Minutes of the meeting of November 11, 1997
Student Commons Commonwealth Ballroom


1. The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm by President Terry Oggel. The minutes of the October 7 meeting were approved as distributed, with corrections to the attendance list previously reported to the Secretary.

2. Oggel made several announcements:

* Summer School 1998 salaries will not be subject to any reduction;
* The 1994 proposal of an early retirement plan will be reviewed by the Senate's Economic Status committee and an open forum will be held next semester. We intend to make a recommendation by the end of spring semester.
* Faculty should note President Trani's letter to the Times-Dispatch on their reporting of the School of Engineering issue, and also the related material in the current issue of the VCU VOICE.
* The Draft of Strategic Plan, Phase II was published in the VCU VOICE, ahead of schedule, and Open Forums have been scheduled on each campus on November 18 to let the community respond directly to the draft. These arrangements were made as a result of negotiations initiated by the Faculty Senate.

3. Cathleen Burke of the Human Resource Division spoke about the activities of HRD in providing training and workshops. This year credit courses in computer use are being scheduled for staff. She stressed that HRD is prepared to work individually with departments. Linda Morton spoke about benefits for staff and faculty, mentioning the new federal guidelines on tax-deferred annuities.

4. Velma Jackson-Williams, Director of the Office of Faculty Affairs, spoke about
the current and future activities of that office, which was created in response to Strategic Directive #14. She distributed brochures describing the workshops and seminars that have already been scheduled, described the technology in the classroom initiative (which will continue), and encouraged faculty to make suggestions for additional ways that the office could assist in faculty development. While acknowledging that the workshops had all been scheduled on the Academic Campus, she emphasized that the office was concerned with faculty in all schools of the University. In response to a question, she indicated that while this year's budget did not address needs of collateral and adjunct faculty, that would be part of future activities of the office.

5. The Senate then turned to the proposed Strategic Plan, Phase II. Some specific suggestions were made, such as making clear that improved technological support for graduate student research activities is as much a part of "instructional technology" as undergraduate classroom enhancement. It was suggested that the emphasis on the need for faculty to find outside funding of scholarly activity conflicted to some extent with the Roles and Rewards policy which encourages a variety of activities. It appears curious that there seems to be no plan to revive the Office of Assessment, despite the continuing emphasis on assessment and accountability by the State Council.

A concern that had general support is that resources for achieving stated goals did not seem to have been realistically assessed; enhancements in some areas may well require "starving" other parts of the University, and the document does not make clear how such decisions will be made. Phrases such as "The University will . . ." do indicate that the item has high priority, but how the goal is to be implemented and what it will cost is usually not specified.

Critiques prepared by Alan Briceland and Blue Wooldridge were distributed and commented on.

6. MOTION: The current draft document cannot be endorsed by the Faculty Senate at this time because it lacks specific details about priorities for reallocation of university resources. The motion was adopted by voice vote without opposition.

7. MOTION: This extension of the Strategic Plan should be divided into planning/process and strategic sections, and faculty must be part of all planning processes. The motion was adopted by voice vote without opposition.

8. Oggel urged Senators to attend the Open Forums on the Plan scheduled for November 18 and express their views. The Executive Committee, working with committee chairs, will continue to develop revisions to the document, and will pass them on the Vice Provost Hiley in advance of the University Council meeting in December.

9. The meeting adjourned at 5:30
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