated, which is a response rate of 24%.
 - b. The survey measured perceptions on several items including campus climate, diversity, inclusion, leadership, and work environment. Historical questions focused on job satisfaction, workload satisfaction, career opportunities, work-life balance, principles of community, and inclusive VT values.
 - c. Areas of excellence were identified and included the following: campus climate, safety on campus and in work environments, access to health and wellness resources, and job satisfaction.
 - d. Areas of improvement were identified and included the following: appreciation for day-to-day work, outreach, leadership, service, and teaching; workload and compensation; leadership; recruitment; and inclusion and diversity.
 - e. Recommended action items designed to improve the climate of departments/teams and the university as a whole and links to supportive resources were provided. [MyCareer Stream](#), a collection of resources to help faculty and staff review career paths and achieve goals, was launched earlier this year. A SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) Analysis program is scheduled for February.
 - f. The [2024 Climate Survey Report](#) is available online. Senators may send any specific questions to Greg Beecher.

Open Floor Discussion

5. The rescheduled discussion with the Division of Information Technology is expected to be held early in the Spring semester. Kyle Johnson, Associate Vice President for IT Governance Planning and Strategy, will also be invited to a Commission on Faculty Affairs meeting. Limited discussion was held on the Microsoft storage changes.

Additional speakers planned for the Spring semester include Ed Baine, Rector of the Board of Visitors, and Lauren Oliver, Director of the Cranwell International Center. Senators can send additional suggestions for speakers to the Faculty Senate officers.

6. Members of the Global Distinction Steering Committee will attend a mini retreat in mid-December. Rachel Miles hopes that the Global Distinction Feedback and Implementation Subcommittee membership will be complete by that time, with a first meeting expected in January.
7. An announcement was made about the Virginia Higher Education Advocacy Day, to be held in Richmond, Virginia, on January 9, 2025. Anyone may attend.
8. Senators reported receiving information during recent meetings and from their colleagues regarding changes in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Changes include adjustments to specific position titles and duties. Lengthy discussion was held on this topic. The Commission on Faculty Affairs is working on a resolution to add a statement on freedom of speech and academic freedom to the Faculty Handbook. The charge of CFA was summarized, and faculty members with specific concerns were asked to reach out to the commission.
9. Discussion was held on scholarly activism and advocacy. The following needs were mentioned: (1) to bridge divides and differences within the university and (2) to seek clarification and provide a definition for specific terms. A suggestion was made to further explore this topic in the Spring semester.
10. Students and faculty with H1B and F1 visas have reported receiving email communication from campus offices. These emails provide guidance on returning to campus in January. There was limited discussion on this topic.
11. No further information has been received on the status of the committee to be convened following approval of CFA 2023-2024C: Resolution to Form a Task Force to Study Instructor Workloads and Salaries. The last response received was that the Vice

Provost for Faculty Affairs was given approval to convene the committee and was assembling staff for support. Justin Lemkul will continue following up.

Motion to adjourn and seconded at 3:33 p.m.