

Faculty Assembly Meeting  
Minutes for February 24, 2015  
3:30 – 5:00pm  
Blow Hall Board Room

*Members Present:* Berhanu Abegaz, Liz Barnes, Eric Chason (Vice-President), Bill Cooke (Secretary), Sarah Day, David Dessler (President), John Eisele, Catherine Forestell, Courtney Harris, Scott McCoy, Brent Owens, Suzanne Raitt, Ron Rapoport, Megan Tschannen-Moran, and Sibel Zandi-Sayek

*Members Absent:* Brent Allred, Lynda Butler, Chris Gareis, Carl Hershner, Lily Panoussi, Tricia Vahle

*Others in Attendance:* Michael Halleran (Provost), Bill Hutton (Parliamentarian)

The meeting was called to order at 3:37pm.

1. Approval of Minutes  
The minutes of the January 28, 2014 meeting were approved unanimously.
2. Provost's Report: Mr. Halleran
  - a) The Provost reported that the Board of Visitors met two weeks ago and heard about how the college is dealing with issues of sexual assault and the OCR investigation. Most board members appeared to understand the issues are very complex.
  - b) The Provost also reported that he had begun a discussion with the Board of Visitors about how one might use proxy measures to determine how well our educational program is working, and how to set goals for these measures. For example, our undergraduates currently receive 9% of their credit hours in "less visible" teaching, that is in intensive independent study courses that result in credit but do not typically count as part of a faculty member's course load even though it may take as much faculty time as a regular course. The Provost wants this to rise to 10%, noting that this might be a better measure of the quality of the education than a traditional measure, such as a student to faculty ratio.
  - c) The Provost said that although he does not want to write NTE policies for the individual schools, department or programs, he will soon present general guidelines for incorporating full time, long term NTE faculty into the academic community. He will present some specific guidelines, but the basic idea is that such NTE faculty should be integrated in all aspects unless otherwise indicated for good reason.
  - d) The Virginia Legislature may end their business a day early this year. We do not know exactly where things will end up, but they will put some money into salaries. There will be strings attached, but we hope those strings will not be too onerous. We expect the additional contributions to VRS will not be as heavy as last year. There will be some version of a reporting bill on sexual assault, although the final details are not yet clear. The President will report to the campus community sometime next week, if the legislature stays on target.

Questions:

Ms. Raitt asked about the percentage of classes to be taught by NTEs. The Provost said his concern is that at some point, if you do not have enough tenured faculty and full time faculty that you run into all sorts of problems. So, his

measures say that the ratio of credit hours taught by TTE faculty to full time NTE faculty should not be below a ratio of two to one. Ms. Raitt said that there seems to be confusion among our NTE faculty as to whether or not service should be a part of their duties, and whether or not service should be part of their annual review. She asked if this would be clarified in his parameters. The Provost answered that his guidelines are silent on that issue, but again, among long-term, full time NTE, if someone is doing service that should be part of their review. It is not clear how much, and what type of service would merit course release. Mr. Cooke asked if these guidelines describe what, if any, difference there is between a tenured or tenure eligible faculty member and a NTE faculty member. The Provost replied that a TTE faculty member is expected to have a research program and to fully participate in the academic program, and although most NTE faculty members are not prohibited from doing research, that is not a primary part of their job. In the case of NTE faculty who are primarily research faculty, then teaching is not a primary requirement of their job.

3. Proposed amendments to the Faculty Handbook:

Mr. Dessler introduced the Faculty Handbook changes proposed by the PRC to change the language from “inadequate consideration” to “failure to follow procedure” in several places beyond those places that were approved last year. The Provost said that there are only two reasons that one can appeal a tenure decision, either failure to follow procedure or discrimination. This amendment clarifies that by removing the term inadequate consideration, which had been defined as failure to follow procedure but still caused some to believe that it allowed an appeal to ask to reopen the case on its merits. Mr. Dessler moved that the Faculty Assembly accept these changes, and the motion was seconded. Mr. Chason clarified that the Faculty Assembly procedures are that the Faculty Assembly motion should be to ratify the changes suggested by the Personnel Policy Committee’s suggested changes to the Handbook, and that it would require only a majority vote. The motion was approved with no opposition.
4. Standing Committee Reports
  - A. Executive Committee: Mr. Dessler
    - a. The Admissions Policy Committee cannot meet with the Faculty Assembly in March, but did agree to meet in April.
    - b. The hope is to vote on recommendations by the working groups on the Faculty Survey and on Retirement Incentives in March.
  - B. Liaison Committee: Mr. Chason

Mr. Chason reported that there was no faculty presentation at the February board meeting due to it being a joint meeting of three boards. But, he did give describe the current efforts of the Faculty Assembly, and the BOV seemed rather engaged. In addition, Mr. Chason said that before he spoke, the Vice Rector, Mr. Scott, praised the members of the Faculty Assembly for being very active and much stronger than he had expected based on his experience with faculty governance groups at other universities.
  - C. COPAR: Mr. Berhanu

COPAR met as part of FUPC and heard an early version of the planned budget, although these plans were not ready to be released to the public. The Provost commented that there was nothing surprising in the planned budget. He said that his major disappointment with last year’s budget was that there was little progress on M&O.
  - D. Academic Affairs: No Report.

E. Faculty Affairs:

- a. Ms. Forestell reported that the working group had been trying to reduce the Faculty Survey because it had grown so large. Such a large survey has two major problems: (1) A long survey generally will not produce reliable results of the later questions due to fatigue, and (2) Such a large survey has proven impossible to analyze in a timely manner. Consequently, the Working Group used three major criteria to reduce the number of questions: (1) Would the survey questions produce actionable results to develop policy or to answer timely questions; (2) Are the answers already available elsewhere; (3) Is the longitudinal data valuable? The categories that have been kept, although the categories are much smaller, academic background, general satisfaction, climate, faculty retention, research and teaching, college governance, faculty evaluation, identifying priorities, and demographic information. Ms. Forestell said that the current model is now approximately half as long as the last survey, and that it should be possible produce a report in less than a year. Ms. Forestell said that timely issues might be better addressed in a very short, annual survey, prepared after the Faculty Assembly retreat. (1:00)
- b. Mr. Cooke presented a summary of the work of the Retirement Incentive Working Group. The summary included a brief overview of recent retirement plans for tenured faculty, including the phased-out 8%/7% final year raise entitlement and the Retired, Return to Work Program. He described the age distribution as stable over the past eight years, with nearly equal numbers in the 40's, 50's and 60's age cohorts, but that there were significant deviations from this distribution in individual units, and presumably in departments and programs. He presented data on recent retirements showing that the average retirement age has been stable at 65, but that it increased to over 70 three years ago, but that it has been dropping again since then. He also showed that although recent retirees have belonged to the VRS (which provides a pension), the majority of retirees will soon be primarily covered by the Optional Retirement Plan (which provides a tax-deferred savings account to which the university has contributed). He described retirement incentive plans at several universities, which either provided a return to work plan, a bonus buy-out plan or both. In all cases the benefits decreased with age, disappearing around the age of 70. He presented several models for discussion; however, due to the late hour, there was very little discussion from the Assembly members.

5. Old Business: none

6. New Business:

The President adjourned the meeting at 5:10 pm.