



VCU

Faculty Senate

Faculty Senate Leadership Meeting Agenda — February 16, 2021

4:00-6:00 pm

Faculty Senate Leadership meeting link:

<https://tinyurl.com/faculty-senate-vcu>

For complete minutes and related files, see: <http://www.facultysenate.vcu.edu/>

Please email ecarpenter2@vcu.edu with questions or corrections.

Procedural Items:

Call to order 4:00-4:02
Nancy Jallo, President

Minutes from January 19, 2021 4:02-4:05

Faculty Senate Committees 4:05-4:45

Diversity and Inclusion excellence: (Accessibility and inclusion working group (from staff senate) and Nick Fetzer (past-president of staff senate) was here to talk about one of their initiatives.

- Revising the accommodation policy at VCU, making it easier to navigate asking for accommodations for disabilities. New policy will make it clearer how they make the requests. New policy says they don't need to go to the supervisor first, they can go straight to the ADA coordinator Crystal Coombes.
- Have volunteers who have received training to accompany people to meetings requesting accommodations. Asking if FS volunteers to also participate in the training. This is best practices from other institutions to have someone accompany people for support.
- For additional information, check out <https://staffsenate.vcu.edu/committees/accessibility-and-inclusion-working-group/> or email the Committee chairs - mcwhorterja@vcu.edu and nbfetzer@vcu.edu
- Debrief from faculty senate meeting: Not a lot of feedback from individuals yet, good discussions in individual groups. Wanting to do, but need a better strategy, about how to get out more information about what different units are doing. Next steps—google form for feedback. Need to check in what is going on in the individual units. Maybe think of bring in a paid moderator in order to help guide discussions so that we have a product which can be shared with faculty at large as well as provide points where we can follow-up on activities.
- <https://nationalseedproject.org/Key-SEED-Texts/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack>

Update from Legislative Affairs -

- Talked with government relations person (Matt Conrad), and the big takeaway for VCU we have another \$10M coming from the state.
- Attached is the report from the Report from the AAUP-VA conference/Faculty Senate of VA/VCU FS via Brian Turner, Carmen Rodriguez, and Pat Cummins

Dear colleagues,

This strange legislative session was set to adjourn on February 11, but Governor Northam called a special session to allow the General Assembly to finish its work. Adjournment is now set for February 27. The most important issue before the General Assembly is the budget.

Fortunately, the state's revenue forecasts continue to improve, so the legislators have more money to direct towards the important new investments approved in the 2020 session that were postponed due to the pandemic. The federal CARES Act provided \$210.3 million for public institutions, \$72.6 million for private non-profit institutions, \$138.3 million specifically for coronavirus relief, and Virginia received an additional \$378.2 million from the December relief act (CRRSAA).

Both the House and the Senate approved their budget bills on Friday, February 12. Each chamber will appoint members to a conference committee to negotiate the differences between the two bills. Key differences are:

- *The House proposes a 3.5% salary increase for state employees, include adjunct faculty. The Senate restores the 3.0% increase approved in 2020. This includes adjunct faculty.*
- *Both chambers increase Tuition Assistance Grants to in-state students attending private non-profit institutions from \$3,400 to \$4,000 per grant. The House however removed the prohibition on TAG awards going to students who study entirely in online programs and provides an award of \$2,000 per grant. The prohibition was adopted in the 2020 session, and was sharply criticized by officials at Liberty University, which runs a very large online program.*

OTHER HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATION 2020 session

BILLS WE SUPPORT

HB 1848 Delegate Sickles (D) adds discrimination on the basis of disability as an unlawful employment practice under the Virginia Human Rights Act. This bill has already **passed** the House and the Senate committee without opposition, and is before the full Senate.

HB 2120 Delegate Keam (D) to require the Board of Visitors to solicit input from the Faculty Senate or its equivalent twice yearly, and when conducting presidential searches. The bill **passed** without opposition in the House and is currently before the Higher Education subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Education and Health.

HB 2204 Delegate Filler-Corn (D) and **SB 1405** Senator Saslaw (D) to create the Get Skilled, Get a Job, Give Back (G3) Fund and directs the VCCS to establish the G3 Program to provide financial assistance from the fund. This fund would be an addition to monies appropriated from the state's General Fund. Both of these bills were **passed** with little opposition in each chamber and are now working their way through the committee process in the other house..

BILLS OF INTEREST (we will track these but likely not take a position)

HB 1755 Delegate Carter (D). Repeals "right-to-work." This bill was destined to die in the Labor and Commerce Committee without a hearing, so Delegate Carter motioned on the floor of the House to have the bill discharged from committee and debated by the full House. That motion was **defeated** on a vote of 87-13.

HB 1870 Delegate Batten (R). This bill would provide in-state tuition for non-Virginia student currently present in the Commonwealth who is a victim of human trafficking. The Post-Secondary and Higher Education subcommittee **failed to recommend reporting** the bill on a 4-4 vote.

HB 1930 Delegate Aird. This bill would prohibit asking about criminal history or using information about criminal history in admissions decision processes. The bill **passed** the House 58-42 and is now before the Higher Education subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Education and Health.

HB 1975 Delegate Rush (R). This bill would waive tuition and fees for students who are survivors of criminal sexual assault and certain other sex crimes committed when the student was under 18. The bill was **reported** from both the Education Committee and the Appropriations Committee but was referred back to Appropriations from the House floor. The bill was **left (died)** in Appropriations.

HB 1980 Delegate Reid (D). Establishes the Enslaved Ancestors College Access Scholarship Program, requiring Longwood, UVA, VCU, VMI, and William & Mary to provide at least one full scholarship each year to someone who meets the bill's qualifications with the institutions own, non-tuition money. The bill **passed** the House 61-39 and is now before the Higher Education subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Education and Health.

BILLS OF CONCERN (We will track these and express concerns as appropriate)

HB 1772 Delegate Freitas (R). This bill would extend per-student enrollment-based funding for non-credit workforce training programs. The Post-Secondary and Higher Education subcommittee **failed to recommend reporting** on 3-5 vote and was **left** in the Committee on Education.

HB 1794 Delegate Davis (R). This would exclude from collective bargaining negotiation matters dealing with hiring, firing or disciplinary actions of a local employee. Collective bargaining may be permitted by local school boards after May 1, 2021. Efforts to limit negotiation of the representation function of the union would further weaken Virginia's already weak step towards public sector unions. The bill was **left** in the House Committee on Labor and Commerce.

HB 2145 Delegate Miyares (R). Prohibits the governing board of any public institution of higher education from fixing tuition at a rate that exceeds \$2,500 per semester or its equivalent in any case in which instruction is provided solely in a virtual format and from a remote location. This bill **laid on the table (defeated)** on a vote of 2-5 in the Post-Secondary and Higher Education subcommittee and was **left in** the House Education Committee.

Alumni and Community Engagement:

- Larry Powell, in charge of one of the should be invited to come to the full meeting. To see about ways that FS can work with alumni groups to increase engagement.

Faculty Affairs

- Have contacted the Tenure task force to see if they need any help or if the FS can be of any help.
- Have been working on faculty evaluations. Message from the Provost about COVID situation should be included. There are concerns that some units are not following that guidance. **So if your unit is not following the guidance, PLEASE EMAIL YOUR SENATOR ASAP!**
- Need to disseminate the process for appealing your faculty annual evaluations. It is also attached as a reminder.
- As a reminder, the statement that was sent is below:

The faculty annual evaluation process is designed to reflect the work that faculty do across the year with regard to Teaching, Scholarship/Research, and Service. There has not been a year like 2020 and the issues that the world has faced due to COVID-19. The faculty have been on the frontlines of facing the pandemic by supporting the university, students, and each other. Therefore, schools and colleges can demonstrate their support of faculty through a flexible annual evaluation process in the time of COVID-19.

The Faculty Senate and the Faculty Affairs Committee of University Council believe that the faculty annual evaluation for the year of COVID-19 should take into account the extraordinary challenges that faculty have faced and continue to face, due to many factors, such as extra teaching loads, instructional delivery and patient care changes, having oversight of safety protocol in the learning spaces on campus, and not having access to labs and participants to conduct their research. We believe that each school and college should handle the annual evaluation process with flexibility. A model for faculty annual evaluation that we would

like to present for consideration during the year of COVID-19 would be that all faculty start with an Excellent rating in each category of Teaching, Scholarship/Research, and Service. Faculty may receive ratings other than Excellent in categories in which they did not meet their basic responsibilities, but the person conducting the annual evaluation should be clear that they are taking into consideration the issues faced by faculty due to COVID-19 when discussing their justifications for these lower ratings.

Academic Support Service-Facilities

- First meeting of Faculty Technology Advisory Committee is next week. Next meeting in April. This is a new committee where faculty can express their concerns regarding potential software and proposed technology changes.
- Also remember. there is now an official appeal process if faculty do not agree with their annual evaluation. The information is at this site, Annual Assessment of Faculty Performance - the appeal process is at the end of this webpage: <https://policy.vcu.edu/universitywide-policies/policies/annual-assessment-of-faculty-performance.html>

Faculty Senate President/University Committee Updates

4:45-5:00

Provost Meeting

- Talked about survey that came out regarding faculty stresses. Brought up concerns about post-COVID syndrome. Asked provost to remind the deans that they need to be aware of the hardships that faculty are also experiencing.
- Feedback to the faculty- We like all the kind words, but they come with a “but”. But the students still feel disengaged. While the statement should not be taken personally, but it is hard not to. Another example is the DFW rate discussion. These statements seem to imply that faculty are being biased toward certain groups which is not true. When the statements are made to everyone, it implies that everyone is doing the action, not just the targeted faculty who are not. This is one of the factors which does contribute to faculty stress.
- Maybe instead of targeting faculty practices, resources could be set aside to provide summer bridge activities/class that the targeted at-risk students could take.
- It would be better to engage faculty in these courses about what their ideas are for improving DFW rates. Maybe a better statistic would be to look at DF rates and remove the Ws from the metric. VCU withdraw policy contributes to that rate. This is an example of a structural issue which could be addressed by admin.

Provost Search

- The website is updated on the progress of the search.

Dean of library Search-

- Search committee is meeting March 1st, so if you can look at the talks which are posted on the search website the search committee would love to hear from you.
- <https://provost.vcu.edu/searches/libraries/>

Academic Continuity

- Meeting typically every 3 weeks, one meeting tomorrow morning. Bring up during this meeting to better engage faculty in the discussions to get ideas on how to improve DFW rates.

Dean Evaluations –

- Brought up to Provost back in October. There is a need for the dean to be evaluated annually, just like the faculty, with faculty input. Maybe this should be a faculty senate activity/resolution. Maybe make a survey asking for comments about their dean's office would help provide transparency. Maybe an activity for faculty affairs committee/academic affairs (of university council).

Role of the Campus reps and Health Systems Committee-

- Maybe attend dean's council meetings
- Need to be better defined
- Are they still needed?
- Maybe help coordinate communication between FS and faculty of the different units.

Requests for Faculty Senate representation (Nancy, all)

- University- wide platform called VIVO-online platform that enables faculty and staff to share their scholarship and research across disciplines, This software platform is utilized by many institutions of higher education and has multiple benefits. planning a demo of VIVO that will be held on Feb 25, 9-10am. We would welcome your attendance and/or a representative from the faculty senate to join (request from
- ONE VCU Sustainability Plan – requesting a member of the Faculty Senate to participate in the development committee. As a collective plan to guide sustainability efforts, ONE VCU is shaped by extensive input from our university, health system, and local communities. The Faculty Senate appointee would join other members of the VCU and VCU Health System communities whose professional roles will directly inform the sustainability plan and assist in its development. Additional members of the Sustainability Plan Development Committee will include appointees from student, staff, and faculty senates and the chair of each working group. Anticipate the final Sustainability Plan to be complete by December 2022. Anticipated meeting frequency for the Sustainability Plan Development Committee will be monthly during the planning process. Once the committee is finalized, a standing meeting time that works best for most will be selected (request from Meredith Weiss, Vice President for Administration)

Other requests?

Stretch Break

5:00-5:05

Faculty Issues/Faculty Senate Discussion

5:05-5:45

Dean Evaluations

Valerie Robnolt

MCV/MPC Representatives Role

MCV/MPC Representatives/All

Mark Crosthwaite MCV Campus Rep; Health Professions,

Radiologic, Technology

Jesse Goldstein Monroe Park Campus Rep College of Humanities and Science,

Faculty Senate Agenda (March 2, 2021)

5:45: 5:59

- *Provost Office*
- *Faculty collaborating with Student success*
Maggie Tolan (VCU Student Success)
- *Strategic Research Priorities Plan (SRPP) Implementation Plan*
Kathy Rudasill and Michael Donnenberg
- *Larry Powell (15 min)VCU alumni and community relationships*
- *Committee work time (determine time and process)*

Adjourn

5:59-6:00

Next Meeting:

Faculty Senate, Next Meeting: March 2, 2021 4-6pm via zoom

Faculty Senate Leadership, Next Meeting March 16, 2021 4-6 pm via zoom