

**MINUTES**  
**September 13, 2019**  
**Commission on Faculty Affairs**  
**10:30 – 12:00 Noon**  
**130 E Burruss Hall**

- 1. Approval of agenda** **B. Hicok**  
Agenda was unanimously approved
  
- 2. Introductions** **B. Hicok**  
In attendance: Masoud Agah, Aaron Bond, Greg Daniel, Jack Finney (ex officio), Bob Hicok, Zachary Mackey, Margarita McGrath (online), Todd Schenk, Robert Weiss  
  
Guests: Dani Backus (VTCSOM, online), David Musick (VTCSOM, online), Ellen Plummer  
  
Not in attendance: Monty Abbas, Richard Blythe, James Hawdon, Amy Nelson, Robert Sebek  
  
Not yet appointed: SGA representative, GSA representative
  
- 3. Approval of May 3, 2019 minutes** **B. Hicok**  
Minutes unanimously approved
  
- 4. Member for Employee Benefits Committee (1 year)** **B. Hicok**  
<https://governance.vt.edu/employee-benefits-committee.php>  
  
(action needed) Please let Bob Hicok know if you can serve as the CFA representative on the Employee Benefits Committee.  
  
**Member for Employees' Spouse and Dependent Scholarship Program Committee (3 years)**  
<https://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/discounts/continuing-education/scholarship.html>  
  
The commission thanks Todd Scheck who agreed to represent the CFA this year on the spouse and dependent scholarship program committee.
  
- 5. B. Hicok reviewed the work plan for the commission, in no particular order:** **B. Hicok**

  - The commission continues its work on revisions to chapter three of the Faculty Handbook (tenure track and tenured faculty). Next steps include discussion with department heads and chairs.

- Suggested changes to chapter five of the Faculty Handbook (non-tenure track instructional faculty) will be distributed to members of the commission for comment.
- Faculty work load equity project – KerryAnn O’Meara and Kiernan Mathews will be visiting campus to conduct workshops on November 21 and 22. Members of the commission and of faculty senate are invited to help shape workshops/topics to be addressed during this visit.
- Open Educational Resources guidelines are in the process of being revised for consideration by CFA and Faculty Senate. Initiated by University Libraries, these guidelines are being created under the direction of the Board of Visitors (and from legislation passed two years ago by the general assembly). Faculty input is important on these guidelines.
- The CFA and senate are assembling a work group to address faculty service – of interest is are mechanisms for evaluating, measuring, and rewarding faculty service. For example, the work group has begun by receiving information on the numbers of faculty members who have served in university governance over the past two years.
- The integration of representation from the VTC School of Medicine into university governance structures will be addressed this year.
- President’s committee on governance continues to meet and discuss principles of shared governance and next steps. The CFA will receive updates on the work of the president’s committee on university governance. Principles of shared governance have been drafted, Next steps include reviewing governance structures and appropriate representation. The commission suggests that the challenge of representation from distributed university locations continue to be addressed – i.e. using technology to invite engagement in meetings; identifying meeting spaces that can accommodate participants from multiple locations using multiple platforms (e.g. skype and zoom; Roanoke and northern Virginia). Another element of representation in shared governance is to insure that representation is included from all types of faculty: non-tenure track instructional, school of medicine, collegiate professors, etc.
- The commencement committee reports to the CFA. The committee will welcome input from the commission on challenges facing the implementation of commencement. These challenges include adequate space and ceremony length (e.g. handing out diplomas during the ceremony).

Other considerations include adjusting department and college ceremonies.

**6. First reading of “CFA 2019-20A: Resolution on Accommodating Religious Observances” B. Hicok**

Commission members want to accommodate reasonable absences from class. The commission discussed ways in which faculty members can be guided to make accommodations for religious holidays in the context of the university’s attendance policy (Faculty Handbook 9.6.2 and 9.6.2.1). In addition to religious holidays, commission members raised questions about how to best accommodate the varied types of requests for absences including religious, athletic competition, family emergency.

Discussion included the possible advantages of having a university attendance policy that supports all types of absences. Commission members also acknowledged the value of identifying religious holidays as a form of absence distinct from athletic competition or family emergency.

Commission members agreed that continued discussion is needed before the commission can support the resolution as it is written.

**7. Other business B. Hicok**  
No other business

**8. Adjourn B. Hicok**  
Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.