

## Notes from Focus Group #1

With Rod Smolla

June 6, 2012

The meeting began with introductions.

Discussion, concerns, and/or issues raised:

- Many people have no idea how IG works
- IG at Radford includes far too many committees
- The four senates differ greatly in what they can do, and in the impact they have. The Administrative and Staff Senates have very little power to effect change. AP faculty are reluctant to speak up because of their professional vulnerability.
- The President's Cabinet includes more than just her vice presidents. This means that some mid-level administrators who participate in cabinet meetings have an ability to influence critical decisions, policies and actions, and IG does not grant them the authority to do this.
- The committee structure is complicated
- IG is much too cumbersome, but no one seems to know how to reform it
- A key question is: "Will there be a commitment to shared governance even after reforms?"
- The Board of Visitors has historically viewed shared governance as shared power; there is recent evidence that this perception is changing for the better
- IG at Radford is top down, not bottom up
- Faculty have little input into whether deans continue or not
- Chairs are "chairs for life," regardless of what the T & R Handbook says
- Departments that want to have external searches to fill chair vacancies are often kept from doing so, ostensibly because of budgetary limitations
- Differing views were expressed in response to the question: "How open is RU's budget situation?" There seemed to be some consensus that there has much more openness recently than previously, but it still remains difficult to receive detailed information about the budget—e.g., regarding budget issues surrounding summer school
- Faculty Senate meetings are far more "action oriented" than Administrative or Staff Senate meetings; the latter are primarily locations for the dissemination of information
- One member of the group contended that "the University leadership doesn't appreciate faculty," but another posited that "things have changed."
- Any reforms of IG should be designed such that the system recognizes what faculty have to offer
- There should be more transparency in all that we do
- There was consensus that, as part of his consultancy, Rod Smolla should meet with the Board of Visitors