



Faculty Senate

Virginia Tech

Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

<https://www.facultysenate.vt.edu/>

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes May 02, 2025 @ 2:30 – 4:15 pm Torgersen 1000 or Via Zoom

Check-In:

Present: Rachel Miles (presiding), Ananda Abeysekara, Luke Achenie, Diane Agud, Rick Ashley, Paul Avey, Azziza Bankole, Manish Bansal, Kristen Benson, Jan Helge Bøhn, Bradley Bowen, Virginia Buechner-Maxwell, Anamaria Bukvic, Anamaria Bukvic, Kevin Cheng, Sherwood Clements, Joshua Clemons, Rebecca Cockrum, Carolyn Commer, Nick Copeland, Carolyn Copenheaver, Kristy Daniels, Matt Eick, Candace Fitch, Mark Freeman, Rodney Gaines, Scott Gartner, Yuba Gautam, Aaron Gross, Wes Gwaltney, James Hawdon, Rebecca Hester, Dan Hindman, Leanna House, Mantu Hudait, Scott Huxtable, Ran Jin, Sarah Karpanty, Bryan Katz, Bryan Katz, Alex Kinnaman, Jake Lahne, Catherine Larochelle, Renee LeClair, Justin Lemkul, Kimberly Loeffert, G.Q. Lu, Jason Malone, Eric Martin, Joel McGlothlin, Harold McKenzie, Joe Merola, Ron Meyers, Marc Michel, Sherif Motaleb Abdelaziz, Phil Nelson, Gregory Novack, Albert Pan, Nicole Pitterson, Steven Rowson, Karen Schnatterly, Ian Shoemaker, Richard Shryock, Nadine Sinno (alternate for Maria del Carmen Caña-Jiménez), Stephanie Smith (Communications), Stephanie Smith (SPIA), Jay Teets, Chelsea Thompto, Jim Tokuhisa, Byron Tsang, Alp Tural (alternate for Bill Green), Bimal Viswanath, Jeff Walling, Jerald Walz, Terri-Ann Wattsman, Angelica Witcher Walker, David Xie, Lizette Zietsman

Guests: E. Fanny Jasso-Hernandez, April Myers, Demetria Somervell

Absent with Notice: Evan Lavender-Smith, Charles “Chuck” Lowery

Absent: Biko Agozino, Lisa Belden, Warren Booth, Mark Coggins, Logan Dandridge, John Entwistle, Bill Green, David Gregory, Joseph Hughes, Eli Jamison, Casey Jim, Gary Long, Charles Lowery, Silvio Macias, Luca Massa, Shelly Maycock, Ali Mehrizi-Sani, Zhané Nicole Ni, John Richey, Nino Ripepi, Syrenthia Robinson, Nazila Roofigari-Esfahan, Adrian Sandu, Eric Stanley, Keith Stephenson, Kwok Tsui, Shane Wang, Ashley Wilkinson, Erin Worthington, Yan Xu, Diane Zahm

Call to Order by the President Rachel Miles at 2:33 PM

Approval of Agenda and Minutes (Rachel Miles)

- Consent agenda was adopted:
 - Minutes for 04-18-2025([Link](#))
 - Agenda for 05-02-2025 ([Link](#))

Business Agenda

Updates and Announcements

1. Senators were reminded of the Faculty Senate Reception scheduled for Friday, May 9 from 3:00–5:00 PM at the Inn at Virginia Tech.
2. Summer discussions will be hosted by the Faculty Senate. Details will be announced later this month.
3. Faculty were invited to suggest topics and concerns for inclusion in the Faculty Constituency Report that will be presented during the June Board of Visitors meeting. Senators were asked to email suggestions to Rachel Miles.
4. A report from the Global Distinction Feedback and Implementation Subcommittee is available for review on the Faculty Senate SharePoint site.
5. The Faculty Senate of Virginia approved a statement during their most recent meeting that calls for updates to be provided regarding actions taken in response to federal executive orders on diversity, equity, and inclusion. This statement will be distributed to Virginia higher education institutions for consideration.

New Business

6. Rachel Miles introduced Joe Merola, who as Past President of the Faculty Senate, presided over the election of Faculty Senate Officers for the 2025-2026 academic year.
 - a. The election process for Faculty Senate President was explained and the candidates, Rodney Gaines and Justin Lemkul, were introduced.
 - i. Bios for both candidates were able for review and the floor was opened for a short question and answer session. Questions focused on shared governance roles and experiences, viewpoints on potential future issues and ways to address them, thoughts on shaping policy, and transparency and communication.
 - ii. Limited discussion was held about the Faculty Senate Bylaws, history, and campaign activities, including a question regarding whether there are established procedures or guidelines for campaigning in senate elections. There is currently no guidance regarding campaigning.

- b. Justin Lemkul was elected to serve as the 2025-2026 Faculty Senate President.
 - c. Joe Merola introduced the election of the remaining officers, the Faculty Senate Vice President and Operations Office, and opened the floor for additional nominations. No additional nominations were received.
 - d. The following were elected to serve as Faculty Senate officers for 2025-2026:
 - Vice President - Jim Hawdon
 - Operations Officer – Alex Kinnaman
7. Rachel Miles presented the election of Commission Chairs for shared governance commissions that report to the Faculty Senate.
- a. Current nominees were shared, and the floor was opened for additional nominations. No nominations were received from the floor.
 - b. The election was conducted; a list of elected Commission Chairs follows:
 - Commission on Faculty Affairs: Jim Hawdon
 - Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies: Renée LeClair
 - Commission on Research: Jan Helge Bøhn
 - Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies: Jim Tokuhisa
8. Rachel Miles brought forward the election of faculty representatives to the shared governance commissions and committees, and University Council.
- a. Nominees for representatives are still needed for the following: Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs, Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs, Commission on A/P Faculty Affairs.
 - b. The floor was opened for additional nominations. No additional nominations were received from the floor.
 - c. Elections were conducted for six shared governance bodies with candidates that were unopposed. Elected representatives for these governing bodies follow:
 - Commission on Faculty Affairs (4 positions): Anamaria Bukvic, Rebecca Hester, and Joel McGlothlin for 3-year terms, and Kristen Benson for a 1-year term to serve out the remainder of Jim Hawdon's term
 - Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies: Phil Nelson
 - Commission on Outreach and International Affairs: Richard Shryock
 - Transportation and Parking Committee: Hollis Wittman

- University Council Representative from Pamplin College of Business: Karen Schnatterly
 - University Council Representative from College of Natural Resources and Environment: Ron Meyers
- d. Four nominations were received for two representative positions to the Climate Action Sustainability and Energy (CASE) Committee. Nominees were introduced, and bios were available for review. Elections were conducted.
- Alp Tural was elected during the first round of voting to fill the first position.
 - Following a run-off vote, Kirsten Dean was elected to fill the second position.
9. Rachel Miles presented the election of faculty senate representatives to the University Council Cabinet. The following were elected as representatives to the University Council Cabinet.
- Jim Hawdon
 - Rachel Miles
10. Rachel Miles introduced Virginia Tech President Tim Sands, Executive Vice President and Provost Cyril Clarke, and Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Amy Sebring, and welcomed them to the Faculty Senate. The floor was opened for questions and discussion. Discussion topics included the following:
- a. The American Association of Colleges and Universities letter calling for constructive engagement. Virginia Tech was not given an invitation to sign this letter; it appears to be targeted more toward private liberal arts colleges. Virginia Tech has been working with the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU), ensuring that the university's views are represented in court. The university has seen success from this approach.
 - b. The call for a mutual defense compact initiated by the University of Massachusetts Faculty Senate. Viewpoints from other Virginia institutions, the reporting structure for university legal counsel who report to the Attorney General of Virginia, and the recently drafted Faculty Senate of Virginia statement were mentioned.
 - c. An overview of the diversity, equity and inclusion compliance report provided to the BOV. This report will be available in the public domain.
 - d. Communication strategies to inform faculty and the campus community. A webpage has been created and provides real-time updates regarding research impacts. The Cranwell web site is also a source of current information on immigration related issues. The university has hosted a townhall and webinar, and another webinar is planned for the near future; details can be found in the

VT Daily News. The Provost's Office distributes a weekly report. The university will continue communicating and considering additional strategies. Faculty with specific questions are encouraged to speak with their department heads or directors.

- e. Limited discussion was held on promotion and tenure, faculty salary compression, the Metallica concert to be held in Lane Stadium on May 7, utilization of space across all campus locations, and resources available for assistant professors affected by delays or freezes on extramural funding.
- f. The university administration will provide answers to any questions not addressed during the meeting. All answers will be compiled and made available to faculty senators.

Open Floor Discussion

- 11. There was no open floor discussion.

Motion to adjourn and seconded at 4:15 p.m.