Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, 2 February 2016 4:00–6:00 PM, Monroe Park Campus, Student Commons, Commonwealth Ballroom
http://www.maps.vcu.edu/monroepark/univcommons/

Attendance:
Present: Alcaine (EDU, Alt. for Chen), Alford (ARTS), Artello (WS), Bedell (StAff), Bodnar-Doren (HAS), Brookman (SOM), Conlon (SWK), Davis (VCU-L), DeAngelis (ARTS), Easley (ARTS), Franzak (BUS, Alt. for Lee), Fraser (SWK), Ghaphery (VCU-L), Hargraves (EDU), Hsu (SOM), Jallo (NUR), Jamerson (AHP), Le (SOM), Lodge (UC), McVoy (SOM), Nicholson (HAS), Ogbonna (PHA), Ottens (SOM), Pellegrini (DEN, Alt. for Coe), Robnolt (EDU), Rodriguez (HAS), Secret (SWK), Smith (ARTS, Alt. for Patton), Spindle (BUS, Alt. for Baranoff), Street (HAS), Wagner (AHP), Wayne (EGR), York (SOM)

Absent: Brown (NUR), Carroll (SOM), Crislip (HAS), Dawson-Cruz (HAS), Dodson (SOM), Freyer (ARTS), Harrison (HAS), Hobgood (SOM), Hylton-Gravatt (PHA), Israel (ARTS), Kaziewicz (UC), Kidd (SOM), LaRose (SOM), Lister (SOM), O'Neal (RetFac), Octave (DEN), Parsons (SOM), Puri (SOM), Ratliff (SOM), Rector (HAS), Sabik (HAS), Saladino (HAS), Samso (SOM), Seinfeld (SOM), Shriar (WS), Smith (BUS), Smith (UC), Totah (HAS), Vanderbilt (SOM), Weatherford (StAff), Wen (ENG), Xu (EDU), Zhang (EGR), Zhou (SOM)

Procedural Items:
4:00 PM Call to Order Holly Alford

Guests:
4:02 PM University President’s Report President Michael Rao

President Rao greeted the faculty and thanked them for their attendance. He then discussed highlights from his State of the University address from the previous week. He paid particular attention to time discussing the new experiential learning requirement beginning with all students entering Fall 2016. This requirement could be met through study abroad programs or other programs already in place at VCU. He stressed that there should be opportunities for the students to experience diversity as well as to have a positive impact on others.

He then addressed the faculty environment at VCU and referenced the recently publicized results of the COACHE survey (presented at the Jan. 26 Faculty Senate meeting). He mentioned that he is continuing to seek out ways to improve compensation for faculty and diversity among faculty. He even suggested that in some instances, VCU might want to investigate cluster hiring or other novel hiring practices.

There is progress being made toward the new budget model for VCU, and the president stressed that money should be spent towards mission-centered priorities. There are also efforts to
increase our financial resources through a comprehensive funding campaign as well as continued
efforts to work with the General Assembly to identify funds for salary increases (based upon
merit/expectations). The president is “not keen” on tuition increases but rather would like to
focus on increasing scholarship funding possibilities. Also of interest is funding for the long-
range facilities plan (e.g., BioTech, Franklin St. Gym, etc.).

4:25 PM Q&A with President Rao Dr. Michael Rao

David Fauri: Thanked President Rao for his support over the years and for encouraging diversity
discussions/conversations in the classroom. He then expressed a wish that more faculty
input would’ve been sought out before the president made the decision about the
experiential learning requirement.
Dr. Rao: He could’ve sought out consensus, but with such an important issue, he felt that
he should “just put it out there”. There is a large percentage of programs already
doing something that would satisfy for this practical experience.
Dr. Hackett: This was discussed with the deans in Summer 2015 and with some faculty
in Fall 2015, so the decision made was not without any faculty input.

Rosalyn Hargraves: Is experiential learning program going to be cost-neutral (at least no extra
cost to students)? Also, since such experiences can be taxing on faculty, how will faculty
be recognized, rewarded, etc.
Dr. Rao: Funding programs will be a point for fundraising efforts. Perhaps this
experiential learning could be incorporated in to the general education
requirements so as not to overburden small departments. However, budget may
need to be shifted to support departments with many majors.
Dr. Hargraves: Under the new budget structure, will small departments with few majors
need to recruit more students or lose departmental money?
Dr. Rao: Maybe some departments will disappear and “clusters” will form in their place.
Promotion/tenure could also evolve to permit this. Learning is no longer in
silos…it is much more diverse.

Salwa Sheibany: Some learning spaces are inadequate, and some foreign language classes must
move class around to find a good space. Also, there is faculty favoritism and bullying,
and there is insufficient response when reported.
Dr. Rao: Troubled to hear this. Classroom issue will be discussed and addressed. We
should all live by the VCU Core Values. Laura Rugless was asked to look further
into these behavioral issues.

Mark Wood: While studying abroad and experiential learning are key components to success,
advising needs to be improved to work with students to identify appropriate avenues and
funding to support students and let them know what is possible. The interdisciplinary
aspect is excellent and should be commended. Concerns about staff and adjunct
compensation were expressed and questions were asked about plans for improvement.
Dr. Hackett: Improvements are coming to professional advising through Maggie Tolan’s
office. Proposals are also coming in for ways to support term and adjunct faculty.
Dr. Rao: Advising improvements are a priority. Adjuncts serve a valued purpose, and
we need to identify and reward deserving adjunct faculty. Also, with the shift in
focus towards interdisciplinary pursuits, perhaps we need to investigate
interdisciplinary promotion/tenure.
KC Ogbonna: With the continued interest in collaboration across campus, there needs to also be a way to improve recognize collaborations through compensation and/or reward.

Dr. Rao: Publishing is important, but so is impact (positive impact). We need a way that measures impact and rewards on such. On a recent trip through Gilpin Court, Dr. Rao noticed how outdated our support system was. VCU should be a leader towards change in this support system.

Dr. Rao: In closing, his partnership with faculty and Faculty Senate was praised. He expressed that VCU’s faculty and students are why the experiential learning requirement will succeed. He then explained how faculty stories keep him grounded. He is proud of VCU’s faculty.

5:05 PM Q&A with Provost Hackett

Kristy Artello: The governor announced a 2% pay increase for all state employees in 2017. Will all of us actually receive a 2% pay raise in 2017?

Dr. Hackett: Actually, his “shorthand” was confusing…it is merely a pool of funds. This is similar to what the state provided last year:

- 2% state-funded pool for staff merit-based raises
- 2% state-funded pool + 2.5% VCU-funded pool for faculty merit-based raises

Mary Secret: The big, bold ideas of President Rao are exciting, BUT do we have the local or departmental leadership qualified to support, implement, and lead this change?

Dr. Hackett: We do, and more information will come out as we continue development.

Jennifer Johnson: Interdisciplinary education, research, and programs are important, but there is still a valued place for disciplinary learning here at VCU.

Dr. Hackett: We are in agreement. We are not doing away with disciplines at VCU.

Rosalyn Hargraves: Tenure and promotion for faculty with joint appointments is confusing. Currently there is a “home” department that decides tenure and promotion on their criteria which might not appreciate/reward work from the joint department/field.

Dr. Hackett: We need to be clear on the rules when establishing joint appointments, especially with respect to primary department, expectations, etc.

Chris Wagner: With the ever-increasing requests for faculty to do more, there is a need to establish rewards for service, service learning, etc.

Dr. Hackett: Faculty workloads shift over time, and faculty rewards should be adjusted appropriately. Differential workloads where people who excel in teaching do more teaching and people who excel in research do more research (according to department-approved work plans) could apply here. We’re not there yet, but merit-based pay considerations based upon differential work plans could address this in part.

Chris Wagner: Plea — always involve the voices of people who are being affected by decisions in the decision making process (shared governance).

Dr. Hackett: “Absolutely.”

Michael McVoy: Faculty are constantly being asked to do “one more little thing,” yet we aren’t being given more time or compensation for this extra effort, and administration isn’t taking into account the cost of faculty time. Faculty time should be budgeted and
considered as important. Starting meetings five minutes late wastes our valuable time
and is expensive. It seems as if the attitude is that “faculty are an unlimited resource.”
Dr. Hackett: Faculty are not available for just anything. We do need to find ways to do
things more expeditiously and efficiently. We also need to find ways to unburden
faculty and reward them appropriately.
Michael McVoy: Something needs to be done to change the culture that seeks to ask
faculty whenever something needs to be done.
Dr. Hackett: Keep in mind that faculty are seeking ways to participate in processes
(shared governance); however, maybe we can be more efficient, use smaller
committees (but not exclusionary), encourage more people to participate (so as
not to use the same people often), etc.

Mary Secret: Faculty support seems to be drying up. We have to make our own travel
arrangements, our own travel planning, etc. Our time could be better used, and support
staff could probably do this work more efficiently.
Dr. Hackett: “I can see that.”

Dr. Hackett: In closing, Dr. Hackett mentioned a recent proposal for hiring new professional
advisors for undergraduate students to alleviate some of the advising burden of faculty.
These advisors can coordinate the technical side of advising (financial aid, registration
processes, etc.) and free-up more time for faculty to focus on mentoring students.

Faculty Senate Items:
5:30 PM Minutes of December 1st meeting
Approved as presented by unanimous vote.

5:35 PM Nominating Committee
Holly Alford
Past President June Nicholson was nominated to chair this year’s Nominating Committee for
nominating a slate of officers for the 2016–2017 term. In addition, Carmen Rodriguez and Mary
Secret were nominated to be Nominating Committee members. These nominees were approved
by unanimous vote. The Nominating Committee was then charged to present a slate of officers
for next year at the March 1st meeting of the Faculty Senate.

5:40 PM Reapportionment Report
Joan Pellegrini
For next year, 2016–2017, the designated number of Senate seats will remain unchanged for the
various schools with no exception. The average total faculty representation is 1 Senator for every
47,172 VCU faculty members, but the range varies from 1 for every 19.5 in the School of Social
Work to 1 for every 53.5 in Student Affairs. The School of Medicine remains at the maximum
allocation of 20 Senate seats and 8 Grievance Panel seats. The Grievance Panel seat allotments
will not change for the various schools with the exception that the School of College of
Humanities & Sciences gains a seat while the School of Education loses a seat. Also note that the
School of Medicine will need five Alternate Senators, the College of Humanities & Sciences will
need three Alternate Senators, and all other schools will each need two Alternate Senators. In
addition, the School of Medicine and the College of Humanities & Sciences will each need four
Alternate Grievance Panelists, the School of Education will need two Alternate Grievance
Panelists, and all other schools will each need one Alternate Grievance Panelist.

5:50 PM Adjournment
Holly Alford