Commission on Student Affairs
November 29, 2007
3:30-5:30 p.m.
Brush Mountain A & B
Squires Student Center

Minutes

Present: Sofiat Abdulrazaaq, Jessica Brunson, Heath Carter, Virgilio Centeno, Ron Daniel, Michael Dunleavy, Tim Filbert, Emily Webb for Ryan Gleeson, Monica Hunter, John Kane, Frances Keene, Adeel Khan, Roshan Kundwani, Maureen Lawrence, Joseph McFadden, Amanda Olejarski, Stephen Rong, Karen Sanders, Guy Sims, Ed Spencer, Toni Stroter

Absent: Amanda Beringer, Kristin Clarke, Rick Ferraro, Portia Galloway, Monika Gibson, Brian Golden, Zenobia Hikes, Meredyth Kenney, Gary Kinder, Julie Latterell, Tanya LeRoiith, Cristina Lugo, Margaret McQuain, Andy Rivenbark, Robert Sebek, Brennan Shepard, Ryan Smith, Lynsey Stuart, John Gray Williams

Visitors: Jeremy Archuleta, Sonya Benson, Nicki Cantrell, Jeneylyne Colcol, Gilles Divoux, Rebecca French, Jonathan Moore, Benjamin Orsburn, Scott Reed, Ken Stanton, Brian Templeton, Kim Timpany

I. Call to Order

Mr. Joe McFadden, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m.

II. Adoption of Agenda

Mr. McFadden called for adoption of the agenda. There was a request to remove the Black Organization Council Constitutional Changes from the agenda because BOC hasn’t met to discuss the changes that were proposed at first reading on November 15. There was a motion to approve the removal of this item from agenda. The motion was seconded and passed. There was a motion to adoption the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded and passed.

III. Chair Report

Mr. McFadden welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced that several visitors were present. He indicated that both commission members and visitors would have the opportunity to ask Mr. Hodge questions and he would alternate the speakers list between the two groups. He also announced this is the last meeting of the semester. He may be in contact with the commission via e-mail before meetings start again in Spring Semester.
IV. Guest Speakers

A. Presentation on Student Fees—Mr. Tim Hodge, University Budget Director, provided an overview of the university’s financial structure, the current budget environment, the cost of education at Virginia Tech, auxiliary enterprises, and benchmarking for tuition and fees. He then opened the floor for a question and answer period. A sampling of the Q&A period follows: Mr. Hodge was asked why student fees increase each year. He responded that the reasons include increased wireless fees, increased electricity costs at the university, increases in health insurance costs, and salary increases for personnel. He was asked why students are required to pay a specific fee, such as the recreational fee, even though they might not use that service. Mr. Hodge responded that the fees cover future users of the service as well as the present services. Without the student fees, the university services system would not exist. The services are available to everyone, whether they use them or not. Mr. Hodge was asked if there is more detailed information about the breakdown of each student fee. He gave the following website as a reference: [http://www.bursar.vt.edu/tuition/index.php](http://www.bursar.vt.edu/tuition/index.php). He was asked why departments aren’t allowed to pay all mandatory fees for graduate students on assistantship since they are allowed to pay tuition. He responded that under state law we would not be allowed to do this because we would be using public funds, and there are restrictions on how the public funds may be used. However, they have tried to make the graduate stipends high enough to cover these fees for the students. The students responded that the stipends aren’t increasing quickly enough to cover the increase in student fees each year. Mr. McFadden indicated he has discussed this issue with the Dean of the Graduate School, so they are aware of the problem. He was also asked whether health insurance fees for graduate students can be paid by the departments with grant money. Mr. Hodge indicated that is allowed for students who are working under sponsored grants and contracts. It is considered one of their fringe benefits. In the interest of time, Mr. McFadden closed the question and answer period and thanked Mr. Hodge for his willingness to speak to the group.

B. Overview of Provost Office—Dr. Mark McNamee, University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, started his discussion by saying it was helpful for him to hear a discussion on budgets and tuition and fees from the students’ perspective. He believes it is very important for this type of discussion to take place so the budget decisions can be as open as possible. Dr. McNamee then discussed his role as Provost. The Provost of a university is the chief academic officer and usually has the title of Vice President for Academic Affairs. Anything about the university that involves the academic enterprise falls under the Provost. Dr. McNamee reports directly to the President and the following report to him: Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice President for Research, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate School, Vice Provost for Outreach and International Affairs, Dean of the Library, and all college deans. Approximately 80 percent of the university operations report to the provost and he works very closely with the other administrative areas as well. One of his responsibilities is to work with the president, Board of Visitors, students, faculty and staff to lead and shape what the academic profile of the university is going to look like. Strategic
planning, the range of programs for students, and the criteria for admission of students all fall under his area. The provost leads these discussions and makes sure those who will implement these programs have what they need to be successful, including sufficient resources. The administration strives to expand and enhance the university, especially the research area. They also strive to enhance the academic programs. They’ve spent several years enhancing the strength of graduate education at the university as well as the undergraduate programs. He works closely with student affairs to make sure students are educated in all areas of their lives. Following a brief question and answer period, Dr. McNamee thanked the group for inviting him to speak. He said he would be happy to meet with other student groups as well. He encouraged the commission to keep up their good work because these groups are very important to the university.

V. Old Business

A. BOC Constitutional Changes (2nd reading)—Item tabled.

VI. New Business

VII. Announcements

Dr. Guy Sims announced the 11th Annual Diversity Summit at 2:00-4:00 p.m., January 25, Commonwealth Ballroom, Squires.

Mr. Joe McFadden announced the GSA and CISO Wine Social at 5:30 p.m., November 30, University Club. The cost is $10.

Ms. Maureen Lawrence announced that Brand New was performing that evening at 9:00 p.m., Commonwealth Ballroom, Squires. Good Luck Chuck is the final movie of the semester and will be shown on at 8:00 p.m., November 30, Colonial Hall, Squires. She also announced free massages from 11:00-5:00, December 3, Johnston Student Center, 3rd floor.

Mr. McFadden also reminded the commission that a recorder is needed for next semester. Please consider volunteering for this job.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Sanzenbach
Recording Secretary