

Academic Committee Meeting
July 21, 2020
11:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.
ZOOM

Attendees:

Bagchi, Rajesh
Boyle, Kevin
Carlson, Kevin
Ghandforoush, Parviz
Gnyawali, Devi
Hunnings, Kay
Khansa, Lara
Maher, Jack
Mitchell, Elizabeth
Russell, Robin
Singal, Vijay
Sumichrast, Robert

Absent:

McGehee, Nancy

Recording Secretary

Ridpath, Kimberly

Minutes/Action Items/Announcements

Dean Sumichrast welcomed the committee and reviewed the action items from the July 15, 2020 meeting. Sumichrast encouraged department heads to attend and to inform faculty and staff about the Diversity Summit which will take place on August 13, 2020 from 9am-3pm. More information can be found by visiting www.inclusive.vt.edu. You can register at: <https://profdev.tlos.vt.edu/courses/indv18-061520>. He said there was no limit on attendance this year and he hoped that all faculty and staff in the college will seriously consider attending. Pamplin is not experiencing excessive undergraduate enrollment “melt.”

Class Operational Plans

At a previous meeting, committee members discussed fall class formats and expectations for exceptions to student attendance. Since then, the provost office announced that faculty should accept student explanations for a need not to attend in person class, rather than requiring students to go to the dean of students. The committee discussed the practicalities of making classes, office hours, and other in person activities available to students online. The committee also discussed the requirement for students to wear masks in class including informing them and enforcing this requirement. The committee discussed some faculty are wanting to

reevaluate their class format decisions in light of new information about Covid-19. Department Heads should communicate with faculty about options.

Pamplin Unit Operational Plans

Kay Hunnings provided an updated Pamplin Telework Principles document incorporating suggestions from the committee and an updated operational plan for the dean's suite. Sumichrast asked department heads to share plans for the operation and staffing of their offices and for faculty. All departments and the NVC offices will have less in-person availability than in previous semesters. The number of days and hours per day will vary depending on the needs of the department and preferences of staff. Generally, faculty will make individual decisions about their locations and working hours. All units are restricting in person interactions in one or more ways.

The committee discussed whether or not Pamplin should develop a more wide-ranging operations document. Kevin Carlson shared an outline for FAQ style document. Many committee members felt that such a document would be valuable. There was also concern that such a document would include information that is more universal and decided by the university rather than the college. Answers in a Pamplin document (or web site) could be easier to access but would be hard to keep up to date. Linking to university posted answers or providing search instructions for university answers could help solve some of the concerns. Committee members will send suggestions for topics to be included, revised or excluded. Any document that is constructed must be available prior to the next Pamplin town hall.

Engage (Undergraduate TA Program)

Carlson provided an update on the Engage Program, including faculty demand, the number of students who want to participate and the schedule. Carlson and Elizabeth Mitchell also provided an update on private funding pledged to the program.

Action Items:

1. Committee members will send suggestions for the Pamplin FAQ document to Carlson and Hunnings as soon as possible.
2. Carlson will update the Pamplin FAQ document and populate it with links and answers. The document will be ready for distribution prior to the Pamplin Town Hall on August 6th.

Old Action Items from July 15, 2020:

1. Janice will set up meetings with the department heads to address concerns/recommendations regarding the inclusive culture.
2. Department Heads will invite Janice to their fall faculty meeting to discuss inclusive culture.