Orientation for new Senators:
3:20 PM – 3:50 PM Senator Orientation Holly Alford & Mary Secret
What the Faculty Senate does
Committees
Sharing information with units
Bringing information back to Faculty Senate

Procedural Items:
4:05 PM Introductions June Nicholson & Holly Alford
June Nicholson, Past President, called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM. She gave an overview of the accomplishments of the Faculty Senate for 2014–2015. June then passed the presidential gavel to President Holly Alford.

Holly thanked June for her service on the Faculty Senate, including most recently two years as President.

Holly recognized Karin Kapsidelis of the Richmond Times-Dispatch as a guest in attendance.

Guests:
4:15 PM Bike Race Update Chief John Venuti & Adam Crowe
VCU Police Chief John Venuti gave a brief overview of VCU operations during the Richmond 2015 Bike Race and then introduced Adam Crowe, VCU Emergency Preparedness Director, to give more details. Adam indicated that VCU will staff a unified command/communication center so that issues/information during the bike race can be distributed immediately and efficiently to the appropriate staff and community members. The biggest impact to the campus will be September 25th-27th. Available resources online include:
www.richmond2015.com
www.societe2015.com
For bike race related information and news, you may follow #TheWorldsatVCU on social media.

VCU is erecting bridges over Main St. and Franklin St. to facilitate access to the Monroe Park Campus. There will be VCU branding on the bridges, and we hope that they are featured prominently in broadcasts and media reports. Transportation plans for VCU will be posted at richmond2015.vcu.edu a week or so before the race. Text message service will be available specifically for bike race information on an opt-in basis. Instructions for signing up for text messages as well as the VCU contact phone number for the unified command/communication center will be disseminated the week prior to the race. Regarding parking on campus, parking subscribers will be provided parking in VCU decks and lots...only about 1000 unsubscribed spaces will be available as for-pay parking during the event.

4:30 PM  President’s Welcome and Update  Dr. Michael Rao
President Michael Rao thanked the Faculty Senate for working well with the administration last year and looks forward to continued efforts. He then introduced Dr. Marsha Rappley as the new Vice President for Health Sciences and CEO of the VCU Health System. He then mentioned that he foresees that we’ll need to think differently about the future of higher education in order to achieve the success we desire. We are at an advantage by being a premiere urban research university, and this will make us stronger as we grow in the near future. We also need to demonstrate how we will connect our goals and direction with that of the Commonwealth of Virginia. He then opened the floor for questions from the faculty, but no one had any questions at that time. President Rao ended by inviting senators and all faculty to share with him their thoughts and insights about what we see as the biggest challenges facing us as educators today.

4:40 PM  Provost Report  Dr. Gail Hackett
Provost Gail Hackett praised the faculty and staff for being welcoming to her these past six months, and she is delighted to be in Richmond and at VCU. She has been to many units to meet staff and faculty, and she hopes to do more of that this year. Recently she has been involved with efforts to investigate ways to improve academic quality and community involvement at VCU. She’s also been involved with two dean searches (Education and Humanities & Sciences), and the search for a new Vice President for Finance and Administration is progressing well. Provost Hackett also mentioned that she has restructured the positions formerly held by
John Wiencek (Senior Vice Provost for Administration and Strategic Initiatives) and Laura Moriarty (Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs) into two new positions with searches currently underway: Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs.

She then praised the incoming freshmen as the most diverse class (over 50% minority, over 30% underrepresented minority) and highest academic credentials of any previous incoming class. VCU is currently experiencing a 62% 6-year grad rate (64% for African-American students), and our retention rate is improving; however, our retention rate does drop off in the 3rd and 4th years, so we need to focus there, especially with regards to African-American males and Hispanic males who have the highest departure rates. Provost Hackett is also looking toward new initiatives to improve faculty/staff recruitment and retention. She then promoted the new Institute for Inclusion, Inquiry, and Innovation (I3) led by Aashir Nasim. She had formed a team that it looking into reinstating a faculty mentoring program, and she is looking into situations/opportunities that may be of interest to term faculty.

Provost Hackett also mentioned that the process into creating a new university budget model was progressing steadily.

Pat Cummins asked if reduced financial aid after sophomore year was a factor affecting our retention rates. Provost Hackett responded that there are likely several key factors that work in tandem to affect retention. Because gateway courses seem to affect retention, one initiative related to retention will be to look into our gateway courses…financial aid may also be an area to look into to help with retention.

Jamie Stillman, Director of Strategic Communications for the Provost Office, then gave a presentation on the bike race’s impact on the Division of Academic Affairs. She discussed liberal telecommuting, 16 hours of paid time to volunteer at the bike race (separate from the standard community service leave), business operations and staffing plans, etc. (one important point: no one is to be alone in any building, so staff areas in groups). Jamie also suggested that employees that are telecommuting should take advantage of the numerous professional development and training opportunities through Atomic Learning: http://go.vcu.edu/atomiclearning

5:05 PM  VP for Health Sciences Report  Dr. Marsha Rappley

Dr. Rappley discussed her first few weeks on the job. One of the highlights she mentioned was a tour that a colleague gave her of the community along with
discussions of where health issues arise in our area and how these issues are related to the associated community. She stated that she is looking for opportunities for working on improving interdisciplinary challenges within the university and improving our involvement with improving community engagement and community health. Urban universities are at the forefront, and now is our time to capitalize on that.

A question was asked about the new VCU Health branding. She responded that it is to strengthen our position and planning as a single entity to better leverage opportunities for health sciences. When asked about the new vcuhealth.org email addresses, Pam Lepley (VP for University Relations) mentioned that it was primarily related to the switch of email services from Lotus Notes to Microsoft Office 365. Dr. Rappley also mentioned that it is in line with what our peer institutions have setup for their medical faculty and practitioners.

5:15 PM Title IX Policies Madelyn Wessel & Laura Rugless
Madelyn Wessel JD, University Counsel, discussed her efforts over the last six months with respect to our Title IX related policies including sexual harassment/assault policies for students and for faculty/staff. In an effort to ensure fairness for all parties in the University, she wrote the current interim policy to pertain to the entire VCU community instead of having separate policies for students and for faculty/staff. The 30-day commenting period lasts for the month of September, so please review the policy and submit comments: http://www.policy.vcu.edu/policies-open-for-public-comment

Laura Rugless JD, Director of Equity and Access Services, discussed how Equity and Access Services has been developing in recent months with growth in investigators and other staff. Her office is looking into opportunities for education and outreach related to Title IX compliance. She hopes that the online training that will be required for all VCU employees (faculty & staff) will be available prior to the Bike Race so that employees can complete it during the race.

June Nicholson asked Madelyn Wessel if there could be open public forums to discuss the interim policies and seek input. Madelyn seemed open to the idea as well as provided other possible options for feedback.

Mary Secret asked what was the biggest thing we should know about the new policies. Madelyn and Laura discussed that the process has changed to a more investigative/discussion model than to a face-to-face confrontational model. It was noted that Laura’s team is the neutral, fact-finding arm of the process. To date, in
general, complainants and respondents have commented that the interim policy and its associated procedures seem fair.

**Faculty Senate Items:**

**5:35 PM**  **Minutes of May 5th meeting**  **Mary Secret & Scott Street**
Minutes were unanimously approved as presented. Thank you to Mary Secret for such a great job these last two years as Recording Secretary & Treasurer.

**5:40 PM**  **Senate Committees**  **Mary Secret**
Mary handed out committee descriptions and surveys and mentioned that everyone should be on at least one committee.

**Discussion Items:**

**5:45 PM**  **Senator Responsibilities**  **Holly Alford**
At the next Faculty Senate meeting, we will be asking all Senators to sit by school so that everyone can meet the others within their schools who are their fellow Senators. This should facilitate the distribution of materials to the faculty within the schools by these Senators. We’ll provide a summary of the meetings for the Senators to use, or they may use their own summaries. We hope to send out this list 24 hours after the Faculty Senate meeting or after the Council of Deans meeting, whichever occurs last…this is a sign of respect to the Provost and the deans so that they can discuss information before faculty approach them with questions/concerns.

Holly also mentioned that since Dr. Reuban Rodriguez was ill today and unable to attend the Faculty Senate meeting, his presentation on the VCU Honor System would be rescheduled.

**5:50 PM**  **Faculty Senate President’s Report**  **Holly Alford**
Holly discussed that shared governance, diversity and equity, and budget will be priorities for the coming year. There will also be opportunities for Senators to serve on various university committees, so don’t be surprised if Holly asks you to serve or nominate someone to serve.

Holly also mentioned that information from Faculty Senate meetings and other information that may be of interest to faculty members will be posted on the Faculty Senate website:  http://facultysenate.vcu.edu/. She then recognized Erin
White for the excellent work she has done and continues to do on the Faculty Senate website.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:59 PM.