Present: Adamitis, Brash, Connable, Donaldson, Gerousis, Grau, Holland, Kennedy, Mulryan, Shollen, Thompson, Timani, Waldron, Winder

Absent: Puaca

I) Call to Order: 3:08 p.m.

II) Curriculum Proposal: Joint Discussion with the UCC
    A) The discussion began with some background on the proposal's development and the recommended Educational Policy Committee (EPC). The Senate took up the issue of curriculum two years ago after hearing concerns about communication throughout the approval process. The Senate action at that time was to require faculty sponsors for each proposal who would attend curriculum committee meetings and provide clarification on details of the proposal, if needed. Last year, the Senate heard additional concerns from the faculty sponsors who had followed their proposals through the process: (1) committees were not communicating with each other, so the sponsors were having to answer the same questions repeatedly; (2) the process appeared to have some redundancies, as evidenced by the fact that different committees were having the same conversations; (3) the weight of approvals at each level was unclear.

    Brash and Winder arrived at 3:10

    In response to the concerns articulated by sponsors, the Senate formed a subcommittee to review the curricular process. The group researched practices at other liberal arts schools and found that many have committees comprising both faculty and administration that reconcile differing outcomes at the lower levels of review and make the final decision on curricular proposals. This stands in contrast to our current system, which places the responsibility for the final reconciliation in the hands of the Provost alone and does not include a point at which faculty and administration come together for discussion.   The subcommittee saw value in having a joint faculty/administration committee because this would ensure communication across colleges and roles (faculty/administration) and provide a way to reconcile differing outcomes. The original version of the EPC included faculty from all colleges/schools, the academic deans and the Provost. However, the Senate heard concerns about having the Provost serve on the committee from both

faculty and administration, so we responded by removing the Provost from the EPC. In the current version of the proposal, the EPC comprises the academic deans and faculty from all colleges/schools, and their role is to make a final decision on proposals. Approved proposals will then move to the Provost, but proposals that are denied will not. The Provost has the right to veto EPC-approved proposals and must explain the rationale to the EPC; the expectation is that such vetoes would primarily be on grounds of insufficient resources. The most significant differences between the current UCC and the proposed EPC are that whereas the UCC is advisory only, the EPC participates in decision-making; and whereas UCC recommendations are all non-binding, EPC decisions are binding for denials.

The discussion then turned to an explanation of how the process works. One concern was that lower bodies could potentially veto a proposal and stop the process. In fact, the new system does not allow this. All curricular proposals must be initiated by the faculty group that bears primary responsibility for that part of the curriculum, e.g., departments, interdisciplinary program directors, etc. Faculty sponsors will attend curriculum meetings to respond to questions and negotiate minor details at all levels. At each level of review prior to the EPC, a proposal may have one of four outcomes: approve, approve with minor recommendations, return to department for clarification/revision, and deny. Proposals that are approved or approved with minor recommendations move on to the next level of review, and the department is informed of the outcome. Departments may respond in a few different ways to proposals that are returned or denied: (1) withdraw the proposal; (2) make revisions; or (3) submit a rebuttal arguing against revisions or denial. The reviewing body then responds and the proposal moves to the next level of review. No reviewing body can halt the process prior to the EPC. The EPC serves as the reconciling body for all reviews coming from the lower levels and, in this capacity, also serves as a venue for appeal when lower levels deny proposals. Establishing the EPC as the point for reconciliation in the process will prove especially useful for interdisciplinary programs, where the approval process spans multiple colleges and input from both the academic deans and faculty will be needed for informed decision-making. The faculty group responsible for the proposal may have a sponsor present at the EPC discussion and the faculty group may respond to requests for clarifications or revisions, as it did at the lower levels. The EPC will make a final decision on the proposal and, if approved, the Provost will have the right to veto. There was a question about whether the process just described was intended just for interdisciplinary programs. The answer is no: one process serves all curricular proposals.

One colleague asked whether the Phi Beta Kappa committee had been consulted

about the proposal, since the original version indicated that an EPC would strengthen our next application. Last year's Senate included a representative from the PBK committee, who spoke to the merits of the proposal relative to the strength of the PBK application. The PBK committee as a whole was not asked to provide formal feedback, as it does not serve a curricular function.

The conversation then turned to the composition of the EPC, specifically the rationale for including the deans. The lack of clarity regarding the weight of approvals in the current process also included the Dean's review. Is the Dean's college-level review weighted the same as the UCC's university-level review? Does the recommendation of one administrator outweigh the recommendation of faculty? Including the Deans on the EPC gives them a clear vote in the process, but it also places the curriculum more firmly in the hands of the faculty, since they comprise the majority of EPC members. There was a suggestion that perhaps the problems of communication identified in the proposal could still be resolved without having to create an EPC. The rationale was that the Deans represent the college, not the university, so moving them to the end of the process seemed to muddle the hierarchy of department-college-university. That being the case, why wouldn't we make the other changes suggested in the proposal, which would resolve our communication issues, but keep the UCC as it is currently composed? In this scenario the UCC would serve as the reconciling body and the Provost would maintain the right to veto only proposals it approves. Some wondered whether this idea would receive administrative support.

At that point, a colleague asked about the Deans' involvement in the process for developing the proposal and whether they supported it. As part of the process last spring, the Deans reviewed the original proposal, provided feedback and requested some changes, which are reflected in the current version of the proposal. The current thinking on the Senate was that the Deans were supportive. There was disagreement about whether this view was accurate, since one person commented that a dean had recently indicated ambivalence about the proposed curricular changes.

Returning to the subject of whether we should replace the UCC with an EPC, some colleagues raised concerns about possible problems resulting from including deans on the EPC. Imagine, for example, a worst-case scenario in which we have uncollegial deans. Would faculty members be willing to engage in open and honest dialogue? Would they be willing even if the deans were collegial? The mere fact of having administrators on the committee could change the dynamic of the group. If as a result faculty did not feel free to voice their opinions but rather only made

comments they thought would be well received, the faculty voice would be diminished. There was also concern about whether untenured people should serve on the committee, the assumption being that they would be less likely to speak their minds in front of the deans, especially considering that the deans now have more say in how faculty are evaluated. A third concern was that contentious proposals would simply devolve into argument between deans. Some colleagues then asked whether anyone had made a counterproposal to the EPC model. No one had, though it was suggested that perhaps the college committees could be opened up to the faculty, as opposed to being chairs-only, as is current practice, so that more faculty could participate in the curricular process.

At that point, we acknowledged that the UCC and Senate do have a good deal of agreement about the proposal, specifically improving communication at all levels of review, formally including interdisciplinary proposals in the process, and clarifying the *Handbook* language.   The only point of disagreement concerns the composition of the EPC, specifically whether Deans should serve on the committee.

The conversation then returned to the EPC. One colleague pointed out that, if all four deans were to support a proposal, only four faculty out of ten would also have to approve for the proposal to pass. But this assumes that the deans will vote as a bloc. Another colleague stated that it was optimistic to think faculty would be open in front of the Deans. In response, a colleague pointed out that some faculty might feel safer speaking their minds in front of other faculty if the Deans were present. Returning to the topic of whether non-tenured people should serve on committee, some thought that it might be better to populate the EPC with senior faculty who have long-term investment in the institution.

Looking at the broader picture, some noted that a committee combining faculty and administration marked a culture shift in the area of curriculum, in which open discussion would become the long-term norm. Others thought that this was actually short-term thinking. One colleague noted that the Provost's power in the process is weakened if the Provost can only veto proposal approved by the EPC, but there was disagreement about whether including the Deans on the EPC empowered them or made them equal to the faculty.   One colleague pointed out that the UCC has a history of free and open discussion.   In response, another suggested that fear of engaging the administration in free and open discussion actually indicates significant problems with faculty governance. It is true that bringing about a culture shift regarding curriculum may seem like a big step, but these are the right deans to help us institute that change. Moreover, if there ever are concerns about evaluations, the new AR rubrics will keep deans in check. The counterargument was

that we can't always trust people to behave properly. In addition, putting Deans on the EPC would increase the potential for good proposals to be denied, because people will try to factor in deans' opinions when voting.

At that point, a colleague noted that the language regarding the power of administrators being used in the discussion suggests bitterness on the part of the faculty. But, in fact, administration has been doing a great job. Another colleague commented that it's interesting how two bodies could have such different views on matters and wondered whether the Deans would act differently if they were together on one committee. People who had been on the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC), which combines faculty and administration, said that there was no evidence there to suggest that the Deans act differently when they serve together, because ultimately one must consider what is best for the university. On the other hand, we would lose the Deans' individual perspectives on EPC, if we see it as similar to the BAC in having a university perspective.

4:07 p.m.: Mulryan and Timani arrive

One pro of having an EPC is that faculty become deciders rather than recommenders in the process; in addition, open discussion and debate means that faculty have the opportunity to change administrators minds about proposals. But perhaps the greatest con is that faculty may fear open discussion with administrators. One colleague commented that the Graduate Program Council already includes the Deans and that this has made discussion uncomfortable on occasion. Another concern was whether all the Deans should be able to weigh in proposals that affect only one college; having all the Deans on the EPC makes sense for interdisciplinary proposals, but not college level proposals. In addition, only having senior faculty on the EPC could be problematic. It was then suggested that we could integrate the Deans into the college committees and that the Council of University Chairs could discuss this suggestion with the Deans. One colleague asked whether the deans enthusiastically support the proposed EPC model. Another wondered whether faculty could vote by secret ballot on the EPC, which would address the concern about fear.

At that point the UCC needed to leave, so that they might conduct their own regularly scheduled meeting. The Faculty Senate thanks them for their active participation in the discussion about the curricular proposal.

4:19-4:35 p.m. Break; Grau leaves

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III) Approval of September Meeting Minutes

Motion: Adamitis and Donaldson moved to approve the minutes.

Discussion: Adamitis proposed an addendum to the discussion of the BOV Finance report. "As the Senate was rather flummoxed by the resolution on the Six-Year Plan, the President sought clarification from the administration. The resolution reflects recommendations made by the Budget Advisory Committee. The University did not alter its funding priorities; we simply did not have enough funding to support them all. The resolution is intended to demonstrate to the state that insufficient support has resulted our inability to fund top priorities."

Vote in Favor: Unanimous

IV) Reports
   A) President's Report
      1) *VRS*: October is Open Enrollment. Changes made in October will go into effect this January. Faculty may enroll with TIAA, Fidelity or the Defined Contribution Plan (DCP), which is the VRS plan with ICMA-RC as the record-keeper. VRS is still negotiating details with the providers in the hope of creating equity among all three regarding fees. It is unlikely that we will pursue an optional retirement plan that is independent from VRS because of the expense and legal risk involved.

      2) *Budget Update*: As noted in the September minutes Virginia faces a significant budget shortfall. While the state initially indicated that higher education would be spared this year, we will in fact lose close to $600K due to changes in the ways in which VRS rate saving and credit card rebates are managed. Nonetheless, the administration remains hopeful that we can still authorize a raise or bonus this year.

        Discussion: The Senate appreciates that the administration values the faculty and continues to bring our salaries up to our goal percentile. Senators also voiced strong support for including staff in the raise or bonus, as the administration hopes to do. Given that the budget will be tight, some wondered whether how offering raises would impact other items on our list of priorities.

      3) *Faculty Line Allocations*: Faculty have communicated concerns to Senators about the way in which faculty lines are being allocated. The Senate needs accurate information about the data being used and methods for decision making before we can respond, so the SEC has requested that the Provost share the data used

for decisions this year. The Provost has agreed to do so and will meet with the SEC to discuss the data.

B) Academic Standing Committee Reports

1) Academic Status: The Senate had asked the Status committee to weigh in on the issue of allowing Pass/Fail for study abroad courses. In a memo dated October 17, 2016, the committee responded as follows:

> After careful consideration of the issues surrounding the pass/fail option in study abroad courses, the University Academic Status Committee proposes to disallow pass/fail as an option for study abroad courses. The study abroad experience is an extensive undertaking requiring much responsibility and obligation, for both participating students and faculty members, thus the level of commitment and dedication necessary is analogous to any other required course (not to general, non-program electives). As a note, this recommendation echoes a similar policy proposed by the Honors program.

> The UASC offers the following contingent recommendation should Faculty Senate recommend leaving study abroad courses open to a pass/fail option.

> "The University Academic Status Committee suggests providing consistency in the Academic Calendar by adding a 'last day to withdraw and elect pass/fail option' date to the extended summer term. This date should reflect the various start dates of study abroad summer experiences. Thus, our committee recommends either establishing a set date before **any** study abroad trip begin, say the Monday after graduation, or within the first week of each departing date."

2) *Admission*: The Admission committee had a very fruitful initial meeting, at which the group decided to research best practices at other institutions and re-evaluate its role in the process here at Christopher Newport.

3) *Council of University Chairs*: The CUC expressed concerns about the process for allocating faculty lines and receiving data after the fact. The chairs identified as transparency as being key for the long-term health of institution.

4) International Studies Advisory Committee: The Senate had asked ISAC to make a recommendation on allowing Pass/Fail for study abroad. The committee submitted the following in a memo dated October 12:

> Per the request of Faculty Senate President Adamitis and the Faculty Senate, the ISAC engaged in a robust discussion as to whether or not pass/fail should

be an option for faculty-led study abroad courses at CNU. This memorandum addresses the major points the committee considered and its recommendation. More than one committee member noted compelling arguments to permit as well as disallow this option. Some members noted this seems to be an isolated problem already corrected by the Honors Faculty. The ISAC examined institutional data provided by the Registrar and surveyed faculty who led study abroad in the past three years. The faculty survey yielded mixed results (some in support of pass/fail and some opposed) with the majority in opposition to allowing a pass/fail option.

In support of allowing pass/fail for study abroad, the committee discussed the intent of pass/fail (providing students the opportunity to explore courses outside their areas of interests without penalty). This is important for many students studying abroad as they take courses outside their majors. Removing this option could create a recruitment barrier as well. Also, there are non-administrative remedies to address concerns about group dynamics related to pass/fail (e.g., offering only courses that meet university requirements, targeting majors only, requiring certain levels of work to pass, etc.). Most committee members address group dynamic concerns using one of these remedies.

In opposition to allowing pass/fail as an option for study abroad, committee members expressed concerns about the group dynamic created when some students fail to participate. The lack of participation creates a number of challenges and threatens the academic integrity of study abroad programs. Committee members also noted many of those electing pass/fail at CNU do so for reasons other than the intended purpose of this option. Indeed, some are using study abroad as an opportunity to travel and party rather than achieve academic goals. This violates the spirit of pass/fail at CNU as well as the aims of study abroad programs. The ISAC also noted concerns regarding the use of university funds to support study abroad. When the university invests funds in sending students abroad, it does so to further students' academic experiences. The university has an interest in ensuring monies allocated and donated for study abroad students fully support the institution's interests as well as the interests of its donors. The current use of pass/fail does not seem to align with those interests. Further, the decision of the Honors Faculty creates inconsistency with regard to study abroad options for pass/fail at CNU. This inconsistency is a concern for many of the ISAC. Furthering the inconsistency argument is the requirement for students who study abroad with external programs or at foreign institutions to earn the equivalent of a C or better in all courses to transfer those study abroad courses to CNU. A policy consistent for all students studying abroad is of value to the institution.

Ultimately, the committee voted on a recommendation to disallow pass/fail as an option for study abroad. The vote was four in favor of disallowing

pass/fail for study abroad and one opposed with one abstention.

5) Liberal Learning Council: The LLC changed the assessment cycle from a 3-year to a 5-year rotation, which affords us more time to implement plans while still remaining SACSCOC-compliant. The new rotation is:

  AIDE -- Fall 2016 -- no change
  AIGM -- Spring 2017 -- no change
  AIWT -- Fall 2017
  AICE -- Spring 2018
  AINW -- Fall 2018

V) Unfinished Business
  A) Revised Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) Memo
  The Senate discussed our priorities in light of the rapidly developing state budget situation. Topics of discussion included whether we should prioritize salaries over growth lines and how lines should be allocated. There was general agreement that increasing salaries would be good for morale, retention and recruitment; but it was also noted that doing so could come at a cost. The allocation of lines is also a tricky issue because we have to balance university versus departmental needs. The Senate engaged in robust discussion and ultimately decided to fuse the older memo, which prioritizes maintaining all faculty lines as previously allocated as well as all academic programs, with the newer memo indicating areas that should receive funding to support PBK initiatives.

  B) Faculty Statement on Diversity
  The subcommittee on diversity and inclusion crafted a statement that the Senate has distributed to all faculty for feedback. The Senate identified this as an important issue last year, both in response to the QEP survey and as a way to support PBK. The plan is to gain faculty support, then submit the statement to the Council on Diversity and Inclusion with the suggestion that they create a university-wide statement.

  C) Faculty Development Committee
  The FDG Committee made the following recommendation, which the Senate will discuss in November, as we were already past 6:00 p.m. by this point.

  Situation
  'Faculty development grants are an important funding mechanism at CNU. Section XIII-6 of the University Handbook outlines the categories, priorities and process for distributing the available FDG funds. Currently the FDG Committee of the Faculty

Senate is charged with recommending, in rank order, to the Provost, which grant applications should be funded after a similar ranking by the Deans of each College.

Issues

FDG Committee has studied the current process and has identified several issues. These include:

- Application intent and subsequent rankings have strayed away from the guidance and priorities outlined in Section XIII-6 of the University Handbook.
- Deans, who have the greatest knowledge of and visibility into departmental and college needs, have little direct control over the allocation of funds.
- Conversely, the FDG Committee members have little knowledge or visibility into departmental and college needs and priorities, making the ranking process difficult.
- Inter-disciplinary applications, which may benefit more than one college, may be under-weighted and not receive adequate consideration at the college level. There is no University level process for the Deans to collaborate on the recommended allocation of funds to inter-disciplinary applications.

Recommendations

Recommendation. The Faculty Senate issue a statement to the Deans and all applicants reiterating the guidance and priorities outlined in Section XIII-6 of the *University Handbook*.

Recommendation. A percentage of the FDG funding (80% is recommended) be allocated to the Deans for direct decision ranking and allocation. This funding would be allocated on a per faculty member basis, but aggregated at the College level. Deans will provide a report to the Provost and the FDG as to final ranking and allocation. **Rationale** - This will allow the Deans to directly fund applications aligned with College and Departmental goals and priorities.

Recommendation. Any applications which are not funded, or are not fully funded, at the College level will be considered for funding using the remaining percentage of allocated funds. The Deans of each College will rank the remaining projects and then meet as a group to recommend a University Level ranked list of applications. The remaining applications as ranked by the Deans are then sent to the Senate FDG Committee for an independent ranking. The Deans' and Senate FDG Committee's rankings will then be sent to the Provost for final decision. **Rationale** – This change will allow proper review and funding for University level applications.

6:08 p.m. The meeting adjourned.