Minutes of the March 2, 1999 Meeting

DRAFT

Lyons Dental Building Student Lounge


Elected Senators Absent: Abbey, Bilyeu, Burns, Chatterji, Cook-Tench, Costanzo, Corey (sub Brown), Cox, Elliott, Forsyth, Gilson (sub J. Mason), Grant, Guthrie, Nixon, Olds, Pitts, Ream, Rezba, Rossi, Shoaf, Stastny, Steel, Swafford (sub Meixner), Webb.

1. The meeting was called to order by President Terry Oggel at 4:00 pm. The minutes of the February meeting were approved as previously posted.

2. The slate of nominees for Senate officers, 1999-2000 was presented by Vice President George Moxley on behalf of the Nominating Committee. The election will be held at the April meeting. There being no nominations from the floor, the nominees are:

   - President: **Wes Pynor**, School of Pharmacy
   - Vice President: **Sue Brilliant**, College of Humanities and Sciences
   - Secretary: **Margot Garcia**, College of Humanities and Sciences
   - Academic Campus Representative: **Dan Ream**, University Library Services
   - Medical Campus Representative: **Mary Ann Kirkpatrick**, Pharmacy

3. **Robert Downs**, Chair of the Academic Programs and Research Committee introduced **Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies William Dewey**. Dr. Downs distributed selections from the Phase II Strategic Plan (Section II and Section IV, 4-14, 17) and the associated items from the Provost's 1997-98 progress report on restructuring. He made note of the prominence of University Library Services in these documents and drew the Senate's attention to the recent interview with Dewey in the UniverCity News.
Dr. Dewey began by reviewing the trends in research funding at VCU. While research dollars are increasing, proportionately less is from federal sources, and funding from NIH has decreased, which threatens our Carnegie research ranking (which is based on federal funding).

He reported two actions taken by his office: one person has been hired to help researchers write grant proposals and another to aid in preparing budget pages of proposals. He stressed, however, that in order to reach the goal of $135 millions the university must devote a significant amount of money to recruit and retain new faculty who will bring in research dollars, and also look realistically at the way clinical and teaching requirements impinge on research productivity. Several questions were raised about the levelling off of the number of tenure-track faculty and our position relative to UVA and our peer institutions. Dewey stressed that other institutions have been more successful than VCU recently at attracting new faculty researchers and government research funds.

4. Downs then introduced Vice President for External Relations, Don Gehring, who spoke about the just-concluded legislative session and prospects for the future of our state supported E&G budget. NOTE: Many of Gehring's remarks can be found in his Legislative Highlights Reports and in a recent interview in UniverCity News. While the General Assembly has included a substantial amount of money (some $15 million) towards the indigent care costs incurred by MCVH, there remains a substantial deficit. Gehring expressed his personal feeling that the University can not afford to keep revisiting this issue year after year, as it interferes with our ability to lobby for funds in other areas of our teaching, service and research missions. Indigent care is not the only unfunded (or underfunded) service that we have to deal with, and other infrastructure needs of the university need to be highlighted for the legislators.

Discussion focussed on how legislative priorities for the next session will be determined, through the work of the Executive Budget Committee.

5. Terry Oggel introduced Kristi Vera of University Counseling Services. She spoke about the role of Counseling Services, which has offices on both campuses (Hunton Hall, 8-3469; Student Commons 8-6200). She urged senators to make colleagues aware that they are available to deal with troubled students, and that if there appears to be a crisis situation the emergency line 8-1234 will provide immediate attention.

6. Earle Coleman and Maria Michaels introduced the revised Student Creed, and on behalf of the Student Affairs Committee asked for Senate endorsement. The SGA of both campuses is proposing that the Creed be formally recognized by the Board of Visitors. In response to questions, they said that although it would not be a formal part of the rules and regulations of the University, it had been
reviewed by VCU lawyers. There was some uneasiness expressed about its quasi-legal status, however, and prediction that it could form the basis for lawsuits. Nevertheless the Faculty Senate voted to endorse the proposal (by voice vote, not unanimous).

7. Coleman reported that he and Sue Brilliant had met with Dean of Students Bill Duvall, who plans to draft a revision to the disruptive student policy that will provide for immediate interim suspension from a class. More details are promised for the next Senate meeting.

8. Allan Briceland distributed a memorandum expressing his views on on the new sickness and disability plan, and the options available to faculty who are considering switching from the old to the new plan. The last date for enrolling is March 31.

9. The annual Senate apportionment report was presented by Ardyth Lohuis. Apportionment for 1999-00 provides the School of Business and the School of Education with one additional Senator (5 rather than 4) and reduces the number from the College of Humanities and Sciences and the School of the Arts by one (11 from 12 and 5 from 6, respectively). Other units representation is unchanged. The report and reapportionment was approved, and the Secretary charged with informing the Schools.

10. John Guthmiller announced that a Legislative Forum has been arranged for March 16th. Local legislators have been invited to hear several faculty describe the role of research in the university and its impact on their teaching.

11. Oggel reminded the Senate to be alert for updates on the searches for a new Provost and Executive Director of ULS. Announcements can be found on the Faculty Senate website.

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