Members attending: Kerry Redican, Valerie Hardcastle, Susan Hagen, Carlyle Brewster, Roby Robinson, Bob Stephens, Diane Zahm, Mike Kelly, Pat Hyer, Catherine Amelink, Ken Eriksson, Carol Burch-Brown

Redican called the meeting to order with four items on the agenda: 1) Kevin McDonald, Director for Equal Opportunity, Conflict and Resolution Program, 2) Update on "Research Extended Appointments" policy revision, 3) Professors of Practice, 4) Part-time Tenure Appointments

Conflict and Resolution Program:

Kevin McDonald, Director for Equal Opportunity, described the Conflict and Resolution Program the Office for Equal Opportunity is developing in concert with other key areas including Student Affairs, the Provost’s Office, Human Resources, and the Office for Multicultural Affairs. The nature of the environment at Virginia Tech is best suited to a "centralized dispersed" model. Implementing the model will require a group of mediators to be trained with a specialization in dealing with conflicts that arise among faculty, staff, or students. The program will provide opportunities for facilitated discussion between groups as well as between two people.

Members of the CFA thought it would be useful to make representatives of the Faculty Review Committee aware of the program, as they settle grievances. Issues may come to light which might be best dealt with through the Conflict and Resolution Program. Members also felt that publicizing the services offered through the program was important in creating a culture that promoted successful resolution of disagreements and conflicts between different parties. Ken Eriksson will serve on the planning committee in his role as chair of the Faculty Senate Reconciliation Committee, whose members may be among the first faculty to be trained.

Research Extended Appointments Policy Revision:

The university policy on Research Extended Appointments (No. 6200) has been revised to provide faculty on academic year appointments with options to extend their base nine month contract to a 10, 11, or 12 month contract when the extended appointment is funded by sponsored grants or contracts. The policy includes detail outlining the formulas that are used to calculate salaries based on the conversion factor. Initial conversions must be made by the end of the fall term if there is only one summer of funding available. The policy provides the flexibility to earn wages through other activities such as teaching summer school courses as long as the combined earnings do not exceed 33 1/3% of the base annual year appointment. The Committee on Research has approved the policy. A motion and seconded to endorse the revised policy; it was approved unanimously.
Professors of Practice:

Prior to the meeting, members of CFA were provided with examples of policies at other institutions that utilize a non-tenure-track appointment commonly referred to as “Professors of Practice.” The professors of practice distinction applies to individuals who are hired because of the benefit they can bring to teaching a class and working with students due in part to their experience, demonstrated excellence, and professional expertise in a particular field. One of the primary distinctions between professors of practice and instructors is the notion that professors of practice would be eligible for promotion through assistant, associate, and full professor ranks. Involvement in department activities, advising students, and administrative duties would further serve to distinguish professors of practice from instructors.

One area of concern highlighted by members of CFA was the negative impact such a classification might have in the Arts. Currently, the university is struggling to define creative scholarship as it relates to the research profile of the institution and having this particular set of ranks might result in fewer tenure and tenure-track positions being allocated to the Arts. Members of the CFA suggested guidelines that state a limited percentage of the faculty can be professors of practice, emphasizing the classification should be used in a limited fashion, and stating in the policy that the department executive committee must decide if they want to use this classification might resolve those issues. Zahm, Hyer, and Redican will work to draft policy language that will be shared with CFA.

Part-time Tenure Appointments

CFA members will receive a sample of literature that has been collected on part-time tenure track appointments. From the deans’ standpoint, several initial concerns were pointed out regarding allocation and/or re-allocation of resources within a department including lab and office space and the difficulty in making a sustained commitment to an individual over such a long period of time.

Members will review materials being sent to them in anticipation of the next CFA meeting.

Recorder: C. Amelink, Office of the Provost