Committee Minutes

ACADEMIC, RESEARCH, AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
August 22, 2022

Committee Members Present: Melissa Nelson (chair), Sandy Davis, and Carrie Chenery participated remotely in accordance with the Code of Virginia §2.2-3708.2(A)(1)(2).

Board Members Present: Rector Long, Anna Buhle (graduate and professional student representative), Holli Drewry (A/P representative), Jamal Ross (undergraduate student representative), Robert Weiss (faculty representative), and Serena Young (staff representative).

Guests: Eric Brooks, Cyril Clarke, Jean Clarke, Natalie Cook, Corey Earles, Ron Fricker, Luisa Havens Gerardo, Tony Haga, Kay Heidbreder, Matt Holt, Saad Khan, Frances Keene, Sharon Kurek, Ellen Plummer, Paul Richter, Tim Sands, Dan Sui, and G. Don Taylor, Rob Viers.

OPEN SESSION

1. Report of ARSA Closed Session and Welcome. M. Nelson, chair of the committee, read the report of the committee’s Closed Session Actions: approval of resolutions to emeritus/emerita status (9), approval of resolutions for appointments to endowed chairs, professorships, or fellowships (4), approval of resolutions for appointments with tenure (3), resolution to approve faculty research leave (1), approval of resolutions for exceptions to the Virginia Conflicts of Interest Act (4), and ratification of the personnel changes report.

M. Nelson welcomed participants to the Open Session of ARSA and acknowledged special guests, Natalie Cooke and Saad Kahn.

2. Review and Approval of Open Session Agenda.

The agenda was unanimously approved as presented.

3. Consent Agenda Items. Approval of June 7, 2022, Meeting Minutes, Report of Reappointments to Endowed Chairs, Professorships, and Fellowships, Resolution to Approve Appointment of Interim Executive Director of the Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research.

4. Student Well-being and Mental Health Initiatives. F. Keene, interim vice president for student affairs presented a comprehensive overview of the support and services the university provides students in the colleges and the residence halls. The university closely monitors student well-being. New this fall are 24/7 telehealth services and the
implementation of a comprehensive residential well-being model. As an undergraduate student, S. Kahn led student-focused mental health efforts and now, post-graduation is employed by Hokie Wellness. Natalie Cook is a faculty member in the Virginia Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine and she and her family reside in the Honors Residential Commons where she serves as faculty principal. The Honors Residential Commons is one of the university's three residential colleges.

The committee discussed the benefits of student-led mental health support efforts focused on self-help and peer education and support. To mitigate the impact of the pandemic, the university employed several strategies to maintain communication and offer support. Students were called and sent electronic communications. In addition, returning students were encouraged to attend welcome events that are traditionally directed at new incoming first-year students. Mental health services and support are available to all graduate and professional students at all the university's locations. The distinct needs of graduate and professional students continue to be a focus. Faculty members are encouraged to support all students by being appropriately flexible and supportive of student needs. Students who serve as well-being leaders receive specialized training on recognizing signs of distress and mental health first aid. The wellness model is holistic and includes attention to student concerns such as food security and financial stressors. The university's telehealth contract includes a review and assessment of the performance of counselors and student experiences with services.

5. Provost's Update. Cyril Clarke, executive vice president and provost, updated the committee on several initiatives.

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) has approved the name and reorganization associated with the College of Architecture, Arts, and Design. In addition, budgeting and leadership in two of the college’s schools are finalized. Additional details are in the process of being resolved such as sufficient space for the arts. The search for a college dean is underway.

The search for a dean for the Pamplin College of Business is re-launched and Dr. Robin Russell is serving as interim dean. The timeline for a search for a vice president for student affairs has not yet been decided.

Progress continues on the university’s strategic initiatives. The Tech Talent Investment Program, artificial intelligence, and quantum information science continue to proceed at both the Innovation Campus and across the university. Health sciences and biomedical sciences continue to advance the university’s research and outreach missions, as does integrated security including the work of the National Security Institute.
The university’s Partnership for Incentive-Based Budget (PIBB) continues to be reviewed. In particular the PIBB model will improve with the addition of student and faculty-centered outcomes and outcomes associated with the arts and other creative areas.

Virtual learning and work continue to be assessed. The pandemic offered opportunities to learn new strategies and the university is examining how virtual learning and work fit into Virginia Tech’s overall mission. A committee chartered by Provost Clarke has produced a report which is being reviewed.

Virginia Tech’s undergraduate enrollment has grown over the past few years, particularly in 2019 when enrollment surged and met the university’s goal of 30,000 students. Analyses of growth potential are underway including how growth might be accommodated including residential beds. The town of Blacksburg and Montgomery County will be engaged in analyses and planning.

Experiential learning is a priority for the university in which the passions and interests of students are engaged in real and simulated environments that can include career exploration. Virginia Tech’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is focused on Bridge Experiences such as internships, coops, and undergraduate research.

The university's shared governance efforts, approved by the Board of Visitors in June are being implemented with the start of the academic year. The University Council Cabinet, co-chaired by Provost Clarke and Robert Weiss, president of the Faculty Senate, will meet and decide next steps. Among the tasks of the University Council is consideration of university-wide initiatives within the domain of the faculty such as experiential education.

6. Agenda Items for Committee Meeting. The committee's agenda will include a discussion of the university's economic development initiatives. Committee members should forward additional items for the agenda to the chair.

7. Adjournment. The committee adjourned at 3:00 p.m.
Open Session Agenda

ACADEMIC, RESEARCH AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Virginia Tech Newport News Center
Maroon and Orange Room
August 22, 2022
2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

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<td>A. Approval of June 7, 2022 Meeting Minutes</td>
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<td>B. Report of Reappointments to Endowed Chairs, Professorships, and Fellowships</td>
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<td>*C. Resolution to Approve Appointment of Interim Executive Director of the Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research</td>
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<td># 4. Panel Discussion: Student Well-being and Mental Health Initiatives</td>
<td>F. Keene</td>
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<td>5. Provost’s Update and Discussion</td>
<td>C. Clarke</td>
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<td>6. Agenda Items for November 2022 Committee Meeting</td>
<td>M. Nelson</td>
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<td>7. Adjourn Committee Meeting</td>
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* Requires Full Board Approval
# Discusses Enterprise Risk Management topic(s)
A. Approval of June 7, 2022 Meeting Minutes
B. Report of Reappointments to Endowed Chairs, Professorships, and Fellowships
*C. Resolution to Approve Appointment of Interim Executive Director of the Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research
Committee Minutes

ACADEMIC, RESEARCH, AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
New Classroom Building 230
June 7, 2022
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Committee Members Present: Melissa Nelson (chair), Carrie Chenery, Anna James, Jeff Veatch.

Board Members Present: Rector Tish Long, Ed Baine, Holli Drewry (A/P representative), Paolo Fermin (undergraduate student representative), Phil Miskovic (graduate and professional student representative), Robert Weiss (faculty representative), Serena Young (staff representative).


OPEN SESSION

1. Welcome. M. Nelson, chair of the committee welcomed board and committee members. Members of the committee had an informal breakfast with graduate and professional students.

2. Review and Approval of Open Session Agenda. M. Nelson asked the committee review and approve the committee’s agenda including the consent agenda.

3. Consent Agenda Items. Approval of April 4, 2022 Meeting Minutes, Report of Reappointments to Endowed Chairs, Professorships, and Fellowships, Report of the 2021-22 Faculty Compensation Plan (shared for information purposes by Finance and Resource Management Committee), Approval of 2021-22 Pratt Fund Budgets (shared with Finance and Resource Management Committee), Resolution to Approve 2022-2023 Student Code of Conduct, Resolution to Approve Department of Real Estate in the Pamplin College of Business, Resolution to Approve Revisions to Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws (shared with Governance and Administration Committee), Resolution to Approve Revisions to Policy 13010 Individual Conflicts of Interest, Resolution to Create a Policy for the Award of Posthumous Degrees, Resolution to Revise Faculty Handbook Related to Change of Duty Station and Special Leave, Resolution to Clarify Language in Faculty Handbook Regarding Extending the Tenure and Continued Appointment Clock, Resolution to Revise Faculty Handbook Language Regarding Appeal of Non-Reappointment.
The committee unanimously approved the Open Session Agenda including the Consent Agenda Items.

4. Update on Continuation of Test-optional Admissions. Juan Espinoza, associate vice provost for enrollment management, and Rick Sparks, university registrar, updated the committee on the university’s continuation of test-optional undergraduate admissions. All public institutions in Virginia are currently implementing test-optional undergraduate admissions. In addition, 1800 American colleges do not require SAT or ACT scores for admission. Virginia Tech will continue to assess the impact of test-optional admissions on enrollments including student success and completion through the spring of 2025. Committee members expressed their support of continuing test optional undergraduate admissions.

5. Math Education Update. Ron Fricker, interim dean of the college of science and Trish Hammer, associate dean of the college of science provided the committee with an update on undergraduate math education. Improvements to math education include completing the implementation of a student-choice class model by spring 2023, moving the emporium onto the main Blacksburg campus, and providing faculty members with ongoing training on new teaching methods. Committee members support the improvements planned for math education and looks forward to updates.

6. Provost’s Update. Cyril Clarke, executive vice president and provost, updated the committee on several initiatives. Several senior level searches are completed and underway. Kevin Pitts, dean of the College of Science begins his appointment on June 13, 2022; Ron Fricker begins his appointment as vice provost for faculty affairs, Provost Clarke thanked Dr. Fricker for his service as interim dean of the College of Science. The search for dean of the Pamplin College of Business continues on schedule, finalists have been invited to campus, and additional conversations are underway. The search for a dean of the College of Architecture and Urban Studies is underway along with steps to recruit and appoint directors within the college. Provost Clarke thanked Frank Shushok for his service as vice president of student affairs and the board wishes him well as he assumes his position of president of Roanoke College. Frances Keene is serving as interim vice president of student affairs and a search for a permanent vice president will occur at a later date. Byron Hughes has taken a position at the University of Tennessee and Provost Clarke thanked him for his service as dean of students. Martha Glass is serving as interim dean of students.

The university has appointed a Task Force on Freedom of Expression and Inquiry. The task force is sponsored by Provost Clarke and Robert Weiss, president of the Faculty Senate. The task force has 20 members and includes representation from faculty, staff, students, members of the Board of Visitors, deans, communications and topic experts. The task force is charged to draft a statement affirming Virginia Tech’s commitment to academic freedom and the constitutional right of free speech. The statement will place these commitments in the context of the university’s academic mission. In addition, the task force will develop recommendations for exercising and demonstrating these commitments in a manner that exemplifies Virginia Tech’s Principles of Community. A report will be submitted January 1, 2023 to President Sands containing the statement and recommendations.
7. Graduate Education and Research Discussion. Dan Sui, senior vice president for research and innovation, and Aimeé Surprenant, associate vice president and dean of the graduate school led a discussion regarding graduate education. Panelists included graduate students Kayla Alward from dairy science, Steph Cooke from marriage and family therapy, Leonard Ohenhen from geosciences, and Aidan Bradley from biomedical engineering and mechanics. Central to the university’s research mission, 6,846 graduate and professional students study, research, teach and make significant contributions to the university’s mission. Virginia Tech offers 170 graduate degrees at the doctoral (45.4%) and master's (54.6%) levels.

Students chose to attend Virginia Tech to study and work with specific faculty members, to pursue particular research interests, and to develop their teaching. Students appreciate the support they receive for teaching, collecting and publishing data, and advancing their careers. Students shared challenges with unpredictable and inconsistent funding, especially over the summer. Work-life balance is difficult when stipends do not cover housing and family care. Expectations for workload are inconsistent and students are frequently expected to work hours beyond the 20 hours a week. there are times when graduate students find it hard to make ends meet, avoid burnout, and finish their degree without interruption. The committee acknowledged the significant contributions of graduate and professional students and encouraged them to communicate with their graduate representative to the board.

8. Agenda Items for Committee Meeting. Committee members will submit to the chair agenda items for future meetings.

9. Adjournment. The committee adjourned at 10:40 a.m.
REPORT

Reappointments to Endowed Chairs, Professorships, or Fellowships (1)

August 22, 2022

The president and executive vice president and provost have confirmed the reappointment of the following faculty to an endowed chair, professorship, or fellowship with a salary and/or operating supplement provided by the endowment and, if available, with funds from the eminent scholars match program.

College of Engineering (1)

Nina Stark Anthony and Catherine Moraco Endowed Faculty Fellowship
Provost’s Update

ACADEMIC, RESEARCH, AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

August 22, 2022

Cyril Clarke, executive vice president and provost, will provide an update.
An Overview of Student Well-being and Mental Health Initiatives
Academic, Research, and Student Affairs Committee
Board of Visitors
August 22, 2022
By The Numbers

Looking at our most visible metrics and rankings, Virginia Tech is on solid ground.

92% of our first-year students are retained

86% of our undergraduate students graduate in 6 years

66% of our undergraduates are employed upon graduation (including military), with a $64,000 median starting salary (NACE, 2021)

39% of our students are from underrepresented minority or underserved populations as the result of a sustained institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion.
Diversity Champion
and recipient of the 2021 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine

#13 Learning Communities
according to the 2021 rankings from U.S. News & World Report.

#1 Counseling
according to the 2021 edition of the Princeton Review’s Best 386 Colleges.
Persistent & Increased Student Well-Being Concerns

- 52% of our students report feelings related to loneliness as measured by the UCLA Loneliness Scale. (ACHA, 2021)

- Our students from vulnerable populations show an increased risk of mental-health problems, including Black, Hispanic, Asian, LGBTQ+, and financially insecure students. (Virginia Tech Healthy Minds Study)

- Our students also face some tough realities in our world that contribute to an eroding sense of overall mental health and well-being.
of our students report they are not flourishing (i.e., self-perceived success in relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism) *national sample average 54%

55%

of our students have elevated levels of generalized anxiety disorder *national sample average 28%

23%

of our students have elevated levels of depression *national sample average 24%

21%

of our students experienced have suicidal ideation *national sample average 13%

7%
Current Mental Health Initiatives

- Ongoing implementation of the 2019 Mental Health Task Force Report
- Counselors embedded in each college
- Counseling partnership with Athletics and Cultural and Community Centers
- Peer-led mental health programs
  - Peer Assistants for Learning
  - FEELS Peer Support Circle
- Animal Assisted Therapy Program
• #VT Better Together campaign
• Train the trainer programs:
  • Mental Health First Aid training
  • QPR (question, persuade, respond) suicide prevention training
• Resiliency workshops
• Koru and Campus Mindfulness practice
• Launch of wellbeing.vt.edu site
Overview of New Student Well-being and Mental Health Initiatives
New Mental Health Initiatives for Fall 2022

- TimelyCare – new telehealth program live for all students
- New embedded Counselors in the Residential Well-being Model
- Residential Well-being Launch
We’ve recentered our structures and functions around students and designed teams to support them and our core priorities.
Residential Well-being District Teams

- Managing Director for Residential Well-Being and Inclusion
- Coordinator for Case Management and Administration
- Coordinator for ExperienceVT
- Coordinator for Well-Being
- Embedded Counselor
- Faculty/Staff Coach

- Student Leader for Belonging and Inclusion
- Student Leader for ExperienceVT
- Student Leader for Well-Being
Panel Discussion

Dr. Frances Keene
Interim Vice President
Student Affairs

Mr. Saad Khan
Mental Health Initiatives Coordinator
Hokie Wellness
Virginia Tech, Class of 2021

Dr. Natalie Cook
Assistant Professor of Public Health, Department of Population Health Sciences
Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine
Faculty Principal, Honors Residential Commons