

**Faculty Senate Minutes**  
**20 November 2015**  
**3-6pm DSU Board Room**

**Present:** Jana Adamitis, Chris Kennedy, Hussam Timani, Betsy Jelinek, Lynn Shollen, Jessica Thompson, Linda Manning, John Nichols, Bob Winder, Harry Grau, Linda Waldron

- I) President Adamitis calls the Senate to order at 3pm.  
II) Guest Presentation: Gage Bailey and Katherine Scott, Student Diversity and Equality Council

Initiative: Formed in 2015, the Student Diversity and Equality Council consists of all organizations on campus that wish to work on issues of equality, diversity, and inclusion. The Council meets monthly. Katherine Scott, Policy Committee Chair, explained that the Council has been looking at CNU policy broadly with a focus as to what particular practices could be more inclusive and accepting. One of the issues the Council has begun to address is gender neutral housing and the SDEC has drafted a resolution for its implementation at CNU. The resolution is a student-desired issue and not a legal case. Adamitis queried what other universities in Virginia have a similar policy. Scott replied that over 200 universities nationwide have such policies, the three in Virginia being Mary Washington, George Mason, and Virginia Tech, which have had such a policy for several years. Waldron: How would the housing lottery work on a practical basis if it abided by this policy? Scott noted that per the resolution at present, the main proposed change would be that upperclass students would not have to identify as strictly male or female to obtain housing and would be able to choose roommates of any gender. Scott further commented that like the current policy here stands, a gender neutral housing policy would still continue to discourage discrimination by prohibiting students from choosing a roommate solely based on a specific attribute. The SDEC has been in discussions with the Dean of Students, the Director of Housing and continue to reach out for more conversation on this matter. The contact information for Katherine Scott and Gage Bailey is: [katherine.scott.14@cnu.edu](mailto:katherine.scott.14@cnu.edu) and [ethan.bailey.14@cnu.edu](mailto:ethan.bailey.14@cnu.edu). The Faculty Senate wishes to thank Katherine and Gage for their professional and informative presentation.

- III) Approval of October 16, 2015 Meeting Minutes. All in favor, with Shollen abstaining.

IV) Reports

A) President's Report

- 1) 15-16 *University Handbook*: The 15-16 *Handbook* is now available on the University website. The Senate's proposed changes to Academic Standing Committees were approved with very few emendations, the most significant of which comprised moving the reporting lines for the following committees to the

Provost: ATAC, APFPRC, ISAC and UADC. It was also suggested that we add one-page chart indicating reporting lines for all academic standing committees.

- 2) Campus Safety – As noted in the October minutes, in light of recent national events, some CNU faculty naturally had questions about campus safety here at CNU. More specifically, they asked whether all doors on academic buildings lock from the inside and whether all windows have blinds. Vice President Bill Brauer has already conducted a survey of all academic buildings and will address issues with locks and blinds as needed. The Faculty Senate appreciates his swift and thorough response to our request for information and action.
- 3) Changes to VRS (Virginia Retirement System) – On October 29<sup>th</sup>, CNU faculty received an email from Human Resources communicating a change to our retirement plans. More specifically, the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) signed a contract with [International City Management Association-Retirement Corporation](#) (ICMA-RC), making them the sole third-party administrator for our Optional Retirement Plan for Higher Education (ORPHE). This means that ICMA-RC will now replace TIAA-CREF and Fidelity as our third-party administrator. The email indicated that the transition would take place in May 2016 and that additional details would be provided at an ORPHE Forum for employers scheduled for December 15, 2015, to be followed by face-to-face meetings between employers and representatives from VRS and ICMA-RC in the spring. In response to this move, TIAA-CREF has filed a Letter of Protest and is challenging the contract award to ICMA-RC.

Significant concerns about this change have been raised at universities and colleges throughout the Commonwealth, as well as here at Christopher Newport. First and foremost, affected employees were not given an opportunity to discuss this important move or provide feedback of any kind prior to the state's decision to change retirement systems. Moreover, we still do not have information on the details of the process, the implications for our retirement packages and whether or not faculty will have the option of remaining in the current system. We at Christopher Newport also note that an important [JLARC Report](#) on this matter was issued in July, when faculty are off contract and our BAC is not in session. Second, some have noted that the investment record of ICMA-RC does not compare favorably to, for example, TIAA-CREF; others have added that ICMA-RC does not seem to have experience working in higher education. This has obvious negative implications for the overall productivity of our retirement investments and could potentially delay our retirements. Third, the fact that the former director of VRS, Robert Schultze, now works for ICMA-RC raises

questions about the process as a whole.

At this point, the Senate awaits more detailed information about this change, and hopefully the meeting scheduled for December will answer at least some questions. In the meantime, the Senate will keep faculty apprised of developments as they occur.

- 4) Annual Review Proposal Update – At a Nov. 3 meeting with Provost Doughty, Deans Underwood, Colvin, Guajardo, and Ebbs, Jana Adamitis (Senate President), Bob Winder (head of the Council of University Chairs) and Chris Kennedy (Chair of the AR Proposal Committee), the Provost agreed to discontinue the practice of norming to a 3, a change the Senate had advocated in favor of a z-score. The Provost queried about the impact of z-scores, the level of detail faculty might or might not need in the calculation of z scores and the possibility of negative z scores. Consequently, the Provost proposed a raw score and adjusted score (similar to the IDEA). Scoring distributions across colleges will continue to be discussed. Moreover, what performance standards will be used and to what degree they will be is also to be discussed, as the Senate has asked departments to limit the use of IDEA to no more than 50% of teaching evaluation measures, leaving at least 50% to be determined by other methods of assessing pedagogical innovation and performance (among those already listed on Eval 6s –though they might need to be added to the Digital Measures lists: peer review, examples of project classroom, participation in pedagogy, under graduate research, Paideia, publications by students or joint authorship with faculty, study abroad, international service learning, teaching awards, and teaching portfolio).
- 5) Departmental EVAL-4: Chairs are strongly encouraged to review and update their departmental EVAL-4s each year in accordance with the *University Handbook* policy in order to clarify their discipline's and department's best practices, particularly as the Faculty Review Committee (FRC) reviews departmental Eval-4s in its assessment of tenure and promotion cases. Senators queried about the correlation and dynamic between UE-4 and Departmental Eval-4.
- 6) Concerns About Processing Paperwork -- The Senate urges the Provost's Office to take more attention to the efficient, timely, and traceable processing of all paperwork, including work visas.

Adamitis moved to close session, with Kennedy seconding, in order to discuss sabbaticals and faculty development grant proposals as submitted by the Subcommittee.

B) Senate Subcommittee Reports

- 1) Faculty Development Grants Committee (Thompson, Chair): The Provost's Office budgeted \$60K for FDG's in AY 15-16, or \$30K per semester, as in past years. In Fall 2015 thirty-four (34) faculty submitted applications for a combined total of \$115,661 in requests. The breakdown of requests by college was: CAH = 14; CNBS = 12; CSS = 8; LUTR = 0.

Adamitis moved to approve the committee's recommendations, and Jelinek seconded.

Vote in Favor: unanimous

- 2) Instructional Faculty Personnel Regulations Committee (Adamitis, Chair): The committee has completed its review of this section of the Handbook and will present proposed changes at the January meeting.
- 3) Final Exam Committee: (Nichols, Chair): The subcommittee submitted a draft of the final exam policy language for review and discussion.
- 4) Curriculum Committee (Kennedy, Chair):  
The Committee examined the curricular review process for redundancies, inefficiencies and any occlusions with regard to the approval or rejection of courses. Having examined the curricular processes of comparable colleges to Christopher Newport University, the Committee has drafted a plan to streamline the curriculum decision process under newly formed "Educational Policy Committee," consisting of faculty, deans, and the Provost (or the Provost's representative), which would replace the current University Curriculum Committee. Similar to other such curriculum committees at other universities the Educational Policy Committee could also create a public comment period on all proposals. A formal draft from the Senate Curriculum Committee will be forthcoming for more discussion.

V) New Business

- A) Curricular Process: During the review process this fall, a routing mistake occurred that impacted two proposals for new courses in the Area of Civic and Democratic Engagement. These should have been reviewed only by the college and Dean of the proposing department, but they were instead sent to all college curriculum

committees and Deans. The Senate recommends that the superfluous materials be removed from the proposal package, as they cannot be considered in the decision-making process. In addition, the Senate reminds all curriculum committees to verify *Handbook* procedures before submitting recommendations. Ours is a complicated process, so mistakes can happen quite easily, and we really do need to double or triple-check ourselves to ensure that we are following procedures.

- B) Memo to the Budget Advisory Committee: The Senate has drafted an updated memo that offers support for particular budgetary initiatives that align with the Six-Year Plan and the housing of a PBK chapter.
  - C) QEP Topic Recommendations: These will be discussed at the full faculty meeting in December.
  - D) FRC Requests: The Faculty Review Committee expressed difficulty in finding common meeting times for all members to meet last semester. The Senate suggests setting the schedule as soon as elections to the Committee are finalized in the Spring and having that schedule take precedence, given the importance of the Committee's work. The FRC also suggested that faculty applying for promotion to full professor not serve on the committee during the year of application, as it creates awkwardness for the group and has the potential to impact group discussion.
- VI) IDEA Incentives: The Senate again discussed the challenges of administering online IDEA surveys that can result in faculty offering incentives – from food to course credit – to students in order to complete the survey. Such incentives – particularly the unregulated use of them across the colleges – have resulted in classroom discussions among students and their instructors as to varying compensatory acts, placing instructors in competition with other instructors' reward systems. Senators expressed a need for the Senate to make a statement on this issue, noting that this practice is unfair to faculty going up for review, while also noting that decreasing the emphasis on the IDEA survey as the sole measure of pedagogical performance will also reduce the pressure to entice students to complete the survey. Other Senators noted that a proven method to ensure high participation rates is to conduct the online survey during some part of class time. The Senate will continue to gather information on this issue and propose solutions in the Spring.
- VII) Adjournment: Linda Manning moved to adjourn with Adamitis seconding.