Minutes of the meeting of October 7, 1997
Lyons Dental Building Student Lounge

Present: Abubaker (for Burns), Adler, Andrews, Barsanti, Baughan, Bilyeu, Boyle, Briceland (for Wooldridge), Brilliant, Cauley, Contos, Crowe, Dvorak, Elliott, Erickson (for Hawkridge), Festa, Fulcher, Griggs, Guthmiller, Hague, Harkins (for Shoaf), Harvie, Henry, Hoffer, Jacobs, Jolles, Kirkpatrick, Leichnetz (for Sonnino), Lewis, Liberti, Lloyd, Malloy, Merchant, Mills (for Coleman), Mouer, Moxley, Oggel, Olbrisch, Olds, Parham, Pellegrini, Pynor, Rezba, Ripley, Robinson, Rossi, Segreti, Shumard (for Guthrie), Spinelli, Stastny (for Campbell), Steel, Swafford, Szari, Welch (for Costanzo), Williamson.

Absent: Cook-Tench, Cox, Gilson, Lenhardt, Ready, Tipton, Webb.

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm by President Terry Oggel. The minutes of the September 2 meeting were approved as distributed, with corrections to the attendance list previously reported to the Secretary. Oggel asked all committee chairs to examine the portions of the September 30 draft of Phase II of the Strategic Plan which fell within their areas and report at the Executive Committee meeting on October 21.

2. Heather Reagan of the Human Resource Division described some of the services provided in the work / life area and distributed brochures to the senators. A full description of these services can be found at the Division's website. Dr. Frank Tortorella spoke about employee health services, encouraging faculty to take advantage of the free flu shots being offered in October and November on both campuses.

3. Dan Mouer read a draft letter to the Rector of the Board of Visitors, expressing the Senate's appreciation for its action in unanimously supporting the process which had led to the approval of the major in African American Studies. After discussion and some suggestions for modifying the letter, a motion to send it to the entire Board was passed by voice vote.

   Mouer also reported on the meeting of the Research Advisory Council, at which several subcommittees on research issues were formed. Vice President Dewey is looking into improving the status of Post-Doctoral researchers, beginning with the formation of an association.

4. Mike Spinelli reported that a subcommittee consisting of himself, Alan Briceland
and Susan Robinson were looking into the sections of the Faculty Handbook which mention the Faculty Senate and the faculty in general, and will be advising the drafting committee headed by David Hiley. Comments may be directed to them or to Oggel, who is also on the committee. Mouer urged them to look carefully at the language in the present Handbook on the job security of collateral faculty, which he feels should be retained.

5. John Guthmiller reported on the conference on higher education sponsored by the Faculty Senate of Virginia, which was held in Roanoke on October 2. A summary of his report, is included below. In it he calls for faculty who are willing and able to interact with legislators and their staffs on behalf of higher education to contact his committee.

6. Susan Robinson moved that all Senate meetings begin at 4:00 pm. After it was noted that the shuttle bus runs every 15 minutes beginning at 3:45, the motion was passed without opposition.

7. The Vice-Provost for Information Technology, John Dayhoff, was introduced. He spoke about his work since arriving at VCU this summer, beginning by noting that his office was not immune to budget cuts and reallocations. Throughout his remarks, which are summarized below, he emphasized his concern for communicating with students as well as with faculty about technology issues. His explanation of the items that appear on his list of priorities for the Office for Information Technology was well received by the Senate. He also urged all faculty to look carefully at the revisions to the Strategic Plan, and consider their implications for technology, since technology is not a one-time investment.

8. The meeting adjourned, and committees met, at 5:30 pm

Neil W. Henry, Secretary

Report by John Guthmiller.
On October 2 the Faculty Senate of Virginia convened a state-wide forum on higher education entitled "Higher Education: Critical Issues for Virginia's Next Generation." Terry Oggel, John Guthmiller, and John Rossi represented the VCU Faculty Senate at the forum, which was held in Roanoke.

Reports were given by J. Michael Mullen, Interim Director of SCHEV, Donald Finley of the Virginia Business Higher Education Council, a group of delegates and senators from the Virginia Legislature. Gubernatorial candidate Don Beyer spoke on "Making Virginia's Schools the Best in the Nation" and Delegate H. Morgan Griffith addressed the forum on behalf of Republican candidate Jim Gilmore. Former governor Gerald L. Baliles gave the featured address, which is available on the Web. John Guthmiller spoke as part of a
faculty panel dealing with issues related to teaching, scholarship, financing, and the values of a college education.

The most critical issue to emerge at the forum was the problem of funding. Former governor Baliles, businessman Finley, and the legislators all agreed that higher education was at risk in the current political/economic climate. To help address the issues of funding and higher education's vulnerability, the Faculty Senate of Virginia is taking steps to establish a closer working relationship between faculty and the legislators who make funding decisions. The VCU Faculty Senate is asked to participate in this process by helping identify VCU faculty who would be willing and able to act, in effect, as lobbyists before the state legislature. Approximately fifteen VCU faculty will be needed, and they do not have to be members of the Senate. This activity is completely in line with and had already been suggested by VCU’s legislative liaison, Don Gehring.

Recruiting and coordinating such faculty "lobbyists" will be the first responsibility of the Senate’s committee on Legislative and Alumni Relations. John Guthmiller is co-chairing this committee with Randall Merchant, and is seeking the names of faculty who are able to participate in this initiative and who would make a positive impression on legislators.

**Remarks by John Dayhoff**

As indicated in "The Strategic plan for the Future of Virginia Commonwealth University" the strengthening of undergraduate, graduate and professional instructional programs is a mission critical factor. In addition, support for basic and applied research programs is a critical success factor. A major element in addressing these factors is the innovative use of information technology.

The challenge for the Office for Information Technology (OIT) is to implement a programmatic, cost effective approach to supporting new and expanding instructional and research programs. The OIT has identified the following as distinct components that require attention in meeting the needs of students, faculty and staff:

1) the continued expansion of VCUnet to all areas of the University.
2) additional open student computer labs.
3) off campus network access to VCU information services.
4) network and presentation equipment upgrades for classrooms.
5) development of and support for faculty and curriculum development.
6) research computational platforms and data bases for basic and applied research.
7) expanded and updated library online data bases.
8) research access using Internet/2.
9) meeting year 2000 compliance.
10) staff development programs.
11) additional staff to support these initiatives.

During a time of explosive growth, both within higher education and information technology, considerable efforts are underway to manage and control costs. All of the initiatives identified by OIT focus on providing quality products and quality services while maintaining a close oversight on cost containment. As VCU continues to grow, it is imperative that the institution and the State provide the funding resources needed to maintain parity with information technology requirements for supporting instructional and research programs.

As for OIT advisory councils and/or advisory committees, I am in the process of reviewing the advisory committee structure with an intent of revising and realigning what is currently in place. I would expect that the Faculty Senate would participate by nominating members of the faculty to whatever committee structure I put into place.

Your continued interest and advice on this is appreciated.