College Senate  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, March 15, 2012  
Brault Building room 321  
Annandale Campus 1:00-3:00p.m.

Members Present

Alexandria: Alka Gandhi, Kirsten Riddick, Ruth Takushi, Matt Todd (chair), Margaret Emblom-Callahan  
Annandale: Vicki Budd, Charlotte Calobrisi, Hemchand Gossai, JoAnn Short, Laurie McCullough  
Loudoun: Jennifer Horton, Michael Polcen, Laura Siko, William Straight, Bridget Pool  
Manassas: Heidi Adamson, Susan Givens, Marcie Schreibman, Joye Thomas  
MEC: Andy Cornell, Karen Gordon, Patty Ottavio, Beth Shewmaker  
Woodbridge: Cynthia Alvarado, Megan Davies, Alison Thimblin  
College Staff: Ken Balbuena, Shannon Ingram, Kerin Hilker  
ELI: Kristin Shriver Hagan, Christy Jensen  
Pres Appointments: David Epstein, Chad Knights, Beatrice Veney  
Students:  
Alternates: Sarah Gunnarson for Barbara Lash, Rosemary Nigrelli for Corey Esparza  
Members Absent: Barbara Lash, Corey Esparza  
Guests: Dr. Jimmie McClellan, Felicia Blakeney, Dr. Scott Ralls  

Minutes reported by: Alka Gandhi

Call to Order

Chair Matt Todd called the meeting to order at 1pm.

Approval of minutes from the February 18, 2016 meeting  
Minutes were approved after some discussion about the proposed end to ELI’s practice of proration. After noting that it was the “routine” practice of proration by ELI and not all potential uses of proration, the discussion concluded.

A motion was made, seconded without objection, and carried to approve the minutes from February 18, 2016, with one vote in opposition.

Forum Constitution Revision  
All Campus Councils have approved the proposed amendments to the Forum Constitution that include (a) changing the name of Campus Councils to “Forum Councils” and adding a Forum that consists of College Staff, and (b) changing the current bylaw that mandates the member of
a Forum Council who receives the most votes automatically serve on College Senate to a system where the Forum Council choses its member who will serve on the College Senate.

**A motion was made, seconded without objection, and carried to amend the Forum Constitution with one abstention.**

Ken Balbuena and Kerin Hilker will begin the process to form the Forum Council for the College Staff.

**Announcements by the Chair of the Senate**

1. A consultant will review the Faculty Handbook to ensure its consistency with VCCS policies.

2. Commencement will take place at Jiffy Lube Live in Bristow, VA on Saturday, May 14, 2016 at 7:30pm.

**Hybrid testing policy (follow-up)**

As no changes to the policy that had been proposed during the February 18, 2016 meeting have been submitted to the Senate, the issue was tabled until the April meeting.

**Statement on Academic Freedom**

Jimmie McClellan, on behalf of the Academic Deans Council, submitted a proposed definition of “academic freedom” to be added to the Faculty Handbook in sections where this freedom had been granted to the faculty but no definition given. The rationale was to protect faculty and convey to students what constitutes a true academic environment.

A discussion regarding whether the final sentence of the proposal had the structure which would allow the teacher to have enough control in the classroom. Some expressed worry over whether all views should be permitted in the classroom. It was noted that VCCS had a ‘freedom of expression’ policy and code of conduct which might address the lack of an explicit academic freedom definition.

**A motion was made to add the statement to the Faculty Handbook as written, seconded without objection, and failed to pass the with a vote of 14 nays to 13 yeas with 3 abstentions.**

After further discussion, an amendment was made to the final sentence to include “within the parameters of the course content” to end of the final sentence and in the penultimate sentence, the word “consistent” was changed to “in compliance.” This resulted in the following statement:

Freedom of academic inquiry, freedom of thought and speech, freedom of expression are inseparable from the search for truth and human progress and therefore must be protected in an institution of higher learning. The instructor is responsible for what is taught and how it is taught so long as the course content and requirements are in compliance with the course content summary and the policies of the College. The instructor is also responsible for maintaining a classroom environment that encourages an open sharing of ideas and respect for the diversity of opinions within the parameters of the course content.
A motion was made, seconded without objection, and carried to approve the amended addition of the definition of “academic freedom” policy in the Faculty Handbook unanimously.

The statement is to be added to the Faculty and Adjunct Handbooks, not replace any language.

**Non-discrimination policy**

The proposal was made to include “gender identity” to the College’s non-discrimination policies. The proposal shouldn’t require any additional costs to be compliant with this addition. It was recommended that the policy be cleared by the College’s legal counsel, which, in fact, is planned by those making the proposal.

A motion was made, seconded without objection, and carried to approve the addition to the College’s non-discrimination policy with 2 abstentions.

**A concern from Annandale about the HR Audit Report**

Felicia Blakeney presented three concerns regarding the HR audit report from Vice Chancellor Christopher Lee at the February 25th meeting. These included:

1. the audit did not have true transparency;
2. an neutral third party should conduct an investigation such as the Attorney General; and
3. true accountability needs to be identified to find the parties responsible for the state of HR and penalize them either through the VCCS or with law enforcement.

A robust discussion commenced about the legitimacy of these concerns. Some agreed with the concerns while others felt no further investigation was needed. Several agreed that the report about the HR “audit” at the February 25th meeting was inadequate and there were many more questions to be answered and specific details needed.

To conclude this discussion, the Chair suggested that it was not for the Senate to request new legal reviews but the Senate should respond, make recommendations and get further clarifications. Ken Balbuena moved that an ad hoc committee be appointed to formulate a response.

A motion was made, seconded without objection, and carried to form a special ad hoc committee with representatives from all College Forums without objection.

A committee was formed for this purpose composed of:
Laura McCullough (AN) – co-chair, JoAnn Short (AN) – co-chair, Ken Balbuena (College Staff), David Epstein (WO), Chad Knights (AL), Karen Gordon (MEC), and Susan Givens (MA)

**Presentation by President of the College, Dr. Scott Ralls**

Dr. Ralls gave a presentation about NOVA’s challenges and opportunities. The challenges included: enrollment and budget declines, internal controls and budgeting systems, academic organization and programming, workforce development, resource development and increased external influences and requirements. The opportunities included: re-envisioning workforce strategies; organization and budget based on more on programs, less on geography and mode
of delivery in an effort to strengthen college-wide systems; reposition the Provost role to one of CEO of the campus and create college-wide academic disciplines; and strengthen advising. The meeting was nearing an end so Dr. Ralls said he would return at a later meeting to finish his list of areas he perceives to be opportunities.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:10 p.m., seconded and carried. The next Senate Council meeting will be held on Thursday, April 21, at 1:00 p.m. in room 321 in the Brault building. Lunch will be served starting at 12:30.