

MINUTES

Faculty Senate
November 07, 2025
2:30 – 4:15 PM
Torgersen 1000 or via Zoom

Present: Justin Lemkul (presiding), Luke Achenie, Joe Adams, Diane Agud, Aaron Ansell, Rick Ashley, Azziza Bankole, Kristen Benson, David Bieri, Jan Helge Bøhn, Warren Booth, Bradley Bowen, Curtis Bower, Anamaria Bukvic, Ryan Calder, Sherwood Clements, Sarah Clinton, Nick Copeland, Carolyn Copenheaver, Logan Dandridge, Maria del Carmen Caña-Jiménez, Naomi Dunn, Anna Duraj-Thatte, Bob Edmison, Matt Eick, Ihudiya Finda Williams, Candace Fitch, Rodney Gaines, Nicholas Goedert, Wes Gwaltney, James Hawdon, William Headley, Kenneth Hodges, Adrienne Holz, Leanna House, Ran Jin, Lara Khansa, Andrea L'Afflitto, Jake Lahne, Catherine Larochelle, Renee LeClair, Charles Lowery, G.Q. Lu, Jason Malone, Eric Martin, Joel McGlothlin, Harold McKenzie, Marc Michel, Rachel Miles, Sherif Motaleb Abdelaziz, Phil Nelson, Gregory Novack, Nicole Pitterson, Mark Psiaki, Isis Quinlan, Shelly Rhoads, Nazila Roofigari-Esfahan, Steven Rowson, Jennifer Russell (alternate for Daniel Hindman) Caroline Saouma, Karen Schnatterly, Mehdi Setareh (alternate for Ramtin Haghnazaz Kouchaksaraei), Ian Shoemaker, Chelsea Thompto, Jim Tokuhisa, Byron Tsang, Alp Tural, Jeff Warfford, Terri-Ann Wattsman, Rebecca Weaver-Hightower, Erin Worthington, Gordon Yee

Absent with Notice: Daniel Hindman, Alex Kinnaman, Kimberly Loeffert, Yi Shi, Jerald Walz, Boya Xu

Absent: Biko Agozino, Nathaniel Bishop, Myra Blanco, Virginia Buechner-Maxwell, Rebecca Cockrum, Mark Coggins, Cassandra Efkeman, Mark Freeman, David Gregory, Aaron Gross, Ramtin Haghnazaz Kouchaksaraei, Rebecca Hester, Eli Jamison, Daniel Karolyi, Sarah Karpanty, Bryan Katz, Bettina Koch, Lakshmi Madhavan Miller, Stephen Martin, Ron Meyers, Albert Pan, John Richey, Nino Ripepi, Richard Shryock, Stephanie Smith, David Xie

Guests:

Dr. Justin Lemkul, Faculty Senate President, called the meeting to order at 2:33. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Consent Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the consent agenda, which included the following items:

- Approval of minutes from October 24, 2025
- Approval of agenda for November 7, 2025

Motion carried.

2. Announcements and Updates

- The Faculty Senate has been asked to remind senators of Virginia Tech Policy 4815: Minors at Virginia Tech, which addresses educational activities and programming involving individuals under age 18. Faculty with programs and activities which include minors on campus should review and be familiar with this policy. Senators are asked to also remind colleagues of Policy 4815. A link to the policy was provided.
- The Little Hokie Hand-Me-Down program is accepting donations until November 10 at the Graduate Learning College front desk and the Women's Center. Information about the Little Hokie Hand-Me-Down was provided.
- The Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies (CGPSP) working group was convened to formulate university policy to combat unprofessional behaviors toward graduate and professional students. The group has completed their report of recommendations which included the creation of a Graduate and Professional Student Grievance Process that would provide students the ability to enter a grievance process if needed. The Faculty Senate expects to see a resolution on this process and other resolutions addressing additional recommendations proceed through shared governance this year.
- A volunteer is needed to serve on a committee to review nominees for the Academies of Leadership and Services. The committee generally meets once in the Spring semester. Volunteers do not have to be faculty senators but must be approved by the Faculty Senate. Please provide recommendations for this position to Justin Lemkul.
- Rodney Gaines serves as a representative to the Faculty Senate of Virginia and provided a summary of their most recent meeting. The Faculty Senate of Virginia discussed a variety of topics including the formation of a committee to write a statement indicating that the group is not in agreement with federal compacts on education; faculty reporting of concerns regarding students recording professors and classes; issues around liberal arts departments; SCHEV-related topics; and concerns with recent bomb threats at historically black colleges and universities in Virginia. Follow-up discussion topics included: (1) The Virginia Tech Faculty Senate elects senators to serve one and three-year terms on the Faculty Senate of Virginia. There are currently openings for one-year terms. The VT Faculty Senate will call for nominees and hold an election for these representatives. (2) The impact of copyright protections, SSD requirements, and syllabus guidelines regarding recording of professors and classes. The complicating factor of on-line classes was noted. This topic is being reviewed at Virginia Tech by Legal Counsel and the administration, and guidance will be made available soon.
- The Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA) is creating a subcommittee on Promotion and Tenure Guidelines that will collect data and provide recommendations.
- The closure of two additional Living Learning Communities, Rhizome and Orion, has been announced. The Faculty Senate has been informed that these communities were closed due to budgetary issues in the College of Architecture, Arts, and Design and the College of Science.
- Justin Lemkul provided information related to the Academic Resource Alignment: (1) Provost Clarke has met with two Board of Visitors (BOV) members serving as liaisons to discuss progress and seek feedback. (2) An update will be given during the November BOV meeting, but no actions are expected. (3) The Academic Resource Alignment Committee will finalize its report and recommendations following BOV feedback, and this will be available to the public in December. (4) Provost Clarke stated that he is committed to faculty input.

Two Faculty Senators have served on the Academic Resource Alignment committee and have provided occasional updates during Faculty Senate meetings. The committee also has representation from all eight colleges and the deans. The committee representatives from the Faculty Senate provided a summary of the processes that the committee undertook during their work, including obtaining quantitative and qualitative data, discussions and transparency with departments, authority and decisions under the Provost's purview, and the impact of SCHEV and Code of Virginia guidelines. Some departments have made decisions that have impacted specific programs and degrees outside of the academic resource alignment process. It was noted that Policy 6500 lacks detail regarding the closure of programs and degrees. This policy is currently being reviewed by CFA and a resolution with suggested revisions is expected. Senators commented on changes that may occur due to recent elections in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the term of BOV membership, and expected legislation regarding Boards of Visitors at the state level. It was noted that the Academic Resource Alignment was not a BOV initiative but was initiated by the university administration and is a regular practice. Justin Lemkul provided a snapshot overview of results from the survey distributed to collect faculty thoughts regarding the compact for higher education. The university has not been asked to agree to the compact and it is not on the agenda for the November 2025 BOV meeting. A summary of the data received from the survey will be provided.

- Justin Lemkul provided a high-level overview of suggestions collected from the Constituency Report Feedback form. This information will be used to form the Faculty Constituency Report to be presented at the November BOV meeting.

3. Unfinished Business

CFA 2025-26A: Resolution to Revise Handbook Section on Appeal of Probationary Non-Reappointment Decision

Jim Hawdon presented CFA 2025-26A for second reading. The Faculty Handbook currently states that cases where dismissal is not related to cause or performance for pre-tenure faculty do not require multiple levels of approval. Updates in this resolution require multiple levels of approval. One change was made following the Faculty Senate First Reading: all dismissals not related to cause or performance must be approved by the Provost unless the Provost is making the decision.

Jim Hawdon made a motion to approve CFA 2025-26A, and the motion was seconded. Discussion regarding new hire paperwork and the purpose of the Faculty Handbook followed. The question was called and a vote was conducted. With over 2/3 approving, the motion to call the question was approved.

A vote was taken on the motion to approve CFA 2025-26A, and the resolution passed.

CFA 2025-26C: Resolution to Revise Formal Grievance Procedure in Faculty Handbook

Jim Hawdon presented CFA 2025-26C for second reading and provided a summary of suggested revisions. One change has been made since Faculty Senate first reading: when a grievance is filed with the Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs, additional items can no longer be added to the grievance. If other issues arise, they must be addressed separately.

Jim Hawdon made a motion to approve CFA 2025-26C, and the motion was seconded. There was no discussion.

A vote was taken, and the resolution passed.

4. New Business

CFA 2025-26E: Resolution to Revise Faculty Handbook for Instructor Rank

Jim Hawdon presented CFA 2025-26E for first reading. The Faculty Handbook currently states that instructors require a minimum of five years of service before being eligible for promotion. This minimum requirement is inconsistent with other faculty ranks. Input from department chairs was sought. It was noted that departments may institute their own internal procedures. Both CFA and the Faculty Senate include representation of faculty within the Instructor rank, and this issue was originally brought up by Instructors.

5. Open Floor Discussion

- Jim Tokuhisa, Chair of the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies (CUSP) provided an update from the commission. The commission will be working on several initiatives including: (1) Updating the senior residency rule which will state the required number of final credit hours that seniors must take at Virginia Tech. (2) Addressing concerns regarding students who earn multiple degrees in the same degree program. (3) extending fall break from one to two days. (4) Revisiting the foreign language admission requirement enforcement resolution. Information was also shared on the commission's plans to respond to the actions taken under exigent circumstances by President Sands to repeal Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies (CGPSP) 2017-18A and Presidential Policy Memorandum (PPM) 307 relating to DEI requirements. The commission has the privilege and responsibility to propose a response to these administrative actions and will present a resolution at a future date that will come to the Faculty Senate for consideration.
- A Senator shared a concern raised by a constituent regarding faculty access to the internet through eduroam. Certain sites cannot be accessed through eduroam; for example, Deep Seek and WeChat. Upon discussion, it was noted that state-level policies have restricted access to certain apps such as DeepSeek, WeChat, TikTok, and others. This is not an action taken only by Virginia Tech.
- Senators were asked to encourage instructors in their departments to complete the recently distributed survey on workload and compensation. The survey is the result of a resolution concerning instructors that was passed about 2 years ago which created a task force to study instructor workload and compensation and is a tool that the task force will use in completing their work.
- A new parking appeals program has been incorporated by Parking Services which allows students to take a quiz in lieu of paying a fine for their first parking ticket. A suggestion was made that the Faculty Senate request this same type of parking appeals program for faculty.
- A senator inquired about wider dialogue and activities in addition to the recent survey that was distributed to assess faculty thought on the federal compact on higher education. The Faculty Senate does have a process for creating statements which is outlined in the Faculty Senate Bylaws. Virginia Tech has not been asked to sign the compact.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:59.