Minutes of the February 1, 2000 Meeting of the Faculty Senate

Meeting in Lyons Dental Student Lounge


Absent: Bilyeu, Henry, Kester, Leone, Malloy, Nixon, Peng, Poindexter, Spottswood, Webb, Ivatury

Faculty Senate President Wes Poynor opened the meeting at 4:10.

The minutes of the December 7, 1999, meeting were approved with typos noted and corrected.

Faculty Senate President Wes Poynor went over the agenda of the upcoming University Council Meeting and the minutes of the past meeting of December 9, 1999. It was noted that the University Council minutes (distributed to senators by email) were incorrect. The Faculty Senate did not vote in opposition to requiring students to have a computer when they enter VCU; rather we were unhappy we had not been consulted as the policy was developed. It was noted that our Library initiative was not in the Governor’s budget, but some capital funding dollars should be forthcoming. The Cauley report on year around classes has not yet come to the University Council.
• The VCU Board of Visitors will be meeting next week.

• Governor Gilmore’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education, chaired by Ed Flippen [elected Rector of the VCU Board of Visitors in February], plans to release its 119-page report on February 3. [See the Recommendations of the Commission online]

• The University Retention Task Force is hard at work. The Culture and Community Subcommittee has created a survey that Senators were asked to fill out and return today.

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Laura Festa, Chair of the Credentials and Rules Committee reported on reapportionment of the 62 elected Senators:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University unit</th>
<th>New number of Senators</th>
<th>Change from this year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Humanities and Sciences</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of the Arts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Business</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Engineering</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Social Work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Allied Health</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Dentistry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Medicine</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Nursing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Pharmacy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Schools have a minimum of 2 Senators and Medicine has hit the cap of 20. The report will be available on the web. Dr. Festa is still gathering the information on the distribution of the seats for the University Grievance Panel. That will be available at the February 29th meeting.

The report from the committee was passed unanimously.

There was an election of the Nominating Committee for the officers of the Faculty Senate: President, Vice President, Secretary, representative from the MCV campus and representative from the Academic campus.

Glen Van Tuyle, George Moxley, Christina Turner and Earle Coleman were nominated from the floor. There being no further nominations, it was moved and seconded to accept the nominees. That motion was passed unanimously. Their report is due at the February 29th meeting (the March meeting).

Dr. Gene Trani, President of the University spoke to the assembled Senators and guests on the future of research at the University, and on the articles in the Richmond Times Dispatch of January 16 and January 30. Dr. Trani then introduced Dr. Roy Pickens, Assistant Vice President for Research and Acting Vice President for Research Dr. Frank Macrina. Provost Roderick McDavis was also introduced.

- On December 17, 1999 the Office for Protection from Research Risks
(OPRR) sent a letter to which the University was asked to respond to by January 6, 2000. On January 11, 2000, OPRR wrote and said the university was suspended from carrying out any research with human subjects. VCU was the 7th University the OPRR had visited and suspended in 1999-2000. President Trani put together an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Task Force that met daily and has issued almost daily e-mail reports to the entire faculty. This group developed a work plan that President Trani and Dr. Pickens presented to OPRR on January 28. OPRR accepted the plan on January 31 and re-instituted the Multiple Projects Assurance (MPA) agreement that allowed human subject research to proceed following re-review of each protocol. Part of the plan has been to contract with Western IRB, a for-profit firm, which reviews research protocols to make sure they follow the legal requirements. VCU will internally evaluate exempt research. However, President Trani emphasized that the researcher is not to determine if the research is exempt. Researchers must put forward a protocol and have it judged by the review board.

- Both FDA and NIH have reinstated the Multiple Projects Assurance (MPA). President Trani said that VCU was clearly not doing what it should have been doing. The VCU IRB had been overwhelmed by the amount of work. It had been set up when VCU generated an annual $50 million research program and VCU is now at about $120 million. VCU had not done the required training for all investigators. Starting right now, VCU will do everything by the book. There is a Priorities Committee working to set priorities for the Western IRB to use in re-reviewing research protocols.

- President Trani stated that VCU is in a period of transition. We need to be prepared to compete for grants and recruit faculty to move the research along. Dr. Pickens has made tremendous progress in the last 21 days. He has regained the OPRR's and FDA's confidence. This new process will improve research at the University. Dr. Macrina will be looking at issues of the animal laboratory and how VCU handles radio-isotopes as well as overseeing the Office of Sponsored Projects. There will be a new Vice President for Research in place by the fall; the search committee is in place, chaired by Dr. Macrina and
Provost McDavis. University people have pulled together and treated this problem as our problem. Provost McDavis will take charge of the training of faculty. Everyone will need to understand the rules. President Trani reiterated that we did not endanger any human subjects.

- President Trani then turned his remarks to the two articles in the Richmond Times Dispatch. He said that VCU would not lose its accreditation. President Trani passed out a copy of a letter from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) stating that VCU was accredited until December 2004. In the accrediting board’s review of VCU, it had commended VCU for its practices in hiring and reviewing of adjuncts. The newspaper articles were based on new SAC standards that are being applied to Community Colleges. President Trani pointed out that only UVA has a higher percentage of full-time teaching faculty. VCU's percentage of adjunct faculty is lower than ODU, Virginia Tech, and William and Mary, and VCU doesn’t routinely use graduate students to teach. The Provost and President Trani will see to it that by 2004 the balance of full time and part time faculty will be in line with SACS requirements.

- President Trani noted that the use of adjuncts is an interesting concept. We have very talented people in the community who want to teach and love doing it. The students gain from their teaching. If we want to have class sizes of less than 22 students, then will have to have lots of sections and therefore a need for more faculty. In an analysis of teaching loads, it was found that less than 50% of full time faculty taught 3 or 4 classes, and that more than 50% taught 0, 1, or 2 classes. Beginning at the department level, we need to look at how to staff classes. Departments need to make sure that an appropriate number of classes are taught by full-time faculty. The lower level classes will be taught by an appropriate balance of full-time faculty and adjuncts.

- President Trani reiterated that reallocation is difficult and painful and will continue. He did note that many legislators don’t understand research. They think it is a hobby that professors do when they are not teaching. The administration has been working
with the legislative committee on technology and there are some knowledgeable people there.

- During the discussion of his presentation, Dr. Trani said that the whole internal review problem shows that there are infrastructure problems in the research effort. It will cost $250,000 for equipment and fix-up. The IRB contract will cost between $750,000 and $1 million. Re-review of projects will take months. The first shipment of protocol reviews went out today. Having the Western IRB do this buys VCU time to rebuild the IRB. In the future, VCU plans to have about 5 IRBs. [On February 4th a new IRB web page was created at http://www.vcu.edu/irb/.]

- VCU is moving in the direction of supporting interdisciplinary institutes and centers. However, President Trani said that the Centers have not done as well in obtaining grants as he had hoped. Now is the time for VCU to develop as a serious player in the grants world. There is a larger concern that the Commonwealth of Virginia is slipping in the number of grants it is receiving. The Governor is putting up $20 million dollars of matching funds to enhance the research competitiveness of Virginia's universities. We need to make sure that the regulatory infrastructure is in place, and that part of that infrastructure will assist in the preparation of grants proposals.

- Dr. Pickens said there were 1100 protocols to be re-reviewed by the Western IRB. They will be reviewed in priority order with the highest priority given to the most vulnerable populations. Once we are past that, university priorities will come into play. We will do everything possible to review new proposals being submitted to funding agencies within 60 days.

- It was noted that some students will be delayed as a result of the IRB suspension. VCU requested from OPRR and was granted the authority to evaluate exempt studies. There will be a three person committee, all of whom have received the IRB training (53 people went through the training), which will review proposals for exemption. The faculty will get e-mails outlining the procedure. [On February 9 an IRB E-mail archive was created at http://www.vcu.edu/irb/.]
• Dr. Trani said in closing that he is expecting a stronger research program to come out of these difficulties. We will have the infrastructure in place. However, it takes only one person to screw up the works and shut us down. We need the Faculty Senate to step up and take leadership. Everyone has to focus on the regulations and help spread the word to all faculty and students.

• Dr. Pickens said he is available to come to departments and explain what happened and what we are doing about it. Send him an email and say “I’ll take you up on your offer.”

It was moved, seconded and approved to adjourn at 5:45.

The next meeting is at 4pm, February 29, 2000, in the Student Commons Forum Room.

Margot W. Garcia,
Secretary of the Faculty Senate

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Neil W. Henry
February 12, 2000