Procedural Items:

Call to order, Welcome
Valerie Robnolt, President

Minutes from meeting August 31, 2021
Everett Carpenter, Recording Secretary

Next Meeting: October 26, 2021 4-6pm Zoom

Attendance:
Valerie Robnolt, Everett Carpenter, Paul Wetzel, Craig Larson, Oliver Karam, Carmen Rodriguez, Hyoujin Im, Kristine Artello, Roxanne Spindle, Allison Johnson, Nancy Jallo, Mary Boyes, Sarah Price, Maria Rivera, Emerson Toney, Frank Bosco, Chintal Desai, Teresa Salgado, Ryan Cales, Maria Teves, Catherine Ingrassia, Sarah Jane Brubaker, Ryad Ghanam, Janet Reid, Laura Boomer, Janie Davis, Brooke Newman, Robert Bianchi, Weining Wang, Sergio Chaparro, Emily Williams, Genevieve Beaird, Audrey Lafrenaye, Yanxiao Zhao, Troy Martin, Lisa Townsend, Salta Liebert, Jon Becker, Kimberly Guthrie, Sarah Glass, Scott Street, Mckenna Brown, Jean Zhang, Supriyo Bandypadhyay, Audrey Lafrenaye, Emily Williams, Nora Alder, Pat Cummins, Chris Saladino, Heather Nunnally, Rachel Flurie, Elizabeth Godbey, Ann Ritter, Mark Crosthwaite, Jane Chung, Liz Canfield

Minutes:

--Minutes from August 31 approved with minor revisions

Provost Report provided by Gypsy Denzine:

--Launched an Online Strategy Task Force and request. The Online Strategy Task Force will be charged with developing strategy recommendations that will ensure VCU offers high quality online courses and programs; improves both student and faculty experiences with online courses; increase and
accelerate the development of marketable online credentials; and expand online education to support teaching, learning and innovation in undergraduate and graduate courses.

-- Academic Reminders.
  o Submit mid-term grades by October 29th. The provost’s office has data to show that this is important to student success and satisfaction.
  o Need course information, such as course syllabus and description before the students start registration on November 3rd. This helps the students when they go to pick their courses.
  o Make sure to double check attendance with the official roster. The register will not notify instructors if students withdraw.

-- Leadership updates.
  o The dean of dentistry search in entering final stages with 4 finalists making their campus visits now.
  o The dean of business search is progressing and anticipate finalists starting their on campus visit in November.
  o Provost’s faculty one stop website (https://provost.vcu.edu/planning/) is up and running. Great place for faculty to get information.
  o An advertisement has been posted for a new chief of ADA compliance. It was pointed out by senators that this is a critical post during these times. There were questions about the origin of 75% in person or hybrid courses and were told by Tomikia LeGrande that that number comes from an attempt to get closer to the pre COVID number of ~9% online. Senators were also told that the deans have flexibility to help accommodate faculty needs. Senators pointed out that since we are not out of the pandemic yet, maybe we need to examine that 75% number. It was pointed out that most universities in the state have moved back to pre-COVID numbers for online courses.

-- Events.
  o The common book and lecture will be October 13th.
  o The virtual faculty wellness day will be October 15th and is co-sponsored by CTLE and FS
  o Faculty club continues November 1st at the ICA. This meeting will recognize those faculty who received tenure this year or last
  o Several student events - check out student website.

-- The Provost plans to hire an outside firm Academic Analytics, to help analyze faculty research productivity. This has been a concern of the AAUP and faculty at other campuses. There were several questions asked.
  o (0) Is this true and was there Faculty input?
    (1) How much will this cost? And could the money be better used in support of teaching VCU students?
    (2) Will Administrator productivity also be analyzed? If not, why not?
    (3) Give the concern of the use of this firm at other institutions how will the Provost address those concerns at VCU?
  o Gypsy Denzine (the provost’s representative at the meeting) expressed that her understanding is that the provost often looks at these tools and metrics. She said that they have engaged faculty with demos etc over the past year. It was also pointed out that it was discussed at the Associate deans for research meeting. We were told that no decision has been made yet and that faculty will be involved when vendors come to make demos.
  o It was expressed that: As the AAUP notes, “Measuring faculty "productivity" with an exclusive or excessive emphasis on quantitative measures of research output must inevitably fail to take adequate account of the variety and totality of scholarly accomplishments.” https://www.aaup.org/file/AcademicAnalytics_statement.pdf
  o It was pointed out the intrinsic bias in analytical packages like the one suggested.
Faculty senator representatives are needed
- The new online taskforce needs 5 volunteers
- Academic Regulation Appeal Committee (ARAC) is looking for a faculty representative. They need another faculty member from schools other than Business and Wilder. They have those covered. It is a 3 year commitment, meetings are on 2nd and 4th Thursdays from 1 pm to 4 pm, and there is no work outside of the meeting time. On the committee, you hear appeals from students regarding enrollment, retroactive drops/adds, and withdrawals. If someone is interested in serving, please contact Pam Burch, co-chair of ARAC at pburch@vcu.edu.
- REAL committee needs more tenured tenure-track faculty representation to help evaluate co-curricular listings.

-- Some questions were asked:
- Are we after covid? Answer, student affairs in particular, know we are still in pandemic, so they are trying to strike a balance between safety and student engagement. There has been an increase in student activities, but student affairs who is coordinating the activities are taking into account the PHRT guidelines at VCU.
- What is the status of the proposed absence policy? Answer, they received lots of feedback and working to incorporate it in a new policy. Once they have a new version, they will send it out again for faculty comment before seeking approval.
- What is the protocol when a student test positive? Answer, While VDH has stopped its contact tracing, VCU has not. So when student health is informed of a potential case, the student is isolated pending a test result. If that test is positive, contact tracing kicks in and close contacts are notified of potential. Due to HIPAA regulations, the instructors and class cannot be notified as a whole, only the close contacts. If the contact is recent enough and test is positive, then even classrooms are closed and cleaned.

Strategic Enrollment and Dean of Student Affairs
- Tomika LeGrande shared a powerpoint which is attached. In summary, freshman enrollment is overall up by 8.8% with the highest median GPA seen in years. However, students are still struggling. We as faculty need to continue encouraging struggling students to seek out help and to build relationships with their advisor and professors.

Committee reports—
- Academic Continuity—Home test are sent out for students who cannot get on campus for surveillance testing. Students who are fully online and attest that they will not come to campus are exempt from testing, but still have to file vaccination status.
- REAL—Committee really needs the help and perspective of tenured faculty. So if interested please volunteer.
- Faculty Senate Committees – There is a form to sign up for committees. PLEASE fill it out. Senators are encourage to volunteer for at least one committee.
  https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfYweU4Ki8eA8wKQg7eOnxV2hisxl5kv-olgZo47TlkHMKeZg/viewform

Faculty Senate Discussion (30 minutes)
- Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Committee (Sarah Jane Brubaker, chair)
- Caste Ch. 11 – Dominant group status threat and the precarity of the highest rung
- The following questions were discussed in breakout rooms.

  o **Question 1**: In general, what did you learn about US history from reading this chapter that was not part of your formal education?
    o How, if at all, does this new knowledge change your perspective on race?
How, if at all, might this new knowledge shape your professional and personal goals, actions and pursuits?

Question 2: How have historical and current government policies and programs and unconscious bias worked to create and maintain the US caste system?
- How could this knowledge about policies change the conversation about "handouts" and special treatment/programs?
- What are some specific examples of other policies, programs and unconscious bias that have operated at VCU?

Question 3 (If time permits): What are specific ways that we can continue to support the Faculty Senate Anti-racism Statement?

Debrief Discussion in Main Room

Anti-racism Statement of the VCU Faculty Senate:
The VCU Faculty Senate recognizes that structural and systemic racism across our educational and social institutions affect the psychological, physical, and spiritual well-being of our entire VCU campus and broader community.

The VCU Faculty Senate affirms the powerful statement made by Dr. Aashir Nasim to the Board of Visitors recognizing the lived experiences and rights of those who call attention to historical and present-day abuses of power and privilege. We pledge to fully support and help to implement the university initiatives identified in his report that are intended to eliminate bias, discrimination, and racism across our campus. *We as VCU Faculty Senators commit to learning about, developing, and engaging in concrete anti-racist work at both individual and collective levels to support our students, faculty, and staff, and to promote real and lasting change.*

Statement of Dr. Nasim:
[https://news.vcu.edu/latest/key-issues/Remarks_by_Aashir_Nasim_PhD](https://news.vcu.edu/latest/key-issues/Remarks_by_Aashir_Nasim_PhD)