

Minutes of the Academic Affairs Committee Meeting
1345-1515 hours
26 January 2024
Smith Hall Board Room

Present:

Board Members

Mr. Adams
Mr. Fain
Mr. Garcia
COL Inman
Ms. Lord

Staff

BG Moreschi
COL Gatliff
COL McDonald
CAPT Sebastino
LTC Eskam
LTC Hagy
LTC Pierce
Ms. Fowler

**VMI Alumni
Association**

Dr. Gupton

VMI Foundation

Mr. King

Ms. Lord called the meeting to order at 1420.

The minutes of the 12 September 2023 meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee were unanimously approved (Attachment 1).

1. Changes in the Faculty

The Academic Affairs Committee considered the Changes in the Faculty and Staff dated 11 January 2024 (Attachment 2). The Committee approved those Changes in the Faculty and Staff.

2. Approval of Graduates

The Academic Affairs Committee considered the Graduation List dated 11 January 2024 for January 2024 graduates. The Committee approved this preliminary list of graduates and granted to the Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty the authority to delete the names of cadets who do not meet the requirements for graduation and to add the names of graduates who may fulfill the requirements for graduation. The Committee further recommended that that the final lists of graduates in September 2023 and December 2023 be filed with the minutes of this meeting (Attachment 3).

3. Approval of Curricular Changes

BG Moreschi briefed the Committee on Curricular Changes dated 12 January 2023 (Attachment 4) that have been approved by the Academic Board. These changes included the following:

- Programmatic Changes:
 - Remove MA 106 as C.S. Information Technology Track Requirement

The Computer and Information Sciences Department proposes to remove MA 106 from the Information Technology Track requirements. It was unintentionally included as one of the “Required Additional Mathematics Courses” in the B.S. in Computer Science – Information Technology Track approved by the Board of Visitors on 29 April 2023.

- New Courses¹:
 - BI 355 – Endocrinology (3-0-3)
 - CE 415 – Environmental Engineering Unit Process Design (3-0-3)
 - CE 439 – Transportation Infrastructure and Economics (3-0-3)
 - CE 450 – Stormwater Management (3-0-3)
 - CE 484 – Mechanics of Composite Materials (3-0-3)
 - ERH 339 – Art of Medieval Europe (3-0-3)
 - ERH 340 – Art of Renaissance Europe (3-0-3)
 - HI 300 – United States Constitutional History (3-0-3)
 - HI 344 – Conflict and Environment (3-0-3)
 - HI 370 – Political Violence in the United States to 1877 (3-0-3)
 - HI 371 – Climate and Human History (M) (3-0-3)
 - HI 381 – Humanity’s War on Nature (3-0-3)

BG Moreschi explained that the proposal for approval of HI 300 is only to add it to the catalogue as an approved course. Adding it to the Core Curriculum would require a separate proposal, which will be submitted after additional work is completed to determine how best to fit the course into the cadets’ schedules. In addition, he described some of the programming associated with the new Constitutional History Program.

The Committee unanimously approved the proposed curricular changes.

4. Approval of Changes to the Faculty Handbook

BG Moreschi briefed the Academic Affairs Committee on the proposed change (Attachment 5) to the *Faculty Handbook – April 2023*, which would establish a policy regarding the sponsorship of permanent residency for Teaching & Research faculty. This proposed change has been approved by the Academic Board and is submitted for the approval of the Board of Visitors. The *Faculty Handbook* with the proposed addition is renamed the *Faculty Handbook – January 2024*.

The Committee unanimously approved the *Faculty Handbook – January 2024*.

¹ The numbers following the course designations (i.e. 3-0-3) indicate the number of lecture hours, lab hours, and total credit hours associated with the course. So, a 3-0-3 designation means the course requires three hours of lecture each week, zero lab hours, and the course is worth three credit hours.

5. Approval of Entrance Rate Guidelines for Academic Salaries for the 2024-25 Academic Year

BG Moreschi presented the proposed entrance rate guidelines for faculty salaries for the 2024-25 academic year dated 11 January 2024 (Attachment 6) noting that they were recommended by the VMI Compensation Committee.

The Academic Affairs Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Board of Visitors approve those entrance salary rate guidelines and that they be made part of the minutes.

5. State of the Academic Program

BG Moreschi introduced LTC Allyson Pierce, the new Director of the Miller Academic Center (MAC), and COL Niccole Gatliff, the new Registrar.

LTC Pierce reviewed some of the programs currently in place in the MAC to assist cadets, and she discussed some of her ideas for future programming, which would include increasing assistance for cadets on academic probation as well as ways to assist faculty in academic advising. LTC Pierce also discussed the additional staffing in the MAC that will be funded through “One Corps, One VMI” and the Pell Grant initiative funded through the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

COL Gatliff discussed some of the challenges experienced during spring registration and the lessons learned. She also discussed possible changes she plans to explore for our processes for issuing diplomas to improve efficiency and cost effectiveness. She noted that the Registrar’s Office is now fully staffed; however, three of the four professional positions are new. She is emphasizing cross-training amongst the staff so that the Registrar’s Office would be in a better position to handle staff shortages in the future.

BG Moreschi reported on a review conducted by an ad hoc committee into the Institute’s current, “test optional” status with regards to the use of standardized testing (i.e., SAT/ACT) in admissions. He explained that VMI became test optional on a temporary basis during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the committee was asked to make a recommendation as to whether this policy should become permanent. The committee recommended continuing as test optional for an additional 1-2 years to collect additional data correlating standardized test scores with academic success, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the numerous, other measures used to evaluate candidates for admission. Currently, admissions candidates who are applying for 3-4-year ROTC scholarships and applicants to the Honors Program are required to submit standardized test scores in their admissions application. Overall, approximately one-third of all applicants submit standardized test scores. A new committee will be formed to evaluate the test optional policy and to make a recommendation as to whether this should be a permanent change, or if the Institute should reinstate the requirement to submit standardized test scores in the admissions application.

Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 1543 hours.