Minutes of the Faculty Senate

February 29, 2000 (March Meeting)

Meeting in Student Commons, Forum Room


Faculty Senate President Wes Poynor opened the meeting at 4:10, noting that this was a millennium leap day, a very rare event.

The minutes of the February 1 meeting were approved with a correction on page 4. (line 20: "He did note that one legislator opined that many legislators don’t understand research.")

Faculty Senate President Wes Poynor went over the agenda.

- He noted that the library initiative had been proposed for $300,000 in the operating budget and $1.9 million in capital budget by the Virginia Senate.
- The year-around programming issue is once more not on the University Council agenda.
- The Disruptive Student Policy revision passed last year has fallen through the cracks. Earle Coleman, Chair of the committee that worked on it, is meeting with student governments of both campuses to try to get it before the administration.
The Board of Visitors will have a special meeting in April on the budget and its regular meeting will be May 12th. The recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education (Ed Flippen, Chair) are accessible on the web at http://www.vcu.edu/vcu/faculty/senate/BRCRecs.htm, but the full report has not yet been printed or released on the web.

Faculty Senate President Poynor attached the minutes of the last two University Executive Budget Committee meetings. The Internal Review Board crisis will eat up most of the new funding.

At the last meeting the faculty were asked to fill in a survey on the campus culture and community at the university. Dr. Poynor distributed the results of the survey for the Senate’s perusal; there were 47 responses and several pages of comments.

A motion was moved, seconded and passed that the Faculty Senate May meeting be moved to April 25 so that President Trani can attend and address us. [Comment added on March 24: The Senate may need to also meet on the regular date of May 2 as well, to discuss the Classroom Technology issue and the Drug-Free Schools and Alcohol Policy revisions, among other issues.]

Linda Harber, Executive Director of Human Resources, introduced Shelly Shiflett who went over the benefits that are available to faculty. Most of the forms that we need are on the web and they are moving to interactive forms. Shelly Shiflett went over some of the changes in benefits. Faculty can contribute to tax deferred annuities (TDA) up to 20% of their salary or $10,500 maximum per year. The vendors are Fidelity, TIAA-CREF, and VALIC. Three grandfathered vendors, Lincoln Life, Aetna, and Travelers will be continued, but faculty with any other vendor will have to change to a new one. There is a cash match of at least $10 per month for those contributing to a TDA and that match will begin on April 14. It will show up on your quarterly accounts from the vendor. Angela Bozeman, head of Worklife, said it was one of the top 20 programs in the country. They have all kinds of information to help employees, from helping you find elder care for a parent or other relative
to recommending meal delivery, eldercare attorneys, or childcare providers. She handed around a book of employee discounts and asked for recommendations for other discounts you would like.

Dean Steven Gottfredson of the College of Humanities and Sciences talked about the Proposal for the creation of a VCU Center for Teaching Excellence. He and Dean Oehler of the School of Education surveyed departments and met with people. They found that there are many fragmented resources to help faculty improve their teaching. It would be good to have them all in one Center to coordinate efforts. It was suggested that the Center should also strengthen and help collateral faculty. It was moved, seconded and approved to support the recommendations in the Proposal for the Creation of a VCU Center for Teaching Excellence with the understanding that there will be a second round of review to allow the Senate to look at the detailed proposal for the center and consider its merits. The discussion on the motion revealed that many of the Senators hadn’t read the report and were concerned that endorsing the report might mean endorsing a whole list of recommendations supporting establishment of a Center.

The Chair of the Senate Committee on Alumni and Exterior Relations, Dr. Mary Ann Kirkpatrick, introduced Dr. William Iles, the Alumni Director. He talked about the reconstruction of 924 W Franklin, the new Alumni House that will open May 9, 2000. The first floor will be restored to the 1890s with contemporary touches. It will be resource for the faculty, staff and students from either campus. They are looking for people who want to donate funds and name the different rooms. The goal is $500,000. Those funds will be matched by $1 million from the Foundation. Another program is raising funds for individual endowed scholarships. Already they have raised $900,000 for 34 scholarship. The goal is $3.6 million for freshman scholarships. The smallest endowment for a scholarship is $20,000. Five percent of the principle is given to the student for books and tuition and five percent is plowed back into the principle. There will be a dinner for donors and scholarship students. The medical campus is raising funds for a variety of projects.
reported on the reapportionment of the number of slots for the University Grievance Committee. There are 21 members on the panel and 17 alternates. She gave thanks to Ms. Lucy Harvey’s careful instruction. It was moved, seconded and passed to accept the report on the University Grievance Committee representation from Schools and College.

**Dr. George Moxley, Chair of the Nominating Committee** put forward their report. Nominations for Faculty Senate Officers 2000-01 are as follows:

- President – Wes Poynor
- Vice President - Sue Brilliant
- Secretary - Dianne Simons
- East Campus Rep: Susanna Wu-Pong and Laura Festa
- West Campus Rep: Dan Ream

It was moved and seconded to close nominations. The nominations were closed with no objections. At the April meeting, voting will take place for the officers.

Faculty Senate Wes Poynor told the Faculty Senate that the Executive Committee asked him to make several points at the next President’s Council, which he did. They are:

1. The IRB Task Force is working hard to put in place a new system. The suspension of all human subjects research has been very hard on faculty and students and they are not happy about the situation. They are being patient as the new systems are put in place.
2. Graduate students who can’t get their research done on time may be in trouble; this is as a result of the suspension and subsequent long time to get re-approval, resulting in postponement of their expected graduation date. These students may need to be given financial relief from the extra tuition. If you know of students in that predicament, please bring them to the attention of your Dean and the Provost.
3. Tenure Track faculty, whose research has been delayed and which may place them in jeopardy, may need to ask to be given
an extension of the tenure time clock. It is important to be proactive on this problem and bring it to the attention of the Departments and Deans.

4. We are concerned about the systemic problem that bad news is not getting through to the President of the University. In discussions with the President, he said that he had not thought that OPRR would impose the “death penalty” and thought we would be given time to work out the problems. We faculty need to be persistent when we see a problem and carry it forward to the Deans and beyond. We must have the courage to tell the President when there are problems. **So at the May meeting (to be held April 25), we are asking the President to talk about the fiscal health of the institution and the priorities for the future.** The Senate President will continue to meet with the President’s Council during the summer as legislative priorities are discussed.

In the ensuing discussion, other topics for the President include a response to Ed Flippen’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education Report and the suggestion that in exchange for developing outcomes based evaluation criteria, Universities will be given 6-year budgets. This idea has been put off for this year in the General Assembly, although the University is proceeding with the essence of the recommendations. We can ask the President to react to what is in the report on campus culture and retention. Dr Trani should be asked to address grants administration, and for a follow-up to the initiatives that came forward from the Research Summit held in January 1999.

Concern was expressed by members of the Faculty Senate that President Trani is joining the Board of Directors of a tobacco company (Universal Corp.).

It was noted that there is a good article in March’s Atlantic Monthly on the relationships between universities and business: “The Kept University.”

The Nominating Committee was established for the Chair of the University Grievance Panel. **Sue Brilliant will chair the Committee**
and Rich Costanzo and Christina Turner agreed to serve with her.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45.
The next Faculty Senate meeting is April 4 at 4 pm in the Lyons Student Lounge.
Margot Garcia
Secretary to the Faculty Senate.

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*Neil W. Henry*

*March 27, 2000*