



TO: Deans, Department Heads, Chairs and School Directors

FROM: Rachel Gabriele, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs *RVG*

CC: Provost, President of the Faculty Senate, Associate Deans for Faculty Affairs, Human Resources, Vice President for Policy and Governance, University Legal Counsel

DATE: July 10, 2025

SUBJECT: Summary of Changes to 2025-26 Faculty Handbook

1. **Purpose.** This memo summarizes some key changes to the 2025-2026 Faculty Handbook. The 2025-26 handbook has been posted to the Provost Office [website](#).
2. **Background.** Each academic year, the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs (OVPFA) updates and publishes the Faculty Handbook (“the handbook”) on behalf of the executive vice president and provost and the faculty senate. The handbook serves as a resource and guide for faculty in relation to their responsibilities and to other university policies, procedures, and resources that pertain to them.

During the academic year, the OVPFA does the following:

- requests review of the handbook from content experts across campus. Minor changes (updated titles, typos, policy changes) may be made administratively with appropriate justification. Other changes will be directed through the appropriate governance process for consideration.
- monitors resolutions moving through university governance that would affect language in the faculty handbook and incorporates any approved changes into the handbook.
- keeps accurate records of revisions and justification for any changes to the handbook.
- Reviews all changes with University Legal Counsel and the Vice President for Policy and Governance.
- provides an overview of revisions to the Commission on Faculty Affairs before preparing the handbook for approval by the Board of Visitors each June.

In addition to the changes described below, this year there will also be an overview of the handbook, and a letter from the provost and the president of the Faculty Senate and chair of the Commission on Faculty Affairs at the front of the handbook.

3. **Administrative updates to the 2025-26 Faculty Handbook included:**
 - Reorganization of Chapter 2 description of faculty categories; reinsertion of descriptive tables; definitions added for consistency with other chapters; remove

the subset of general faculty that is called “college faculty”, which then has subset of TT/NTT/Research and instead just have the subsets be of the general faculty. This helps avoid confusion about research faculty who are not in colleges and removes a layer of additional nomenclature that is a holdover from back when we used to have “college faculty” and “extra-collegiate” faculty.

- Adjusted language for consistency with policy changes where appropriate; addition of statement on academic freedom from task force recommendations.
- Revised titles, office/department names to reflect changes.
- Updated references to policies and webpages for consistency, clarity, and accessibility.

4. Substantive changes to the handbook include the following changes that were approved through the governance process and by the Board of Visitors:

- **Section 1.1.12 Faculty Organizations (CFA 2024-25K).** This change formally recognizes the creation of faculty organizations, where faculty with common disciplinary or professional interests may wish to organize for the purposes of networking and professional development. A formal policy describes the process and procedures for registering a faculty organization will be developed upon approval of this change.

Approved as amended by Board of Visitors; resolution can be found in the minutes from the June 3, 2025 meeting.

- **Section 2.2.4 Non-Discrimination, Harassment Prevention, Sexual Assault (CFA 2024-25D).** Ethical expectations that faculty do not engage in intimate relationships with those they supervise are stated but require additional clarification, and a procedure presently does not exist for disclosure in the event of the emergence of such relationship. Revisions were made to this section to redefine *consensual* relationships involving faculty and those they supervise as *intimate* relationships, and to describe specific action to mitigate bias and reduce the potential for exploitation.

Approved by Board of Visitors; resolution can be found in the minutes from the March 25, 2025 meeting.

- **Section 2.3.2 (and throughout) Faculty Reconciliation (CFA 2024-25H).** Faculty reconciliation is a complex process that requires professional training and extensive knowledge of the policies and administrative entities at Virginia Tech, and it has been challenging to identify faculty who are qualified to perform this function. This change formalizes and codifies the role of a Director of Faculty Reconciliation (DFR) within the Office of Faculty Affairs, and describes the role of the DFR, and confirms that they operate independently from the Office of Faculty Affairs.

Approved by Board of Visitors; resolution can be found in the minutes from the June 3, 2025 meeting.

- **Section 3.2.2 University Distinguished Professors (CFA 2024-25B).** The University Distinguished Professors report directly to the President of the university, but administrative support for those distinguished faculty has, in practice, been delegated to the Executive Vice President and Provost and the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs. This change confirms that the administrative aspects of the University Distinguished Professors' appointments are overseen by the Executive Vice President and Provost and managed by the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs.

Approved by Board of Visitors; resolution can be found in the minutes from the March 25, 2025 meeting.

- **Section 5.1.4 Clinical Faculty Series (CFA 2024-25A).** The clinical instructor and clinical professor series required additional detail regarding the expectations of those positions and the distinctions between the two. In addition, the ranks within the clinical instructor track needed to be brought in alignment with the non-clinical instructor track. These changes included additional descriptions of the Clinical Instructor Track (5.1.4.1) and Clinical Professor Track (5.1.4.2), and additional ranks added to the Clinical Instructor Track.

Approved by Board of Visitors; resolution can be found in the minutes from the March 25, 2025 meeting.

- **Section 6.1.2 Postdoctoral Associate (COR 2024-25A).** These changes align the handbook with current practice in the Office of Research and Innovation, clarifying the eligibility for postdoctoral status.

Approved by Board of Visitors; resolution can be found in the minutes from the June 3, 2025 meeting.

- **Chapter 12: Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (CFA 2024-25J).** As a further step towards integrating the VTCSOM into the university structure, this chapter has been removed, and any sections that are unique to VTCSOM faculty have been moved into the appropriate section, and all other items in Chapter 12 have been appropriately addressed in other sections of the handbook.

Approved by Board of Visitors; resolution can be found in the minutes from the June 3, 2025 meeting.