



MINUTES

Faculty Senate

April 17, 2026

2:30 – 4:15 p.m.

Torgersen 1000 and via Zoom

Present – Justin Lemkul (presiding), Luke Achenie, Joe Adams, Biko Agozino, Diane Agud, Aaron Ansell, Rick Ashley, Kristen Benson, David Bieri, Myra Blanco, Jan Helge Bøhn, Warren Booth, Bradley Bowen, Curtis Bower, Ryan Calder, Sherwood Clements, Nick Copeland, Carolyn Copenheaver, Naomi Dunn, Anna Duraj-Thatte, Bob Edmison, Matt Eick, Candace Fitch, Nicholas Goedert, Barrett Gutter, Ramtin Haghnazar Kouchaksaraei, Samantha Harden (alternate for HFNE), James Hawdon, Rebecca Hester, Dan Hindman, Kenneth Hodges, Adrienne Holz, Laura Iancu (alternate for Logan Dandridge), Eli Jamison, Ran Jin, Bryan Katz, Alex Kinnaman, Jake Lahne, Mark Limes, Kimberly Loeffert, Charles Lowery, G.Q. Lu, Jason Malone, Eric Martin, Joel McGlothlin, Harold McKenzie, Marc Michel, Rachel Miles, Sherif Motaleb Abdelaziz, Phil Nelson, Corinne Noiro (alternate for Maria del Carmen Caña-Jiménez), Gregory Novack, Albert Pan, Nicole Pitterson, Mark Psiaki, Shelly Rhoads, John Richey, Nazila Roofigari-Esfahan, Steven Rowson, Caroline Saouma, Yi Shi, Ian Shoemaker, Richard Shryock, Stephanie Smith, Chelsea Thompto, Jim Tokuhisa, Byron Tsang, Alp Tural, Jerald Walz, Jeff Warford, Terri-Ann Wattsman, Erin Worthington, Boya Xu, Gordon Yee

Absent with Notice: Logan Dandridge, Wes Gwaltney, Rebecca Weaver-Hightower

Absent: Azziza Bankole, Nathaniel Bishop, Virginia Buechner-Maxwell, Sarah Clinton, Rebecca Cockrum, Mark Coggins, Cassandra Efke, Ihudiya Finda Williams, Mark Freeman, David Gregory, Aaron Gross, William Headley, Leanna House, Daniel Karolyi, Sarah Karpanty, Lara Khansa, Bettina Koch, Andrea L'Afflitto, Catherine Larochelle, Renee LeClair, Stephen Martin, Ron Meyers, Isis Quinlan, Nino Ripepi, David Xie

Guests: Kyle Johnson, April Myers, Demetria Somervell, Matthew Zimmerman

Justin Lemkul called the meeting to order at 2:30. 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 April 3, 2026
- Approval of agenda for April 17, 2026

2. Updates and Announcements

Recap of the April 13-14 Virginia Tech Board of Visitors (BOV) Meeting

There was no action taken on the Living-Learning Program resolution, and the resolution was postponed until the June BOV meeting. At that time, amendments can be made to the resolution that was presented at the April meeting, and a vote can occur. Provost Julie Ross is continuing an

assessment on Living-Learning Programs, and the results of this assessment will be provided to the BOV.

The BOV approved a tuition increase of up to 2.9% and a fee increase of up to \$160. There is no final budget yet from the state, and the university hopes that the final increase is less than the maximum approved.

Copies of the remarks presented by the Faculty Representative to the BOV, Justin Lemkul, on the Living-Learning Program resolution and the Faculty Constituency report were provided.

Based on interest received at the November BOV meeting, Justin Lemkul collected information from faculty regarding facilities-related concerns. This input was used to create a memo and report which was submitted. The memo and report were available to senators for review.

University President Search

The Search Committee will consist of BOV members, the five constituent representatives (Faculty, A/P Faculty, Staff, Graduate and Professional Student, and Undergraduate Student), a representative from the Alumni Association, and appointee(s) from the governor. A search firm will be engaged within the next few weeks, but no timeline has been announced. The rector has expressed a desire to work expediently, but there is no hard deadline set. The Faculty Senate has been advised that Virginia law states that input from the Faculty Senate must be solicited regarding presidential searches.

Academic Freedom Panel

The panel features Dean Lee Learman and Dean Laura Belmonte and will be held on Monday, April 20, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. in the Holtzman Alumni Center Auditorium.

Faculty Senate President Office Hours

Will be held Monday, May 1, from 10:00 a.m. until noon in the Faculty Affairs Office, Burruss 330.

Faculty Senate Social

This annual reception will be held on May 8 from 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. Lunch and beverages will be provided. Senators were asked to RSVP by May 1 at 6:00 p.m.

Faculty Affairs: Faculty Senate Leadership Incubator

Kim Allen, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, Leadership Development, is recruiting participants for a new Faculty Senate Leadership Incubator to be held during the 2026-27 academic year. Programming will include one monthly meeting (scheduled for two hours on Fridays) and a few specially scheduled longer meetings. The cohort size is limited to 10-12 participants and is open to anyone currently serving as a senator. A link was provided for those who would like to apply.

3. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

4. New Business

Presentation of Officer and Commission Chair Slate

Rachel Miles, Faculty Senate Past President, Dan Hindman, and Diane Agud served on the nominating committee to present a slate of officers and commission chairs for the 2026-2027 academic year.

The slate of officers follows: President – Justin Lemkul; Vice President – Jim Hawdon; Operations Officer – Alex Kinnaman.

The slate for Commission Chairs follows: Commission on Faculty Affairs – Jake Lahne; Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies – Jerald Walz; Commission on Research – Ryan Calder; Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies – Sherwood Clements

The floor was opened for nominations of additional faculty senate officers or commission chairs. No nominations were received. Anyone with questions or interest in submitting a nomination should reach out to Rachel Miles. A vote will be conducted on these positions at the May 1, 2026, Faculty Senate meeting.

Faculty senators will have the opportunity to fill additional shared governance roles; information on these positions will be distributed.

Discussion followed concerning how the senate is reaching out to diverse groups on campus, constituency groups, and election requirements contained in the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws. Senators were encouraged to communicate with colleagues in their departments regarding Faculty Senate. During this academic year, the Faculty Senate leadership has spoken to various caucuses and the Department Heads Council to increase awareness and to encourage support and interest.

Call for Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies (CGPSP) Policy 6210 Working Group Co-Chair

CGPSP Resolution 2025-26C will be presented for second reading and vote during the April 20, 2026, University Council meeting. If approved by University Council and then by President Sands, the resolution will create a working group to review Policy 6210 – Management of Graduate Assistantships and Tuition Remission. The Faculty Senate has been asked to nominate a co-chair for this group. This role will require work over the summer. Anyone interested should reach out to Justin Lemkul.

Faculty Senate Bylaws Revisions, First Reading

Jim Hawdon presented revisions to the Faculty Senate bylaws for first reading. Most of the proposed changes are editorial in nature. The term “department” is replaced with the more specific term, “constituencies” throughout the bylaws.

Representation for the VT School of Medicine (VTCSOM) has been updated based on a required evaluation completed this year. Original language stated that VTSCOM would have 12 senate positions, but these seats have been difficult to fill due to the VTCSOM schedule, and only 9 seats have been able to be filled. VTCSOM was consulted, and a proposed update to the language states that VTCSOM will be treated like a college and will be represented by no more than nine senators. Guidelines on representation are included in the Faculty Senate constitution and bylaws. The Faculty Senate attempts to track faculty who reside in areas like ARECS or academies to ensure representation. The total of faculty in these areas is less than the number of faculty represented by one senator in departments. Additionally, college faculty associations also elect senators to represent faculty in their college and provide representation to these senators. Work regarding representation will continue in this area.

More significant updates were suggested for Article XII, Policy Review and Recommendation Process, Section 4, Faculty Senate Position Statements. Proposed changes include additional

details regarding Faculty Senate Position Statements, the purpose of the Faculty Senate, and a listing of requirements for Faculty Senate Position Statements.

Extensive discussion regarding the proposed updates regarding positions statements included the following topics: whether the added text limits topics that the senate could address, clarification of the role of the cabinet in the process; the opportunity for the faculty as an entire body to make statements on broader topics; the roles of faculty associations and the faculty senate; the role of senates in the shared governance process; clarification that any faculty member can bring topics forward for consideration for a faculty senate position statement, and intersections with academic freedom.

Revisions will be considered based on the extensive discussion and resulting changes will be brought forward at the second reading.

Presidential Search Statement, First Reading

Justin Lemkul presented the draft Presidential Search Statement for first reading. Information from the code of Virginia provided. The Faculty Senate will hold a special plenary session on April 24 at 2:30 PM for second reading and vote of the statement. This will be the only topic of business at the meeting. Limited comments on language updates and expectations followed. The statement will be distributed, and senators were asked to provide comments by noon on Wednesday, April 22.

5. Visit with Associate President for IT Governance, Planning, and Strategy Kyle Johnson

Kyle Johnson presented information on the IT governance evolution at Virginia Tech. IT Governance at Virginia Tech seeks to ensure the work and service it provides meets institutional needs; to increase consistency and transparency in decision-making; to prioritize initiatives; and to empower work across functions. Historical challenges have included a perceived disconnect between the efforts of the working committees and the IT Executive Committee; a lack of clarity regarding scope; a lack of regularly scheduled meetings; and a lack of connection between IT governance, procurement, and project management.

IT governance committees include the executive, advisory, and working committees. Information about the committees, structure, meeting information, membership, and administrative support were provided. Each of the university senates (Faculty, A/P Faculty, Staff, Undergraduate Student, and Graduate and Professional Student) have been asked to appoint one member each to the IT governance advisory council.

An overview of the intersection of IT Governance with IT Project management was given. A new university procurement policy from Finance will impact the IT procurement process. The desire is to align project intakes and discovery with the university budget planning cycle and to increase the velocity for IT procurement.

6. Open Floor

Press Release has extended the Title II deadline for 2-3 years depending on the size of the institution.

A press release from the federal government does not apply to Virginia Tech because the Virginia legislature has already adopted the required changes. Virginia must move forward with the April 24, 2026, deadline.

Survey from Working Group to provide guidance to promotion and tenure committees on impact to faculty from disruption of research.

This will be distributed soon, and senators were encouraged to respond.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:12.