

University Council Minutes
September 18, 2023
3:30 PM
Creativity and Innovation District Building Multipurpose Library (Room 104)

Present: Joe Merola (presiding), Ron Fricker for Cyril Clarke, April Myers, Kim O'Rourke, Stacey Wilkerson for Menah Pratt, Frances Keene, Aimée Surprenant, Rachel Holloway, Daniel Givens, Tom Ewing for Laura Belmonte, Tsai Lu Liu, Kevin Pitts, Paul Winistorfer, Julia Ross, Saonee Sarker, Lee Learman, Tyler Walters, Dwayne Edwards, Natalia Guerrero, Robert Weiss, Evan Lavender-Smith, Janice Austin, Stephanie Trout, Jennifer Jones, LaTawnya Burleson, Callan Bartel, Kari Evans, Kiera Schneiderman, Tristan Southerland, William Storey, Ainsley Cragin, Rachel Maizel, Yohan Sequeira, Riley DeHority, Emily Tirrell, Gary Long, Nicole Pitterson, Daniel Hindman, Charles Lowery, Renee LeClair, Serena Young, Amber Robinson, Sally Shupe, Melissa Faircloth, Kelly Oaks, & Shania Clinedinst

Absent with notice: Tim Sands, Amy Sebring, Bryan Garey, Alan Grant, Rodney Gaines,

Absent: Daniel Sui, Paul Knox, Stuart Feigenbaum, Virginia Buechner-Maxwell, Lujean Baab, & John Gray Williams

Guests: Ginny Pannabecker, Ranald Adams, Madeline Boudville, Lori Buchanan, Kim Daniloski, Carla Finkielstein, Dee Harris, Justin Lemkul, M L Logan, Xiaoyan Ma, Brandy Morse, Debbie Greer, Katie Moseby, Kat Nelson, Arianna Schuler Scott, Demetria Somervell, Diane Zahm, & Montasir Abbas

Dr. Merola called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Agenda

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

2. Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of May 1, 2023

Dr. Merola noted that these minutes have been voted on electronically and can be publicly accessed on the Governance Information System on the Web (<http://www.governance.vt.edu>).

3. Commission Chair Reports

Dr. Merola asked the Commission chairs to present briefly their goals for the academic year.

1. Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs – Stephanie Trout, Chair
 - a. Professional Development Leave – Potential draft of resolution for review.
 - b. The Constituent Working Group has folded into the A/P faculty senate group - Policies and Issues standing group to continue review of the constituent groups under a governance document and will propose resolutions as needed. - Currently in review and dependent on outcome future resolution.
 - c. Grievance process update.
 - d. Governance 101.
2. Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity – Melissa Faircloth, Chair
 - a. Conduct annual check-in with Caucuses.
 - b. Complete working group charge regarding disaggregation of data brought forth by the APIDA community in 2022.

- c. Complete working group charge regarding Username Change brought forth by the LBGTQ+ community in 2023.

3. Commission on Faculty Affairs – Justin Lemkul, Chair

- a. Clarify the role of clinical service and practice in the context of Promotion and Tenure to propose revisions to the Faculty Handbook in support of these faculty.
- b. Clarify the role of the Faculty Senate within the Faculty Handbook with respect to standing and external committees and procedures.
- c. Study Promotion requirements for collegiate faculty, including evaluating the current requirements for external reviewers.
- d. Evaluate current Faculty Senate representation and discuss the representation of postdoctoral and other research faculty
- e. Recommend best practices for the annual faculty review process
- f. Discuss methods by which to receive faculty feedback on emerging technologies (e.g. generative AI) and for having open and transparent discussions regarding VT policy on these issues

4. Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs – Ranald Adams, Chair

- a. Discussion on how information can be made available to graduate and professional students about the financial status in a department (such as those that are funded from within the department and those that are funded from outside the department).
- b. Use graduate and professional student expertise in the area of sustainability to determine areas for consideration.
- c. Considering a designated seat on the Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs from the Greater Washington DC, Metro area.
- d. Finding ways to ensure resources that are available on the Blacksburg campus are translated to the Roanoke campus.
- e. Continue to make progress on reproduction access.
- f. Oversight of policies that have been passed in the past.
- g. Sexual Violence Task Force updates.

5. Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies – Montasir Abbas, Chair

a. Operational

- Resolutions (SWOT), discussion, writing (strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats)
 - Consider the change in SWOT status with potential actions.
 - Consider collaboration and engagement of other commissions in specific activities when needed, shared governance.

b. Responsive

- Follow up on recommendations of the Task Force on Freedom of Expression and Inquiry.
- Other actions as they come up.

c. Proactive

- For a sub-committee to explore creating a separate category of professional masters.
- Online learning/experiential learning.
- Funding – sharing success and faculty engagement.
- Student recruitment and admission for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

6. Commission on Outreach and International Affairs – Dave Close, Chair

- a. Work collaboratively with the taskforce on the Global Strategic Plan.
- b. Identify and promote additional scholarships or funding opportunities for student study abroad opportunities.

- c. Create an international alumni database for the purpose of securing financial support for international experiences.

7. Commission on Research – Carla Finkielstein, Chair

- a. Revision of Human Subjects Research Policy (13040)
- b. Representation of Research Faculty in Faculty Senate (will discuss with the Commission on Faculty Affairs)
- c. Revision to and merging of the two policies that govern centers at Virginia Tech
- d. Feedback on Promotion and Tenure documents containing new metrics
- e. Animal research policy
- f. Research faculty structure

8. Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs – Callan Bartel, Chair

- a. Look at leave discrepancies that impact staff and work with senior leadership to effect change.
- b. Develop a resolution to add university's support of participation in shared governance and professional development into job descriptions.
- c. Learn about past compensation programs for staff and support efforts to propose changes to staff compensation.
- d. Increase professional development and career pathing for staff.
- e. Increase diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging initiatives for staff.

9. Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs – Tristan Southerland, Chair

- a. Revise the Undergraduate Student Senate's Governing Documents.
- b. Promote the overall health and safety of all undergraduate students at Virginia Tech.
- c. Recommend policy that supports InclusiveVT institutional goals.
- d. Improve the undergraduate student experience.

10. Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies – Diane Zahm, Chair

- a. Conduct the business of the Commission using student success as a guiding principle.
- b. Review at least one academic policy and propose modifications as needed to ensure that policy is not creating barriers for student success.
- c. Identify opportunities to improve engagement with the Faculty Senate
- d. Collaborate with other commissions as needed.

4. Announcement of Approval and Posting of UC Cabinet and Commission Minutes

These minutes have been voted on electronically and will be posted on the University web (<http://www.governance.vt.edu>). Note that the purpose of voting on minutes of the University Council Cabinet, Commissions, and Committees reporting to University Council Cabinet is to accept them for filing. University Council Bylaws require that policy items be brought forward in resolution form for University Council action.

- Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs
March 8, 2023
April 12, 2023
- Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs
May 2, 2023

- Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies
May 3, 2023
- Commission on Outreach and International Affairs
April 20, 2023
May 4, 2023
- Commission on Research
March 2, 2023
April 13, 2023
- Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs
August 23, 2022
September 27, 2022
November 29, 2022
March 28, 2023
April 25, 2023
- Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies
April 24, 2023
- Athletics Committee
April 12, 2023
- Campus Development Committee
March 7, 2023
- Climate Action, Sustainability, and Energy Committee
April 24, 2023

5. Adjournment

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