Minutes of the meeting of May 5, 1998
Lyons Dental Building Student Lounge


Absent: Baughan, Boyle, Burns, Elliott, Fulcher, Griggs, Guthrie, Jolles, Leichnetz, Malloy, Merchant, Mouer, Ready, Rezba, Segreti, Sonnino, Tipton, Webb.

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by President Terry Oggel, who welcomed Maria Michaels of the SGA, who will be participating in Faculty Senate meetings in 1998-99, and Provost Grace Harris. He announced that the first meeting of the fall semester would be on September 8, the second Tuesday of the month, due to the late start of the semester. He will be sending a letter to all faculty summarizing the activities of the Senate this year.

2. Mike Spinelli announced that the Faculty Transition Plan had been discussed at the meeting of the Council of Deans, and had also been presented to the Vice Presidents. It is on the agenda of the University Council next week and will be presented to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Visitors, for information, later this month. While the plan does require the assent of external (state) offices, it seems to be well-received internally.

3. John Guthmiller described the visit of Senator John Watkins to campus on April 24, and stated that personal contacts between faculty and legislators would continue to be encouraged. Guthmiller has been elected Vice President of the Faculty Senate of Virginia.

4. The student mentoring program also was initiated on April 24, and Charles Byles will continue to chair that task force. A second group of approximately 15 students will be selected for the program in the fall; faculty who are interested in participating as mentors should contact Charles Byles (cmbyles@vcu.edu).

5. Dennis O'Toole (Economics), the chair of the Intercollegiate Athletic Council (IAC), and IAC member John Pagels (Biology) were introduced to report to the faculty on IAC activities. Their report include the official graduation-rates report from VCU to the NCAA and a draft of the institutional self-study report which will be submitted to the NCAA in the fall. O'Toole explained that these reports
are necessary for certification by the NCAA. There are four subcommittees currently at work in the areas of:
- Governance and Commitment to Rules
- Academic Integrity
- Fiscal Integrity
- Commitment to Equity

Their preliminary reports indicate that VCU should satisfy all rules with the possible exception of the gender equity commitment. Although there is equity in provision of scholarships, the number of male "walk-ons" (non scholarship players) is greater than the number of females. The subcommittee is still analyzing this issue and considering alternatives such as restricting the number of participants on male teams or increasing the number of female scholarships. Copies of these drafts are available from the IAC, which invites responses and suggestions from all interested faculty. Contact Dennis O'Toole, Box 844000 (dmotoole@vcu.edu). IAC members are listed at http://www.vcu.edu/ireweb/committees/pres4f.htm.

6. Lucy Harvie (Credentials and Rules) moved approval of amendments to the Standing Rules and Leadership Guidelines which were distributed at the meeting. These dealt with attendance regulations and apportionment. The amendments passed without dissent and have been incorporated into the Standing Rules.

7. Steve Gilson (AA/EEO Committee) moved approval of a resolution prepared by the committee which recommended that the University use a single consistently-worded statement in all university documents that contain a non-discrimination statement. Further, they proposed wording which refers to all conditions which are presently found in university documents plus others listed in the Virginia Human Rights Act (VA Code, Section 2.1-715 et seq.) The recommended wording is as follows:

VCU is an equal employment affirmative action institution and does not discriminate on the basis of race; color; ethnicity; religion; national origin; gender; pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions; age; sexual orientation; political affiliation; marital status; disability; or veteran's status. This policy is monitored by the Office of Equal Opportunity/ Affirmative Action Services.

The motion was passed by voice vote and communicated to the Provost.

8. Jan Lewis (Academic Support Services) proposed a resolution supporting increased funding for University Library Services for collections and personnel. Text of Resolution. The motion was passed unanimously after amending it to include the recommendation that this issue be high on the university's list of legislative priorities. A Senate task force will meet with the Provost to discuss
The issue in more detail.

9. Kathleen Cauley presented the report of the task force on year round programming, thanking the members of the task force and the Provost for her support of the survey of students about the summer session. Task Force Report. She summarized the report, emphasizing that it merely identified issues that would have to be dealt with if the summer session were ever to be more integrated into academic programs. The report recommended that the University continue to study the feasibility of year-round programs and seek ways to enhance current summer school offerings and reduce conflicts in the course schedule.

The Report was accepted by the Senate and will be forwarded to the Provost. The Task Force will continue to examine the interest among faculty and programs in year-round scheduling.

10. Terry Oggel recognized committee chairs and officers and thanked them all for their efforts this year and introduced Provost Grace Harris.

11. Provost Harris, who had participated in the discussion of the preceding agenda items, thanked the Faculty Senate for its activity, especially with regard to the adoption of the Strategic Plan and the consequent implementation strategies. The implementation plan is still considered a draft and won't be published until after the Board of Visitors' meeting, but several task forces are already at work and some schools have begun planning processes based on the Plan. Among the issues being currently addressed are:
   - General education for undergraduates;
   - The organization of various advising and retention efforts under the Academic Success Center, which is being announced this week;
   - Resources for graduate education; a task force on graduate engineering has been formed;
   - A task force on integration of the life sciences programs on our two campuses has been formed;
   - Plans for vitalization of the Shafer Court area.

Responding to a question about the apparent lack of faculty input into the process by which legislative priorities are set, she encouraged the Senate Executive Committee to raise the issue with the President when it meets with him in the fall.

12. The issue of the pay cycle for 9-month faculty was raised. The Provost noted that the decision to eliminate the 18-pay option and require 24-pays for all faculty had been made in 1997 after study by a salary administration committee. It was announced in a letter to 9-month faculty in July 1997, although it is to go into effect this August. Faculty who had received the letter, however, insisted that they had not interpreted it as saying that they would be forced to accept the
18-pay cycle. Faculty who were affected by the decision pointed out the financial effects of what is effectively a 25% reduction in salary in the August to May period. Faculty who were not personally affected suggested that the lack of faculty involvement in the development and adoption of the plan had been a serious mistake, and that this decision is having an effect on the morale and commitment of faculty that is out of proportion to the benefit the university will gain from it.

The Provost said that she would put the issue on the agenda of the next meeting of Vice Presidents, and would re-evaluate the benefits of the plan for the overall system.

13. A motion was made to declare the Student Commons McDonald's the worst-run McDonald's in the world, but it was withdrawn because of opposition from MCV Campus Senators who felt that the MCV Food Court location should get that recognition.

14. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm

Return to Faculty Senate Home Page