Final Report of the  
Faculty Senate Standing Committee on Academic and Professional Status  

Respectfully Submitted by Allen S. Lee, committee chair  

23 April 2013  

This final report has received a majority of votes from the members of the committee. 5 voted in favor, with 1 abstention. The members, in addition to the chair, are Andrew Chestnut, James Farmer, Elizabeth McGee, Michael McVoy, Laura Morgan, Kayvan Najarian, and Robert Sims.

The Faculty Senate Standing Committee on Academic and Professional Status recommends the establishment of a “Shared Governance Task Force,” whose purpose will be grounded in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools’ (SACS’) recognition of shared governance as a requirement or criterion for accreditation (SACS, The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, 2012, pages 3, 25, and 31). The Task Force would be charged to recommend systematic and inclusive processes through which shared governance could then be developed. This issue also directly impacts the goal of faculty quality and retention in Quest for Distinction (page 28, section IC, topic “Investing in People”). The Committee recommends that the SACS concepts of “objectives” and “measures” be applied to guide the work of the Task Force and that such objectives and measures be formally included in the Quality Enhancement Plan, which is one of the required documents in the SACS reaffirmation process.

The following timeline is offered only as suggestive and illustrative of the one that the Task Force might follow.

A Possible Timeline for the Task Force to Follow in Recommending Systematic and Inclusive Processes Through Which Shared Governance Could Then Be Developed

Stage 1: Within three months of the adoption of the recommendation to establish the Shared Governance Task Force, the Task Force will be established, where the membership will include representation from faculty, administration, and students.

Stage 2: Within three months of its establishment, the Task Force will have composed a “Statement of Issues, Areas of Focus, and Goals for Shared Governance at VCU,” which will identify what it considers to be issues and areas of focus that can be addressed with the help of shared governance and goals that can be achieved with the help of shared governance.

Stage 3: Within three months of having composed its “Statement of Issues, Areas of Focus, and Goals for Shared Governance at VCU,” the Task Force will identify best practices in shared governance, where these best practices can be drawn from either inside or outside of VCU.
Stage 4: Within six months of having identified best practices, the Task Force will devise a process to develop a shared governance framework at VCU, where the process can specify, among other things, (1) the academic units (e.g., schools, departments, colleges, centers, programs) and administrative units (e.g., provost’s office, faculty senate, university council) which will develop shared-governance procedures, (2) guidelines for what shared-governance procedures need to cover, (3) benchmarks and “model” shared-governance frameworks (drawn from the best practices), (4) schedules of open hearings at the unit level, and (5) a target date for a completed formulation of the shared governance framework.

The Faculty Senate welcomes and encourages the President and Provost to improve the above timeline as they see fit. The Faculty Senate appreciates the spirit of cooperation that the faculty at VCU have enjoyed with the President and Provost and trusts them in making decisions on how to proceed in establishing a process to develop a shared governance framework.