Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, March 31, 4-6 p.m., Student Commons Forum Room, MPC

Attendance:
Present  Alford(ARTS), Alvarez(HAS), Andrews(BUS), Artello(WS), Baranoff (BUS), Brookman(SOM), Brown(NUR), Chen(EDU), Colello(SOM), Conlon(SWK), Davis(VCU-L), Easley(ARTS), Falyar(AHP), Fauri(SWK), Freyer(ARTS), Ghaphery(VCU-L), Harrison(HAS), Hoder(SOM alt for O’Connell), Honnold(HAS), Huang(PHA alt for Morgan), Hylton-Gravatt(PHA), Jallo(NUR), Kaziewicz(UC), LaRose(SOM), Lee(BUS), Lister(SOM), McVoy(SOM), Nicholson(HAS), Ottens(SOM), Patton(ARTS), Pellegrini(DEN), Raushcer(Staff alt for Bedell), Robnault(EDU), Rodriguez(HAS), Saladino(HAS), Secret(SWK), Seinfeld(SOM), Shriar(WS), Street(HAS), Totah(HAS), Vijayakumar(BUS alt for Smith), Wagner(AHP), White(VCU-L), Yang (EGR alt for Wayne), Zhang(EGR)

Absent  Bachmann(SOM), Carroll(SOM), Cates(UC), Chestnut(HAS), Coble(DEN ), Crislip(HAS), DeAngelis (ARTS), Dodson(SOM), Gannaway(SOM), Hobgood(SOM), Israel(ARTS), Jones(SOM), Marinello(SOM), Octave (DEN), Parsons(SOM), Puri(SOM), Rapchick (StAff), Ratliff(SOM), Rector(HAS), Sabik (SOM), Sims(HAS), Smith(UC), Weaver(SOM), Wickham(SOM), Xu (EDU)

Procedural Items: President J. Nicholson called the meeting to order at 4:08, thanked Senate colleagues for the hard work this year, and reminded everyone of the final meeting on Tuesday May 5th. No university administrators will be at the March 31 Senate meeting because of the Board of Visitor’s (BOV) retreat that occurred today. Updates from the administration will be postponed until the May Senate meeting. The BOV had a significant discussion at its retreat about faculty compensation.

In answer to a question from a Senator, President Nicholson reported that more information about Title IX will be forthcoming at the May meeting and that the faculty will also have an opportunity to discuss policy changes at the May meeting about other VCU policies and revisions in process.

The minutes of March 3 meeting were reviewed, moved, and approved.

Update on the BOV Retreat: D. Fauri shared the following budget highlights from that day’s (March 31, 2015) BOV retreat that he attended:

• The new budget will be guided by the Focus Quest Strategic Plan; budget details are being worked out and will be presented for vote at the May, 2015 BOV meeting; budget considerations need to take into account the fact that state money is restricted in usage and supports only about 30% of the university’s operating expenses; all universities must provide matching funds on some items

• There will be an emphasis on restructuring the VCU human resource unit and funding for this is included in the budget proposal. Among other things, this will lead to addressing the need for a comprehensive salary administration, including salary compression and equity

• An investment strategy proposal was considered. A proposal to centralize the development funds in the future for more effective fiscal management of investments is being reviewed

• Faculty compensation adjustments will be presented for approval at May BOV meeting; the date that the adjustments go into effect has not yet been decided: maybe fall, 2015

• All the compensation increase being discussed is for increase in base salary; Faculty Senate worked hard to bring the need for base salary increase (as opposed to bonuses) to the attention of the administration and BOV
Salary increase is projected to be 2% from the Commonwealth with an additional 2.5% for T & R faculty through reallocation of university funds.

Increases are to be merit increases, not across the board, according to the VCU president; decisions about the amount of merit increase will be made at the unit level; one reason for the T & R increases is fact that VCU has fallen far behind other universities in T & R compensation.

Questions/statements from the floor:

- All 4.5% is merit-based and thus it is possible that some faculty will not get a raise.
- Fauri is not aware of the details of additional guidelines that will provided to the units for the merit increases except that units need to consider the Quest Strategic Plan.
- Faculty Senate has some input into the decisions about when the raises will occur through representation the FS Budget Advisory Committee (D. Fauri).
- The compensation study is not public; it would be a mistake to mix salary compression issues with current base increase issues for this year.

Several faculty Senators expressed concerns about:

- The lack of a cost-of-living increase, particularly given the fact that faculty have had only minimal base salary increases for a number of years.
- The fairness of merit increases decided only at the unit level, particularly given some of the earlier concerns raised with the fairness of the evaluative process at the unit level in which teaching, seems poorly recognized.

FS President J. Nicholson was asked to share the concern that the merit raise decisions be consistent and fair at her next meeting with the provost.

After much discussion about the need for everyone to work toward an equitable and fair system regarding raises, Faculty Senate passed the following two motions:

- The VCU Faculty Senate proposes that T & R faculty receive a 2% cost-of-living increase (from state budgeted funds) and that the 2.5% recommended increase (from reallocated funds) be awarded for (a) performance-based adjustment. Passed by a majority vote with 8 opposed and 4 abstentions.

- The VCU Faculty Senate proposes that some proportion of the 2% performance-based pool created for A & P faculty salary increases be allocated for cost-of-living raises for A & P faculty. Passed by majority vote with 0 opposed and 9 abstentions.

**Senate Officers 2015-16: Nominations Committee:** B. Andrews presented the slate of officers for the 2015-2016 Faculty Senate Officers from the Nominating Committee and asked for nominations from the floor (none offered). The following Senators were elected, by majority vote, as Faculty Senate officers:

- President: Holly Alford, Tenured Associate Professor, Department of Fashion Design and Merchandising
- Vice President: Mary Secret, Associate Professor in the School of Social Work
- Corresponding Secretary: Michael McVoy, Professor of Pediatrics, School of Medicine
- Recording Secretary: Scott Street, Teaching Associate Professor in the Department of Statistical Sciences & Operations
- Monroe Park Campus Representative: Jennifer S. Wayne, Professor of Biomedical Engineering and of Orthopaedic Surgery, Department of Biomedical Engineering, School of Engineering
- MCV Representative: 2-person team from the School of Nursing, Lisa Brown, Associate Professor with tenure in the School of Nursing and Nancy Jallo, Assistant Professor in the School of Nursing
Academic and Professional Status Committee Shared Governance Resolution: A. Lee reviewed the resolution that was discussed at the prior meeting. Because the medical campus uses a data system different from WEAVE, a friendly amendment was made to ensure that the resolution included all data systems within the university.

Be it resolved that, in order to implement shared governance as described by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the Faculty Senate recommends, to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Health Sciences, to adopt the requirement that data on “goals,” “outcomes/objectives,” “measures/achievement target,” and “findings” be entered into WEAVE, or its’ equivalent on the medical campus, as they pertain to shared governance. Each academic unit should first define, as it deems appropriate, these terms (“goals,” “outcomes/objectives,” “measures/achievement target,” and “findings”) and provide data annually in WEAVE or its medical campus equivalent to assess progress in the implementation of shared governance.

The Share Governance Resolution passed with a majority vote and 2 abstentions.

Academic and Professional Status Committee: K. Artello asked for a discussion about student course evaluations. Points of discussion included:

- Concern about the low response rate for the online course evaluations; a suggestion that students be required to do course evaluations, contingent on the release of course grades, was made but not pursued because such a requirement may create a backlash that would be detrimental to the faculty
- Concern about possible bias and lack of consistency (from dept to dept) of the course evaluation questions and the importance of interpreting the data to account for some of these biases, and concern that student teaching evaluations constitute the entire basis of teaching evaluations
- Need to consider ways other than (or in addition to) student course evaluations to assess student success; mandatory peer review of courses is one suggestion
- Need for good instruments that assess the learning, teaching, and overall course

Senate By-Laws Update and Task Force: S. Street, Chair of the Credentials and Rules Committee, reported that a separate task force will be created to review and recommend revisions to the Faculty By-laws. The task force will be open to all Faculty Senators and faculty colleagues. Please contact Street if interested. The By-laws revision needs to be completed in the Fall by the Senate and as it moves forward for final approval will need 5% of VCU faculty to vote and half of the voting members to approve it for the revisions to pass.

Time constraints did not allow for discussion of agenda items about Strategic Planning for the Faculty Senate Leadership, Spring 2015 Senate Elections, and Communication to Academic Units of issues and actions of the Senate. President Nicholson will e-mail (and/or otherwise ensure) that faculty Senators have information about these items.

Meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Mary Secret, Corresponding Secretary
April 19, 2015