

University Council Minutes
September 15, 2025
3:30 p.m.
2420 North End Center and Zoom

Present: Justin Lemkul (presiding), April Myers, Menah Pratt, Frances Keene, Kim O'Rourke, Aimée Surprenant, Jill Sible, Tom Thompson for Mario Ferruzzi, Daniel Givens, Tsai Lu Liu, Kevin Pitts, Julia Ross, Saonee Sarker, Lee Learman, Paul Heilker for Rebecca Bot-Knutson, Rachel Miles, James Hawdon, Marlena Lester, Jennifer Jones, Nicole Connors, Amber Hagan, Gabe Petry, Jasmine Boyd, Emma Roshioru, Aarav Parikh, Thomas Feely, Lindsay Ricci, Pooja Bhagawat, Gyang Chung, Taylor Peele, Katie Drinkwater Gregg, Nicole Pitterson, Karen Schnatterly, Rodney Gaines, Kim Loeffert, Rebecca Hester, David Xie, Renée LeClair, Terri Pecora, Amber Robinson, Clay Crumpler, Jennifer Clevenger, Ronnie Mondal, Jim Tokuhisa, Jan Helge Bøhn

Absent with Notice: Tim Sands, Cyril Clarke, Amy Sebring, and Serena Young

Absent: Daniel Sui, Bryan Garey, Guru Ghosh, Laura Belmonte, Saskia van de Gevel, Tyler Walters, Amanda Morris, Jennifer Johnson, Marc Michel, and Ron Meyers

Guests: Kari Evans, Ron Fricker, Rachel Gabriele, Monique Logan, Lori Rose, Sally Shupe, Demetria Somervell, Rick Sparks, and James Bridgeforth

Dr. Lemkul called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. A quorum was present.

1. Announcement of Order of the Day

Dr. Lemkul announced the order of the day for the meeting. Items to be placed on the agenda must be submitted to the secretary at least ten days prior to the meeting date. Follow the procedures in Section 2(2) – University Council Bylaws, Article IX, Section 2(2-3).

2. Announcement of review and approval of minutes of May 5, 2025

Dr. Lemkul noted that these minutes have been voted on electronically and can be publicly accessed on the Governance Information System on the Web (<http://www.governance.vt.edu>).

3. Commission Chairs Reports

1. Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs – Jennifer Jones, Chair
 - a. Ongoing grievance determination panels as needed
 - b. Determine status of Resolution 2023-24A and continue with governance process or remove from consideration
 - c. Consider an annual review of Faculty Handbook section pertaining to A/P Faculty
 - d. Consider a resolution to update Faculty Handbook Section 2.30.3.1
 - e. Continued discussion of A/P Faculty evaluation plan in PageUp pilot program

2. Commission on Faculty Affairs – Jim Hawdon, Chair
 - a. Revise Faculty Handbook concerning non-reappointment of faculty members on regular appointment for reasons other than just cause
 - b. Clarify the grievance process outlined in the Faculty Handbook, including the role of the hearing panel
 - c. Clarify the appeals process outlined in the Faculty Handbook
 - d. Review collegiate faculty series, including the description, duties performed, and promotion process
 - e. Evaluate School of Medicine representation in Faculty Senate
 - f. Establish a Faculty Senate-sponsored workgroup for reviewing promotion and tenure expectations documents
 - g. Review policy concerning time-in-rank for instructors
3. Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs – Ronnie Mondal, Chair
 - a. Recommend policy and administrative changes to graduate programs from the results of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate – Graduate School Climate Survey 2024-25
 - b. Implement cultural and administrative changes following the recommendations from the Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies working group on the new grievance process for graduate and professional students.
 - c. Build up training modules and programs for students to take part in the panels for the grievance process
 - d. Amend Policy 8010 and/or 8012 to create a separate classification of student organizations for student senates
4. Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies – Renée LeClair, Chair
 - a. Review resolutions as they come through discussing the implications and potential implications for CGPSP
 - b. Collaborate with CGPSA and other commissions as needed
 - c. Continue to review task force recommendations
 - d. Continue to review working group recommendations
 - e. Continue with a subcommittee to streamline the process of professional master's programs
 - f. Review graduate certificate programs
 - g. Explore alternative funding opportunities for graduate learners
5. Commission on Outreach and International Affairs – Jennifer Clevenger, Chair
 - a. Explore potential for a Lifelong Learner Institute (or center) to provide innovative courses and credentialing opportunities, particularly for those in our region
 - b. Explore opportunities to be a Global Campus, utilizing specialized platforms to share courses with students and partner institutions
 - c. Explore ramifications of federal immigration issues on enrollment management and graduate student research. What are the risks and realities affecting the VT talent pipeline?
 - d. Develop a university-wide definition for engagement with the assistance of the Engagement Leadership Council and Carnegie Reclassification.

6. Commission on Research – Jan Helge Bøhn, Chair
 - a. Five-year review of university center: Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science (ICTAS) in Fall 2025
 - b. Five-year review of university center: Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) in Spring 2026 (tentative)
 - c. In support of Virginia Tech Global Distinction, envision and design fellowships to bring globally distinguished faculty to campus
 - d. Postdocs in governance (e.g., as a standing committee within the Commission on Research)
 - e. Changes to the Faculty Handbook to reflect changes to research faculty structure
7. Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs – Gabe Petry, Chair
 - a. Address the lack of bereavement leave for staff using benchmarking to form a proposal to support a resolution
 - b. Increase non-student wage and staff visibility and inclusion in steering committees and high-level searches
 - c. Improve support, availability, and dispersal of professional development opportunities and funds
 - d. Study current telework expectations, eligibility, and efficacy to support transparency and possible recommendations for policy updates
8. Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs – Aarav Parikh, Chair
 - a. Review and approve UCSO Constitutions
 - b. Ideate and advocate for policies and programs to enhance the undergraduate experience
 - c. Lead discussions regarding university policy related to formation, dissolution and operations of non-senate UCSOs
 - d. Interface with other shared governance entities to ensure complete and accurate representation of the undergraduate student body
 - e. Serve as a collaborative platform between undergraduate students and other university stakeholders
9. Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies – Jim Tokuhisa, Chair
 - a. Continue to identify barriers to student success present in university policies, the Undergraduate Course Catalog, and other documents pertaining to undergraduate studies and policies
 - b. Identify and address policies that will be impacted by the adoption of Banner SaaS (the enterprise resource planning system for the university) and offer changes that enhance student success
 - c. Formulate a policy on university text messaging for student academic correspondence
 - d. Propose the foreign language requirement for admission be applied and enforced at admission
 - e. Explore a two-day Fall Break

4. Announcement of approval and posting of UC Cabinet, Commission, and Committee Minutes

These minutes have been voted on electronically and will be posted on the University web (<http://www.governance.vt.edu>). Note that the purpose of voting on minutes of the University Council Cabinet, Commissions, and Committees reporting to University Council Cabinet is to accept them for filing. University Council Bylaws require that policy items be brought forward in resolution form for University Council action.

- Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs
April 11, 2025
- Commission on Faculty Affairs
April 11, 2025
- Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs
April 9, 2025
April 30, 2025
- Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies
April 16, 2025
- Commission on Outreach and International Affairs
April 17, 2025
- Commission on Research
March 6, 2025
April 10, 2025
May 8, 2025
- Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs
February 25, 2025
April 22, 2025
- Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies
February 24, 2025
April 14, 2025
April 28, 2025
- Athletics Committee
February 13, 2025
March 6, 2025
April 17, 2025
- Campus Development Committee
December 3, 2024

- Climate Action, Sustainability, and Energy Committee
February 24, 2025
March 31, 2025
April 28, 2025
- Transportation and Parking Committee
April 8, 2025
May 13, 2025

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:43 p.m.