

2013-2014 Annual Report of the Faculty Senate

Ed Walker, President

The Faculty Senate convened seven times during the 2013-2014 academic year. Each of the meetings began with a Q&A session with President McKinney. Minutes from the previous Senate meeting were voted upon and approved (sometimes with minor corrections). During each meeting, the statutory committees, standing committees, and any existing special committees updated the Senate on their activities since the previous meeting. Several issues were remanded to committees for consideration. The following is a brief summary of the major activities during 2013-2014. Please see the official minutes of each Senate meeting for more detail (<http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/faculty-senate/minutes.php>)

Major issues:

- 1) September 19, 2013 meeting:
 - a. The Senate tentatively voted to accept changes to the by-laws to accommodate the change in alignment of departments among colleges on campus and to provide for a succession plan for each office of the executive committee.
 - b. The Senate voted to create a Special Committee to look into the development of a standing committee at VSU to improve our internationalization efforts.
- 2) October 17, 2013 meeting:
 - a. The Senate voted to pre-approve all the Academic Committee minutes for the 2013-2014 year with the exception of where there is the need for an appeal – thus streamlining the approval process.
 - b. The Senate to make the changes to the wording of the bylaws as proposed
 - i. changes pertaining to the membership to include one person from the VSU Retiree Association as a non-voting member and term expirations for the President, Vice-President/President Elect, Secretary & Parliamentarian, and
 - ii. changes pertaining to the Division of Social Work now under the College of Education, and
 - iii. changes pertaining to the merging of the student services committee and the student activities committee.
- 3) November 21, 2013 meeting:
 - a. In regard to the changes in the graduation ceremony, the Senate passed a resolution stating: *Whereas student and faculty governing bodies were not formally consulted about changes to the graduation; whereas the Graduate graduation ceremony was melded with the undergraduate graduation ceremony; whereas the summer graduation ceremony was eliminated; and, whereas summer graduates are denied the privilege of walking early as a result of these changes; we the Faculty Senate stand opposed to the*

changes to the graduation ceremony as presented by the President via email on November 1, 2013.

- b. In regard to the letter sent from the VSU Foundation to the student group S.A.V.E., the Senate passed a resolution stating: *Whereas the tone of the letter is patronizing, condescending and dismissive; whereas the letter is written and presented on VSU letterhead and therefore apparently represents VSU administrative thought - We the Faculty Senate condemn and reject the letter written and sent by Wayne Edwards, Chairman of the Investment Committee of the VSU Foundation Board of Trustees in response to the President of S.A.V.E. and that groups concerns and efforts toward foundation divestment from companies or funds supporting fossil fuel extraction.*
 - c. The Senate discussed and did not pass a recommendation from the Faculty Affairs Committee that would create a three-tiered FAR evaluation scheme to provide a more accurate and descriptive assessment of faculty performance as compared to the satisfactory/unsatisfactory rating currently used to evaluate faculty performance.
 - d. The Senate voted to amend the by-laws to include the phrase “no fewer than one Council of Staff Affairs (COSA) member recommended by the President of COSA will sit on each committee”.
- 4) February 20, 2014 meeting:
- a. The Senate voted to pass to the President the recommendations of the Special Committee on Safety and Security at VSU.
- 5) March 27, 2014 meeting:
- a. The Senate failed to pass an academic calendar.
 - b. The Senate voted to approve the proposed by-laws of a new standing committee - Internationalization and Globalization.
 - c. The Senate voted to approve the adjustments to the SAT and ACT standards for dual enrollment submitted by the office of the VPAA and previously approved by the Deans Council.
 - d. The Senate voted to approve the new wording to the VSU Tenure & Promotion Policies and Procedures as presented by James LaPlant.
 - e. The Senate voted to elect Laura Wright to the position of Vice-President/President-Elect (which became open due to Aubrey Fowler’s resignation to accept a Department Head position.)
- 6) April 17, 2014 meeting
- a. The Senate passed a recommendation from the Faculty Affairs committee regarding faculty evaluation www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/deans-office/documents/fem-final.pdf
 - b. The Senate voted to approve the academic calendar for the 2015-2016 academic year.
 - c. The Senate voted to strike the phrase “a total of 30” from the VSU catalog section on Prior Learning Assessment at the recommendation of the Educational Policies committee.
 - d. The Senate vote to change the Senate by-laws to create a new Internationalization and Globalization Committee.

7) May 15, 2014 meeting:

- a. In response to President McKinney's request, the Senate voted to approve a 5-year academic calendar through the academic year 2019-2020. It should be noted that the calendar approved in the April meeting was adjusted by the President to move spring break from the week approved by the Senate.
- b. The Senate voted to request of the Provost and President that we add to a specific section of the VSU Strategic Plan (strategy 1.2.4) the wording "e.g. increased institution wide support of VSU Study Abroad programs"
- c. The Senate voted to request the President's Office to supply all data that was used in the market salary adjustment to the Faculty Senate by August 1, 2014.
- d. The Senate voted to add August and January meeting to the Faculty Senate schedule (4th Thursday meeting in August and a 3rd Thursday meeting in January.)
- e. The senate held elections for offices of the Executive Committee of the Senate
 - i. President – Laura Wright (ascending from the role of VP/PE)
 - ii. Vice-President/President-Elect – James Archibald
 - iii. Secretary – Lynn Adams
 - iv. Parliamentarian – Michael Noll

Major Issues to Carry Forward:

- 1) Update and improve the VSU Faculty Handbook (has been on-going for at least three years with no resolution)
- 2) Follow up on 12-month faculty being mandated to take five days of vacation time during the week between Christmas and New Year's Day when the university is closed. Specifically the holiday/leave survey, HR will work with IT and Strategic Research to develop a survey for both 12 month faculty and staff.
- 3) Consideration of faculty salaries and salary adjustments (including both the process and the data upon which the decisions are made.)
- 4) Creation of a Faculty Senate strategic plan to support the strategic plan of the university.
- 5) Review and update Faculty Senate Statutory and Standing Committee responsibilities.