Minutes of the Faculty Senate
November 6, 2001
Commonwealth Ballroom A, Student Commons

Present:

Absent:
Boothby, Hague, Heldberg, Jeter, Kennamer, Kirschbaum, Lloyd, McCreary, Peng, Roberson, Seither, Tepper, Walsh

Excused: Alder, Diegelman, Weaver

Opening Remarks:
The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm. The minutes from October 2nd Senate meeting were approved as distributed and posted on the Web.
President Bob Andrews announced that the Academic Affairs Committee of University Council had met and that considerable discussion had occurred regarding the proposal to form a special curriculum review committee for professional program courses and programs. President Andrews voiced concern that the proposed constitution of the committee was heavily weighted in terms of the number of administrators and that the committee bore little resemblance to other curriculum review committees (i.e. the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and University Graduate Curriculum Committee). The proposal was tabled. The Provost will oversee a revision of the proposal and it will come back to the Academic Affairs Committee.
Dr. Andrews announced that he had been contacted by the VCU Athletic Department regarding the provision of free tickets for faculty and staff for 2 upcoming basketball games (November 20: VCU v. East Tennessee State University and December 18:
Faculty would be notified via campus mail of this opportunity to support VCU athletics.

**Fall Scheduling:**
The University Calendar Committee is responding to a resolution from the VCU Student Government Association requesting a fall break and Dr. Andrews sought Faculty Senators opinions about two proposals under consideration. One proposal was to hold classes on Labor Day and extend the Thanksgiving Break to include the Monday following Thanksgiving or the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving and the other was to offer a fall break midway through the semester.

**Senator Briceland** commented that a decision on the fall calendar is an important decision and needs to be widely disseminated and discussed. **Senator Fauri** spoke to the proposal to schedule classes on Labor Day in order to have a fall break or extra day of Thanksgiving holiday. He stated his belief that Labor Day has a history in our country as a day to honor workers and he felt the University should respect the national holiday.

**Senator Poynor** pointed out that the calendar on the MCV campus and the one on the Academic Campus did not coincide. Dr. Andrews indicated that the resolution had been drafted on the Academic Campus. The Student Government Association on the MCV campus had not discussed the fall break issue to his knowledge. **Senator Poynor** indicated that the Department of Pharmacy had on their own initiative as a department scheduled a fall break for the pharmacy students, but after trying it for four years, they abandoned the idea because the faculty and students found that it did not work for them to miss lab courses.

**Senator Koerin** asked when the decision would be made and noted that other Virginia colleges do meet on Labor Day. It was noted that some schools schedule a break in October at midterm time and others give students the full week of Thanksgiving off. The current proposal is for a two-day break in week 7 of the semester (October.) Dr. Andrews asked that Senators complete the survey that was circulated. He announced that he would compile the responses and share them with the Calendar Committee. He encouraged faculty to talk with other faculty and students over the course of the next couple of days and send those comments to him before the Calendar Committee meeting, which was scheduled for Friday November 9, 2001.

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**Resolution for Support of the Implementation of the University's Five-Year Diversity Plan**

**Senator Beverly Koerin** presented the following resolution on behalf of the Senate AA/EEO Committee, which she chairs:

*The Faculty Senate is committed to the goals of the University, one of*
which is to “value and promote racial and cultural diversity in its student body, faculty, administration and staff to enhance and enrich the university” (VCU Undergraduate Bulletin, 2001-2002, p. 2). Toward that end, the Faculty Senate endorses recommendations submitted by the University AA/504 Advisory Committee to the Provost in May 2001 regarding (1) implementation of the Proposed Five-Year Diversity Plan and (2) establishing a system of ensuring accountability relative to the university’s goals with respect to diversity. While the Senate recognizes that some efforts have been initiated to enhance diversity, the Five-Year Diversity Plan, requested by Provost Harris during the 1998-999 academic year and submitted to Provost McDavis in September 1999, entails a more comprehensive approach to achieving this university goal.

Senator Chris Turner spoke in support the resolution. A senator from the School of Medicine responded that statements in support of diversity were “nice, but the bottom line is that to increase the diversity of students in the School of Medicine, it requires money for scholarships.” Without this funding VCU is unable to compete with other schools attempting to recruit minority students who are able to offer these students scholarships. A discussion ensued that included expressed concern that the resolution would not put any pressure on the administration, but it would result in placing additional pressure on faculty. It was asserted that the resolution would serve as an entree’ to the Administration to focus attention to the issue of increased diversification at all levels of the University.

Senator Poynor expressed a belief that passage of the resolution would give the Provost “the ammunition to take to the other Vice Presidents” to move in the direction of creating a better climate for diversity. It was noted that diversity was addressed in the University’s Institutional Performance Agreement.

Senator Pat Cummins shared that the University was doing well in terms of recruiting a diverse student body, but not nearly as well in the area of diversity amongst tenured faculty positions. Senate discussion included statements that the Diversity Plan "is about faculty," and "hiring and promotion practices." It was asserted that "Women and persons of color were in collateral faculty positions" at VCU. A comment was made that this report came from another University committee and that it appeared that "the University seems to be sitting on the report." The Senate resolution was simply a faculty endorsement of the AA/504 Committee's work. The motion passed 28-6-1. The resolution will be shared with the Provost by President Andrews
Senator Dan Ream, Chair of Academic Support Committee, presented Senators with a brief description of the history of the Senate's commitment to support increased funding for the VCU Libraries. After an extensive study by the Academic Support Services Committee, the Senate passed a resolution in April 1999 requesting that the VCU administration develop a 5-year plan that would move the VCU Libraries "to the median status in budget, salaries, and collections of its peer libraries by 2005." Senator Ream then introduced Dr. John Ulmschneider, Executive Director of the VCU Libraries, who presented a report to the Senate in response to the Senate's request for the 5-Year Plan.

Dr. Ulmschneider indicated that when the original Senate resolution was passed VCU Libraries ranked 24th or 25th amongst its 25 peer institutions. He reported that the Senate passed a second resolution in May of 2000 that renewed the call for increased library funding.

He informed Senators that among VCU's 24 SCHEV-approved peer institutions only one is not a member of the Association of Research Libraries. In addition, of the 88 Carnegie Research Extensive universities, 77 have membership in ARL and those institutions that do not have membership are nearly all specialized graduate institutions very different from VCU. The administration recognizes the need for a library system commensurate with competing peer institutions if VCU is to demonstrate the excellence required to attain Tier 2 status in the US News & World Report rankings of colleges and universities.

Dr. Ulmschneider identified five sources that could provide the necessary funding to provide permanent improvements. They included:

- Income from the 30% tuition differential specified for support services from non-resident tuition
- 3% allocation of the Facilities and Cost Recovery (FACR) funding
- General Fund E & G allocations from the General Assembly's base budget adequacy initiative.
- General Fund E & G new allocations for high-priority University initiatives
- Private funding

Dr. Ulmschneider shared with Senators that the VCU community would realize "four direct and highly visible benefits from ARL-commensurate funding levels." They were:

- Collections strengths
- Space and services for expanded enrollment
- Effortless library access in a digital world
- State-of-the-art support for off-campus students

Dr. Ulmschneider reported that although only very modest permanent changes have occurred in the VCU Libraries budget since 1993, progress has been made. In fiscal 2000-2001, the University adopted the specific goal of meeting ARL membership
criteria by becoming one of the top 100 library systems in North America. The University has provided the Libraries with modest one-time funds and permanent HEETF funding that has permitted "substantial expansion of digital collections and expanded hours and improved security." Two hundred thousand dollars was designated for VCU Libraries as part of the Life Sciences Initiative. Unfortunately $130,000 of funding was permanently cut from the budget, which offset a large portion of the gain.

Dr. Ulmschneider shared the Five-Year Financial Plan with Senators, pointing out that the financial plan calls for growth in the area of personnel funding, with additional staff positions being added at a rate of 5-10 new faculty each year and 3-6 classified positions each year for a total increase of 57 library staff over the 5 year period. This would help to bring the balance between funds spent for collections and those allocated for personnel more closely in line with other research libraries.

Dr. Ulmschneider was asked "How do you know you have reached the gold standard?" and he responded that meeting the criteria for ARL membership, which consists of a formula based upon volume count, volumes added, serials received, total expenditures, and numbers of professional and support staff, would "tell us that we have met it. It is the gold standard." He assured Senators that the increase in number of online journals is "ideal for VCU and where we want to go."

Dr. Ulmschneider indicated that the renewed interest by Provost McDavis in programs of academic excellence, and recognition of the role of the Libraries in retention had earned the support of the Provost for library improvements. Dr. Ulmschneider indicated his gratitude for strong pockets of dedication to improvements in the library. He commended the Senate on their persistence in keeping the Administration aware of the Faculty's commitment to library improvements.

Dr. Ulmschneider was asked if there was a formal structure for how faculty could give input to the library in regard to acquisitions. He informed the Senate that the University Library Advisory Committee had representatives from each school and the college. A Senator commented that he did not understand why VCU did not have an online subscription to Nature. Dr. Ulmschneider commented that "We have a diverse academic community at VCU and we depend on faculty to provide information for decisions about acquisitions. He also informed Senators that a button on VCU Homepage allowed requests to be made. There is also a list available online that lists library materials that have been requested, but for which there has been no funding available.

Dr. Wes Poynor presented a resolution on behalf of the Senate Executive Committee
Whereas, the VCU Faculty Senate has passed annual resolutions in support of increased Library funding over the past 3 years, and
Whereas the University has committed to achieving Association of Research Libraries (ARL) membership at a level within the top 100 ARL libraries through the Strategic Plan Phase II and the Institutional Performance Agreement processes, and
Whereas the Libraries' Executive Director has come forward with a 5-year funding plan that will enable VCU Libraries to achieve ARL status in the near future,
Therefore, let it be resolved
That the VCU Faculty Senate supports the goals of ARL membership and top 100 rank among ARL libraries, and
That the Faculty Senate strongly encourages the University administration to allocate (i) the required funding from non-resident tuition income, as specified in the Libraries' 5-year plan; (ii) funding of 3% of the FACR budget; and (iii) approximately $1 million from both the state E & G funding initiatives (base budget adequacy and special library initiative) over the first biennium of the plan and further extending this latter funding mechanism over the entire 5 year period, and
That the Faculty Senate wishes the VCU Libraries Executive Director and the Provost to report annually in the spring on progress toward the goals of the 5 year plan.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

Faculty Representative of NCAA

Dr. Dennis O’Toole, Faculty Representative of NCAA, made a brief report before the Senate. He shared with faculty that he is a member of the Intercollegiate Athletic Council, which functions outside of the athletic department to advise and represent student athletes in regard to academics. During the last year this group has
- Looked at graduation rates for athletes
- Looked at grades by teams
- Looked at exit interviews with student athletes.

Senator Briceland inquired about the analysis. The response from Dr. O'Toole was that the baseball program, which has historically had the lowest academic averages of any team is now third or fourth from the bottom. Some teams, as a rule, are generally always on top. Both the male and female tennis teams are ranked at the top. However, the golf team, which usually has student athletes who perform well academically, but they are not doing as well now in comparison to other athletic teams. Dr. O’ Toole also
indicated that the academic performance of the men’s soccer team has deteriorated, some of this drop Dr. O'Toole attributed to bringing in more foreign students with English as a second language problems. Graduation rates of basketball players, that are published in the Chronicle of Higher Education, are turned in by registrar. Dr. O'Toole pointed out that if a student athlete turns pro that is counted against you. Transfer students also count against the graduation rate figures. Dr. O'Toole pointed out that the graduation rate for student athletes is only slightly lower, at 37% than for the whole University, at 38%

Senator Suzee Leone announced that the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign was still in progress and that it would continue November 30th this year. Senator Leone reported that this year's campaign had no specific monetary goal. Instead the focus was on increasing the percentage of participants beyond last year's level of 18%. This year's donations vary from 25 cents to $2400.

Senator Dan Ream presented Senators with a copy of Web Survey that the Academic Support Service committee will be circulating once IRB approval has been received. The survey is designed as a "snapshot" of this semester only and will not address previous semesters' classroom experiences.

Dr. Peter Vallentyne, President of the VCU Chapter of AAUP made an annual plea to Senators to consider joining AAUP, and to encourage their colleagues to do so. He shared that the AAUP was founded in 1915 and that, as an organization it concerns itself with supporting a climate for academic freedom, assurance of due process, and providing faculty with legal support when necessary.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm.

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Respectfully submitted,
Dianne F. Simons, Ph.D., OTR
Faculty Senate Secretary -Treasurer

Posted December 4, 2001
Neil W. Henry