Faculty Senate Meeting Agenda – August 31, 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.

Pre-Meeting Orientation for New Senators and Alternate Senators 3pm-3:45pm – Valerie Robnolt, Nancy Jallo, Maria Rivera, Everett Carpenter

Procedural Items:
Call to order, Welcome
Valerie Robnolt, President

Minutes from meeting May 4, 2021
Everett Carpenter, Recording Secretary

1. Return to Campus
Provost Office Report
Fotis Sotiropoulos, Provost for Academic Affairs

He stated that he believes that the role of FS/provost is a vital role and should be collaborative. When decisions are made should have buy in from faculty and if he disagrees with faculty should be able to explain why. He will strive for transparency by sharing information with the faculty. FS leadership is the representatives to administration and look forward to working with them.

Return to campus update—Enrollment is down by 0.8% at 220 students declines, strategic enrollment and retention is working to reverse that. First /second year retention rates are comparable to last year, but continuing undergrads is down by 5%, graduate enrollment doing well. Undergraduate course modalities, 40% are hybrid, 30% completely online, and 30% are in person. Graduate courses are 70% hybrid and 10% in person. Approximately 5,700 students are living on campus, 96% of them have been vaccinated, 3.7% have valid exemptions on file; overall 93% of the students are vaccinated and 4% have exemptions. 89% of employees are vaccinated, 5% in progress, and only 1% have filed exemptions under-review. The deadline for employees is September 15th to report status and get in compliance. Right now, seeing input from FS as well as COVID taskforce as what to do with those who are not in compliance. What would the progressive discipline measures look like. For example, so we exclude students who are online only from compliance, what about those students who don’t comply with progressive discipline, should we ultimately administratively withdraw them. Same for employees, looking at potential time off without pay or even in extreme cases termination. All decision will be based on recommendation with the PHRT response team and in consultation with FS and COVID group

Additional information can be found at the FAQ’s https://provost.vcu.edu/planning/faq2021/.
Finally would like, announcements,
  • leadership updates welcome new dean of libraries,
  • Wednesday is the faculty club at ICA,
  • Thursday convocation at grace street theater.

Other questions: Provost believes that VCU have been better than other universities within Virginia in engaging faculty in decisions.

  • How to weekly testing be enforced for unvaccinated students? First level of enforce holds, then need to make decision to be made what kind of warnings etc., still being vetted. Warning the first missed testing, communication with all students to remind them of consequences, miss second steps, then create access obstacles with rec sports dining etc., maybe imposing fine, third maybe admin withdraw. Still vetting it nothing has been decided yet. Ideas can be sent to Chuck Klink and provost office. COVID advisory group is meeting on the 9th. Looking for feedback from all groups before making final decisions.
  • Who pays for testing, will testing at home works? University provides testing currently, Plan is student clinics like last year, 3 asymptotic clinics offering testing 5 days week. Can mail test kits to those off campus, all are PCR. Employee will begin 27th, targeting the former RAMtech building also by appointment and still PCR.
  • Does the mandate apply to contractors? Contractors will be held to the same standards of employees and students. Testing will not be provided by university.
  • What is the process for when a student reports positive? What happens in classroom? Similar to last year, notification process etc, contact tracing, reach back 24hrs for cleaning and contact tracing, for close contacts. Still have VCU contract tracing team. Contact tracing handles all communication of positive cases, faculty does not need to inform classes. HIPAA prevents broadcast notification.
  • Will faculty be able to get at will testing? Right now all on campus testing is being allocated to surveillance testing. Of unvaccinated at-will is up to the faculty. PHRT looking into surveillance testing in vaccinated, but not currently focused on that. PCR can be positive up to months after an infection...
  • 1188 have students have exemption but the numbers change daily, 779 not reported status yet, of those 290 are in online only courses.
  • Will VCU make available the 3rd round booster shot? Right now, the booster is recommended for immunocompromised only. The CDC has not fully endorsed the need for 3rd shot. Sept 20, those who are at least 8 months from last dose and are immunocompromised might be able for it. Right now, not even sure the recommendation will be there. Still waiting for information.
  • IF we have a positive case, can we move classes online temporarily? This is addressed in the FAQs. Not necessarily a reason to move online.

2. Student Absence Regulation

Student absence policy- Rodriguez- slides provided. There is a comment period coming over the next couple of weeks. The driver for the policy was there before COVID, COVID just brought out some additional issues. Many of these major edits are extreme issues not common place. Follow the link to provide feedback. The feedback link is also in the slides. If you have problems with the link, you can use this one: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfGRResJONCG4-L52kZi7Y7L5LMmYERtD8bWpEL42hSqmuBPKA/viewform
3. Pass/Fail Academic Regulation (10 minutes)
Mary Boyes-Scott Street – The new permanent Pass/fail options are outlined in the attached slides. This would be a permanent P/F regulation based on the temp one during COVID. Please provide feedback with this form. If you have problems with the link, use this one: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeraMEE-vSF3ItaWMctOHdv2Qief43880YKC3LBvlq2s79f0w/viewform

4. Non-discrimination Training (10 minutes)
Non-discrimination training – Cleopatra Magwaro-Associate VP for Equity and access services magwaroc@vcu.edu. The online training will launch for ALL faculty and staff this fall. She is responsible for making sure civil rights are applied across all units. Patrick Noonan oversees civil right investigation. A Foundation to VCU efforts for a move equitable and inclusive environment will be this training. It is viewed as mission critical and outlined in the Strategic Plan. It will be required and there will be escalating consequences up to termination for not completing it. Compliance and monitoring will be handled by IES office. Online virtual training in LMS or there was opportunity for person training. If there are questions, Patrick Noonan, Director, EEO & Affirmative Action Programs, noonanpr@vcu.edu. Magwaro stated, “This is viewed as mission critical, unless there is a fundamental reason which you cannot do the training, then maybe a state agency is not where you should be.”

5. University Committees (10 minutes)
Request for volunteers for the VCU lactation policy. There was a lot of volunteers. There are two groups, a policy workgroup, and space group looking for areas for the lactation rooms and if building and planning needs to include spaces in future constructions.

REAL committee – curriculum committee will be looking at the approval of new courses. Looking at the barriers for inclusion of interdisciplinary work. New committee within the structure looking at assessment now. On Thursday 4-6 3rd floor of library, a REAL social event for students to interact with REAL presentation UROP group. Check out the VCU real page www.real.vcu.edu.

Faculty Senate Items:

Faculty Senate President’s Report (15 minutes)
Valerie Robnolt, President Faculty Senate
Nancy Jallo, Past President Faculty Senate

Nancy Jallo- Share accomplishments which are viewed through a lens of respect and collaboration, 6 key areas—1) Anti-racism statement and action plan, 2) COVID input on student policies, scheduling of classes, return to campus, calendar of classes etc., 3) Input in the Provost search process, 4) annual faculty performance review during COVID, 5) AS well as the salary distribution during 2020, and 6) adjunct faculty report.

Valerie Robnolt – Goals for 2021-22 developed at Faculty Senate Leadership Retreat:
1) Continue to work on establishing what shared governance is with Provost Sotiropoulos.
2) Continue to work on alignment of the faculty annual evaluation/review process across the university to have consistency, the use of the appeal process for the faculty annual evaluation/review process and how this process aligns with the work that the P&T Task Force is doing.
3) Gather information about how deans and other administrators are evaluated across the units and advocate for consistency across units.
6. 2021-2022 Faculty Senate Representatives to University Council  (5 minutes)
Valerie Robnolt, President
1. Valerie Robnolt (Faculty Senate President)
2. Maria Rivera (Faculty Senate Vice-President)
3. Nancy Jallo (Faculty Senate Past-President)
4. Everett Carpenter
* Alternate: Roxanne Spindle

Faculty Senate Committees  (20 minutes)
Faculty Affairs
Maria Teves (chair)

Shared Governance
Kristy Artello (co-chair)
Oliver Karam (co-chair)

Academic Programs and Research
Ryan Cales (chair)

Academic Support Services
Valerie Robnolt (chair)

Diversity and Inclusive Excellence:
Sarah Jane Brubaker (chair)

Alumni and Community Relations
Gaynell Sherrod (chair)

Committee Members Sign-Up
Maria Rivera
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfYweU4Ki8eA8wKQg7eOnxV2hisxl5kvolgZo47TIlkHMKeZg/viewform

Adjournment

Next Meeting: October 5, 2021 4-6pm Zoom

Other Meetings:
October 26, 2021 (due to VCU being closed on 11/2 for Election Day) - Zoom
November 30, 2021 – Zoom
January 25, 2022 – Tentatively Larrick Center, Court End Ballroom
February 1, 2022 – Faculty Senate hosts President Rao’s meeting with VCU Faculty – Tentatively Student Commons, Commonwealth Ballrooms A-B
March 1, 2022 – Tentatively Larrick Center, Court End Ballroom
April 5, 2022 – Tentatively Student Commons, Commonwealth Ballroom A-B
May 3, 2022 – Tentatively Larrick Center, Court End Ballroom

Representative present: Valerie Robnolt, Everett Carpenter, Nancy Jallo, C. E. Lawson, Roxanne Spindle, Allison Johnson, R. McKenna Brown, Scott Street, Ed Boone, Paul Wetzel, Maria Rivera, Sonali Rathore,
Standing Committees: Each standing committee shall have a minimum of three members. The chair of the committee must always be an Elected Senator or an Honorary Senator. The standing committees of the Senate, and their continuing charges, shall be as follows:

a. **Academic Programs and Research:** (i) to study and make recommendations concerning how the faculty might effectively respond to matters of administrative policy/practice concerning the establishment, maintenance, and curtailment of academic programs and their effect on faculty status; (ii) to recommend ways in which the administration of research policy would maximally benefit faculty efforts in expanding research.
   **Chair:** Ryan Cales

b. **Academic Support Services:** (i) to establish and maintain liaisons with academic support agencies at VCU, including libraries, media support services, computer technology services, campus police, bookstores, physical plant, and other agencies providing support for academics at VCU; (ii) to report on and discuss policies and procedures of these agencies.
   **Chair:** Valerie Robnolt

c. **Alumni and Community Relations:** (i) to maintain a liaison with alumni and with the Office of Development and Alumni Relations; (ii) to maintain a positive image and relationship with the Richmond metropolitan community.
   **Chair:** Gaynell Sherrod

d. **Credentials and Rules:** (i) to oversee and enforce Faculty Senate attendance regulations; (ii) to grant exemptions to attendance requirements for individual Senators when necessary; (iii) to reapportion Faculty Senate seats annually as specified in the Bylaws of the Faculty and the Standing Rules of the Faculty Senate; (iv) to reapportion Grievance Board seats annually as specified in the VCU Faculty Mediation and Grievance Policy; (v) to review and propose revisions to the Bylaws of the Faculty and the Standing Rules of the Faculty Senate.
   **Chair:** Scott Street
e. **Diversity and Inclusive Excellence:** (i) to communicate with the various entities and offices associated with diversity and inclusive excellence; (ii) to discuss and explore any questions/issues concerning diversity and inclusion in the VCU Community.  
**Chair:** Sarah Jane Brubaker

f. **Economic Status, Budget, and Planning:** (i) to study the budget and planning policies/practices of the university and recommend appropriate faculty involvement; (ii) to report to the Faculty Senate the decisions of any executive-level budget advisory committee on which the members serve; (iii) to discuss implications of economic and fringe benefit matters, including salary, retirement, and insurance. At least one member of this committee shall represent the Faculty Senate on an executive-level university budget committee.  
**Chair:** Roxanne Spindle

g. **Faculty Affairs:** (i) to explore faculty needs in the areas of evaluation/assessment, promotion, tenure, professional development, and other areas relating to the professional status of faculty at VCU; (ii) to report on and recommend policies and procedures that will enhance academic and faculty affairs.  
**Chair:** Maria Teves

h. **Governance Committee:** (i) Evaluate and monitor the establishment of transparent and purposeful shared decision-making structure within VCU; and (ii) Foster a dynamic faculty-staff-leader partnership that promotes shared decision-making for University’s mission in teaching, scholarship, service, and enhancing work-life.  
**Co-chairs:** Kristy Artello and Oliver Karam

i. **State Legislative and Statewide Relations:** (i) to develop and maintain a positive image and relationship with the members of the State Legislature, the citizens of Virginia and the VCU Office of Government Relations; (ii) to coordinate the selection and activities of faculty who serve as contacts with State legislators; (iii) to maintain an alliance with the Faculty Senate of Virginia; (iv) to assist with the planning of Virginia Standing Rules of the Faculty Senate Page 5 of 7 Revised and Approved on May 1, 2018 Higher Education Advocacy Day. At least one representative from the VCU Faculty Senate to the Faculty Senate of Virginia shall be a member of this committee.  
**Co-chairs:** Carmen Rodriquez and Pat Cummins

j. **Student Affairs:** (i) to maintain a liaison with student government, student organizations, and Student Affairs staff; (ii) to represent faculty and faculty interests to students and to invite students to present their views and needs to the faculty.  
**Chair:** Chris Saladino

k. **VCU Health Systems Relations:** (i) to maintain a liaison with the VCU Health System; (ii) to represent faculty and faculty interests to the VCU Health System; (iii) to discuss and explore any questions/issues between the faculty and the VCU Health System.  
**Co-chairs:**

l. **Website and Social Media:** (i) to maintain electronic distribution lists; (ii) to maintain the Faculty Senate website; (iii) to generally ensure that faculty at VCU are informed of Senate deliberations, actions, and proceedings using electronic mail, the Faculty Senate website, or other media; (iv) to maintain Faculty Senate social media platforms.  
**Chair:** Ashley Brewer