



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, Diane Agud, Aaron Ansell, Rick Ashley, Azziza Bankole, Kristen Benson, David Bieri, Myra Blanco, Jan Helge Bøhn, Warren Booth, Curtis Bower, Sherwood Clements, Sarah Clinton, Nick Copeland, Carolyn Copenheaver, Maria del Carmen Caña-Jiménez, Naomi Dunn, Bob Edmison, Matt Eick, Candace Fitch, Nicholas Goedert, Barrett Gutter, Ramtin Hagnazar Kouchaksaraei, Samantha Harden (alternate for HFNE), James Hawdon, William Headley, Rebecca Hester, Dan Hindman, Kenneth Hodges, Adrienne Holz, Leanna House, Laura Iancu (alternate for Logan Dandridge), Eli Jamison, Ran Jin, Bryan Katz, Alex Kinnaman, Andrea L'Afflitto, Jake Lahne, Catherine Larochelle, Renee LeClair, Mark Limes, Kimberly Loeffert, Charles Lowery, G.Q. Lu, Stephen Martin, Joel McGlothlin, Harold McKenzie, Rachel Miles, Sherif Motaleb Abdelaziz, Phil Nelson, Gregory Novack, Albert Pan, Nicole Pitterson, Mark Psiaki, Shelly Rhoads, John Richey, Nazila Roofigari-Esfahan, Steven Rowson, Ian Shoemaker, Richard Shryock, Stephanie Smith, Tychia Thompson (alternate for Rebecca Weaver-Hightower), Chelsea Thompto, Jim Tokuhisa, Diego Troya (alternate for Caroline Saouma), Alp Tural, Jerald Walz, Jeff Warfford, Terri-Ann Wattsman, Erin Worthington, David Xie, Boya Xu, Gordon Yee

Absent with Notice: Bradley Bowen, Logan Dandridge, Rebecca Weaver-Hightower, Yi Shi

Absent: Biko Agozino, Nathaniel Bishop, Virginia Buechner-Maxwell, Ryan Calder, Rebecca Cockrum, Mark Coggins, Anna Duraj-Thatte, Cassandra Efkeman, Ihudiya Finda Williams, Mark Freeman, David Gregory, Aaron Gross, Wes Gwaltney, Daniel Karolyi, Sarah Karpanty, Lara Khansa, Bettina Koch, Jason Malone, Eric Martin, Ron Meyers, Marc Michel, Isis Quinlan, Nino Ripepi, Caroline Saouma, Byron Tsang

Guests: Ann Gregus, April Myers, Matthew Zimmerman

Justin Lemkul called the meeting to order at 2:31. 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 17, 2026
- Approval of minutes from April 24, 2026
- Approval of agenda for May 1, 2026

2. Updates and Announcements

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.

Service Acknowledgement

Justin Lemkul thanked the Officers, Commission Chairs, Cabinet members, and members of the Office of the Vice President for Policy and Governance team for their service to the Faculty Senate this year.

3. Unfinished Business

Call for CGPSP Policy 6210 Working Group Co-Chair

CGPSP Resolution 2025-26C was presented for second reading and vote during the April 20, 2026, University Council meeting. The resolution to create a working group to review Policy 6210 – Management of Graduate Assistantships and Tuition Remission was approved by the University Council and President. The Faculty Senate has been asked to nominate a co-chair for this group. A call was made for volunteers. No nominations were received. Any senator interested should reach out to Justin Lemkul.

Second Reading of Faculty Senate Bylaws Revisions

Jim Hawdon presented revisions to the Faculty Senate bylaws for second reading.

The first set of revisions concerned Articles I – XII § 3. 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, and six of those nine must be from the school’s academic departments.

A motion was made and seconded to approve these revisions.

There being no further discussion, a vote was taken, and the motion passed (Yes: 60, No: 0, Abstain: 0).

The second set of revisions concerned Article XII § 4 Policy Review and Recommendation Process to include additional details regarding Faculty Senate Position Statements and the purpose of the Faculty Senate. The section describing scope requirements for a proposed statement was eliminated. Proposed statements not approved by Cabinet can still be brought to the Senate and require a two-thirds vote in favor to be considered and will be written in collaboration with the PPC. The statement will be discussed at the following Senate meeting and revised based on that discussion, and a vote will occur at the following Senate meeting after discussion. Approving this vote will only require a simple majority vote.

A motion was made and seconded to approve these revisions.

A lengthy discussion followed, focusing on the different voting systems used in the process and editorial updates.

A motion was made and seconded to amend the first sentence of Article XII § 4 to remove "... the shared governance and tripartite mission of the university" and replace with "the purpose of the Faculty Senate as defined in the Constitution." This amendment reflects similar verbiage in the Faculty Senate Constitution and affirms that the Bylaws are the procedural execution of the Constitution.

A vote was taken and the motion passed (Yes: 54, No: 2, Abstain: 1).

A motion was made and seconded to amend Article XII § 4 part b to allow a proposed statement not approved by the Cabinet to have a vote called and approved by a simple majority rather than by a two-third vote. This aligns the voting systems for both proposing a statement to be written and approving a written statement as described in Article XII § 4 part d.

A vote was taken and the motion failed (Yes: 29, No: 32, Abstain: 8).

A motion was made and seconded to amend Article XII § 4 part d to change the voting system for presented statements from a simple majority vote to a two-thirds vote. This aligns the voting systems for both proposing a statement to be written and approving a written statement as described in Article XII § 4 part b. This amendment also reinforces that an approved statement has wide support from the Senate.

A vote was taken and the motion passed (Yes: 48, No: 7, Abstain: 6).

There being no further discussion, a vote was taken to approve the amended motion to revise Article XII § 4; the motion passed (Yes: 50, No: 2, Abstain: 1).

4. New Business

Faculty Senate Officers Election

Rachel Miles, Faculty Senate Past President, presented the slate of Officers and motioned to approve the slate.

The floor was opened for additional nominations. No nominations were received. Discussion on the precedence for Officers to serve consecutive years noted that several previous presidents served two consecutive years. Ms. Miles also noted that the Senate leadership co-developed the Faculty Senate Leadership Incubator and is considering additional at-large positions on the Cabinet, both to mentor future Senate leaders.

There being no further discussion, the slate of officers is as follows: President – Justin Lemkul; Vice President – Jim Hawdon; Operations Officer – Alex Kinnaman.

A vote was taken to approve the slate of Officers, and the motion passed (54, No: 0, Abstain: 2).

Faculty Senate Commission Chair Elections

Rachel Miles, Faculty Senate Past President, presented the slate of Commission Chairs and motioned to approve the slate.

The floor was opened for additional nominations. No nominations were received.

There being no further discussion, the slate for Commission Chairs is as 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

A vote was taken to approve the slate of Commission Chairs, and the motion passed (Yes: 60, No: 1, Abstain: 0).

University Council and University Council Cabinet Election

Justin Lemkul brought forward the election of faculty senators to the University Council and the University Council Cabinet. One senator from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the College of Engineering, the College of Science, and the Virginia Tech Carillion School of Medicine were received to serve on University Council. Two Faculty Senate Representatives were received to serve on the University Council Cabinet. Elections were conducted for all six positions with candidates that were unopposed. Elected representatives for these governance positions follow:

- University Council Representative from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences representative: Jerald Walz
- University Council Representative from the College of Engineering: Jan Helge Bøhn
- University Council Representative from the College of Science: Diane Agud
- University Council Representative from the Virginia Tech Carillion School of Medicine: Curtis Bower
- University Council Cabinet Representatives from the Faculty Senate: Rachel Miles and Jim Hawdon

Commission and Committee Membership Elections

Justin Lemkul brought forward the election of faculty senators and faculty representatives to the shared governance Commissions.

One nomination was received for three representative positions on the Commission on Faculty Affairs. One nomination was received for one representative position on the Commission on Outreach and International Affairs.

Nominees for representatives were still needed for the following: two representative positions on the Commission on Faculty Affairs, one representative position on the Commission on Research, one representative position on the Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies, and one representative on the Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs.

The floor was opened for additional nominations. Nominations were received for one representative on the Commission on Faculty Affairs and one representative on the Commission on Research.

There being no further nominations or discussion, elections were conducted for four positions with candidates that were unopposed. Elected representatives for these governance positions follow:

- Commission on Faculty Affairs Representatives: Laura Iancu and Diane Agud
- Commission on Outreach and International Affairs: Matt Eick

- Commission on Research: Adrienne Holz

An election will be held in August 2026 for the remaining unfilled governance positions.

Justin Lemkul brought forward the election of faculty senators and faculty representatives to the shared governance Committees.

Three nominations were received for one representative position on the Campus Development Committee (Scott Fralin, Ed Lener, Bipasha Banerjee). Three nominations were received for one representative position on the Climate Action, Sustainability, and Energy Committee (Jennifer Russel, Esther Dowell, Mengyu Yin). Two nominations were received for one representative position on the Transportation and Parking Committee (Mary Finn, Alice Rogers). Five nominations were received for one representative position on the University Curriculum Committee for General Education (Steve Rowson, María del Carmen Caña Jiménez, Jason Higgins, Todd Ogle, Yinlin Chen). One nomination was received for one representative position on the IT Governance Advisory Committee (Adrianna Schuler Scott).

Nominees for representatives were still needed for the following: one representative position on the Academic Support Committee, two representative positions on the Employee Benefits Committee, and one Recipient of the Alumni Award for Research Excellence representative position on the Faculty Honorifics Committee.

The floor was opened for additional nominations. Nominations were received for one representative position on the Academic Support Committee (Jake Lahne) and two representative positions on the Employee Benefits Committee (Sherif Abdelaziz, Diane Agud). Additional nominations were received for the Transportation and Parking Committee (Diane Agud), and the IT Governance Advisory Committee (David Bieri).

There being no further nominations or discussion, elections were conducted for all positions, and received bios were available for review. Elected representatives for these governance positions follow:

- Academic Support Committee Representative: Jake Lahne
- Campus Development Committee: Scott Fralin
- Climate Action, Sustainability, and Energy Committee: Esther Dowell
- Employee Benefits Committee: Sherif Abdelaziz, Diane Agud
- Transportation and Parking Committee: Alice Rogers
- University Curriculum Committee for General Educations: Todd Ogle
- IT Governance Advisory Committee: Arianna Schuler Scott

An election will be held in August 2026 for the remaining unfilled governance position.

[Following the meeting, Jake Lahne formally resigned from his position on the Transportation and Parking Committee. The runner-up in the Transportation and Parking Committee election, Mary Finn, will complete Dr. Lahne's term ending in 2027 and serve a 1-year term.]

Discussion of Faculty Senate Priorities for 2026-2027

Justin Lemkul invited the Faculty Senate to offer topics that the Faculty Senate may prioritize for 2026-2027. The following topics were offered:

- Facilitate increased communication with Schiffert Health Center and the Dean of Students, particularly regarding notes issued to students for absences. Some teaching faculty have been directed by the Dean of Students to ignore these notes as they only state that the student was at Schiffert at a specific time, not that they are excused absences. Additional information is desired for how this information is communicated and what the appropriate actions are.
- Invite representatives from the Services for Students with Disabilities, particularly the Accommodations and Access department, to speak with the Senate about new and continuing services.
- Investigate the value of additional technology resources for class, such as iClickers and TopHat, that are major expenses for students and not expected for class success. A discussion among students and faculty may help address the worth of integrating these technologies in the classroom.
- Invite speakers and other guests to discuss AI integration and accessibility of tools, particularly proprietary tools. Additionally, invite representatives from Scholarly Integrity and Research Compliance to discuss academic integrity in terms of AI use and where Virginia Tech stands in comparison to other universities, and topics such as best practices for checking for the use of AI, encouraging students to report misuse of AI, and appropriate levels of AI integration into the classroom.
- Invite more Caucuses to speak with the Senate to share their experiences and discuss collaboration opportunities.
- A request for CUSP to investigate reinstating the SAT as an enrollment requirement.
- Strengthen our relationship with the Faculty Senate of Virginia.

5. Open Floor

Summer Communications

Justin Lemkul informed the Faculty Senate that a monthly email with relevant updates and news will be distributed over the summer. It is also possible that an informal summer meeting may be held.

Disrupted Research Survey

A survey will be distributed next week soliciting experiences from faculty on their research being disrupted. Senators are encouraged to share the survey with their constituents.

President's Appreciation

Justin Lemkul offered thanks and gratitude to the senators for their ongoing service in the Senate and successfully concluding the year. The Senate also congratulated Dr. Rick Ashley, a long-standing senator and valued contributor, on his retirement in the fall.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:15.