

Faculty Assembly Meeting
November 18, 2008
Adopted 12/9/2008 unanimously

Present: Bruce Campbell, Mike DiPaola, Larry Evans, Alan Fuchs, Katherine Kulick, Lisa Landino, John Lee, Alan Meese, Leisa Meyer, Adam Potkay, Marc Sher, Carol Sheriff, Kate Slevin, Greg Smith, and Barbette Spaeth, Tom White, and Laurie Wolf.

Absent: Carl Hershner, Steve Kuhl, Rip McAdams, Todd Mooradian, and Gene Tracy

Others in Attendance: Bailey Thomson, Christine Dang, Brian Focarino, Skyler Halbritter, and Dean Gilbert.

Tom White called the meeting to order at 15:31

1. Motion – to approve the minutes of the meeting of October 28 was approved unanimously
2. Provost was not present due to a commitment in Richmond. He sent for distribution the annual report to the assembly on Specified Term Faculty Report 2008-09 for review and promised to answer all questions at the next assembly meeting. A question was raised as to what specific positions are included in the report. It was suggested that the report contain information about what courses are being taught by adjunct instructors. The report will be on the next meeting's agenda so that questions can be answered.
3. Faculty liaisons of the Undergraduate Honor Council (Bailey Thomson and Christine Dang) made a presentation on the current honor process. First, they suggested preventative measures that professors can use to assist undergraduates, especially during the stressful time prior to exams. A question was raised about faculty proctoring exams. Dean Gilbert emphasized that faculty should be a "presence" during the exam process by making rounds. The issue of proctoring generated discussion. Next, they elaborated on the role of the professor if a violation of the honor code is suspected and responsibilities during the process of an investigation. Procedures of the process were then specified. They finished their presentation by highlighting expectations that faculty can have of students in regard to the system and the process.

Dean Gilbert also mentioned a process by which professors can bring concerns about students to the attention of the dean of student's office so they may assist and provide intervention. A question was raised about how violations are recorded and the duration of time that the conviction appears on the record. A spirited discussion ensued as to whether the faculty is obligated to follow the processes of the honor code policy, especially in situations in which the incident may be minor. Although it is the prerogative of a faculty member to make the decision whether to report an incident to the council, council members argued that consistency and peer review are provided when the council handles such matters.

4. Preliminary results from the Faculty Assembly strategic planning survey. President White thanked Katherine Kulick for her efforts in getting the survey up and running in such a tight time frame. She has worked since it closed in compiling data. 337 responses were

received, which represents 64% of the faculty. Several faculty forums were convened to hear faculty concerns and opinions. Most were small group sessions that gave individuals an opportunity to be heard.

Top four priorities across all faculty respondents in the university included:

- Attract and retain superb faculty
- Support for faculty research
- Attract and retain superb students
- Greater financial independence

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee is looking for a first draft of the survey results by November 24. Tom suggested that the Assembly undertake a larger report during the second semester that will be more comprehensive and reflect all the data collected by the survey. Five members of the Assembly serve on the Planning Steering Committee. Tom reported that there is a lot of concern about the vision statement. There is general agreement is that the vision statement needs much work and refinement. A comment was made that the current statement virtually ignores the graduate programs. There was a strong plea to incorporate all students (undergrad and grad) in references as we craft language to integrate all university programs. A point was made that requiring a one-on-one research experience for every undergraduate has enormous resource implications and would place extraordinary demands on faculty. It would require the faculty to grow in size to accommodate such an undertaking.

It was emphasized that a vision statement should be grounded in aspirations. It should reflect who we want to be, not who we are. A question was raised about whether the challenges prioritized by the survey were mundane. A discussion ensued about how these challenges can be transformed into significant and unique ways to achieve our aspirations. The “how” to meet these challenges must be articulated as priorities under the challenges.

The faculty must influence the specific strategies and goals in a significant way. All constituencies will bring their priorities to the table. Expanding the size of the faculty is a priority that transcends several of the challenges we have prioritized. Timeline is that on December 15 the PSC will deliver a report to the president. He will review it and respond to the committee following the winter break. The schedule has been very ambitious and has not provided the kind of time the faculty really needs to respond to such a task

5. The Academic Affairs Committee of the Assembly is considering proposed college-wide education abroad committee. The chair will reschedule a meeting for then to deliberate.
6. Leisa Meyer provided an update on the College’s non-discrimination policy. She provided a copy of the faculty handbook’s statement related to rights and responsibility. There is no statement referring to sexual orientation, gender identity, or transgender status. A discussion of next steps ensued. Two issues were raised: whether the federal and state government guarantee rights for these groups; and how we can amend current language and policy to include these groups. It was suggested that our Faculty Affairs

Committee draft suggested language to include those three groups in order to clarify their rights. Lisa distributed a request from Equality Virginia, a non-profit group representing these groups for the Assembly to adopt a resolution

7. New business: Kate Slevin provided a preliminary report on the search for a new Provost. She urged that members of the faculty nominate individuals, since such nominations have been fruitful in past searches. The committee is being proactive in recruiting outstanding candidates
8. A reminder that our next meeting will be on December 9.
Motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved at 5:04 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Mike DiPaola
Secretary, Faculty Assembly