

**Commission on Faculty Affairs
Minutes
April 9, 2010**

Members attending: Debbie Smith (acting chair), Carol Burger, Bruce Pencek, Brad Klein, Sam Easterling, Drew Marrs, Dennis Welch, Sam Riley, and Patricia Hyer

Agenda for the meeting included five items: federal contract compliance, update on policy 1025-CEOD resolution 2009-10B, residency requirements for employees pursuing graduate education, proposed changes to faculty handbook, and committee membership.

The minutes of the CFA meeting on March 19, 2010, were approved without change by email prior to the meeting.

Federal Contract Compliance

Patricia Hyer reported that she has incorporated a number of changes to Policy 6200 and to Chapters 2 and 6 of the Faculty Handbook based on feedback from departmental administrators and faculty members. She also met with a variety of senior officials to negotiate greater flexibility for research extended appointments and return of any fringe benefit savings, as requested by the departments.

Changes include: dropping some references to the prohibition of vacation for AY faculty with three full months of summer salary, making reference to the “effort reporting period” rather than individual pay periods, allowing overhead to be used as back-up funding for research extended appointments, and incorporating language related to “de minimus” activity not requiring reporting. Changes, if approved, will be effective starting Fall 2010.

CFA members unanimously approved the resolution with recommended minor changes. The Commission on Research will review the document on April 14. University Council will review the resolution on April 19 and May 5. The changes, if approved, would then go to the Board of Visitors on June 7.

Update on Anti-discrimination & Harassment Policy - Policy 1025

In Fall 2009, CFA members approved the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity (CEOD) resolution to add gender identity and expression to Policy 1025, and to revise sections on procedure and appeals. Recent state-level controversy makes existing protection for sexual orientation more vulnerable, hence the decision to remove gender identity and expression from the proposed revisions to avoid that problem. CFA members stated for the record that the commission continues to support the eventual inclusion of gender identity and expression as part of the university’s non-discrimination statement. The remaining procedural and appeal changes were reconfirmed.

Residency Requirements for Employees Pursuing Graduate Education

Hyer briefed CFA members about changes to graduate school policy impacting part-time graduate students employed by Virginia Tech. For many years, several degree programs allowed part-time graduate students to fulfill their residency requirements with less than full-time enrollment, usually six credit hours during each of two consecutive semesters.

In Spring 2009, the graduate school began enforcing full-time enrollment to meet residency requirements. The on-line graduate catalog also stated a requirement that full-time Virginia Tech employees could not enroll for more than six credit hours per semester, making it impossible for full-time Virginia Tech employees to meet residency requirements if the two statements were enforced in a literal way.

Because the impact was significant for a number of A/P faculty members who were pursuing doctoral degrees while employed, the Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs (CAPFA) got involved. CAPFA passed a resolution requesting that the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies (CGS&P) reconsider the definition of doctoral residency in a way that did not disenfranchise Virginia Tech employees.

Doctoral residency requirements have been under active discussion in CGS&P and one of its committee throughout Spring 2010. The current proposal is to articulate more clearly three paths to fulfillment of residency: 1) full-time enrollment for two consecutive semesters, 2) alternative residency proposals submitted by degree programs and approved by the graduate school, and 3) individual alternative residency exceptions approved by the graduate school.

Hyer noted that the most difficult issue has been that policy changes were made without full discussion and approval by all appropriate levels of governance, surprising both program leaders and students. Faculty advisors are unable to advise students appropriately when changes are made to the graduate catalog and then enforced without widespread knowledge that the rules have changed.

Proposed Changes to the Faculty Handbook

Rather than adopting separate faculty handbooks for each category of faculty, Hyer has proposed that Chapter 2 of the faculty handbook be changed to have one section for policies that apply to all faculty categories and individual sections with policies applying only to the particular category of faculty: tenure-track faculty, continued appointment track, non-tenure-track instructional, administrative/professional faculty, and research faculty.

Committee Membership

Debbie Smith asked for volunteers for CFA commission representative appointments. Smith agreed to serve an additional year on the Employee Benefits Committee. Sam Riley agreed to serve a one year term on the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Committee. Dennis Welch agreed to serve a three year term on the Virginia Tech Employee Spouse and Dependent Scholarship Committee.

New Business to be Addressed at Future Meetings

- 1) CFA Topics for 2010-1011
- 2) Presentation on the study of tenure outcomes by faculty cohort by Tracey Cameron, GA in the Provost's Office.

Recorder, Cindy Wilkinson