

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

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

*Members Absent:* Brent Allred, Chris Gareis, Carl Hershner and Brent Owens

*Others in Attendance:* Bill Hutton (Parliamentarian)

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

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the February 24, 2015 meeting were approved.

2. Provost's Report: Mr. Halleran did not attend and did not send a substitute.

3. Standing Committee Reports

A. 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. He reported that the State Legislature had set a ceiling of 4.5% on faculty raises, and that this would be merit based only.

B. Executive Committee: Mr. Dessler

- a. The Executive Committee has reconnected with the Office of Advancement to develop a letter to ask for support from faculty, with the hope of the letter being distributed by the One Tribe One Day event in April. Based on the discussion that followed, the Faculty Assembly seemed likely to have 100% participation.

C. Liaison Committee: Mr. Chason

Mr. Chason reported that there will be a Liaison Committee meeting later this month to discuss the Faculty Presentation for the April Board of Visitors meeting.

D. Faculty Affairs:

- a. Ms. Forestell reported that the working group had significantly reduced the size of the Faculty Survey so that it is likely to be completed in less than 10 minutes. She reported a series of recommendations proposed by the working group. Following the suggestion of Mr. Dessler, Mr. Cooke proposed a motion to endorse the recommendations of the working group, and this motion was seconded. After some discussion, and a few minor editorial changes, this motion passed unanimously. The text of the approved recommendations is appended at the end of these minutes. It was agreed that the working group would post the current instrument so that it could be accepted at the next Faculty Assembly meeting.

E. Academic Affairs:

- a. Mr. Cooke continued the discussion of the work of the Retirement Incentive Working Group. The primary question is whether or not a retirement incentive program is necessary. The working group's discussions have suggested that a retirement incentive program could

help both the administration and the faculty in planning for retirement, while the financial aspects, as reported by the Faculty Compensation Board's study of last year, suggest that senior faculty cost approximately \$50,000 more per year than their eventual replacements. He discussed the difference between faculty under the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) versus faculty under the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP). For faculty under the VRS system (which provides a pension based on years of service and salary at the time of retirement), a return to work plan can lead to a net increase in salary simultaneous with a net decrease in the cost to the University. For faculty under the ORP (which provides a financial savings which has been based on past contributions and the performance of the investments), there is no similar net increase in salary. Consequently, the working group expected that other retirement incentives might be necessary for the ORP faculty. The faculty demographics show that within 10 years, most remaining faculty will be ORP members. Mr. Cooke reported that the working group will be distributing a survey to tenured and tenure eligible faculty to try to determine which possible retirement incentive programs might be attractive to faculty members. A lively discussion ensued discussing some of the suggested possible retirement incentive programs, in terms of their financial affects and their likely incentive to induce earlier retirement.

4. Old Business: none

5. New Business:

The President adjourned the meeting at 5:10 pm.

### **Faculty Survey Working Group Recommendations**

(1) We recommend that the 2015 Faculty Survey retain the following categories:

- Academic Background
- Demographic Information
- General satisfaction with selected aspects of work situation.
- Research Activities
- College Governance
- Faculty Evaluation
- Identifying priorities

(2) We recommend that in future faculty surveys, the Faculty Assembly will strive to include questions that fit the following criteria:

- a. Actionable, in that they will provide feedback to help the Assembly to develop policies or initiatives related to timely issues that will improve the wellbeing of faculty.
- b. Longitudinal, in that they will provide information on longstanding issues that will allow the Assembly to observe trends in perceptions and attitudes over time.

- c. Not easily obtained from other sources. Information that can be obtained from other administrative sources on campus will not be included.
- (3) Although the faculty survey will continue to be administered every three years we recommend that the Assembly conduct additional short (e.g., 5 min) surveys that address timely issues that concern faculty, if needed during the intervening years.
- (4) In order to assist with the preparation of the report for the faculty survey we recommend that the Assembly commit to paying a graduate student to work half time for one summer month to complete the data analyses.