



MINUTES

Faculty Senate

April 3, 2026

2:30 – 4:15 p.m.

Torgersen 1000 and via Zoom

Present – Justin Lemkul (presiding), Montasir Abbas (alternate for Sherif Motaleb Abdelaziz), Luke Achenie, Joe Adams, Diane Agud, Rick Ashley, Azziza Bankole, Kristen Benson, Myra Blanco, Jan Helge Bøhn, Bradley Bowen, Curtis Bower, Candace Buckner (alternate for Aaron Ansell), Ryan Calder, Sherwood Clements, Sarah Clinton, Carolyn Copenheaver, Maria del Carmen Caña-Jiménez, Anna Duraj-Thatte, Bob Edmison, Matt Eick, Candace Fitch, Nicholas Goedert, Aaron Gross, Barrett Gutter, Wes Gwaltney, Ramtin Hagnazar Kouchaksaraei, Samantha Harden (alternate for HNFE), William Headley, Rebecca Hester, Kenneth Hodges, Adrienne Holz, Leanna House, Eli Jamison, Ran Jin, Bryan Katz, Lara Khansa, Alex Kinnaman, Jake Lahne, Renee LeClair, Mark Limes, Kimberly Loeffert, Charles Lowery, G.Q. Lu, Jason Malone, Eric Martin, Joel McGlothlin, Rachel Miles, Phil Nelson, Laura Nesor (alternate for Marc Michel), Gregory Novack, Albert Pan, Nicole Pitterson, Mark Psiaki, Isis Quinlan, Shelly Rhoads, John Richey, Nazila Roofigari-Esfahan, Steven Rowson, Caroline Saouma, Yi Shi, Ian Shoemaker, Richard Shryock, Stephanie Smith, Tyechia Thompson (alternate for Rebecca Weaver-Hightower), Chelsea Thompto, Jim Tokuhisa, Alp Tural, Jerald Walz, Jeff Warfford, Terri-Ann Wattsman, Erin Worthington, David Xie, Boya Xu, Gordon Yee

Absent with Notice: Aaron Ansell, Logan Dandridge, Rebecca Weaver-Hightower

Absent: Biko Agozino, David Bieri, Nathaniel Bishop, Warren Booth, Virginia Buechner-Maxwell, Rebecca Cockrum, Mark Coggins, Nick Copeland, Naomi Dunn, Cassandra Efke, Ihudiya Finda Williams, Mark Freeman, David Gregory, James Hawdon, Dan Hindman, Daniel Karolyi, Sarah Karpanty, Bettina Koch, Andrea L'Afflito, Catherine Larochelle, Stephen Martin, Harold McKenzie, Ron Meyers, Marc Michel, Sherif Motaleb Abdelaziz, Nino Ripepi, Byron Tsang

Guests: Alan Fellers, Amy Hogan, Sharon Kurek, April Myers, Amy Orders, Demetria Somervell, Tammy Trimble

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 March 20, 2026
- Approval of agenda for April 3, 2026

2. Updates and Announcements

Recap of Board of Visitors (BOV) Public Comment hearing on tuition and fees

When an increase in tuition and fees is proposed, Virginia Tech holds a public comment session. Because of proposed increases for 2026-2027, a public comment session was held on April 2, 2026. Written statements will be accepted through Monday, April 6, 2026, at 11:59 PM and can be

submitted through the BOV website. Decisions regarding tuition and fees will be made at the April 13-14, 2026, Virginia Tech BOV meeting.

Correction: Legislative Update on SB 494/HB 1385

An incorrect version of the bill was previously given to the Virginia Tech Faculty Senate. A link to the correct bill was provided. The faculty, staff, and student representatives to the Board of Visitors will not have voting rights.

Faculty Senate Luncheon, May 8, 12:00 – 2:00 PM, Hahn Horticulture Garden Marquee

Senators and Alternate Senators are invited to attend. Lunch and beverages will be provided, and the VT Therapy dogs will be onsite. Senators were asked to RSVP via the link provided by 6:00 p.m. on May 1, 2026.

3. Unfinished Business

Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA) 2025-26H: Resolution to Revise Faculty Handbook Expectations Guidelines for Non-Tenure Track Instructional Faculty

Jim Hawdon presented CFA 2025-26H for second reading. The focus of this resolution is to direct non-tenure track faculty to consult with their department regarding departmental guidelines for expectations. A motion was made and seconded to approve CFA 2025-26H.

A vote was conducted, and the resolution passed (Yes: 61; No: 0; Abstain: 1).

CFA 2025-26I: Resolution to Revise Faculty Handbook Section on Part-Time Faculty

Jim Hawdon presented CFA 2025-26I for second reading. This resolution relocates and streamlines text but does not include policy changes. A motion was made and seconded to approve the resolution.

A vote was conducted, and CFA 2025-26I passed (Yes: 62; No: 0; Abstain: 0).

CFA 2025-26J: Resolution to Revise Faculty Handbook Regarding Additional Compensation for Faculty

Jim Hawdon presented CFA 2025-26J for second reading. This resolution provides clarification on additional compensation. One change was made after first reading in the Faculty Senate: language that originally stated that additional activities outside of usual job responsibilities “cannot” be made without consent of the faculty member has been changed to state “should not.” This change is in response to the location of this information in the faculty handbook and its application to A/P Faculty. A motion was made and seconded to approve the resolution.

Discussion focused on clarifications for winter semester and the process/procedures for AY Faculty who are asked to work during the summer. AY Faculty can be asked but not required to work during the summer.

A vote was conducted, and the resolution passed (Yes: 56; No: 2; Abstain: 1).

CFA 2025-26L: Resolution to Revise Faculty Handbook Section on Clinical Instructors

Jim Hawdon presented CFA 2025-26L for second reading. This resolution removes the time requirement for promotion and adds a definition of clinical faculty earlier in the section. A motion was made and seconded to approve the resolution.

A vote was conducted, and CFA 2025-26L passed (Yes: 55; No: 0; Abstain: 0).

Commission Undergraduate Studies and Policies (CUSP) 2025-26A: Resolution to Review Process for Pathways Concept 7

Jim Tokuhisa presented CUSP 2025-26A for second reading. This resolution addresses the suspension of Pathways Concept 7. Historical information, a summary of the resolution, and data pertaining to Pathways courses and students were provided. A motion was made and seconded to approve CFA 2025-26A.

A vote was conducted, and the CUSP 2025-26A passed (Yes: 58; No: 1; Abstain: 1).

CUSP 2025-26H: Resolution to Revise the Foreign Language Requirement

Jim Tokuhisa presented CFA 2025-26H for second reading. This resolution changes the timing for the enforcement of the admissions requirement for foreign language at Virginia Tech from prior to graduation to prior to admissions. Other than the timing of the requirement enforcement, no other changes are made to the requirement. A motion was made and seconded to approve the resolution.

Lengthy discussion followed and focused on the following: impacts to the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and students in that department; comments expressed during the last Faculty Senate meeting supportive of foreign language education being included in updates to Pathways Concept 7; concerns surrounding advising processes in relation to foreign language courses, programs, and minors; Virginia Tech's policy to allow the completion of an admissions requirement at graduation instead of at admission is unseen at other higher education institutions; better access to foreign language at the high school level today as compared to when the admissions requirement and enforcement timeline was first written; complicating factors for transfer students; and the process used to track this requirement. It was noted that the committee did consider changing the foreign language requirement to become a graduation requirement as opposed to an admissions requirement, but there were complicating factors such as impacts to credit hours and electives.

The following friendly amendment was made for the resolution: the addition of another "Therefore Be it further Resolved" statement that charges Virginia Tech with monitoring effects and addressing concerns that this resolution has on the Modern and Classical Languages department. There was support for this suggested amendment.

A vote was conducted to approve CUSP 2025-26H with the amended language, and the resolution passed (Yes: 42; No: 13; Abstain: 5).

Election of Representative to the Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies (CGPSP)

One representative is needed to serve on CGPSP with a term expiration of June 30, 2028. The floor was opened for nominations, and Charles Lowery was nominated. Charles Lowery was elected by unanimous consent.

4. New Business

Visit with Alan Fellers, Director of Conflicts of Interest and Commitment Disclosures, Amy Hogan, Organizational Excellence Executive Director, and Cristen Jandreau, Director of the Research Conflict of Interest Program

The conflict of interest and conflict of commitment programs within Virginia Tech's research area are robust. A review of the programs campus-wide was conducted and areas of improvement were identified. Changes in the program procedures have been proposed, and the university is seeking feedback and engagement around this topic.

The conflict of commitment and conflict of interest programs are currently decentralized at Virginia Tech. Employees and departments have experienced challenges in navigating this system. For example, employees must know that they need to disclose something in order to disclose it. As part of the review process, benchmarking of other educational institutions was completed. Most of Virginia Tech's peer institutions require all or most employees to disclose.

The purpose and basis for the program is not changing, but the look and feel will be different. Changes to simplify and streamline the process include the following: 1) all Virginia Tech employees must complete conflict of interest and commitment training; 2) a centralized process for annual disclosures will be implemented; 3) a university-wide software will be launched and utilized; 4) employees working .75 FTE or higher will be required to submit yearly reports even if they have nothing to disclose, and remaining employees must submit a report only if they have something to disclose.

Timeline information was provided. Vended software has been launched. Specifics on policy and guidance are being completed. The BOV will consider a resolution on this topic at the April meeting. A soft or piloted launch is expected in Fall 2026 with an official rollout occurring in Spring 2027.

Discussion focused on confusion with consulting, conflicts of time, improved guidance to assist in determining whether something should be disclosed, the mode of training that will be provided (videos or written), and data being communicated into Elements.

Visit with Associate Vice President for Public Safety Amy Orders

Public Safety at Virginia Tech encompasses the Police Department, Environmental Health and Safety, Emergency Management, and the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad. Amy Orders invited the faculty to provide comment and feedback around these areas.

Areas of discussion focused on 1) Flock safety cameras – these cameras are located at major university entrances, data is maintained for a short time, and privacy rules have been established by the Commonwealth. 2) License plate readers for parking services – this is concerning Transportation and Parking Services, but no information has been distributed about implementation of this change on Virginia Tech's campus. 3) Privacy and security of email and online items is IT security and not part of the services provided by the Public Safety office.

5. Open Floor

BOV Materials

Materials for the April BOV meeting are available on the BOV website.

P&T Guidance committee

This committee continues its work focused on identifying those who have been impacted by research disruptions. A survey will be distributed by the Faculty Senate and senators were encouraged to share the survey with colleagues and respond.

Student religious accommodation requests

Faculty in a department asked their Senator to share a situation they experienced where more than one student reportedly asked for and received a religious accommodation of several class days (1 month). No senators were aware of an accommodation of this length being granted in their areas. Resources were suggested and included the office of interfaith programs and Virginia Tech's interfaith calendar.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:58.