Meeting Tuesday, November 2, 2004

Student Commons

Agenda

I. Minutes
II. President's report

Minutes of the Faculty Senate

November 2, 2004

Richmond Salons 1&2 Student Commons


President Judy Lewis called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

1. The minutes of the October 5th meeting were approved.

2. President Judith Lewis reported on the following …

President Lewis reported once again on the activities of the Strategic Planning Commission and encouraged senators to look at the 4 major themes and the 7 strategic directions on the www.vcu.edu/vcu2020/. She stressed once again that this is a new strategic plan, not an extension of the previous one, and that it will take us out to the year 2020. In response to a question, she noted that it could, of course, be adapted based on the wishes of a new leader after Dr. Trani’s retirement, but she expected that the basic directions would still remain in place, as the person recruited would be expected to share the vision of the Board of Visitors that hired him or her. She indicated that there will be subcommittees formed to work with the committees identified under Roster of Strategic Directions and encouraged those who are interested to contact one of the co-chairs so that they will be able to include those names on their lists of potential subcommittee members.

Time lines for the work of the Strategic Planning Commission are fast paced. Draft reports of committees are expected to be ready before winter break, with public hearings planned in the spring. Faculty Senate will need to provide any input by March if the strategic plan is to go to the Board of Visitors by next November.

The Provost Search Committee is working with the Korn Ferry search firm. Dr. Trani has established 3 priorities in identifying a new permanent provost: The new provost will need to be able to

   (1) bring intellectual order to the undergraduate experience,
   (2) continue to develop research in science, technology, and engineering, and
   (3) manage day to day operations within a balanced budget.

President Trani expects to stay on until his planned retirement in 2007, and he will be able to work with the person who is hired until that time. Dr. Trani stressed that we are recruiting a provost, and not the next VCU president.
A report on promotion and tenure decisions over the last three years revealed that the overwhelming majority of personnel actions, whether promotion or tenure, resulted in favorable actions. In many cases, promotion and tenure (two personnel actions) were sought by the same individual. Two actions were denied in 2001-02, 6 actions were denied in 2002-03, and 3 actions were denied in 2003-04. One hundred percent of collateral faculty were recommended for the actions they sought.

Judy Lewis attended the Faculty Senate of Virginia meeting on October 30. Her report and that of the other representatives is included under “committee reports” below.

Dr. Trani’s meeting with the Faculty Senate is tentatively planned for February 1, 2005. The topic is likely to be the strategic plan. The location has yet to be determined.

3. Committee reports were provided:

Legislative and Statewide Relations Committee

Co-chairs Pat Cummins and Bob Andrews and Faculty Senate President Judy Lewis reported on the Legislative and Governmental Relations Committee activities relative to the January 13, 2005 Higher Education Advocacy Day now being planned with the Virginia Conference AAUP and the Faculty Senate of Virginia (FSV). On October 9, the Virginia Conference AAUP approved over $2000 in funding, and on October 30, the FSV approved an additional $400. VCU will host the joint group of faculty participating in Higher Education Advocacy, and we will provide both a box lunch and a morning coffee service. Anyone wishing to be on the list of January 13 participants, or to take part in any prior activities should inform either Pat Cummins (pcummins@vcu.edu) or Bob Andrews (rlandrew@vcu.edu). Even if people participate only in the morning or in the afternoon, VCU faculty participation is much appreciated. Participants will also receive a tote bag like the ones we are providing to legislators and their staff!

On October 30, VCU’s 3 representatives to the Faculty Senate of Virginia (FSV) attended the Fall FSV meeting. Peter Blake, Assistant Secretary of Education responsible for Higher Education in
Virginia, spoke before the Faculty Senate of Virginia regarding state priorities. He was thanked for his efforts in working toward base adequacy funding last year and was encouraged to continue to work on our behalf to advance higher education further in the coming year. **Rob Lockridge, Special Assistant to the President at the University of Virginia**, spoke about **chartered universities** and explained why his institution along with Virginia Tech and William and Mary thought it was a good idea. Given the small percentage of state funding in the University of Virginia budget, it was clear that this was a more reasonable solution for that institution than for others. Discussion revolved about the impact on other institutions if three elite institutions were treated differently in terms of state funding.

Planning and follow-up on higher education advocacy were discussed at the FSV meeting. **Our FSV representatives are Judy Lewis, Pat Cummins, and Chris Turner. The FSV president is Bob Andrews.** Plans to coordinate the activities of the VCU Faculty Senate, of the State AAUP and the FSV were determined at the end of the FSV meeting. **Chris Turner volunteered to host a workshop on lobbying** at which handbooks provided last year by AAUP will be distributed. Judy Lewis will arrange a meeting place on the MCV campus. Pat Cummins, Brian Turner (Randolph Macon), and Bob Andrews agreed to specific roles in the planning process. VCU faculty participation is encouraged, including both our senators and the faculty whom our senators represent.

**Academic Programs and Research Committee**

Co-chair **Karen Kester** reported on the work of the Academic Programs and Research Committee. **Janet Hutchinson** had worked on the need for following IRB approval processes for class projects, such as survey projects, and a subgroup dealing with reviews of student protocols is being formed. One senator suggested that hospital residents needed to be included. **As for the part of the strategic plan involving scientific research, headed up by Vice Provost Huff (Life Sciences), Karen would like to develop some bulleted statements of interest to faculty. Please e-mail Karen with ideas and suggestions.**

**Academic Support Services Committee**

Co-chair **Lynne Turman** reported that there were no burning issues being taken up by the Academic Support Services Committee at this time.
being taken up by the Academic Support Services Committee at this time. An issue concerning library forms is being resolved. It was suggested the classroom quality be explored by the committee. Judy Lewis remarked that Assistant Secretary of Education Peter Blake, in his comments to the Faculty Senate of Virginia, had noted the poor quality of his classroom in Hibbs Hall. There may be an opportunity to pursue classroom quality this year, as there is more funding than in some other years.

Affirmative Actions / EEO Committee

Co-chairs Liz Cramer and Martha Moon reported for the committee. Data from Institutional Research concerning minorities and women suggest that these groups are more likely than others to lose jobs in a financial slowdown. It was also reported that in a loose coalition involving VCU and the surrounding community an effort is being made to provide a welcoming climate for Hispanic faculty and students. The VCU School of World Studies is assisting. On campus, the VCU Faculty Senate now has a representative to the Equity and Diversity Committee.

Academic and Professional Status Committee

Co-chair Cynthia Donnell reported that we are still waiting for Vice Provost Brodd to forward the next draft of the faculty handbook. Chris Turner suggested that the AAUP national headquarters was available to provide assistance to faculty in evaluating handbooks. She is willing to contact them if asked to do so. The second issue that it was suggested should come before the Academic and Professional Status Committee is that of academic freedom for collateral faculty.

Mentoring Task Force

Task force chair Aaron Anderson recommended that the group be disbanded. The original intent was to assist at-risk students, but after VCU 102 was developed for that purpose, the role became less vital. The task force had been working with instructors in VCU 102, but the mentoring faculty were informed that the 102 instructors did not believe the faculty mentoring program outside of the course was effective.

Communications, Publicity & Publications Committee
Committee chair Gary Sarkozi reported that we are reexamining the Senate web site and its design, and that we are adding links.

Alumni and Community Relations Committee

Committee Chair Alan Briceland indicated that he would be meeting soon with the Alumni Affairs Office and would be discussing outreach office communication. Following up on an issue brought by a constituent, Judy Lewis noted that Alumni Weekend was held during Passover and that the Alumni Affairs Office should be encouraged to avoid such scheduling in the future.

Committee on Economic Status

Co-chair Mike Pitts noted that his committee plans to explore retirement benefits for 9-month faculty teaching summer school, something that would put them on more equal footing with their 12-month counterparts. An additional benefit being explored was that of tuition for faculty children. Pat Cummins suggested that the committee look into prescription drug benefits. In particular, she found that the catastrophic coverage that kicks in after faculty have paid $1500 out of pocket, does not count prescription drug costs in that $1500 amount. With recent co-pays for prescriptions increasing several fold, many constituents are paying more than $1500 for prescriptions alone but are unable to get relief after passing that threshold.

Student Affairs Committee

Liz Canfield reported on her work with the Student Government president. In the area of student affairs, senators in the School of the Arts noted that faculty advisors in the School of the Arts have found that Advising Office advisors [working with undeclared students] sometimes give advice that contradicts that of advisors in the School of the Arts.

The meeting adjourned at 5:23

Posted by Neil W. Henry