Minutes of the Faculty Senate, February 6th, 2007: Student Commons Forum Room

Present: Beck, Betzhold, Black, Bradner, Briceland, Brookman, Bukavekas, Burch, Canfield, Churn, Cotter, Cummins, Donnell, Dupree, Dukat, Ellington, Elmore, Elsea, Fauri, Gordon, Gongora, Grimes, Huband, Johnson, Lafazani, Lewis, Martin, McDonnough, Miller, Mills, Munro, Murphy-Judy, Philipsen, Pitts, Price, Ratz, Reardon, Robnolt, Quillan, Ream, Schreffler, Secret, Simons, Sirica, Smith, Spede, Spindle, Sterling, Street, Tepper, Wenger, Szari, Zhou, Guthmann, Poynor, Boyle

Absent: Coggins, Corey, Essah, Fernandez-Ward, Getty, Green, Grizzard, Hope (EXC), Ingroff (EXC), Kester, Klenke, Lebman (EXC), Masho, Nicols, Perberdy (EXC), Richardson (EXC), Selinger, Sherman, Straus, Taxman, Wooldridge

Agenda and Notes:

1. Nominating Committee: Cummins, Andrews, Corey, and Donnell

2. Cathy Howard: University—Community Partnership grants (deadline March 1). See [www.vcu.edu/ocp/programs/community/index.html](http://www.vcu.edu/ocp/programs/community/index.html) for details.

3. President Trani’s Visit to Faculty Senate:

   A. What We Know about the Budget: The 07-08 budget was announced by the Governor in December and the House and Senate announced in Feb. Here are the highlights:

   - 3% salary increase for faculty and staff in effect 11/07
   - 10% statewide average increase in nursing instructional faculty (b/c of the shortage and crisis in nursing)
   - The House added 1% increase for T/R faculty and staff if there is enough money.
   - 2.3M was allotted for VCU in base adequacy funding (approved by Senate and the Governor).
   - The House wants to do a “tuition cap,” but other institutions will probably fight this initiative.
   - 70% of our students are on need-based financial aid.
   - $625,000 was allotted for the School of Business and Engineering
   - $100,000 was allotted for the Grace Harris Leadership Institute (Gov.) but not by the House/Senate
   - Financial Interest and Restructuring: 1.2M to VCU
- Cancer Research: 0; we hope to change their minds about this
- Capital Outlay: 12M by Gov./Senate 7M/5M=12M by House
- Equipment for Medical Sciences: 3.7M (Gov/House); deferred by Senate
- Music Center: 1.7M (Gov/House/Senate)
- Sanger Hall: $750,000
- Monroe Park Housing: 15+M in bonds
- SOB Building: $450,000 (Gov/House/Senate)
- Base Adequacy funding is the most important to us. We covered our cost overruns here.
- The entire report will be available on 2/22. Visit it at http://leg2.state.va.us/MoneyWeb.NSF/sb2006
- VCU is certainly “on the map” in VA! We now have a much higher profile and they’re aware of our growth.

B. Question about Phillip Morris: Partnering with a tobacco company? We don’t have a formal partnership w/ PM. 85% of the top medical schools work with PM. It is the question for individual faculty members whether to apply for a grant through PM or to work w/ them. PM is most likely moving away from tobacco and toward consumer-based products. Also, PM donates to the Massey Cancer Center.

C. University College: Why is one person both the Dean of the UC and Assistant Dean of Humanities and Sciences? Dr. Steingass was hired through a national search for the H/S position. He helped build the UC in a short period of time (esp. given VCU’s large size). There is not a current conflict of interest between the UC and H/S because the UC grew out of H/S. The UC is largely a centralized place for services for undergrads. It made sense to have the same person involved both during the transition period, but that is temporary.

D. Related Question about National Searches for Deans: Dr. Gottfredson spoke on this issue. He stated that there is a policy for having a national search for Deans, but also a waiver of such a national search for special circumstances.

E. University College Conversation Continued: There were 120 faculty and staff members who led discussion groups on the Summer Reading (Freakonomics). The UC also aids in our ability to provide opportunity and access for our students. 35-38 faculty will be hired to teach Focused Inquiry courses in the UC for 07-08 school year.

F. Involving vs. Informing Faculty: There were over 120 sessions to discuss the Strategic Plan, 100 people were initially involved in drafting it. The committees to design this plan had huge faculty involvement. President Trani said that “No
an academic program comes out of my office” and he cited the PhD in Media, Art, and Text as an example.

G. University College Curriculum: There was a feeling expressed in the Senate about there not being a dialogue around these issues of General Education curriculum/requirements. There was a question of why the Focused Inquiry courses didn’t go through the H/S College Curriculum Committee and why the courses went straight to the UUCC. Dr. Trani’s answer began with “What we’re creating is brand new.” Dr. Gottfredson went on to add that the speed in which this happened had to do with availability of funds (needing to spend it now that we have it). Dr. Gottfredson went on to explain that over 60 faculty were involved in some stage of developing the curriculum for the FI courses. He also added that the money for this program does not come at a cost to other programs (it is “new” money). At this point, Senator Szari spoke about how he saw the UC helping his students.

H. Faculty Benefits: This is a matter of state law (51.1-124.3), and is specific about the issue of 9 month faculty and summer teaching/work.

I. Years of Service/Post Docs: “The way we treat Post Docs is a disgrace; the way every American university treats Post Docs is a disgrace” (approximate quote). See this website for details about insurance, tuition remission, etc.: http://www.research.vcu.edu/vpr/postdoc/benefits.htm

J. Domestic Partner Benefits: It depends on state law. We’ve already extended recreational benefits to domestic partners, but for the larger issues, we must petition the state government.

K. Commodification of Education: VCU’s support from the General Fund has gone to 33%, which means we’ve had to cultivate business partners, etc, but we’re trying to strike a balance.

L. Adjunct Faculty: We now have more tenure-eligible faculty than non-tenure-eligible faculty. We’ve turned this around a bit. Adjuncts are not paid enough, nor are they given benefits. This is due to supply/demand.

M. Can we make the VRS and ORP more equitable? We’ll work on this. The VRS is state-run and needs to be dealt w/ on a state level.

N. When Will You Retire?: June 30, 2010. Dr. Trani is going to Cambridge in July to finish his book.

O. Diversity Survey: The Climate Survey was answered by approximately 2000 respondents and more details will be available soon.

P. Age Discrimination: There is no formal retirement age for faculty.

Q. Degree Compatibility: European Colleges are changing and some of our professional degrees are becoming = to PhDs.

R. VCU-Qatar, Is nepotism permitted? No. No one is allowed to report to a spouse, and there no one does.

S. How/why can students register for courses who lack the pre-req’s? This system needs work. We’re switching over to the Banner system, but unfortunately, a
fix is about 3 yrs. away. We need to be “tidier.”

T. Need to eliminate SSNs: We’re working on this.

U. Printed Question (see your handout): This question centered around recent internal hires. Here is the response: Hollsworth had much support, was internal. J. Bennett was an external hire. “It’s a careful balance between getting new talent and doing internal hires.” The policy has a waiver of external (i.e. national) searches (see discussion above), and Dr. Trani said that 1600 VCU faculty members had a chance to apply for the Dean’s position. The next question was “Is the Administration working like a good ol’ boys club?” Dr. Trani answered that there was a lot of work being done on this campus to increase diversity, and then he listed the numbers of women and people of color who have been appointed/hired.

V. Football team? No.

W. Any effect from Tech opening a Medical School? VCU/UVA/EVMS are already underfunded and Dr. Trani suggested better funding existing medical schools.

X. Relationships between Faculty and Administration: There is a need for communication (why TelegRAM was instituted) and there needs to be a continued dialogue through Faculty Senate and Faculty Council.