Minutes
ACADEMIC, RESEARCH, AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Room G102A/B
Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC
10:00 – 11:15 a.m.

Committee Members Present: Greta Harris (chair), Melissa Nelson, Carrie Chenery

Committee Members Absent: Jeff Veatch

Additional Board Members Present: Horacio Valeiras, Letitia Long, Shelley Butler Barlow, C.T. Hill, Anna James, Sharon Brickhouse Martin, Melissa Nelson, Kim O'Rourke, Chris Petersen, Mehul Sanghani, Preston White.

Constituent Representatives Present: Eric Kaufman, (faculty representative), Sabrina Sturgeon (graduate and professional student representative), Camellia Pastore (undergraduate student representative), Tamarah Smith (staff representative)


OPEN SESSION

1. Motion to Return to Open Session. The committee voted unanimously to move into Open Session.

2. Welcome and Acceptance of Agenda. Greta Harris, chair of the committee, welcomed committee members and attendees to the Open Session. The morning tour of the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC was informative and highlighted exciting research areas.

The committee voted unanimously to accept the agenda as presented including all items on the Consent Agenda.

3. Report of Closed Session Action Items. G. Harris reported that the committee met in closed session and approved nine faculty appointments to emeritus/emerita status, five appointments to endowed chairs, professorships, or fellowships, and two reappointments to Alumni Distinguished Professor.

5. **Overview of Academic Affairs:** Jack Finney, vice provost for faculty affairs reviewed the areas under the leadership of the provost including academic deans, vice provosts, and academic vice presidents. Under the approval purview of the ARSA committee are academic degrees, undergraduate, professional, and graduate student policies, and approval of policies for faculty employees of all types. Faculty employment actions approved by ARSA include promotion and tenure, research leaves, appointments to emeritus or emerita status, endowed professorships, and appointments to University Distinguished Professors and Alumni Distinguished Professors. Appropriate to the type of resolution, ARSA reviews and approves actions at each meeting in a Closed Session or in an Open Session.

6. **Report from the Council of College Deans.** Laura Belmonte, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and representative to the committee from the Council of College Deans, reported to the committee on several items. The Council of College Deans meets regularly to discuss topics of mutual interest. The council provides an excellent platform for collegiate exchange and support across the academic enterprise. The last several months have been dedicated to addressing current circumstances such as budget reductions, the plans for which are due August 28th. In addition, deans have been managing their college within the constraints of the hiring freeze, COVID-19 planning for course scheduling, and classroom configurations. Faculty members continue to express concerns with being able to keep up properly with family caregiving including youth and elders. The schedule for the local schools presents a challenge as do the limited options for child care. The Virginia Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine has several highlights that include a substantial grant from the National Institutes of Health and a successful student enrollment in the newly accredited B.S. in Public Health.

7. **Discussion: Global Land Grant.** Guru Ghosh, vice president for outreach and international affairs, summarized the university’s global plan for responding to the pandemic, including bringing more than 400 university students and faculty home from locations abroad, supporting international students and faculty who remained in the U.S., and communicating with numerous prospective students and faculty on issues related to travel. Panel members Kathleen Alexander, professor in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation, in the College of Natural Resources and environment, Tom Archibald, associate professor in the Department of Agricultural Leadership and Community Education in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and Venkataramana Sridhar, associate professor in the Department of Biological Systems Engineering in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, presented on their global research and outreach programs and the integration of their work in the domestic and international science and policy aspects of responding to COVID-19. Alexander works in Botswana, Archibald in Senegal, and Sridhar in Southeast Asia. Their work engages Virginia Tech, global partners, government agencies, and community partners. The global and local reach of their work, termed “glocal,” demonstrates the impact and reach of Virginia Tech’s faculty.
8. **Provost’s Update and Discussion.** Cyril Clarke, executive vice president and provost, introduced Dan Givens who began his tenure June 1, 2020 as dean of the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. Dean Givens holds DVM and Ph.D. degrees, is boarded in theriogenology and microbiology, and comes to the Virginia Tech from Auburn University. The university is grateful for the outstanding leadership and service of Greg Daniel, professor of small animal clinical sciences, who served as interim dean of the college. Don Taylor, the Charles O. Gordon Professor of Industrial and Systems Engineering, has been appointed executive vice provost effective July 1, 2020. His leadership roles include service as head in the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, interim dean of the College of Engineering, vice provost for learning systems innovation and effectiveness, and interim vice president for research and innovation. In this role, executive vice provost Taylor will support the day-to-day management of activities in academic enterprise and improve strategic capabilities of the office of the provost. The search for a new vice president for research and innovation continues.

The university’s progress towards reaccreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is meeting all deadlines. The university’s self-study is the first step and is on target for submission by the September 9, 2020 deadline. Subsequent steps towards reaccreditation include a November 2020 off-site review, submission of any additional reports requested by the off-site review team due February 1, 2021, submission of the university’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) required by the SACSCOC, and an on-site review team visit in mid-March 2021. The QEP is a document that outlines the university’s processes for identifying emerging issues from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes aimed at accomplishing the mission of the university.

The final outcome of enrollments will be determined at census in September 2020. Given the circumstances, enrollment is satisfactory. As of August 22, 2020, the university’s undergraduate enrollments include 6,632 freshmen (43 fewer than the 6,675 goal), 1,876 out-of-state freshmen (248 fewer than the 2,124 goal, and 28.3% of total), 109 international freshmen (328 fewer than the 437 goal), 1,257 transfer students (125 more than the 1,132 goal). Deferrals include 96 to spring 2021 (1 semester), 292 to fall 2021 (1 year), 39 beyond fall 2021, for a total of 427 deferrals. The academic profile of the freshman class: 3.97 average high school grade point average, and average score of 1271 on the SAT. The academic profile of transfer students is an average college GPA of 3.47. The diversity of the freshman class includes: 39% underserved (USS)/underrepresented (URM), 20% URM, 20% first generation, 18% Pell-eligible, and 3% international. The provost expressed appreciation for the university’s Enrollment Management Team and the Enrollment Advisory Council.

Preparation for the fall semester was driven by a commitment to optimize three primary factors: public health, academic program quality, and resource capacity. In addition, planning and implementation is guided by a commitment to shared
responsibility by the office of the provost, the senior vice president and chief business officer, and the emergency management team. The cabinet of the Faculty Senate and the provost have kept in regular communication. In addition, communication between the university and the Town of Blacksburg has been important. The health-risk mitigation strategy includes: isolating infected individuals including a 14-day quarantine for students before arrival, reducing spread of infection through the use of masks and distancing, identifying and supporting infected individuals through testing, contact tracing and isolation/quarantine. Key partners are the local and state departments of health. Efforts continue to recognize and provide support for challenges such as student mental health, child and dependent care responsibilities, and the concerns of faculty on the impact of the pandemic on career progression.

9. **Agenda Items for November 2020 meeting.**
   The chair of the committee will contact committee members for topics to include on agendas for subsequent ARSA committee meetings.

10. **Adjourn.** Having no further business, the committee adjourned at 11:15.