Faculty Senate Leadership Meeting Agenda – November 16, 2021
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.

Procedural Items:
Executive Committee Meets with Provost Sotiropoulos 4:00-4:15

Call to order, Welcome
Valerie Robnolt, President 4:15-4:17

Minutes from October 19, 2021
Everett Carpenter, Recording Secretary 4:17-4:20

Faculty Senate President’s Report/Issues
University Committees Update/Issues 4:20-5:15

Academic Analytics – Sharing concerns about how it will be used
Annual evaluations (goal - next steps with regard to Faculty Affair’s paper and COVID concerns)
Dean and Other Admin Evaluations across Units (next steps about goal)
VCU Brand Research Request
Online Strategy Task Force and Steering Committee (Valerie Robnolt)
Pat Cummins/Carmen Rodriguez (FS Va) – Higher Education Advocacy Day?
Any other university committee reports?
Other items: All Committee members

Stretch Break 5:15-5:20

Faculty Senate Agenda (November 30, 2021) 5:20-5:30
Work time for committees - Discussion of when we should have committee meetings
Provost Office Report
P&T Task Force Findings and Recommendations – Drs. Jill Gordon & Curt Sessler, co-chairs
Online Programs Group – Veronica Shuford & James Fowlkes, co-chairs
ADA & Accessibility - Cleo Magwaro – she cannot discuss specific ADA requests or anything under purview of the Provost
Sustainability Group – Climate Emergency Declaration - Michael Donnenberg & Bill Muth

Adjournment

Next FS Meeting: November 30, 2021 4-6pm Zoom

Next Leadership Meeting: December 14, 2021 4-6 pm Zoom
MINUTES:

We need to confirm the parts that Academic Analytics will be used for and cannot be used. So does it include teaching and service activities or just research activities? It should go through the normal technology approval process since this will be a new contract for the added features. How will it be used differently than how the Office of Research uses it? There is concern about how the deans will use it and perhaps the department chairs should be involved in the process. Want to see the draft policy so we can see what the data will be used for and what it cannot be used for.

How are we going to operationalize the dean evaluation process goals for the year? We need to know about what is going on across the university. Which units are doing evaluations of deans? How can we use those faculty led evals to be used by the provost for his evals of the deans? As senators when we send out agenda for the next meeting, include a Google form to ask about in which units faculty do their own evals of the deans which ones don’t. What happens to the evals afterwards? Maybe work with provost’s office to include the information from those faculty-led evals in the annual review of the deans by the provost. The currently evaluate the deans every year but did not do it in 2020. The 360 review is only done every 3 or 5 years.

We hear from the provost that he was hired to help move VCU to the next level. What does that mean? How can we do that when we have not really got the infrastructure to handle becoming an R1 institute? What does it mean to become a member of the AAU like UVA? Not all units at VCU are at the same level right now to provide support for research/scholarship/grants. So how do we reach that next level without leaving groups behind?

Annual evaluations discussion. Possibly an opportunity to start a new paradigm by instead of starting at satisfactory and working toward excellent, starting at excellent and then working down. So rather than faculty must justify their work as excellent, administration would have to justify why we are not. There is an appeals process, but there are still people who don’t feel comfortable using the process yet for whatever reason and not all faculty are aware of it.
Need to revise faculty handbook. Maybe add the appeals policy in the handbook. Or direct the deans to add the appeal process link to the annual eval forms.

VCU brand research is wanting to come to meeting. The VCU is wanting us to review the brand, partner in C3 research. VCU is wanting to rebrand and this research is most likely shaping that. Interesting to know why the rebranding? What is its impact on VCU market position? They want to send out a survey.

Faculty Senate meetings are open to everyone. Is there a way to have a meeting free of administration? Can they leave after they present their points? While full meetings are open by law, committee meetings are not. So we could go into committee meetings and exclude none senators from the meetings.

School of Medicine/Nursing uses fares to help with annual evaluation. Now switch system to portfolio where the CVs are located. Other schools interested in using it or developing something similar.

Discussion about ADA policy— Email from Cleo Magwaro:

“...the Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities Policy was passed unanimously by Cabinet and will go into the Comment Period on Monday Nov. 15 through Dec. 2. (Here’s the link to provide comments: https://policy.vcu.edu/universitywide-policies/policies-open-for-public-comment/)

Also, VCU recently hired a new ADA Specialist who will start on Dec. 6, and we are in the process of hiring our inaugural Accessibility Specialist-- it is my vision to have a top accessibility campus in the region-- we are already making inroads with the lactation spaces and policy workgroups. Announcements on positions will follow.

In addition, based on feedback from you, this year we will be reaching out early to those with existing ADA accommodation agreements related to COVID-19. Letters will go out this week. However, a final decision to extend or provide a SP22 accommodation pertaining to COVID will not happen until Dec. 2021.”

Resolution about Climate Emergency - Issue with the resolution as presented because we have not done the research etc. So maybe we have a smaller draft resolution in support of THEIR resolution rather than take the position that the Faculty Senate is demanding these changes.

Update – The Online Strategy Task Force and Steering Committee had their first meetings. Faculty Senate has four representatives: Valerie Robnolt, Kristy Artello, Liz Canfield and Jon Becker. Valerie is serving on the Steering Committee. There are going to be 4 work groups: High Quality Online Education, Student and Faculty Experience, Marketable Online Credentials, and Innovation in Teaching and Learning. There are 3 main thrusts:
1) What does a high quality online course look like at VCU?
2) How do we use online learning to expand our teaching and learning mission?
3) How do we scale up to a) support students, and b) find innovative ways to increase revenue?
By the end of March, this group will present recommendations for how VCU will move forward with online learning.

Committee updates
• Discussion about VIVO research collaboration software.
• Budget advisory committee meeting will be in December.
• Student affairs has scheduled its meeting with VSSG.
• 1) make sure that credit faculty receive can be transferred to family member, 2) Qatar says, looking for double affiliation with VCU main campus. 3) continue the annual evaluation work and P&T taskforce.
• Higher education advocacy date has not been set yet. https://resources.gmu.edu/facstaff/senate/FS_AGENDA_4-7-21_FINAL?gmu-w-rd=sm&gmu-w-rdm=ht

Notes from Chat:
• i would also like to know how much this costs. – with regard to Academic Analytics
• or a foundation grant
• We already have a subscription, so it would be for an expansion of the subscription and he said last time it was under 100K.
• UVA is the only Virginia school in the AAU. 66 total schools.
• include question on the form – with regard to the Google Form to ask what each unit does to evaluate deans.
• They can send us the survey before, right? – with regard to the VCU Brand Research request
• we could break out into small discussions. – with regard to the discussion related to the Faculty Senate meeting being open to all people, so if we need to meet without admin present, we can go to committee meetings.
• each chair can have a designated link for each committee
• I do that for classes.
• in theory
• can they send their report early? – with regard to the presentation by the P&T Task Force
• Cleo is new too
• change.org? – with regard to the Climate Emergency Declaration to have people sign it as a petition.
• I am getting participation in my committee
• Vivo – research collaboration software that is used by some at VCU
• Student Affairs committee was small and we didn’t have a lot to discuss beyond waiting on Dr. Rodriguez getting back to us to participate in SGA meetings.
• We have 7 attend Governance Committee. We have developed a division of labor. I am still waiting for people to step forward and take on tasks. I’ll send out a reminder to my committee. We are going to be talking with other sister institutions on how governance works or does not work in their respective institutions.