

**Minutes from the General Faculty Council Meeting**  
**Wednesday, April 11, 2007**  
**Newcomb 481**

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**Present**

Mary Abouzeid, (for Eleanor Wilson), Dawn Anderson, Otilie Austin, Beth Blanton-Kent, Kay Buchanan, Virginia Carter, Jean Collier, Dahlia French, Phil Gates, David Glover, James Groves, Kevin King, Robin Kuzen, Aaron Laushway, Teresa Lockard, Lotta Lofgren, James Marshall Pattie, Barbara Millar, Jennie Moody, Peter Norton, Ed Murphy (for Ricky Patterson), Ellen Ramsey, Dawn Rigney, David Wolcott

**Absent**

Pam McIntyre, John Wilson

**Visitors**

Marva Barnett, Bill Keene, Judith Reagan, Gweneth West, Lynda White

*Introduction and Welcome*

12:00     **Gathering of Members**

1.     12:10     **Call to Order**

- Peter Norton called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m.

2.     12:15     **Chair's Report**

- Peter welcomed new members and thanked departing members for their service on the GFC. On behalf of the General Faculty Council, Peter expressed special thanks for Jennie Moody's exceptionally valuable service as chair.
- Peter expressed the importance of the GFC and gratitude for those serving on the GFC. He invited members to share their perspectives on their vision of the GFC and what they see as the role of the GFC.

3.     12:25     **Orientation for New Members**

- Committee Chairs explained the role of each committee. Peter encouraged each new member to decide on a committee to join and contact the chair.
- Barbara Millar clarified the expectation that each member serve on a committee, attend monthly meetings, and represent their constituents.
- Jean Collier encouraged new members to review the website, past minutes, and annual reports to become familiar with the GFC.

*Old Business*

4.     12:38     **Council's Comments on the Draft Ten-Year Plan**

- Peter requested that designated representatives send remaining statements on the Draft Ten-Year Plan to him by April 25. He will collate statements and send out via email to the GRC roster for review.

*New Business*

5.     12:42     **Council's Response "The Titling Issue" (Interim Report of the Faculty**

### **Senate Academic Affairs Committee, March 15, 2007)**

- Peter introduced Judith Reagan from the Teaching Resource Center who shared the TRC's position statement dated April 10, 2007. Judith distributed this statement to Council members (see end of minutes for this document). Jennie Moody provided background on this issue. Peter expressed his thoughts on this issue and how it locks in place a hierarchy that does not accurately reflect the true value of the professional contributions of many non-tenure-track faculty members to the university's mission, and tends to create visible career ceiling just as arbitrary and unfair as the old glass ceiling. A discussion ensued between members of the GFC on this issue.
  - Judith noted that an opportunity exists for a deeper look at titling issues and how it can foster faculty involvement in these issues. Judith also noted that the reason given for the proposed change in titling—that it addresses AAUP's concern about the disparities between tenured and non-tenured faculty—makes no sense, because in fact the proposed change would worsen these disparities.
  - Marva Barnett shared a conversation that she had with Ken Schwartz who is very open to discussing this issue. She also noted that how we title faculty at UVA sets us apart from other universities and views it as a unique strength. She argued that if we eliminate the general faculty rank the potential problems that might occur.
  - Bill Keene reported that the Joint Committee will meet next week to discuss this issue.
  - Jean Collier suggested that the GFC invite Susan Carkeek, the head of Human Resources, to discuss this issue from her office at the next GFC meeting in May.
  - Robin Kuzen observed that no uniform policies exist for promotion for nontenured track faculty.
  - Marva Barnett noted some of the problems with the titling issue and how Gertrude Fraser's office is working on faculty spousal and partner hires under the general faculty rank.
  - Jennie suggested that GFC may need to propose titles that include qualifiers that distinguish non-track from track faculty while retaining the word "professor."
  - Kevin King noted titling issues in the medical system and how they resolve them.
  - Dahlia French proposed that nontenured track maintain their current titles. Dahlia said that it would be insulting to instructional non-tenure-track faculty to bar them from professorial titles. Marva Barnett noted that most people are satisfied with the current titling policy.
  - Gweneth West suggested asking Gene Block to share his perspective on this issue. Phil Gates also suggested asking all of the key players to attend an upcoming meeting to discuss this issue.
- Peter called a special Executive Meeting to discuss this issue and strategize before the Joint Meeting. Meeting set for Friday, April 13 at 8:30 a.m.

6.   tabled   **The Future of Expectation of Continued Employment (informational; no action planned)**

### ***Committees***

7.    1:15    **Communications Committee Report: The Council-Sponsored Professional Development Activity**

- Barbara Millar announced the Council-Sponsored Professional Development Activity, The Challenges of Managing Change with Darden Professor, Alexander Horniman, on May 1, 2007.

8. 1:30 **Other Committee Updates**

- No additional reports.

1:32 **Adjournment**

Next Council Meeting on Wednesday, May 9, 12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m.

April 10, 2007

Response to the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee interim report  
“The Titling Issue,” 15 March 2007

In the mid- to late 1990s, a major Faculty Senate goal for the Executive Council and the Academic Affairs Committee was building intellectual community. The March 15, 2007, “Titling Issue” interim report and recommendations run contrary to that essential goal in that the titles “lecturer” and “instructor” imply an inherent diminution of status. Implementing the “Titling Issue” recommendations would be detrimental to faculty community, interposing hierarchical distinctions: On a tangible and humanly very real level, it would diminish our spirit of teamwork; on a practical level, it would make harder to hire the best possible candidates.

Granted, the classification “general faculty” is amorphous because it includes all U.Va. professional staff who are neither tenure-track nor classified staff. But the “Titling Issue” report focuses primarily on the relatively small percent of general faculty who are Ph.D.-holding academics: those who read in their disciplines, teach, do research, receive grant funding, and write books and articles. Sometimes research and publication are explicitly part of their job descriptions (as, for instance, for those who oversee TA-taught foreign language courses). Others of these colleagues undertake intellectual pursuits beyond the forty-hour work week because they love their fields. These people are professorial. Such adjunct-type titles as “instructor” and “lecturer” do not, in fact, “retain the esteem and convey the prestige of these important members of the University community,” as the “Titling Issue” report proposes. In fact, the University of Virginia has been ahead of other universities, not behind, as the “Titling Issues” report implies. Indeed, U.Va. has forged ahead by building a community of faculty who work together fluidly and seamlessly, unworried about hierarchies of job status. These teams of highly collaborative colleagues are an essential way of leveraging the skill and expertise of the tenured and tenure-track faculty, as academic projects have become increasingly complex, contingent and dependent on finding constructive footing in age-old tensions between autonomy and community.

Because the “general faculty” designation provides managerial flexibility, the University has been able to create imaginative, innovative academic positions. Such jobs have recently been instrumental in hiring and retaining new faculty members. Many partners of newly hired tenure-track faculty members hold Ph.D.s and envisioned tenure-track careers; some have actually given up tenure at another institution to accompany their partners to U.Va. It is a reality that double tenure-track hires are rarely possible, but we have been crafting desirable new general faculty positions for such highly qualified people. Families are beginning to stay together, rather than hold tenure-track positions in institutions hundreds of miles apart—a situation in which personal and professional goals almost inevitably clash, to the detriment of all. In order to build a diverse faculty whose members work in a healthy, life-balanced environment, we must maintain our traditional

flexibility and continue to offer these new colleagues the opportunity to move through the professorial ranks.

In addition, U.Va. faculty and administrators are concerned about hiring the best possible candidates. Because titles matter to people, higher-quality titles attract higher-quality colleagues. Titles are also important for U.Va.'s international reputation. General faculty members—whose positions prioritize teaching and administration over research—are becoming the people who are establishing new study abroad programs and educational exchanges with such countries as China, for example. Chinese professors and administrators are unlikely to deal levelly with a “lecturer;” to do so might imply inferiority in their system. Other examples of contributions by general faculty members to high priority and innovative projects abound. For example, the Teaching + Technology Initiative (TTI) projects depend on active collegial partnerships between tenured and tenure-track faculty and academically trained general faculty. In the more research-focused Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (IATH), such partnerships between tenured and tenure-track faculty and general faculty are arguably a central reason why IATH has put UVa on the map as the model of humanities computing. As a final example, we note that when Vice Provost Milton Adams issued a call for proposals last year for innovative courses incorporating issues of diversity and multiculturalism into new courses, a substantial number of the applications were submitted by members of the general faculty.

The solution to the quality-control question of promotion is simple, and many departments have already adopted it. In the School of Engineering and the Department of French, the process for promotion for academic general faculty parallels that for tenure-track faculty, including third-year reviews and committee oversight. Committee members gather inside and outside letters of evaluation, teaching evaluation data, publications, candidates' statements of accomplishments and goals; after analyzing the data, they submit a report to the chair, which is forwarded to the Dean and/or Provost's Office, as appropriate. Position descriptions for such general faculty members emphasize the type of work the department or center needs; the candidate is judged on his or her success in accomplishing that work.

Finally, the “Titling Issue” report implies that changing titles will address the issue that “the non-tenure cohort [is] the fastest growing faculty group among [AAUP] member institutions.” In fact, such an issue could not be resolved by changing titles. It can be solved only by hiring people into tenurable positions and supporting them in their work toward promotion and tenure. The University hires non-tenure-track colleagues to teach, to oversee essential TA training activities, to do academic advising and to fulfill other roles that once belonged to tenured faculty. The colleagues who perform that work so essential to the intellectual growth of our students and to the University's excellent reputation should continue to be known as assistant, associate, and full professors, as their accomplishments prove them to be. All members of the faculty must feel a real stake in the success of the joint academic enterprise, and that is not likely to happen with degradation of any faculty members' stature.

Respectfully submitted,

Signed electronically, in alphabetical order:

John Alexander  
Information Technology & Communication/ Department of Slavic Languages and  
Literatures

Marva A. Barnett  
Teaching Resource Center / Department of French

Scot French  
Virginia Center for Digital History

José D. Fuentes  
Department of Environmental Sciences

Jeffrey J. Holt  
Department of Mathematics  
Department of Statistics

Janette C. Hudson  
Department of German

Robert G. Kelly  
Materials Science and Engineering

Paxton Marshall  
School of Engineering and Applied Science

Edward Murphy  
Department of Astronomy

Ricky Patterson  
Department of Astronomy

Judith Reagan  
Teaching Resource Center / Department of Drama

Jonathan A. Schnyer  
Office of Assessment & Studies

Emily Scida  
Department of Spanish, Italian & Portuguese  
Program in Linguistics

Sandra S. Seidel

Assistant Dean, CLAS