

**University Council Minutes
November 5, 2001
1045 Pamplin Hall, 3:00 p.m.**

Present: Mark McNamee (Presiding), Dennis Cochrane (for Bob Bates), Jeb Stewart (for Erv Blythe), Lanny Cross, Ben Dixon, Peter Eyre, Margie Zelinski (for Elizabeth Flanagan), Eileen Hitchingham, Janet Johnson, Max Stephenson (for Paul Knox), Kim O'Rourke, John Eaton (for Joe Merola), Lisa Wilkes (for Minnis Ridenour), Ray Smoot, Hap Bonham (for Rich Sorensen), Malcolm McPherson (for Bill Stephenson), Andy Swiger, Tom Tillar, Pat Hyer (for Susan Angle), Ed Fox, Ryan Hartman, Bob Hendricks, Marge Murray, Edd Sewell, Susan Sumner, Charles Bostian (for Tim Pratt), Kamal Rojiani, Helen Crawford (for Bob Tracy), Mitzi Vernon, Rebecca Crittenden, Pat Devens, John Hillison, Philip Huang, Suzanne Murrmann, Rodney Gaines, Kwaku Kankam (for Ashley Marshall), Mike Martin (by phone), Randy Stith, Althea Aschmann, Debbie Wilson, Delbert Jones, Jimmy Martin, Brandy Ellen Cowing, Melinda Pomeroy, Christina Coukos, Robert Kopera, Rachel Luken, Brian Montgomery, Susan Saunders

Absent: Charles Steger, Greg Brown, Len Peters, Melvin Gillespie, Stephen Boyle, Mike Koechlein, Mark Barrow, Wayne Durham, Jeryl Jones, Jack Davis, Dan Dolan, Bernard Feldman, Marquee King, Clayton Smith

Guests: David Ford, Dwight Shelton

Mark McNamee presided over the meeting in the absence of Charles Steger, Chair. The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. The motion carried.

2. Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of October 1, 2001

Dr. McNamee noted that the minutes from the October 15, 2001, University Council meeting have been voted on and approved electronically. Once voted upon, University Council minutes can be publicly accessed on the Governance Information System on the WEB (<http://intra.vt.edu/govern/>)

3. New Business

First Reading

**Commission on Research Resolution 2001-2002A
Resolution Regarding Faculty Handbook Revisions for Special Research
Faculty**

Bob Hendricks introduced the resolution for first reading and called on Pat Hyer to give a brief overview.

Special research faculty ranks include: research associate, senior research associate, research scientist, senior research scientist, post doctoral associate, research assistant professor, research associate professor, research professor; project associate, senior project associate and project director. Most special research faculty are funded on sponsored research and projects. There are approximately 350-450 of these employees on campus. The number of special research faculty is expected to rise in the future to accommodate the increasing amount of research done at the university.

A committee was charged with the task of reviewing employment policies and procedures for this group of employees a few years ago. Following are some of the steps that have been taken thus far: moving the date of their merit adjustment to November 25 so they would part of the annual raise process for all faculty members; developing a new policy to allow more permanent appointments for those who are funded in centers that have diversified and stable funding; and most recently, a set of ranks was established for project associate, senior project associate and project director.

This resolution represents another step in the revision process to bring the personnel policies up to date. Not all of the information presented in this resolution is new; however, some of the language has been revised to more appropriately address issues dealing with special research faculty. Dr. Hyer outlined the revised text for the Faculty Handbook for Special Research Faculty. She noted that the highlighted text represents new or changed information and that specific sections require approval by University Council as well as the Board of Visitors because they include changes in employment policies.

The committee has proposed the following changes:

- Section 2.2: Institute searches for research faculty members (this has not been done systematically before). This refers to expedited searches in which the principal investigator and others who want to hire research faculty would have to post the job on the university job site for 10 calendar days. This is a procedural matter rather than a policy matter. This will help to make sure that applicants know about the availability of jobs in a more formal way and would give principal investigators more candidates from which to choose. It would also allow our employees who are working on a project that ends to move to another project at the university. This helps fulfill our obligation to do open searches.
- Section 2.3 and 2.3.1: Terms of appointment are not new. Most of these people are on a restricted appointment. That is, their source of funding is uncertain (the revenue for the university may have a limited life). Appointments are restricted and continued employment depends on availability of funding, the need for services, and satisfactory performance.
- Section 2.3.1.2: The section on Multi-Year Restricted Appointments is new. Special research faculty members who are working on a multi-year grant or multiple grants may be appointed, or reappointed, for up to three years. This may be beneficial for attracting a faculty member from out-of-

state. This is considered a policy change and approval by the Board of Visitors is required to implement this change.

- Section 2.4: This section contains new language for the handbook. In general, special research faculty have calendar-year (12 month) appointments; however, under certain conditions it may be appropriate to have a special research faculty member under an academic-year appointment (9 months).

Ray Smoot pointed out that the word "hours" was omitted from the last sentence of the first paragraph. The sentence should read: [Faculty members on AY RESTRICTED appointments earn and accrue sick leave at the rate of five hours per pay period during the academic year; those on REGULAR appointments are entitled to 1040 hours of paid sick leave upon employment.]

- Sections 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8: These sections discuss annual evaluations, merit and special adjustments and reappointments for special research faculty. This is not a change in policy but these issues are not currently addressed in the faculty handbook.
- Section 2.9.4: The section concerning termination of appointment has been rewritten but there is no change in the notice period. The section addresses situations where a sponsor terminates funding before the end of a contract, or directs a change in the research program and the services of an employee are no longer needed.
- Section 2.10: This is an addition to the faculty handbook stating that special research faculty members are expected to give 30 days notice of their intent to resign if they intend to leave prior to the end of their contract period.
- Section 2.11: This section is new. It deals with contributions to the instructional program by research faculty. Although the primary responsibility of research faculty is to conduct research, there are occasions where the university and its instructional programs may benefit from the occasional participation of research faculty. Research faculty members are limited to teaching one (3-credit) course per academic year, or no more than two courses in a two-year period. The principal investigator/supervisor, department head, and dean must approve exceptions.

Dr. Hyer answered questions from the audience and invited anyone who has additional questions to contact her via email (hyerp@vt.edu). The resolution will be on the agenda for the next University Council meeting.

4. Ongoing Business

Council accepted the following Commission minutes:

- Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs
September 20, 2001
- Commission on Faculty Affairs
October 5, 2001
- Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies
September 19, 2001
October 3, 2001
- Commission on Research
September 26, 2001
October 10, 2001
- Commission on Student Affairs
October 4, 2001
- Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies
October 8, 2001
- Commission on University Support
May 14, 2001

5. Adjournment

Dr. McNamee adjourned the meeting at 3:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim T. O'Rourke
Executive Assistant to the President

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