Minutes of the Faculty Senate
January 21, 2003

Forum Room, Student Commons, Academic Campus


Absent: Costanzo, Crouch, Dewey, Hague, Hodges, Kennamer, Sholley, Tepper, Thoma, Walsh, Ward

President Bob Andrews called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

The December minutes were approved as corrected.

Bob thanked Peter Kirkpatrick for his service as secretary of Faculty Senate and announced that Iris Johnson from the School of Business would replace Peter for the Spring 2003 semester. Bob stated that he, Judy Lewis, and Fred Certosimo met with Provost Rod McDavis and Vice Provost Ed Blanks to convey faculty concerns about the proposed changes to the Faculty Sick Leave Reporting Policy. As work on this policy continues, feedback to Faculty Senate will be presented. Additionally, Bob will continue efforts to obtain approval for a non-voting faculty member to serve on the Board of Visitors.

Grievance Review Committee

Wesley Poynor, Chair, asked for faculty input concerning the grievance process.
The committee plans to meet in January to review the procedures for possible revision.

Nominating Committee

Bob Andrews, Martha Moon, Wes Poynor, and Mark Wood were elected unanimously as the Faculty Senate Nominating Committee to recommend officers for the 2003-2004 academic year.

Mentoring Task Force

Charles Byles, Chair, asked for faculty volunteers to become mentors for VCU 102 students. The purpose of the VCU Faculty Senate Mentoring Program is to provide mentors for students who are having academic difficulty. Mentors visit the first session of a VCU 102 class then meet with their assigned students on a basis established by each mentor with his or her students. Charles provides information about the program to mentors that includes expectations of mentors and their VCU 102 students and suggested activities for the mentoring process.

Intercollegiate Athletic Council

Dennis O’Toole, National Collegiate Athletic Association Representative who chairs the Intercollegiate Athletic Council (IAC), provided a report on the IAC that covered the purpose of the IAC, its responsibilities, its membership composition, and how the IAC performs its duties. The efforts of the IAC help the University develop and maintain a quality intercollegiate athletic program that also provides for the welfare of the student-athlete.

Legislative and Statewide Relations Committee

Nora Alder, Chair, reported that the individuals from VCU who attended the Virginia General Assembly Lobby Day on January 9 thought it was a worthwhile experience. Lobby Day was a joint event of the American Association of University Professors and the Faculty Senate of Virginia. Christina Turner, Vice President, distributed a detailed report that explained the Lobby Day activities. Chris provided positive feedback of the event and stressed the necessity of the VCU community’s involvement in lobbying. Chris and Nora offered to provide training for VCU faculty about how to lobby; the intent would be to provide training then secure a date to again lobby at the General Assembly.

Legislative Update
Don Gehring, Vice President for Government and Community Relations, presented the legislative update. The grim financial picture provides no money for higher education for the next four years; a possible but not promising exception may be money for salaries.

Don expressed appreciation for the faculty lobbying effort; he commended Chris Turner for embracing the idea of going to the legislators with input on higher education issues. General Assembly members need to know how the university operates and to understand its goals; and who can better educate them than those who work in the university environment. The General Assembly has 30 new members which means committees have smaller senior leadership cores. This new-member trend makes it more important than ever for faculty to build relationships with legislators. The strong political agenda is for faculty to educate members of the General Assembly about higher education.

After Don’s remarks, faculty senators asked numerous questions concerning items such as elasticity of tuition, prepaid college tuition, tax increases on cigarettes or other purchases, University entrepreneurial activities, libraries sharing holdings, and initiatives that threaten tenure. Don’s responses to questions included the following: The University benefits from the bond passage, and the University now has tuition flexibility. The benefits to be derived from prepaid college tuition is more dubious than originally thought. More tax on tobacco or alcohol would be a revenue enhancer, but the General Assembly shows no interest in raising this tax. As for seeking entrepreneurial opportunities, the University does not have a choice. It cannot look to the State for revenues, so it must look to itself to generate funds. The concept of libraries sharing their holdings with one another is positively reviewed. The proposed bill to abolish tenure is basically dead.

Don’s suggestion for faculty who want to continue lobbying is to develop a long-term strategy. Identify issues and work on these, perhaps one or two at a time. Give a consistent message—certain items appear each time as a core—not just for VCU but for everyone. Be a voice for higher education.

After Don finished, Chris Turner encouraged all faculty senators to look at proposed bills that come before the General Assembly then express views on these bills to the legislators. Chris promoted lobbying, encouraged everyone to look at Don Gehring’s web site [http://www.vcu.edu/exrel/index.shtml] for information, and informed everyone that Lobbyist-in-a-Box allows one to track bills. [The URL to find Lobbyist-in-a-Box is http://legis.state.va.us/LIS/Lobbyist.htm. To login, use vcu1 as the user name and session as the password.] Chris announced a Rally for Education will be held at the Virginia Capitol January 27 at 11 a.m. The message of the rally to
will be held at the Virginia Capitol January 27 at 11 a.m. The message of the rally to elected officials will be “If you are for public education, fund it.”

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

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Iris W. Johnson, Secretary

Posted by Neil W. Henry
February 3, 2003