Minutes of the meeting of March 3, 1998
Lyons Dental Building Student Lounge


1. The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm by President Terry Oggel, who welcomed President Eugene Trani, Vice President Donald Gehring, Vice Provost David Hiley, Vice Provost Sue Ann Messmer and other guests. He invited senators to sign a card to Provost Grace Harris, who was recovering at home from surgery.

2. The minutes of the February 3 meeting were approved as distributed.

3. Oggel thanked the senators who had participated in drafting recommendations and priorities for the Revised Strategic Plan, especially to the leaders of the five review groups: Sue Brilliant, Jan Lewis, George Moxley, Iris Parham and Blue Wooldridge. The recommendations have been submitted to the Provost, and will remain on the Faculty Senate's website until the final copy is approved and published.

4. Mike Spinelli reported that the draft of the Faculty Transition Incentive Plan (FTIP) would be published in the VCU Voice, and that open hearings would be held on each campus before the Senate considers the Plan at its April meeting. Note: Instead of being published, a copy of the draft will be mailed to all faculty on March 13. Hearings have been scheduled for March 24, and any subsequent revisions to the draft will be posted on the Faculty Senate website before the April 7 meeting. If the Senate approves the FTIP it will be sent to the Provost for administrative review and action.

5. John Guthmiller reported on legislative activities, encouraging senators to follow up on contacts with legislators after the General Assembly session ends. He noted that he hopes to invite a member of the Senate to visit VCU later in the semester.

6. There will be a report on the budget and the budget process from Vice President
Paul Timmreck at the April meeting.

7. Bob Andrews, reporting for the Nominations Committee, moved to suspend the Bylaws in order to permit senators who are in the final year of their terms to serve next year as Campus Representatives on the Executive Committee, and as Senators-At-Large. The Bylaws already provide for this in the cases of the President, Vice President and Secretary of the Faculty Senate. After brief discussion the motion passed unanimously. Nominations are as follows (elections will be held at the April 7 meeting, at which time nominations may be made from the floor):

1. President: Terry Oggel
2. Vice President: George Moxley, Mike Spinelli
3. Secretary: Neil Henry
4. MCV Campus Representative: Iris Parham, Wesley Poynor, Eileen Segreti
5. Academic Campus Representative: Sue Brilliant, Jan Lewis

8. Oggel recounted the history of the Faculty Senate and the contributions of the former presidents of the Senate, many of whom were in attendance. His remarks are available on the website, along with the list of past presidents.

9. President Trani spoke on the state of the university. He began by emphasizing the increasing recognition of VCU nationally as well as regionally, citing the recent rankings of a record number of graduate programs in U.S. News and World Report and the top 100 rating of MCV Hospitals, one of only two located in the South. That very day Motorola announced a commitment of $6.5 million to support the School of Engineering and its "clean room" facility. The current campaign to raise $125 million is, with one year to go, on target to succeed. Furthermore, he sees greater support for the university from the community, both the business and governmental, as they recognize the contribution VCU makes to the well being of the community.

He noted that legislative results were mixed, however. While we appeared to have been successful in getting funding for high priority capital items (renovation of Sanger Hall and the new Life Sciences Building), the car tax issue dominated the legislative session and promises to have a critical effect on the ability of the state to fund other initiatives in this and future bienniums. Funding undergraduate medical education in the era of managed care will remain a highest priority of next year, next biennium, and for many years thereafter. Final results on the budget are not yet available, since many items still remain to be settled in the conference committee.

Trani reminded the faculty that tuition at VCU had increased only 6%, total, in the past six years. Thus, while a national debate over the high cost of college is going on, our tuition income is well behind the rate of increase in other costs.
This cannot continue much longer if we are to continue to grow. In the discussion that followed President Trani responded frankly to questions about out-of-state graduate student tuition; the prospects for more equitable funding of indigent care in the hospital; and the role of faculty in university decision making in an era in which many more external groups are demanding a say in decision making. He concluded by expressing his optimism about the future of the university, noting that both the governor and the legislature will have commissions this year studying the issue of funding higher education.

10. The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.