



MINUTES

Faculty Senate
February 06, 2026
2:30 – 4:15 p.m.

Torgersen 1000 and via Zoom

Present – Justin Lemkul (presiding), Luke Achenie, Joe Adams, Diane Agud, Aaron Ansell, Rick Ashley, Azziza Bankole, Kristen Benson, David Bieri, Jan Helge Bøhn, Warren Booth, Bradley Bowen, Curtis Bower, Ryan Calder, Sherwood Clements, Sarah Clinton, Carolyn Copenheaver, Maria del Carmen Caña-Jiménez, Naomi Dunn, Anna Duraj-Thatte, Matt Eick, Nicholas Goedert, Aaron Gross, Barrett Gutter, Wes Gwaltney, Ramtin Haghnazar Kouchaksaraei, Rebecca Hammond (alternate for Myra Blanco), James Hawdon, Rebecca Hester, Dan Hindman, Kenneth Hodges, Adrienne Holz, Leanna House, Laura Iancu (alternate for Logan Dandridge), Eli Jamison, Ran Jin, Lara Khansa, Alex Kinnaman, Jake Lahne, Renee LeClair, Mark Limes, Kimberly Loeffert, Charles Lowery, G.Q. Lu, Jason Malone, Stephen Martin, Joel McGlothlin, Harold McKenzie, Rachel Miles, Sherif Motaleb Abdelaziz, Phil Nelson, Gregory Novack, Nicole Pitterson, Mark Psiaki, Isis Quinlan, Shelly Rhoads, John Richey, Nazila Roofigari-Esfahan, Steven Rowson, Yi Shi, Ian Shoemaker, Richard Shryock, Stephanie Smith, Chelsea Thompto, Jim Tokuhisa, Diego Troya (alternate for Caroline Saouma), Byron Tsang, Alp Tural, Jerald Walz, Jeff Warford, Terri-Ann Wattsman, Erin Worthington, David Xie, Boya Xu, Gordon Yee

Absent with Notice: Logan Dandridge, Bryan Katz, Candace Fitch

Absent: Biko Agozino, Nathaniel Bishop, Myra Blanco, Virginia Buechner-Maxwell, Rebecca Cockrum, Mark Coggins, Nick Copeland, Bob Edmison, Cassandra Efke, Ihudiya Finda Williams, Mark Freeman, David Gregory, William Headley, Daniel Karolyi, Sarah Karpanty, Bettina Koch, Andrea L'Afflitto, Catherine Laroche, Eric Martin, Ron Meyers, Marc Michel, Albert Pan, Nino Ripepi, Caroline Saouma, Rebecca Weaver-Hightower

Guests: Julie Allen, April Myers, Corinne Noirot, Jill Sible, Demetria Somervell, Rick Sparks

Justin Lemkul called the meeting to order at 2:32. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Consent Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the consent agenda which consisted of the items below. Motion carried.

- Approval of minutes from January 23, 2026
- Approval of agenda for February 06, 2026

2. Updates and Announcements

Virginia Tech Board of Visitors (BOV) Special Meeting Recap

The February 5 special meeting of the BOV was called by the Rector of the Board primarily to address housing concerns. Two resolutions were considered and passed. (1) Approval of a planning authorization for a heating and cooling system for the Beamer-Lawson Indoor Practice Facility. (2) Approval for renovation of the following aging residential facilities: Slusher Hall, Hoge

Hall, Pritchard Hall. The meeting also contained a closed session in which information discussed is not disclosed.

CFA Working Group on Collegiate Faculty Policies

Proposed changes to the section of the Faculty Handbook related to the collegiate faculty series will be emailed to faculty senators. Senators were asked to invite collegiate faculty colleagues to review the proposed changes and provide their input. It was noted that this section of the handbook contains broad information and should not be too detailed or prescriptive. The commission's goal is to advance these changes through shared governance this year, so comments and input are needed soon.

Update on Budget Planning

Links were provided for the executive budget planning and FY27 budget reduction planning documents. Both are items under review by the budget and planning committee. The FY27 budget reduction planning document is only an exercise; there is no plan to enact reductions at this time.

COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) Survey

This survey will be distributed by email, and each link is specific to the recipient. Data collected is utilized by the university and can be filtered and compiled at individual college and department levels. The survey is anonymous and is provided by an outside source (Harvard University).

University Strategic Plan Survey

A link to the survey was provided and senators were encouraged to complete it.

3. Unfinished Business

Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA) 2025-26F: Revision to the Faculty Handbook on P&T Appeals

Jim Hawdon presented CFA 2025-26F for second reading. Revisions proposed in this resolution include a required notification process and procedural information. A motion was made and seconded to approve CFA 2025-26F.

A vote was taken, and the resolution passed. (Voting: Yes: 67; Abstain: 2; No: 0)

Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies (CUSP) 2025-26C: Resolution to Revise Policy 6815 Undergraduate Graduation

Jim Tokuhisa presented CUSP 2025-26C for second reading. Dr. Jill Sible, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs, and Rick Sparks, Associate Vice Provost and University Registrar, were available to provide additional details and answer questions.

Policy 6815 is related to undergraduate graduation. Proposed changes include updates regarding degree requirements, procedures, double majors and multiple degrees, and ceremonies. Following the first reading in Faculty Senate, a definitions section was added. A motion was made and seconded to approve the resolution.

A vote was taken, and the resolution was approved. (Voting: Yes: 65; Abstain: 3; No: 1)

CUSP 2025-26D: Resolution to Revise PPM 107 Midterm Assessment of Undergraduate Students

Jim Tokuhisa presented CUSP 2025-26D for second reading. Dr. Jill Sible, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs, and Rick Sparks, Associate Vice Provost and University Registrar, were available to provide additional details and answer questions.

This resolution changes the mid-term assessment from the current satisfactory and unsatisfactory grading scale to the assigned grade mode for each course for first year and transfer students. A motion was made and seconded to approve CUSP 2025-26D.

Comments and discussion focused on the following topics: there are a variety of course types at the university, including many whose course plans do not allow for a meaningful mid-term grade; the increased administrative burden for this approach; faculty who teach large sections have expressed concerns regarding their ability to compute an accurate grade in the allotted timeframe; and the requirement for meaningful grades prior to drop dates.

Dr. Jill Sible provided perspective regarding the proposed changes. Mid-term assessments are utilized by student advising for outreach and intervention. An assessment within the grading scale of the class will provide advisors with useful information and enhance student support.

During the Faculty Senate first reading, a suggestion was made to consider utilizing an alternative type of assessment, such as a survey, that would provide more substantive feedback. The VT Early Academic Referral System, its purpose, and faculty concerns with the system were shared. This system does not provide the same type of information as the midterm assessment but is an additional resource that faculty can use to report concerns.

A vote was taken, and the resolution passed. (Voting: Yes: 43; Abstain: 7; No: 16)

4. New Business

Election of a representative to the University Curriculum Committee for General Education (UCCGE)

A representative is needed to serve for one semester on the UCCGE. Meeting information was provided. The representative is not required to be a faculty senator. The floor was opened for nominations, and Steve Rowson was nominated.

A vote was conducted and Steve Rowson was elected to serve as UCCGE representative for one semester. (Voting: Yes: 61; Abstain: 0; No: 0)

Questions for President Sands and Provost Ross

The Faculty Senate will host President Sands and Provost Ross on February 20. Senators were asked to suggest discussion topics and questions via an anonymous survey form that will be distributed by email.

5. Open Floor

CFA Working Group

A CFA working group has been convened to focus on scholarship disruptions that have occurred over the past year. The group is asking for stories and anecdotes from those who have been impacted. This information will be used in the consideration of tenure guidelines and ways to support faculty. Senators were asked to watch for future communication and requests from the group.

Follow-Up Regarding No Further Legal Defense of the Dear Colleague Letter

A question was asked during the last Faculty Senate meeting regarding the federal government's decision to drop defense of the Dear Colleague Letter and what impact this may have on Virginia Tech. Additional information is being sought on this topic and will be provided when available.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:15.