Council Minutes
Executive Committee of the Department Heads Council
325 Burruss Hall
8-9:30am
October 5, 2014

Attending: Eric Paterson (Aerospace and Ocean Engineering); Nancy Ross (Geosciences); David Hodgson (Large Animal Clinical Sciences); Bob Denton (Communication) Anisa Zvonkovic (Human Development) Richard Rudd (Horticulture); Benda Winkel (Biological Sciences); Bob Smith (Sustainable Biomaterials), Beth Grabau (Plant Pathology, Physiology & Weed Science); Paul Herr (Marketing); Stephanie Adams (Engineering Education), Vice Provost Jack Finney, Provost Mark McNamee, Faculty Affairs Team: Amy Hogan, Peggy Layne, Ellen Plummer.

Rapporteur: Maureen McCusker

Welcome: Intro by Eric Paterson

Provost McNamee’s Announcements:

President’s Installation is 16-18. 17th is the “big day.” Looking for a large turn out from Faculty, Staff and Students. Please encourage faculty to be there. Preference is in academic regalia or in dress clothes.

Preparations for November Board’s Meeting: This is where they discuss University and College scorecards. Now we are making some reformations: Undergraduate research participation is dropping (8% last year). This needs to be addressed. Graduate enrollments are dropping, which is particularly alarming given that one of the new strategic plans was to increase enrollment by 1,000. Provost is looking into trying to understand why it is dropping and what will they do about it

1. DH Comment: One reason may be that departments are counting undergraduate research differently. A lot of Bio department researchers are under the radar because they are not signed up. So work needs to be made on how to count them.
2. DH Comment: Other question is what counts as undergraduate research? There are other ways to report it: capstones, theses, etc.
   a. Response from Dr. McNamee: Chris Busch at Institutional Research is the one who is in charge of research counts, so she is the one to ask if faculty are confused.
3. DH Question: On the graduate student side, are sponsored programs up from last year?
   a. Response from Dr. McNamee: yes. He thinks the issue is in attracting graduate students. They are graduating on time; they are just not enrolling.
4. DH Question: We are not receiving any new resources coming in, so we cannot get new students, so where are the resources coming?
   a. Response from Dr. McNamee: Increasing graduate enrollment has been the main source of funding the past of 3 years. He is looking into where the new resources are being allocated. The main issue is the large drop in Master’s enrollment not so much Ph.D. enrollment.
There is new proposal to change general education: This will be coming down the pipeline, so keep an eye out for it. But the Provost believes the DHEC is in a good place to give feedback on the proposal. So please provide Provost’s office with feedback.

1. **DH Question**: Should we appoint an ad hoc committee to look at it?
   a. **Response from Dr. Finney**: maybe the ad hoc council can be this committee, since it represents every college.

2. **DH Question**: Since we are the group most concerned about resources, do you have a timeline for when we’ll get some more information on timing of resource allocation?
   a. **Response from Dr. McNamee**: We should prioritize the general education proposal first. Assuming the proposal passes, next year (2015-2016) will be a test run and implementation would be 2016-2017.

3. **DH Question**: What is the process for “how it passes?”
   a. **Response from Dr. McNamee**: Committees approval -> University council for approval, including reforms and changes until it finally gets passed

4. **DH Question**: Are there current baseline measures to use for comparison of new the General Education to current?
   a. **Response from Dr. McNamee**: one problem with the current model is that there is no way to make assessments; however, there is an assessment plan in place

**Inclusion and Diversity Forum**: last week was very successful (over 400 people attended total). Dr. McNamee believes we are on the verge of a successful. Believes people who are most close to the policies are in the best place to make decisions. Department Head support is also requested. October 20 is first meeting of executive council (senior management) that the president chairs, who have the ability to make changes.

1. **DH Question**: have you talked at all about next year’s funding?
   a. **Dr. McNamee Response**: This is in the process; it is still too early to tell. There is a 1% reduction, but unsure exactly how the University going to deal with it. There have been some discussions of maybe adjusting severance agreements.
   b. **Dr. McNamee Comment**: Recommendation to go to the Presidential installation, where he will discuss his plans related to this issue.

8:30am: Dr. McNamee Departs and group began discussion of what will be addressed in the Department Head Council Meetings.

**Dr. Finney’s Plans for Discussion:**

1. **InclusiveVT**

2. **Dual Career and related questions**: This is a process the University uses to evaluate employee fit and contributions, and it is important to understand when and under what conditions is it most successful.

3. **School of Medicine Acquisition**: There have been discussions of VT acquiring the Carillion Clinic. Initial plan was to jointly acquire it with Carillion, but accreditors did not allow that under accreditation. So plan B was that first VT would acquire it, then get accreditation, then go back to initial plan of sharing. It will become a VT College: the 9th College at VT. However, it will be distinctive in that they have 18 different types of faculty, and they have different types of tenure. It will be an interesting process and will need to consult organizations such as AAUP as
to how to deal with 2 types of tenure. Timeline is uncertain. Initial thought was June 2016, but recently talk has been that the 2016 date is rushing, so may delay 1-2 years.

b. **DH Question:** This Medical School is in Roanoke, correct?
   i. **Dr. Finney Response:** Yes.

c. **DH Question:** Is the idea to generate and collaborate research?
   i. **Dr. Finney Response:** Absolutely. Also, it will give the faculty access to additional resources and research opportunities.

d. **DH Question:** How are you going to pay for it?
   i. **Dr. Finney Response:** “Acquisition” does not necessarily mean VT is buying it; it is an accreditation term. There is a business budget, which he will discuss at the meeting. There are 631 faculty members, and 60 of them have tenure or tenure track.

**Peggy Layne’s Plans for Discussion:**

1. **Promotion to Professor program**
2. **Future faculty development program:** faculty-recruiting program, for which department heads are key because we seek recommendations from DH. Program is in 6th year.
   a. **DH Comment:** Often times we do not nominate a student because the student needs some time for post-doc. Can the realm be expanded beyond fellows, post-docs, and others?
3. **Work life Policies:** Modified duties, leave policies, ad tenure. Last year’s follow-up research reveals some people are still confused about the policies. So wants to make sure the information gets communicated readily.
   a. **DH Question:** can you apply for modified duties more than once before tenure, because she has had multiple faculty have been having multiple children before tenure?
   b. **DH Comment:** Faculty is consistently concerned about how it impacts the p & t process, so it would be great if you could clarify these policies.

**Amy Hogan’s Plans for Discussion:**

1. **Lunch and Learn:** would like to provide some more information on these and what we can do to get more attendance and ideas for discussion. She is looking for input from DHs.
   a. **DH Question:** What do DH core statistics look like? How many new DH’s do we have? How long have they been there? How many are attending?
      i. **Dr. Finney Response:** The reality is, that regardless of how long you have been in your role, this can be helpful. This is good input for how to market this event.
2. **Fulbright Opportunities:** There has been recent discussion of how to build awareness and recognition of external awards, and Fulbright is one area where VT is specifically looking to address this. Fulbright provides funded opportunities, which can be very well supported by VT. We are looking to host an event in January for Department Heads to supporting faculty though these opportunities.
3. **Resources supporting leadership on the website:** Self-serve leadership development portion of the website that details out across the different leadership levels and how people can find resources to support them. Also, she is seeking DH input on what else should be added to these resources, ie., what Department Heads are looking for in this.

**DH Comment:** His department has not had a newsletter or stewardship to “market” to alumni, friends, and sponsors for 15 years. DH’s would appreciate some input on how to do this.
a. **DH Comment:** “I second that.” Branding: she does not know who to go to in order to do these things. Where do DH’s go to address these issues?
b. **DH Comment:** It would be nice to have a showcase of different solutions and how to stay in touch with alums.
c. **DH Comment:** There should certainly be a social media component and strategy to what Departments do. The problem is, this is highly expensive and time-consuming, so he looks to the College to maintain it.
d. **Eric Patterson discussed his newsletter:** He uses the organization Constant Contact to assist with it. He discussed how to build an email distribution list, but to do it within the terms and conditions. His audience is mostly external, but also partially internal.
e. **DH Comment:** Bottom line is that DH need a place to do this. Maybe we talk to development. “How do we as department heads address this?”

4. **Comment:** “Development is the most frustrating place on campus for me.”

**Ellen Plummer’s Plans for Discussion:**

1. **InclusiveVT:** Wants to discuss this new and improved model.
2. **College Liaisons:** Program dedicated faculty member in each College, who meets with on-campus candidates. One of the diversity data points they received this Fall was abysmal. There have been 99 hires in the last year and less than 10 were from underrepresented groups. Ellen would like to figure out how to engage the liaisons in ways to address our issues with recruitment and why/how these numbers are so low. Had inaugural Liaisons lunch, and this program is continuing to be very fruitful. Assistant professors in the Fall stated that VT was the only school where they had the ability to ask about different personal questions. They are happy with the program.
   a. **DH Question:** What is the diversity of College Liaisons?
   i. **Ellen Plummer’s Response:** There are men and women, but need more diverse group.
   b. **DH Comment:** We really need to work on diversifying our leadership (Deans, Heads, VPs, etc.). They are all white males, and it is striking.
3. **Mentoring program:** Ellen has changed mentoring grant proposals deadlines- Sept. 1 and March 1. Also, reorganized the workshops by College, but if people cannot make the College meeting, they can go to the other workshops. Also, the proposal timeline is now 4 semesters. Note: some people are putting the mentoring grant in their offer, which is a wonderful recruitment strategy.
4. **Governance:** There have been good conversations with President’s Office that we might be able to do a better job informing our colleagues about university governance. Should discuss how policies get passed and how student policies/affairs impact people. At any given moment, there are about 400 people involved in governance at one point, but there is little communication on how governance is conducted.
5. **Faculty Handbook:** She has decided to convene a small group to help her look at the Handbook. There are some inconsistencies and room for variability in the Handbook, which need to be addressed (grievance, winter session compensation, etc.).

**DH Comment:** This might be too much to discuss at one department head council meeting. Should we prioritize which ones to discuss?

**Dr. Finney’s Response:** Maybe everyone should scale back what they will discuss.
**DH Comment:** EFARS will likely come up at the meeting, so be prepared to discuss that.

**DH Comment:** PDI: it is very much STEM and hard science-based, as opposed to social science based. Faculty are very eager to participate in it, but this issue should be addressed.

**Dr. Finney Response:** Maybe this is a way we can scale up. General DH agreement that this is a good idea

**DH Comment:** Governance: it would be great if they could talk a little more about international partnerships.