

**Commission on Faculty Affairs
Minutes
September 9, 2011**

Members attending: Sarah Karpanty (Chair), Jack Finney, Alan Grant, Kay Hunnings (representing Dean Sorensen), Bruce Pencek, Debbie Smith, Joe Merola, John Massey, Tyler Arthur (SGA Rep), Eric Vance, Robena Hughes, Matt Chan (GSA)

Guests attending: Leah Richardson (Human Resources), and three doctoral students: Heidi McCoy, Mike Kutrak, Nicole Johnson

The meeting was called to order by Sarah Karpanty, Chair, who distributed the agenda with three items:

1. Introductions of CFA members and guests
2. Conviction Checks – Jack Finney
3. Call for 2011-12 agenda items – Sarah Karpanty

All minutes from last year had been approved and submitted to University Council.

1. Introductions. Each member and guest introduced themselves.
2. Conviction checks for all new employees. Jack Finney provided a handout of highlights about the proposed convictions check policy. The current policy has been revised by the Safety and Security Policy Group to now include all new employees. Current employees will not be subject to conviction checks except when teaching/research faculty move into an administrative role that triggers current policy criteria and when staff or A/P faculty move into any new position. The discussion included the following topics:
 - a. What is the definition of a 'conviction'? Response: *Any court proceeding that results in a conviction should be found by the check.*
 - b. Are department chairs included in the decision of proceeding with a candidate or not based on conviction check findings? Response: *Yes, and that has now been included on the highlights summary, as all hiring managers will receive the information along with their senior management, legal counsel, and the Virginia Tech Police.*
 - c. Changes in position for current faculty: If someone is nominated and selected to be department head, the subsequent conviction check may reveal a conviction that makes them ineligible. It may be difficult to keep this information restricted to those with a need to know. Response: *Careful communication of the new policy will be needed so that a faculty member with a conviction will discuss the issue with the hiring manager, or withdraw from further consideration.*
 - d. For internal moves, is there an appeals process? Response: *The current draft of the policy does not include a formal appeals process, and this issue will be communicated to the Safety and Security Policy Group.*
 - e. What will the policy be regarding the accuracy of the vendor? Response: *Human Resources will be responsible for monitoring the outcomes and should there be problems, an alternative vendor will be pursued.*

Bruce Pencek, President of the Faculty Senate, asked about timing and will work with Jack Finney to include the proposed convictions check policy on the agenda for Faculty Senate as soon as possible.

Post-meeting note: Jack Finney presented this topic to the Faculty Senate on Sept. 13th, 2011

3. Call for 2011-12 Agenda Items.

- a. Changing the current policy to allow the usual entry position for a library faculty member to be assistant professor, rather than instructor. The instructor rank will be used when the faculty member has not completed a terminal degree.
- a. Other Faculty Handbook revisions will be prepared and sponsored by CFA across the current year.
- b. The major revisions for August 2011 were clarification of the research leave policies and ending the need for annual reappointment letters for A/P faculty on regular appointments. The other changes were editorial corrections and the addition of a summary table for the grievance process.
- c. Task Force on the Evaluation of Teaching: Ray Van Dyke will be invited to an upcoming meeting for an update on the new teaching evaluation system.
- d. Long Range Planning Working Documents are available on the Long Range Planning web pages. Paul Knox and Frances Keene will be invited to an upcoming meeting for an update on the strategic planning process.

4. New Business.

Eric Vance described the poor conditions in War Memorial Gym and noted that the conditions are problematic for recruiting new faculty and an issue for morale with existing faculty. He commented that other options for health and fitness and recreation should be available for faculty and staff. When budget problems are present, the university should consider creative compensation or benefits.

5. Adjournment. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Recorders, Leah Richardson and Jack Finney