Minutes of the September 8, 1998 Meeting

Student Commons Forum Room

DRAFT


Elected Senators Absent: Barsanti, Burns, Campbell, Canavos, Contos, Cox, Dvorak, Elliott, Fulcher, Gilson, Grant, Jolles, Klinker, Liberti, Malloy, Ready, Ripley, Van Tuyle, Welch.

1. The meeting was called to order by President Terry Oggel at 4:00 pm. He welcomed the new and returning Senators, Provost Grace Harris, and Maria Michaels, representative of the Student Government Association. He then introduced the other Officers of the Senate. Vice President George Moxley distributed Committee Preference Forms: he is responsible for appointing the members of Senate committees. Oggel noted that tours of new Siegel Center (Sept. 8-9) and of the Engineering Building (Sept. 29 & 30 at 10 a.m.) have been arranged for senators. Minutes of the May meeting were approved as distributed by campus mail and posted on the Web.

2. Oggel then reported on activities of the officers and other senators during the summer.

- The FTIP (early retirement plan) proposal is being reviewed by the University Counsel's office. While some legal questions have been raised (specifically about tax implications of the plan), there is every indication
that it will be brought to the Board of Visitors for approval at their November meeting. After being approved by the Board it will require approval by State units before going into effect. The Senate Task Force will continue to monitor progress of the proposal, which, according to Provost Harris, will be presented to the appropriate committee of the BOV at its September meeting.

- The final report of the 12-month program task force was received in June, and is available on the Web at [http://www.vcu.edu/vcu/faculty/senate/Year_round.htm](http://www.vcu.edu/vcu/faculty/senate/Year_round.htm). A reconstituted task force, chaired by Kathleen Cauley, will continue to work with the administration to explore issues raised by last year's report.

- The draft of the Athletic Department Self-Study Report being prepared for the NCAA that was discussed briefly at the May Senate meeting was reviewed in June by several senators under the leadership of Judy Steel. Our response was sent to the committee that is preparing the report. The report, which is due to go to the NCAA in November, will be on the agenda of the Senate's October meeting.

- The revised Faculty Handbook is almost finished, according to Oggel, who has been involved in the process with Vice Provost David Hiley and others. It will be published online soon (perhaps in September).

- The Senate has been asked to suggest faculty members to serve on the Search Committees for Provost and for Library Director. This process is underway and senators will be informed by email of the composition of these committees.

- The Human Resources Division will be reviewing the Tax Deferred Annuities programs this fall, and has requested participation from the Faculty Senate. Anyone interested in participating should contact President Oggel immediately.

3. Senate Representatives to University Council: The Executive Committee moved that Wes Poynor and Stan Strong be elected as Senate representatives to the Council, and that Neil Henry be elected Alternate. There being no further nominations, election was by acclamation. The President and Vice President of the Senate serve on the Council ex-officio.

4. COMMITTEES: Oggel introduced the chairs of the Senate committees, who described their plans for the year.

- John Guthmiller will chair a Special Committee on Legislative Relations, continuing the work begun last year in promoting direct contacts between faculty and members of the General Assembly.
- Jan Lewis will chair a Special Committee that will review policies and
practices relating to collateral faculty at VCU and make recommendations. This is a continuation of work begun by two standing committees over the past two years.

- Sue Brilliant reported on a long list of issues of interest to the committee on Academic and Professional Status. She reported that the 1996 guidelines on use of "electronic information systems and office equipment", which many faculty had found objectionable, had been replaced in August after review by an OIT committee that included faculty, OIT and Human Resources staff, and Internal Audit. The new "Guidelines for faculty and staff use of communication media" were distributed to senators, but do not appear to have been published online yet. Brilliant noted that the OIT committee on which she serves has also prepared a draft "Ethics policy on computing", which will eventually be sent to the BOV.

The petition to amend the Bylaws of the School of Graduate Studies to increase representation on the Graduate Council for the schools with more faculty has been forwarded to Dean Jack Haar, and we expect that a referendum on the question will take place this fall.

Discussion of the elimination of the 18-pay option for 9-month faculty continues, but while it seems clear that no financial benefit accrues to VCU from this change in policy, there seems to be little response by the administration.

The committee will examine the use and status of adjunct faculty throughout the University, following up a report by the Faculty Council of the College of Humanities and Sciences last year. Provost Harris stated that she had asked all Deans to look into the adjunct issue along the lines of the College report, and that this would be an important issue for her this year.

- Robert Downs of the School of Medicine has agreed to serve as an Honorary Senator and chair the committee on Academic Programs and Research. George Moxley noted that because of the anticipated wave in federal funding this is a critical year for research efforts. Indirect cost recovery is a major issue, along with strengthening the research infrastructure and, as Provost Harris noted, the provision of sufficient startup funds for new faculty.
- Margot Garcia has agreed to chair the committee on Alumni and Community Relations.
- Wes Poynor will chair the Budget and Planning Committee, which will closely watch the work of the Governor's Commission on Higher Education. Through the faculty members on the Executive Budget Committee it will follow the progress of Vice-President Timmreck's efforts to integrate planning into the budgeting process.
Dan Ream and the Academic Support Services committee will continue to support the movement to improve library funding a legislative priority of the university. The committee will also participate in the current Strategic Planning Committee of OIT (the minutes of this committee are now on the Web at http://www.vcu.edu/vcu/oit/plan/index.html).

Mike Spinelli will chair the Economic Status committee.

Earle Coleman will chair the Student Affairs committee, which will have Maria Michaels as a student member. One anticipated issue is the possible reduction in student study space if office use on the fourth floor of Cabell Library is increased.

Charles Byles reported that the mentoring program sponsored by the senate will continue. He is currently recruiting new students to the program and encouraged more faculty to participate as mentors.

The Credentials and Rules committee chaired by Ardyth Lohuis and the retiring Lucy Harvie will review the Bylaws of the Faculty, and the Standing Rules and Leadership Guidelines of the Senate.

Blue Wooldridge will chair a Special Committee that will review staffing levels throughout the university, examining the number of filled and unfilled research and teaching lines.

4. Report from Provost Grace Harris.

The Provost discussed the issues that she would be following very closely this year. She expressed her appreciation that many of these issues were being discussed and reviewed by the Faculty Senate and its committees. The adoption of the early retirement plan, the work of the Executive Budget Committee, and the use and status of adjunct faculty have already been mentioned. Other issues include:

- The Strategic Plan, Phase II, and its implementation. Vice Provost David Hiley has been drafting a report to SCHEV on restructuring that is required of all institutions. This report will be based on the Strategic Plan and is due by October 1. The Senate will get a copy as soon as it is ready. Harris emphasized that the strategic plan will continue to be basis for academic and budgetary planning within the university.

- The Academic Success Program, announced last spring, is up and running under the leadership of John Borgard, Associate Dean of Humanities and Sciences. Faculty support for this program is very important, and the Senate should anticipate a progress report from Borgard soon, perhaps at the October meeting.

- Efforts to promote our curricula in the life sciences are underway. This will involve coordination among programs on both campuses and between undergraduate and graduate programs. The planning and construction of
the new Life Sciences Building on the Academic Campus will provide a focal point for this effort.

- Discussions are ongoing concerning our strategy with respect to the African-American Studies major that was rejected last year by SCHEV. The issue is on the agenda of the September meeting of the Board of Visitors' Academic Policy Committee.

- Student housing must be expanded. There is increasing demand as the number of new freshmen continues to grow (some 2200 this fall). We have been discussing possible strategies with a private company that builds and manages student housing. The most likely site is on Broad St. between the Siegel Center and the Fine Arts Building. While there are serious drawbacks to this site (distance from the other campus housing units; potential impact on the Carver community) it appears to be preferable to other sites that were proposed. The issue of relations with the Carver community is a critical one, and will not be ignored.

- Student enrollment is projected to increase, but can we expand geographically to become "nationally known"? One issue is whether certain programs can and should be targeted to expand the recruitment base, particularly at the graduate level. Increases in merit-based scholarships and support for graduate tuition stipends for out-of-state students will be critical in these efforts.

- Finally, Provost Harris urged faculty to continue to participate in the many public events that are scheduled for this academic year: the opening of the Engineering Building and the Siegel Center, for example.

5. The meeting adjourned at 5:45, for informal discussion with committee chairs.

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*Neil W. Henry, Secretary*

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