



Faculty Senate

Virginia Tech

Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

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

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
January 24, 2025 @ 2:30 – 4:15 pm
Torgersen 1000 or Via Zoom

Check-In:

Present: Biko Agozino, Diane Agud, Rick Ashley, Paul Avey, Kristen Benson, Jan Helge Bøhn, Warren Booth, Bradley Bowen, Virginia Buechner-Maxwell, Young Cao, Kevin Cheng, Sherwood Clements, Joshua Clemons, Carolyn Commer, Nick Copeland, Carolyn Copenheaver, Kristy Daniels, Matt Eick, Candace Fitch, Rodney Gaines, Yuba Gautam, Aaron Gross, Wes Gwaltney, James Hawdon, Rebecca Hester, Dan Hindman, Mantu Hudait, Scott Huxtable, Ran Jin, Bryan Katz, Bryan Katz, Alex Kinnaman, Jake Lahne, Catherine Larochelle, Evan Lavender-Smith, Renee LeClair, Justin Lemkul, Kimberly Loeffert, Gary Long, Charles Lowery, G.Q. Lu, Jason Malone, Luca Massa, Joel McGlothlin, Harold McKenzie, Joe Merola, Marc Michel, Sherif Motaleb Abdelaziz, Phil Nelson, Zhange Nicole Ni, Gregory Novack, Albert Pan, Nicole Pitterson, Nazila Roofigari-Esfahan, Steven Rowson, Karen Schnatterly, Ian Shoemaker, Richard Shryock, Stephanie Smith (Communications), Stephanie Smith (SPIA), Keith Stephenson, Jay Teets, Chelsea Thompto, Jim Tokuhisa, Alp Tural (alternate for Bill Green), Bimal Viswanath, Jeff Walling, Jerald Walz, Terri-Ann Wattsman, Angelica Witcher, Erin Worthington, Yan Xu, Diane Zahm, Lizette Zietsman

Guests: E. Fanny Jasso-Hernandez, April Myers, Demetria Somervell, Lijuan Yuan

Absent with Notice: Maria del Carmen Caña-Jiménez

Absent: Luke Achenie, Azziza Bankole, Manish Bansal, Lisa Belden, Anamaria Bukvic, Anamaria Bukvic, Rebecca Cockrum, Mark Coggins, Logan Dandridge, John Entwistle, Scott Gartner, Bill Green, David Gregory, Leanna House, Joseph Hughes, Eli Jamison, Casey Jim, Sarah Karpanty, Silvio Macias, Eric Martin, Shelly Maycock, Ali Mehrizi-Sani, Rachel Miles, John Richey, Nino Ripepi, Syrenthia Robinson, Adrian Sandu, Eric Stanley, Byron Tsang, Kwok Tsui, Shane Wang, Ashley Wilkinson, David Xie

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

Approval of Agenda and Minutes (Rachel Miles)

- Consent agenda was adopted:
 - Minutes for 12-06-2024 ([Link](#))
 - Agenda for 01-24-2025 ([Link](#))

Business Agenda

1. Rachel Miles introduced Virginia Tech Police Department (VTPD) Sargeant Jason Miller, who presented information on the university's Co-Responder Program.
 - a. Sgt. Miller has served on the VTPD for over eight years. He holds a B.S. in Psychology and an M.S. in Sport Psychology and Education Research. The Virginia Tech Police Department is one of approximately 72 universities that have achieved accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) and the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA).
 - b. The Co-Response program seeks to ensure that rights of individuals are not violated, that necessary assistance and access to police services is received, and that officers are adequately trained and equipped.
 - i. VTPD's policy, procedure, and training includes mental health training. VTPD strives to ensure all agency personnel attend crisis intervention training (CIT) within one year of field training completion. Officers receive annual mental health refresher training.
 - ii. Sgt. Miller presented an overview of commonly used terms and language and noted that guidelines on involuntary admissions such as emergency custody and temporary detention orders are outlined in the Code of Virginia 37.2-808. Additionally, he shared a brief history of the Marcus-David Peters Act.
 - c. Co-response models include coordination between 911 and 988 Suicide and Crisis regional crisis call centers. The VTPD co-response model is similar to a program utilized by Washington County, VA, and consists of a CIT trained officer and a licensed or licensed-eligible clinician or counselor who undergo additional and specified training for crisis and law enforcement. Licensed clinicians can complete assessments and provide access to resources immediately.
 - i. New River Valley Co-Response includes New River Valley Community Services, VTPD, Montgomery Co Sheriff's Office, Blacksburg, and Christiansburg Police.
 - ii. Additional resources include the Mobile Crisis Team; REACH Crisis Team; Mobile Co-Responder Team; CIT Trained Officers; other

community response teams; and as a last resort, traditionally trained law enforcement, emergency medical and fire departments.

- iii. Since implementing the co-response model, the number of individuals having to go through a forced evaluation process has been reduced.
- d. Virginia Tech provides several mental health and co-response resources including the following: imbedded counselors through Residential Well-Being; Cooks Counseling offers in-person sessions and on-call services; Timely Care provides a number of free counseling sessions per year; support for students is provided automatically through coordination between the Dean of Students, Academic Affairs, professors and campus services. Additional services are offered throughout the New River Valley.
- e. Questions and limited discussion followed Sgt. Miller's remarks.

2. Updates & Announcements

- a. Representatives are needed from the College of Natural Resources and Environment to fully populate the Global Distinction Feedback Subcommittee. Representatives do not have to be senators. Please contact Rachel Miles if you know someone that might be willing to serve.
- b. Interviews for the Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs are ongoing. This position will be directly involved in supporting faculty in shared governance. Candidates will be presenting on the topic of shared governance during open forums. Specific dates, times, and Zoom links were provided.

New Business

3. Rachel Miles presented a summary of topics discussed during the cabinet's meeting with President Sands and Provost Clarke.
 - a. A variety of topics related to Athletics and Name, Image, and Likeness were discussed including anti-trust cases against the NCAA and pay for play and inducement. Additional discussion included the following:
 - i. Strict rules exist around athletics funding: no more than 20% of subsidies are allowed for athletics, and no state or general (E&G) funds can be used. The athletics fee at Virginia Tech is the lowest in the state, but it is controversial to increase this fee. VT is seeking legislative changes and emphasizing increased philanthropy.
 - ii. The number of student athletes is expected to decrease, with an increase in scholarship athletes. Fractional scholarships are being eliminated for alignment with anti-trust cases.

- iii. The Budgeting and Planning Committee will present this topic to University Council early in the Spring.
- b. Topics regarding political environment, Freedom of Speech, and Academic Freedom were discussed. InclusiveVT is a core part of VTs culture and strategic direction.
 - i. Updates may be made but the university remains committed to InclusiveVT. InclusiveVT is intended to be integrated into the responsibilities of each unit. The Beyond Boundaries Incubator will foster ideas and programs that will advance strategic engagement across the university. Several ideas and recommendations have been made and are under consideration.
 - ii. A resolution is being prepared by the Commission on Faculty Affairs to include a statement on Free Speech and Academic Freedom, with plans to include this statement in the Faculty Handbook so that it effectively becomes policy. This action is in response to a recommendation to do so that was endorsed by the Board of Visitors.
 - iii. Discussion on potential impacts to researchers, faculty, and the university community from changes made at the federal level were discussed.

Open Floor Discussion

- 4. Aaron Ansell, professor of Religion and Culture, will be presenting a talk entitled “The Responsible Exercise of Academic Freedom in an Age of Polarization” on Feb 27, 5-6 PM in the Goodall Room of the Newman Library. The Statement on Academic Freedom that was adopted by the Board of Visitors mentions continued learning and ongoing education, which includes opportunities like this. The Faculty Senate will distribute information on this talk and its relation to academic freedom to senators.
- 5. The topic of annual faculty reporting and Elements was introduced, with emphasis on the administrative burden required to pull data from Elements and then convert it into a usable format for annual faculty reporting. It was stated that time devoted to this could be used to further global distinction. A request was made that the Faculty Senate review this issue. This topic falls under the charge of the Commission on Faculty Affairs and they will undertake review and discussion.

Motion to adjourn and seconded at 4:18 p.m.