

**Commission on Faculty Affairs**  
**Minutes**  
**October 20, 2017**  
**10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.**  
**130 Burruss Hall**

**In Attendance:** J. Ferris (Chair), G. Amacher, R. Blieszner, S.-Y. Chien, C. Clarke, J. Finney, L. Geyer, M. McGrath, T. Schenk, R. Speer, J. Spotila, R. Willis, P. Young

**Absent:** L. Brogdon, V. Groover, R. Hicok

**Guests:** P. Donovan (for V. Groover), T. Mayer

**Upcoming Meetings:** Nov. 3 in 330E Burruss, Nov. 17 in 330E Burruss

**1. Welcome and Approval of Agenda**

**J. Ferris**

Meeting called to order at 10:30 a.m.  
The agenda was approved unanimously.

**2. Approval of October 6, 2017 CFA Minutes**

**J. Ferris**

The minutes were approved unanimously.

**3. Presentation and Discussion**

**T. Mayer**

- a. Equity in access: large-scale facilities and proposals**
- b. Faculty role in VP Research vision**

Comments collected from faculty senators on issues related to ‘equity in access’ and ‘faculty role in VP Research vision’ shared with group. The ‘Faculty Senate Resolution on Free Inquiry’ passed in Spring, 2017 was also displayed. T. Mayer shared slides on OVPRI’s strategy for how VT can become a top 100 research institution. T. Mayer emphasized that while it can appear lost among the major initiatives underway, VT very much still values discovery-driven research and the role of individual investigators. Diversity of disciplines, approaches, funding sources and so on is our strength. Challenge is, given limited resources, how do we start to prioritize? Within each area, faculty need to help identify. T. Mayer slides illustrate where we are vis-à-vis our peers in various areas, and thus where we need to strengthen as an institution (including scholarly works, competitive federal funding, faculty awards, intellectual property and licensing, startups, and important accreditation). VT faculty disproportionately dependent on high level of ‘institutional support’ (43%).

In terms of (perceived) internal competition among and between institutes and colleges, there is not a single model in place. Also reasons why some might get back more of the

F&A, like the debt service they carry on their facilities. In general, it is challenging to figure out when/how to wave overhead or make a voluntary cost-share. Can be contentious and risky to wave because of the precedent it sets, and need for this F&A to cover costs. Most of the F&A is going back to colleges and departments (OVPRI only keeps 8.9%). Ongoing conversations with institutes around how to develop a more coordinated approach, and need to have further conversations with faculty around how best to interact with each type of institute. Issues like shared facilities, not just within institutes, is a high priority that OVPRI is working on.

Recognition that we need to fix administrative elements of the system so that they are not the barrier. OVPRI is focusing on how to support more effective research and innovation, including via better university-wide coordination so that faculty do not fall through cracks; a coordinated innovation strategy, rather than siloed operations; streamlined bureaucracy; and allocation of staff to key areas. Currently realigning along a new 'OVPRI Functional Focus Model'.

CFA members present provided various feedback, including that: The cultivation of relationships with program officers and others is very important, and we would benefit from having support staff that can facilitate access by setting up meetings, maintaining connections and so on. Faculty need to see acknowledgement and reward for taking chances on larger proposals, in the P&T process, with course buyouts and so on; we want at least some faculty to go after really prestigious awards with low chances. Much of the process of establishing what we value and how it will be encouraged and recognized is outside the scope of OVPRI, but they can provide the scaffolding.

**4. Academies of Faculty Service and Leadership nomination** **J. Ferris**

R. Speer volunteered to be the Commission on Faculty Affairs representative at the Oct 6<sup>th</sup> CFA meeting.

**5. Employee Benefits Committee** **G. Amacher**  
**a. Guidance and expectations for committee actions**  
**b. Retiree Health Benefits for Tenured Faculty**

Topic tabled for future CFA meeting.

**6. Faculty Morale, Recruiting and Retention** **J. Ferris**

Noted that ongoing meetings between Provost, others from Provost's Office, Faculty Senate Cabinet and (going forward) other senators.

**7. Promotion and Tenure (P&T) process** **J. Ferris**  
**a. Work Group – membership and next steps**

Work group has been formed. The first status report will be provided to CFA at the Nov 3<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**8. Other business**

**J. Ferris**

No other business was discussed.

**9. Adjourn**

**J. Ferris**

Meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m.