MINUTES
Commission on Student Affairs
219 Squires Student Center
December 3, 1998
3:30 p.m.

Present: Mr. Clyde Harris, Mr. Davis Bailey, Mr. Jerry Via (for Dr. Robert Bates), Ms. Laura Bayless, Mr. Jamaa Bickley-King, Mr. Andrew Bishop, Mr. Sean Blackburn, Ms. Nicki Cantrell, Mr. Matthew Chan, Dr. Lanny Cross, Ms. Lori Crowe, Ms. Lara Digan, Mr. Ryan Ford, Mr. Joe McAlarne (for Mr. Jonathan Harmer), Ms. Alex Iannucci, Ms. Madonna Mendoza, Dr. Barbara Pendergrass, Mr. Brad Ramsey, Ms. Kristy Robinson, Dr. Peter Rony, Mr. Ferat Sahin, Dr. Delores Scott, Dr. Edward Spencer, Ms. Roxene Thompson, Mr. Paul Wagner

Absent: Ms. Susan Anderson, Ms. Lauren Esleeck, Ms. Judy Fielder, Ms. Jennifer Gittes, Ms. Kara Gittes, Dr. Martha Johnson, Mr. Jody Olson, Dr. Edd Sewell, Dr. Brian Warren

I. Call to Order. Mr. Clyde Harris, chair, called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Mr. Harris announced that the minutes of the November 19, 1998, CSA meeting had been approved electronically.

II. Approval of Agenda

Motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda. Motion was approved by unanimous vote.

III. Committee Reports

A. Ms. Laura Bayless reported that the Judicial Affairs Review Committee met on Tuesday to review the responses they received from other institutions. They will meet again either exam week or early next semester and come up with a recommendation to present to CSA.

B. Mr. Sean Blackburn reported that the CSA Membership Ad Hoc Committee met on November 30. Their next meeting will be early in spring semester, and will bring their recommendations to CSA soon after that meeting.

IV. New Business

A. Ms. Lori Crowe presented copies of the new Virginia Tech Union Constitution for first reading. She reported that items have been removed from the Constitution in order to have a smaller version of the Constitution, but these will be included in the By Laws. A motion was made, seconded and approved unanimously to waive first reading.

A suggestion was made to change one word in the new Constitution. Section B. Non-discrimination statement should read, "No otherwise qualified individual shall be excluded from membership on the basis of age, race, sex, handicap, national origin, sexual preference, religious affiliation, or political persuasion." After further discussion, motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the changes to the Virginia Tech Constitution.
B. Dr. Delores Scott presented a brief history of the University Task Force on Academic Advising which was appointed by the Provost in September of 1998. Dr. Scott reported that for the last three years, there has been a lot of discussion about advising at the university, how we assess it, and what might be done to improve it. The charge of the task force was to examine student/advisor needs and responsibilities, methods and departmental structures for advising students, use of technology in advising, and strategies for recognizing and rewarding advising.

Between 1997 and 1998, there were four groups working on this issue. In 1996, there was an alumni survey that was administered to people who have been out of the university for several years, and one of their issues was advising. The survey found that alumni were not satisfied with the quality of advising that they had received while at the university. In late 1996, the President made a statement about issues related to undergraduate education, and one of the things which he emphasized in his pledge was the importance of academic advising. In March of 1997, our accreditation agency visited Virginia Tech. The group suggested that Virginia Tech evaluate its advising processes and use the results to make the system more effective.

Dr. Scott discussed a summary of what has happened with the task force since its appointment, which included the charge to the task force, appointment of internal and external work groups, discussion of strategies to ensure student involvement and developing a working paper for advising philosophy. The task force is composed of faculty, administrators, advisors, and other people who have the responsibility for delivering academic advisement to undergraduate and graduate students. One of the big issues which they discussed was at what point should they involve students and how do they go about doing that. In the work group meetings, the internal group developed a questionnaire to identify methods of advising, and the external group began collecting information on advising at peer institutions. They discussed strategies to involve the campus community in advising discussions and reaffirmed the need for and importance of student input. In December, they plan to continue the work of the internal and external groups, and develop the strategy on how they will engage students in the discussions on academic advising.

Dr. Scott distributed the "Proposed Guiding Philosophy for Advising" and asked for suggestions from CSA members as to what they think of the document and if there are things they would like to add or consider. Some of the suggestions included conducting a survey in conjunction with class registration; a survey of students prior to their being advised as to what their needs are, and when they leave the university, if their expectations have been fulfilled; classroom teacher evaluations; determine which departments are highly rated by students, what they are doing versus what the other departments are doing and then comparing the two; how students and the advisors give feedback; distribute a survey when students pick up their class schedules which has to be completed before they get their off scans; define what the advisors should be doing, strictly advising or a well-rounded individual who will serve the needs of the community and the Commonwealth. It was stated that one of the biggest issues with the students is not having access to an advisor and not feeling comfortable going to the advisor, and that it is critical to have a recourse for poor faculty advising.

Dr. Scott thanked the members for their suggestions.
V. Announcements

A. Mr. Ryan Ford introduced the new Interfraternity Council president, Mr. Brad Ramsey.

B. Dr. Barbara Pendergrass distributed a flyer related to spring break and urged that care be taken regarding fraudulent offers. She announced that the Office of the Dean of Students will be presenting the Second annual Diversity Summit to be held Monday, January 18, 1999, 12:00-3:00 in Owens Banquet Hall. She asked that she be contacted if anyone is interested in participating. Dr. Pendergrass also distributed an invitation to "An Evening of Celebration" to be held Tuesday, December 8, 1998, 5:00 p.m. in the Multicultural Center, Squires Student Center.

C. Ms. Kristi Robinson introduced Ms. Lara Digan as the new president of the Panhellenic Council.

D. Dr. Peter Rony asked that the university community should widely communicate and conduct informational sessions regarding the year 2000. Mr. Harris indicated that perhaps someone could be invited to attend a future CSA meeting to discuss this issue.

VI. Adjournment. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.