Faculty Senate Leadership Meeting Agenda – January 18, 2022
4:00 – 6:00 PM
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.

Attendance:
Valerie, Scott, Everett, Jessie, Nancy, Maria R., Ryan, Gaynell, Roxanne, Maria T., Oliver, Pat, and Angela

Procedural Items:
Call to order, Welcome  4:00-4:02
Valerie Robnolt, President

Minutes from December 14, 2021  4:02-4:05
Everett Carpenter, Outgoing Recording Secretary
Welcome to Gaynell Sherrod, Incoming Recording Secretary!

At 4:04
Valerie - We have a quorum so let’s start the meeting.
  - Faculty Senate Leadership Check-in:
  - Several Faculty Senators noted that they were back on campus and teaching in-person for the first time since the start of the pandemic
  - GS will be away at U Mn for a residency from Jan 19-Feb 5
  - Everett will note the meeting minutes on Jan 25 and Feb 1 in GS’ absence

Valerie Called for acceptance of the December FS Leadership Meeting Minutes
  - Minutes Accepted
  - Everett agreed to note that the minutes are the final version not a draft, otherwise the no changes.

Faculty Senate Committee Business/Goals  4:05-4:55
Discussion about when committees should meet
Valerie:
  - When do want to have committee meetings?
Discussion included these suggestions:
  - One suggestion was that we not have them during the meeting times, but suggest that they happen on the “off” Tuesdays
  - Another issue was to have the committee meetings at a time when administrators are not “still” present at the general meeting
Valerie – I thought we had decided to announce that we were going into a committee meeting and therefore go into a closed session, and would ask/request admin to leave?
FS Leadership suggested that there could be notice announced in the “chat” that the meeting is moving into closed sessions. It was decided that the chair of the Faculty Affairs committee would create a Zoom link and if we need to meet without administrators, we will go into that committee meeting as a closed session.

More discussion about when all committees should meet:
- If we don’t embed time in the larger meeting, it was suggested that committees find discreet time to meet outside of the general meeting timeframe.

Valerie – What if we ask the committees if they are available to meet at 3:30 pm before general FS meetings?
- Some committees may want to meet for additional time – but it should not be required.
- Another person said they think it’s good to touch base and establish a time for committees to meet – because, in their committee a lot of people are new to the Faculty Senate and to the committees.

Valerie – FS recognizes the necessity and importance of the committee work and we need to make a space for this work to happen. FS Leadership decided that we would meet in committees at 4:00 before the Jan. 25 Faculty Senate meeting on a separate Zoom link and in addition to discussing business, each committee would make a plan about when to meet outside of regular FS meetings.

Next Business:

Valerie – the Provost was supposed to be at the meeting but wasn’t able to attend due to an important leadership meeting.

- With the new governor in place, VCU can no longer require:
  - Faculty and staff to get boosters
  - That faculty and staff are vaccinated
  - However, the Mask mandate is still in effect for VCU but was lifted for K-12 public schools
  - Jesse and Nancy weighed in about the meeting they attended with VCU leadership on these issues and their takeaways regarding the severity of the COVID and the new variants as they impact VCU faculty/staff/students and return to campus.

One member shared that the last time we had the COVID discussion in a meeting, it was brought up to “not require masks” in spring 2022. There was surprise that VCU would not pushback about all the safety protocol we had in place. How do we as faculty protect ourselves, the students, and the learning community? It’s very cavalier to say that Omicron is “just mild.”

Valerie – If you have any concerns, please, email me, Nancy, or Jesse. She said that it’s very concerning that we (VCU) can no longer mandate vaccination and boosters at VCU.

During this discussion, someone asked, What if an employee contracts COVID at VCU. Can they get work compensation?
- The answer was that it is a good question. However, the burden of proof is on you and that will be difficult to trace and determine that you caught the same strain as someone in that specific environment.

- Someone wondered if at some point they are going to force faculty/staff to be on campus for in-person engagement?

- Several said that they believe many of the accommodations that are in place around teaching and events will not be revoked – at least we don’t think so.
– One member thanked the FS who attended the COVID advisory meetings for their work and for representing faculty.

**Diversity and Inclusive Excellence** - Resolution vote at 1/25/22 meeting
Sarah Jane Brubaker (chair)

Valerie - For Next Week’s Meeting – We have three (3) Resolutions to vote on.

Valerie said she’d like to do polls for these resolutions during the meeting and Scott said that is something that he could assist with.

**VCU Health Systems Relations**
Mark Crosthwaite (chair)

Valerie – I need to check in with Mark about the position paper that he is working on.

**Faculty Affairs** - faculty evaluations and appeal process
Maria Teves (chair) – The committee has a report and questions that we want the admin to respond to.
– It was shared that there is a process whereas your committee can submit questions from your report and solicit a direct response.

Valerie – Discussed the appeal process for retaliatory actions against faculty that serve on committees or do work that hold admin accountable.
– It was shared that people in the College are still uneasy with the results and feel that the Chairs are more aligned with the Deans. We should advocate being proactive and getting the information to the faculty about the appeals process to lessen their fears.

Valerie – Jill Gordon is the interim Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs. We should put this issue on their radar.

**Governance** - shared governance (school/unit) – No updates at this time.

**Academic Programs and Research** -

Ryan Cales (chair) – the provost office has offered two additional literacies that they want to offer in addition to the “racial” – entrepreneurial and computational literacy.

– One member asked about a class around language and other culture.

– Another member said they would like to see these classes vetted by FS.

– The Gen Ed Committee was blindsided by the two new literacies.

The provost’s proposed two new literacies courses should go through Faculty Senate.

**Academic Support Services** - facilities
Valerie Robnolt (chair)

Valerie – I am on the Online Strategy Steering Committee and faculty and students were surveyed about online courses and the response rates to the surveys were very low.
- It is believed that we need an outside company to assist with the Online Ed offerings. Thus our online ed Committee is on task force related to online learning.
- We must look at intellectual property.
- It was shared that the School of Business is offering an online component of their program and was required to offer it asynchronous; the students don’t see this as being unique. We really need to be unique if we want to push out online offerings this late in the game.
- It was shared that World Languages are doing some of these in part in languages as part of the SCHEV system to make more opportunities available across institutions.
- The question was asked, How does the intellectual property work in this instance because it happens in medical research? The Online Strategy Task Force will hopefully learn this answer.

Alumni and Community Relations
Gaynell Sherrod (chair) – she spoke with Corey from the Alumni office of development

Website and Social Media
Ashley Brewer (chair) – No update at this time.

Credentials and Rules
Scott Street (chair) – the committee might have a report by sometime in February for review. It’s informational for us and important for the admin’s office to determine how many senators each unit gets.

State Legislative and Statewide Relations - Higher Education Advocacy Day Information
Carmen Rodriguez (co-chair)
Pat Cummins (co-chair)

Several things. We did not have higher Ed on the agenda because of the prep for the new governor. Updates that came today from AAUP:
- We are likely to support faculty pay raises – 5%
- We will support the $224 MILLION for faculty retention
- Salaries increase from the state must be matched by the host institution
- $15 Million for financial aid for VCU
- $20 million dollar requests for five Health Sciences Schools at VCU –
  o If we do not get any money from the state, then it will cost VCU $60 million dollars to support the schools – we need advocacy for this subsidy
- We want to support the $180 million dollars for the new Arts and Innovation Building
- The Research Center for Social Equity/Justice in the Wilder School - $5 million
- In K-12 public schools – The Advance Diploma – there is a bill proposed that students will not need a language for an advanced degree from K-12 public schools in VA.

Valerie – In terms of salary, do we want to advocate for “cost” of living increase as opposed to merit-based increases?

Student Affairs
Chris Saladino (chair) – No update at this time.

Economic Status, Budget, and Planning
Roxanne Spindle (chair) - Nothing new from this committee.
MCV/MPC Representatives
Mark Crosthwaite MCV Campus Rep
Jesse Goldstein Monroe Park Campus Rep

– It was shared that the Provost decided to mentor the Dean that was received a “no confidence” from the faculty in the College of Humanities and Sciences.
  - The dean is now required to have a research agenda.
  - There is going to be an AAUP meeting that will be open to all – to expand its faculty engagement.

Faculty Senate President’s Report/Issues

University Committees Update/Issues

Academic Analytics Benchmark Use and Access Update
Administrative Structure Report and Resolution
Unit and Department Bylaws – Faculty Role in Chair Removal and Department Reorganization
Advocating for Cost-of-Living Raises
Annual evaluations (goal - next steps about Faculty Affair’s paper and COVID concerns)
Dean and Other Admin Evaluations across Units (next steps about goal)
Online Strategy Task Force and Steering Committee (Valerie Robnolt, Kristy Artello)
Any other university committee reports?

Valerie
What I want to talk about for next week-

Vote on the following and how to do it:
• Sustainability Advisory Group – Climate Emergency Declaration
• Administrative Structure Report and Resolution
  - Needs to be a better understanding about how employees are categorized
  - A comment was made that something happened with salary in VCU Health system with the salary raise that was not equitable. One member found the email from the Health System CFO about our salaries – MCV and VCU ... and that showed the 5% increase on one side and the 5% decrease on the other side. I feel bad making this complaint because my salary is different it is the concept of the inequity of it.
  - Other comments about administrative structure:
    - The ultimate goal is that we need more faculty.
    - We are top heavy with administrators
    - We have a conversation that looks at faculty and admin in the same conversation and we look at their roles in the same conversation.

Valerie – It’s 6:03 and I want to mindful of our time and get organized for next week’s meeting.

We are asking for transparency. I’ll check in with them to find out where we/they are in this conversation and ways to resolve the issues.

Scott – Have you confirmed with the President’s office that he is able to meet with us on the 1st (Feb 1st) and not the 25th of Jan.

Nancy – Send an email to Mandy Moffett for confirmation.

Valerie - Meeting Adjourned at 6:08 pm.
Upcoming General Meeting:
Faculty Senate Agenda (January 25, 2022)
Work time for committees - Discussion of when we should have committee meetings
Provost Office Report
  • Resolution: Defending Academic Freedom to Lead Discussions About Racial, Class and Gender Justice

Next Leadership Meeting: February 15, 2022 4-6 pm Zoom

Next FS Meeting: January 25, 2022 4-6pm Zoom