

University Council Minutes
April 21, 2025
3:30 p.m.
2420 North End Center and Zoom

Present: Tim Sands (presiding), April Myers, Cyril Clarke, Amy Sebring, Laurel Miner for Daniel Sui, Bryan Garey, Menah Pratt, Frances Keene, Kim O'Rourke, Guru Ghosh, Aimée Surprenant, Rachel Holloway, Marry Burrows for Mario Feruzzi, Daniel Givens, Tsai Lu Liu, Kevin Pitts, Paul Winistorfer, Julia Ross, Lee Learman, Laura Belmonte, Saonee Sarker, Tyler Walters, Amanda Morris, Rachel Miles, Justin Lemkul, Janice Austin, Marlena Lester, Amber Hagan, Kari Evans, Chloe Ebert, Aarav Parikh, Ronnie Mondal, Quiyana Murphy, William Poland, Gary Long, Nicole Pitterson, Jason Malone, Rodney Gaines, Ron Meyers, Rebecca Hester, Renée LeClair, Judy Alford for Holli Gardner Drewry, Serena Young, Amber Robinson, Sally Shupe, Vincent Wang, Donna Westfall-Rudd, Anita Jenious for Kelly Oaks, Larry Cox, II, Francisco Carvallo, Jim Tokuhisa, and Rachel Maizel

Absent with Notice: Evan Lavender-Smith, LaTawnya Burleson, Natalia Guerrero, and David He

Absent: Paul Knox, Enrique Noyola, Alex Efird, Leslie Orellana, and Kim Loeffert

Guests: Ron Fricker, Kat Nelson, Lori Rose, Demetria Somervell, Rick Sparks, and Charlotte Waggoner

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

1. Announcement of Order of the Day

Dr. Sands 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 April 7, 2025

Dr. Sands 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. Unfinished Business

Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies
CGPSP Resolution 2024-25B
Resolution to Revise the Graduate Honor System Constitution

Renée LeClair presented the resolution for second reading and confirmed that legal counsel had reviewed the revisions. She made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded, and the motion passed.

Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs
CUSA Resolution 2024-25A
Resolution to Update CUSA Membership to Enhance Undergraduate Student Representation

Aarav Parikh presented the resolution for second reading and made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded, and the motion passed.

4. New Business

Commission on Faculty Affairs

CFA Resolution 2024-25K

Resolution to Amend the Faculty Handbook to Codify Interest or Discipline-Based Faculty Organizations

Justin Lemkul presented the resolution for first reading. This resolution is a small amendment to the Faculty Handbook to allow faculty organizations to form around shared disciplinary or professional interests for the purpose of professional development. Questions raised focused on recognition and evaluation of such organizations. These concerns will be addressed through administrative policy set by the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, rather than being codified in the handbook, similar to the model used for registered student organizations

Commission on Faculty Affairs

CFA Resolution 2024-25J

Resolution to Integrate Chapter 12 into Chapters 2 and 5 of the Faculty Handbook

Justin Lemkul presented the resolution for first reading. This resolution proposes the removal of Chapter 12 of the Faculty Handbook, which pertains exclusively to the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine faculty. Its content will be integrated into Chapters 2 and 5. Most changes are administrative and involve eliminating redundant language. The amendment underwent legal review and was approved with no required changes. The update preserves unique provisions, such as tenure-to-title policies specific to the School of Medicine. The change supports greater integration of the medical school's procedures into the broader faculty handbook.

Commission on Faculty Affairs

CFA Resolution 2024-25H

Resolution to Codify the Faculty Handbook Reconciliation Process within the Faculty Affairs Office

Justin Lemkul presented the resolution for first reading. This resolution codifies the current faculty reconciliation process by formally transferring responsibility to the Office of Faculty Affairs under the Director of Faculty Reconciliation, a role already in place. This resolution eliminates the inactive Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation and clarifies that reconciliation efforts aim to mediate disputes before reaching the grievance stage. No new positions will be created; the change reflects current practice and updates the Faculty Senate constitution accordingly.

Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs

CGPSA Resolution 2024-25B

Resolution to Clarify Graduate Teaching Assistants', Graduate Assistants', and Graduate Research Assistants' Relationships with Students They Have Academic or Professional Supervision Over

Rachel Maizel presented the resolution for first reading and noted that legal counsel as well as the Office for Civil Rights Compliance and Prevention Education had reviewed the resolution. This resolution mirrors CFA Resolution 2024-25D but applies to graduate students in supervisory roles (e.g., GTAs, GAs, GRAs). It prohibits consensual sexual relationships between these individuals and students under their direct supervision.

Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies
CGPSP Resolution 2024-25C
Resolution to Update the Graduate Catalog

Renée LeClair presented the resolution for first reading. This resolution proposes four updates to the graduate catalog:

1. Removal of the restriction that courses must not be taken pass/fail if a graded option is available.
2. Revised graduate admissions criteria, particularly for international students who may not hold a four-year baccalaureate degree.
3. Clarified language on repeating courses within a plan of study.
4. Updated guidance on submitting a plan of study, requiring submission to the Graduate School as early as possible and no later than the term preceding the intended graduation date.

Commission on Research
COR Resolution 2024-25A
Resolution to Clarify Eligibility for Postdoctoral Associate Status

Nicole Pitterson presented the resolution for first reading. This resolution clarifies eligibility criteria for postdoctoral associate status. It establishes a five-year total eligibility window following the completion of a terminal degree, including time spent at other institutions. It also specifies that appointments must occur within four years of earning the doctoral degree and defines who may supervise postdocs. Minor revisions were made based on feedback from the Faculty Senate and other commissions.

Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs
CUSA Resolution 2024-25B
Resolution to Amend the Undergraduate Student Senate Constitution

Aarav Parikh presented the resolution for first reading. This resolution updates the Undergraduate Student Senate (USS) Constitution, originally created during the transition from the Student Government Association (SGA). Changes include updated definitions, incorporation of a land-grant acknowledgment, internal procedural revisions, the addition of a petition section to support new referendum legislation, and the relocation of certain content to the bylaws for greater operational flexibility. Feedback from the Staff Senate regarding formatting and terminology (e.g., "professional staff") has been addressed.

5. 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.

- Commission on Faculty Affairs
February 28, 2025

- Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs
February 12, 2025
- Commission on Outreach and International Affairs
March 20, 2025
- Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs
March 19, 2025
April 2, 2025

6. Adjournment

Rodney Gaines raised a question regarding potential opportunities for ongoing communications over the summer. Faculty Senate President Rachel Miles stated that she would be writing to all faculty senators soon to let them know that the Faculty Senate officers will meet periodically over the summer, and any senator may contact them with issues.

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:50 p.m.

First name	Last name	Do you approve CGPSP Resolution 2024-25B?	Do you approve CUSA 2024-25A?
Judy	Alford	No Response	Yes
Laura	Belmonte	No Response	Yes
Mary	Burrows	No Response	Yes
LA	Cox II	No Response	Abstain
Kari	Evans	Yes	Yes
Rodney	Gaines	Yes	Yes
Bryan	Garey	No Response	Yes
Guru	Ghosh	Yes	Yes
Dan	Givens	Yes	Yes
Amber	Hagan	Yes	Yes
Rebecca	Hester	Yes	Yes
Rachel	Holloway	Yes	Yes
Anita	Jenious	Yes	Yes
Frances	Keene	Yes	Yes
Renee	LeClair	Yes	Yes
Justin	Lemkul	Yes	Yes
Lu	Liu	Yes	Yes
Gary	Long	Yes	Yes
Jason	Malone	Yes	Yes
Marlena	McGlothlin Lester	Yes	Yes
Ron	Meyers	Yes	Yes
Rachel	Miles	Yes	Yes
Laurel	Miner	No Response	Yes
Ronnie	Mondal	Yes	Yes
Amanda	Morris	Yes	Yes
Quiyana	Murphy	Abstain	Yes
Kim	O'Rourke	Yes	Yes
Aarav	Parikh	No Response	Yes
Nicole	Pitterson	Yes	Yes
Kevin	Pitts	Yes	Yes
William	Poland	Yes	Yes
Menah	Pratt	Yes	Yes
Amber	Robinson	Yes	Yes
Julia	Ross	Yes	Yes
Saonee	Sarker	Yes	Yes
Amy	Sebring	Yes	Yes
Sally	Shupe	Yes	Yes
Aimee	Surprenant	Yes	Yes
Tyler	Walters	No Response	Yes
Vincent	Wang	Yes	Yes
Donna	Westfall- Rudd	Yes	Yes
Paul	Winistorfer	Yes	Yes
Serena	Young	Yes	Yes
Janice	Austin	Yes	Yes
Don	Taylor	Yes	Yes