

**University Council Minutes**  
**March 3, 2025**  
**3:30 p.m.**  
**2420 North End Center and Zoom**

**Present:** Cyril Clarke (presiding), April Myers, Laurel Miner for Daniel Sui, Bryan Garey, Menah Pratt, Frances Keene, Kim O'Rourke, Guru Ghosh, Rachel Holloway, Mike Gutter for Mario Feruzzi, Daniel Givens, Laura Belmonte, Tsai Lu Liu, Kevin Pitts, Paul Winistorfer, Saonee Sarker, Lee Learman, Tyler Walters, Amanda Morris, Rachel Miles, Justin Lemkul, Evan Lavender-Smith, Janice Austin, Marlena Lester, Enriqu Noyola, LaTawnya Burleson, Amber Hagan, Kari Evans, O'Brian Martin for Kiera Schneiderman, Leslie Orellana, Alex Efird, Ronnie Mondal, Quiyana Murphy, William Poland, Gary Long, Nicole Pitterson, Jason Malone, Rodney Gaines, Kim Loeffert, David He, Holli Gardner Drewry, Serena Young, T Amber Robinson, Sally Shupe, Vincent Wang, Donna Westfall-Rudd, Kelly Oaks, Larry Cox, II, Francisco Carvallo, Rachel Maizel, and Jim Tokuhisa

**Absent with Notice:** Tim Sands, Amy Sebring, Aimée Surprenant, and Renée LeClair

**Absent:** Lee Learman, Paul Knox, Natalia Guerrero, and Rebecca Hester

**Guests:** Ron Fricker, Rachel Gabriele, Monique Logan, Kat Nelson, Lori Rose, Demetria Somervell, Rick Sparks, Lauren Surface, and Kyle Johnson

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

### **1. Announcement of Order of the Day**

Dr. Clarke announced the order of the day for the meeting. Items to be placed on the agenda must be submitted to the secretary at least ten days prior to the meeting date. Follow the procedures in Section 2(2) – University Council Bylaws, Article IX, Section 2(2-3).

### **2. Announcement of review and approval of minutes of February 3, 2025**

Dr. Clarke 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>). (Note: The February 17, 2025, meeting was cancelled.)

### **3. New Business**

Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs

CAPFA Resolution 2024-25A

Resolution Updating Language in Chapter 7 of the Faculty Handbook on the A/P Faculty Grievance Process

Marlena Lester presented the resolution for first reading. This resolution would revise language in Chapter 7 of the Faculty Handbook to ensure consistency and alignment with current practice in the A/P faculty grievance process. This revision clarifies that the AP Faculty Senate Vice President also serves as the CAPFA chair and oversees the grievance process. Further, it aligns the mediation process with current practice and also incorporates recommendations from the Office of Faculty Affairs.

Commission on Faculty Affairs

CFA Resolution 2024-25C

Resolution to Amend the Faculty Senate Constitution to Establish a Discussion Forum Under the Purview of the Faculty Senate

Justin Lemkul presented the resolution for first reading. The resolution proposes adding a provision to Article 3 of the Faculty Senate Constitution to establish a scholarly discussion forum that will provide a structured space for faculty, staff, and students to discuss topics of scholarly interest, particularly those arising from current events or shared academic concerns. The goal is to create a platform where issues facing the university community can be explored with input from faculty experts.

During the resolution commenting period, questions were raised primarily about procedural aspects, including topic selection and forum structure. These procedural details would be outlined in the Faculty Senate bylaws rather than in Article 3 of the Constitution. If the resolution is approved, the necessary bylaws will be developed to define the forum's operations.

This initiative aims to enhance intellectual engagement and interdisciplinary dialogue within the university community.

Commission on Faculty Affairs

CFA Resolution 2024-25F

Resolution to Amend the Faculty Handbook to Include a Statement of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom

Justin Lemkul, Chair of CFA, withdrew this resolution. The Board of Visitors approved the Statement of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in 2023. Adding the statement to the Faculty Handbook is an administrative action, and since there is no policy being enacted or changed, a resolution is not required.

Commission on Faculty Affairs

CFA Resolution 2024-25I

Resolution to Rename the Department of Biomedical Engineering and Mechanics

Justin Lemkul presented the resolution for first reading. The College of Engineering has relocated the Engineering Mechanics program from the Department of Biomedical Engineering and Mechanics to Mechanical Engineering. As a result, the faculty in the Department of Biomedical Engineering and Mechanics have requested a name change to the Department of Biomedical Engineering which better reflects the department's current discipline and focus.

Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs

CGPSA Resolution 2024-25A

Resolution to Expand CGPSA Membership to Graduate Students from Extended Campuses

Rachel Maizel presented the resolution for first reading. This resolution expands CGPSA membership to include graduate students from the Roanoke and DC extended campuses. The intent is to enhance representation and input from these locations, an initiative that has been

under consideration for several years. Changing the membership would require a revision to the University Council Bylaws.

Concerns were raised regarding the equitable distribution of representation and how additional extended campuses might be included in the future. Maizel clarified that collaboration with existing graduate assemblies in Roanoke and DC will help ensure fair representation. She also noted that the current structure of one member per college is not fully equitable in terms of proportional representation.

A suggestion was made to refine the language in the membership listing to specify the inclusion of extended campuses more clearly for future reference.

#### **4. Announcement of approval and posting of UC Cabinet, Commission, and Committee 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.

- University Council Cabinet  
January 27, 2025  
February 10, 2025
- Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity  
March 19, 2024  
April 16, 2024
- Commission on Faculty Affairs  
November 15, 2024
- Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs  
October 9, 2024  
November 13, 2024  
December 11, 2024
- Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies  
December 9, 2024  
January 25, 2025

#### **5. Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:42 p.m.