

## **Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Business Meeting Minutes**

December 13, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.

Heth 43/ RUC Large Board Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

**Present:** Staci Allen, Tom Bennett, Ashlee Claud, Vanessa Conner, Emily Fitzgerald, David Halpin, Heather Hollandsworth, Stephanie Hovsepian, Deana Sentman, Malinda Tasler, Juan Urista

**Not Present:** Sandra Bond, Charley Cosmato, Mary Francis, Matt Harman, Chad Hyatt, Debra Johnson, Mark Lambert, Eric Lovik, Jess Rothe, Scott Shull, Meghan Viet

**Guests:** Amanda Baldwin-Estep, Lee Blackwell, Trisha Calhoun, Dianne Clark, Brandon Cohen, Mary Fowler-Hughes, Melanie Fox, Renée Huth, Jason Lucas, Margaret McManus, Melissa Neal, Connie Phillips, Michael Sean Ramsey, Barbara Tait, Bethany Usher

- 1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 3:04 pm by President Ashlee Claud.
- 2. Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from November 8, 2023 were approved.
- 3. Guest Speaker:** Dr. Bethany Usher, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Provost Usher noted she is part of the AP Faculty and gave a summary of her education and career to date. Usher's background is bioarchaeology, and her most recent position before coming to Radford was Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education at George Mason University. Going to Radford is returning to her family roots with family in the region and her professional roots in regional public universities.

Provost Usher is enthusiastic about Radford's student focus, and in working daily with the fantastic President's Team. Priorities include filling positions and determining Radford's academic identity. We are working on filling the Assistant Provost for Student Success, Assistant Provost for Faculty and Curriculum, and Director of Finance and Administration for Academic Affairs positions. We won't be searching for a Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts for a year because of rebuilding. The Dean position searches for the Davis College of Business and Economics and the new College of Nursing will kick off in February and March.

Experiential Learning (ExL) is the experience we give students that makes us stand out. We need to run with ExL and give students real world applications of what they are learning. Radford is looking at relating academics to the five areas of the Social Determinants of Health: Economic Stability, Educational Access and Quality, Health Care Access and Quality, Neighborhood and Built Environment, and Social and Community Context as was discussed at the Radford University Distinction Forum in October.

Questions and Answers:

Q: What did you want to get out of the Distinction Forum?

A: Two things – 1. To bring the community together and communicate; and 2. To put data together and find consensus. Experiential education came up top. Wil Stanton is analyzing the

data looking at perceptions and real intersections in overlap. Holly Cline is working on the data with students and will present on the intersections. Areas that are interdisciplinary will have interdisciplinary administration. We won't hire more administrators – we can put someone in a department over the interdisciplinary work and run with it. For example, someone majoring in Education can take a minor and teach science or history. It is not true that colleges need to maximize their FTE. What is important is encouraging connections between people and changing mindsets.

Q: Is there any conversation about strengthening our online programs to reach out broader geographically?

A: Yes, we are working on it. We're working on an MBA for Nursing, and microcredentials with MATLAB. CBE works well in technical fields, with students reaching thresholds. We are working with students and bringing back information. Students want an in-person or hybrid master's program in Abingdon, but changing the day it was offered was too unpredictable. For example, a student might need a class every Monday. We are trying to figure out how far we can stretch. It is tough to drive across the state for three students.

Q: (Stephanie Hovsepien) Part of the process of the AP Faculty Awards Subcommittee involves going through the Provost's and President's offices. What do you suggest we present?

A: Talk with Penny (Foundation) about funding first. I want to see an outline of the process and the criteria. Don't make it too much work for people to apply. It should be simple and easy to evaluate.

In further discussion, Hovsepien described the awards as one on collaboration, and the other on student support. Usher suggested awards supportive for faculty and supportive of students (balanced awards). Are you individually doing something, or creating an environment that leads to success? Provost Usher said she is happy to help.

Q: What is the vision and timeline for changes?

A: I want to see a change in perception, and a backing off from everything being compiled in handbooks. I'm working with the deans on curriculum changes. The REAL curriculum is being updated and simplified.

Q: How do we know we're making progress?

A: We sent out a zillion links to students to apply. Many applied, but very few came. We are seeing a better yield and have more deposits this year than last year. There are issues with FAFSA delays, and we expect to receive fewer applications, but more acceptance.

Q: What changes are being made to the REAL curriculum?

A: REAL is a good approach, but with some complications. Students were looking at letters rather than what they wanted to do and were not getting out and seeing the world. Proposals to change REAL include dropping artificial minors and not necessarily requiring minors. Transfer students could pick any letter, but SACS did not like that, so we are working on it. Amanda Kellogg left for JMU, and David Beach is now Director of Undergraduate Curriculum.

Q: Why are English and Foreign Languages merging?

A: They had the same chair for the last three years, and not many are taking foreign languages. That chair passed away suddenly and unexpectedly. The departments voted to come together,

and the Faculty Senate and BOV approved the merger into the School of Writing, Language, and Literature. We don't anticipate an issue getting SCHEV's approval.

Q: What's going on with Muse Hall?

A: At the end of next semester, Muse will no longer be used. Muse was not built with an adequate sewer system for a tall building. It would cost more to repair the systems than to tear down the building and rebuild. Muse will not be torn down until the Dalton renovation is completed. The dining hall will be in Muse, though no one will be living there. A lot of alumni want bricks from Muse, so we will be offering bricks to people.

Q: A student was concerned because Muse was the most affordable campus housing. What's the university doing about housing costs?

A: I don't know what they're doing, but housing costs will be addressed. We have the least expensive housing in VA public universities. Our biggest issue is heat.

Q: When/how are RUC and Main coming together?

A: We are softening hard lines between budgets, and budgets will eventually be together. Nursing is doing better being one department. A consultant is looking at RUC, including first year freshmen in programs at Roanoke, and upper undergrad and graduate programs at RUC. We are continuing to invest in health and health-related programs at Roanoke and continuing to collaborate between units.

4. **Morale Survey Update:** Ashlee Claud went over the changes. A motion was raised to approve the survey with minor typographical edits and present it to the President and Susan Trageser, and then post on the web. The motion was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.
5. **January 10 Meeting Decision:** A motion was raised, seconded and passed: AP Senate will not meet in January.
6. **Upcoming Events:**
  - MLK Day of Service, January 15, service opportunities on all campuses
  - Educational Career Fair, February 16; 10 am – noon, Student Rec and Wellness Center
  - Spring Career and Internship Fair, March 13; noon to 3:00 pm, Student Rec and Wellness Center
7. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 4:02 pm.

**Future Meeting Dates:**

- January 10
- February 14
- March 13
- April 10