Present: Alford, Beck, Black, Brookman, Bradner, Canfield, Churn, Cooper, Corey, Cotter (Alt. -Finucane), Cummins, Dery, Donnell, Dupree, Ellington, Elsea, Essah (Alt. – Fisher), Farmer, Fauri, Fernandez-Ward, Getty, Ghosh (Alternate), Gordon, Gower, Johnson, Kinney (Alt. - Kuhn), Klenke, Lampert, Martin, Masho, McDonnough, Miller, Munro, Murphy-Judy, Nichols, Pitts, Poynor, Quillan, Ratz, Ream, Reardon, Robnolt, Selinger, Sherman, Simons, Spede, Spindle, Strauss, Street, Szari, Taxman, Wenger (Alt. – Otto), Wooldridge.


President Kathryn Murphy-Judy called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. She wished a Happy New Year (Rosh Hoshana) to Jewish faculty and Ramadan Mubarak to Muslim faculty, and she expressed her regrets to those celebrating religious holidays and who were unable to attend the October 4 Faculty Senate meeting.

1. Minutes of the September 2005 Senate meeting were approved, with the addition of Senator Churn’s name to those who had attended.

2. Vice President Dianne Simons reported on the composition of Senate committees and distributed a list, which is attached to these minutes.

3. President Murphy-Judy reported on the following informational items and events:
(1) The Faculty Senate of Virginia co-sponsored gubernatorial debates on September 14 in the VCU Student Commons. It was co-sponsored with the Virginia Business Higher Education Council and the student group Virginia 21. Candidates participating included Democrat Tim Kaine, Republican Jerry Kilgore, and Independent Russ Potts.

(2) Preparations are under way for Higher Education Advocacy Day in January 2006.

President Murphy-Judy recognized Senator Pat Cummins, co-chair of the State Legislative and Statewide Relations Committee, who distributed the attached information on planning for what tentatively is scheduled as a January 12 event. Faculty partners for this event are the Virginia Conference of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the Faculty Senate of Virginia (FSV). Issues will tentatively include base adequacy funding, bringing faculty salaries to the 60th percentile of our peer institutions, and faculty welfare issues. Details are on the attachment. Those wishing to join the Senate committee may still contact Senator Cummins.

(3) President Murphy-Judy met with Dr. Trani recently. Discussions focused on missing student Taylor Behl, the Higher Education Restructuring Act, and base adequacy funding.

(4) President Murphy-Judy met with Provost Gottfredson recently and discussed the following topics:

After receiving from Dr. Gottfredson an update on the new SCHEV Institutional Performance Standards, she encouraged faculty to visit the SCHEV web site to see added details. As a result of the Higher Education Restructuring Act of 2005, institutions not only gained added flexibility in spending, but also greater restrictions and accountability for performance. The institution’s control over how we reach those goals is often limited, but there is a danger of not receiving our expected funding if we do not meet them. President Murphy-Judy did note that our performance standards include graduating people with degrees in high-need areas, such as certified teachers, nurses, and those in business and in engineering fields. (Dr. Gottfredson was present and later addressed again the legislation and the implications of the resulting Institutional Performance Standards.)
Drs. Gottfredson and Retchin will hold two more meetings for those who wish to provide feedback on the strategic plan. People are still encouraged to read the strategic plan on line and e-mail their feedback to Dr. Gottfredson. The provost noted that internal monies will be allocated in line with goals set out in the strategic plan, and the Executive Budget Committee will help to oversee the budget allocations.

The provost was impressed with the faculty’s accomplishments he had read about in their annual reports.

University legal counsel is working on tightening up definitions of consensual relations between faculty and students. Students and their parents do not always have the same opinion on what should be allowed.

(5) President Murphy-Judy reported that the search for a Vice President for Finance and Administration is continuing. The pool has been narrowed to six people.

(6) During her first opportunity to attend President’s Council, President Murphy-Judy learned that the council is disbanding. In order to gain information that previously was exchanged at this high-level meeting, she and the vice provosts who had been meeting with the president and the vice presidents will now instead meet periodically with the vice presidents. The senate president will rely more on her routine meetings with the provost and ask questions rather than receive information that might otherwise have come up in President’s Council meetings of the past.

(7) Associate Vice-Provost Laura Moriarty will meet with the Senate in December to discuss faculty development and assessment.

(8) Lotus Notes now serves VCU students, and e-mail problems have been a concern to student government leaders. It is expected that many problems will be ironed out with the student users before the remaining faculty and staff are assigned to Lotus Notes in the spring.

(9) President Murphy-Judy attended the Staff Senate meeting and will continue to exchange ideas with that group’s leaders.

4. Senator Poynor, Chair of the University Grievance Panel, reported that the University Grievance Panel dealt with three grievances, while 6 other cases were addressed at the informal stage. He distributed information on the
were addressed at the informal stage.

5. Senator Poynor distributed information on the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign and encouraged faculty to participate.

6. Senator Wooldridge, Chair of the Full-Time Faculty Task Force, reported on data provided by Institutional Research relative to numbers of full-time faculty. The first sheet illustrated the climb in the student-faculty ratio from 12.27 students per faculty member in 1981 to 17.22 students per faculty member in 2005. The second sheet showed how between 1999 and 2004 the number of tenured and tenure-eligible faculty had declined from 59% of the full-time faculty to 51% of the full-time faculty. He noted that the Senate may wish to invite Mark Hampton from Institutional Research & Evaluation to discuss the figures more in detail.

7. Senator Corey, Co-chair of the Academic Programs and Research Committee, noted that the Office of International Education now must approve certain internationally oriented grant proposals. In response to an inquiry from the committee, that office did clarify that their approval process does not apply to every situation, including proposals with foreign contract sites. The policy is not yet a written policy.

8. Lag pay and calculation of salary paid from one fiscal year to another have resulted in numerous questions from faculty. Satisfactory answers were provided by the Executive Director of Human Resources Cynthia Andrews for what is a complex situation, with many formulas for different classes of employees. Ms. Andrews demonstrated to President Murphy-Judy how employees were paid and concluded that all affected had received the appropriate salary disbursements.

9. The November meeting of Faculty Senate will include a presentation from the Director of the University Libraries John Ulmschneider. Intercultural festival representatives will also be present.

10. Provost Gottfredson addressed the Faculty Senate and discussed the following issues:

A) VCU is hosting students displaced from institutions closed as a result of Hurricane Katrina. However, VCU is honoring a request from those institutions not to actively recruit those students once their home institutions reopen. Similarly VCU will not actively recruit faculty from institutions affected by Hurricane
Katrina.

B) Following up on concerns about the declining ratio of tenure-eligible faculty commented on earlier by task force chair Wooldridge, Dr. Gottfredson added his own continuing concern about those numbers and expressed an institutional commitment to increase numbers of tenure-eligible faculty once again. He explained the effect that budget reductions had had, particularly during the late nineties and at the beginning of this decade. Referring to the data from the Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation, he noted that he had asked that those data be prepared in order to address the issues that were raised.

C) Following up on the concerns expressed earlier by President Murphy-Judy, Dr. Gottfredson summarized the steps that had led to the legislature’s passage of the Higher Education Restructuring Act. His concerns were similar to those expressed earlier by the Faculty Senate president. He shared with the group how the efforts of three institutions (William and Mary, Virginia Tech, and the University of Virginia) to gain flexibility had ultimately affected all public institutions. The legislature, when faced with a request for flexibility from those three schools, understandably asked for added accountability. Addressing in more detail the issues raised by Dr. Murphy-Judy concerning the individual institutional performance indicators, he spoke to the state’s desire to add to the numbers of in-state students served: while VCU accounted for 27% of recent statewide growth in the numbers of in-state students served by Virginia’s public institutions, instead of being rewarded for what VCU had done to date, our institution, along with others, will be judged only on the basis of new Virginia students added when it comes to that performance measure! (Dr. Gottfredson noted in particular how VCU had more than doubled its number of freshmen while the tenure-eligible faculty serving those freshmen has not grown or in some cases has declined.) Worse still, with the added flexibility of the Higher Education Restructuring Act, if institutions are unable to meet the performance standards by which they are judged, they will not receive the funding on which they are counting. This includes such things as graduating more students in areas of need (teachers, nurses, engineers, business professionals, etc.), goals that are laudable, but the ability to reach many of the goals is often calculated in terms such as graduates per tenured faculty member that are hard to relate to either planning or execution. He indicated that state institutions’ presidents were still working with SCHEV to iron out details.

D) Following up on the base adequacy funding issues discussed earlier by Senator Cummins, co-chair of the State Legislative and Statewide Relations Committee, Dr. Gottfredson placed into context the amount of funding necessary to get us back to where we were before the budget reductions of the late 1990s and earlier this decade. In preparing the 6-year institutional plans, VCU and other institutions
were required to make budget estimates based on two scenarios. The first included a combination of added base adequacy funding from the legislature and new tuition dollars, while the second assumed no new state funds for base adequacy. Under the first plan, VCU intends to grow to 34,000 students, while under the second, VCU would be unable to grow without imposing unacceptable increases in tuition. He is optimistic about making reasonable progress on the base adequacy issue this year and in future years, coming to about $18.5 million or more this year and over a hundred million dollars in the next 5 to 7 years for VCU. (Senator Cummins shared with him the tentative plan for higher education advocacy, which includes preparing a position paper on base adequacy funding.)

E) Strategic planning is tied to financial planning more so than in the past. Following up on earlier comments made by President Murphy-Judy, Dr. Gottfredson invited faculty to continue submitting their comments.

Final announcements:

President Murphy-Judy provided announcements for upcoming events of this weekend. She also brought news about new recreation buildings planned for students on both campuses, as was announced during the University Council meeting of this afternoon.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 PM.