Dear Colleagues,

I write to let you know that at its meeting today, the Board of Trustees formally approved the establishment of a Faculty Senate at the University of Richmond. The Senate will begin its work in June 2015 after the election of the first class of Senators. The Senators’ terms will commence, and the University Faculty Council will be dissolved, at that time.

Prior to Board action, the Charter that will serve as the Senate’s governing document was approved by a vote of the full faculty, as was the implementation plan. The Charter, implementation plan, and timeline are available at facultysenate.richmond.edu.

The approval of the Senate is an affirmation of our commitment to shared governance, which is a distinctive, essential, and enduring dimension of American higher education. Today’s vote was the culmination of a yearlong process of consultation, collaboration, and planning by the faculty, UFC, administration, and Board. The Senate reflects a common desire to ensure a robust structure for the faculty to carry out its responsibilities with respect to academic policy and an effective vehicle for faculty participation in shared governance. The Senate structure preserves appropriate autonomy for each school over its own affairs while creating a recognized and duly empowered representative body to conduct business on behalf of the University faculty. The Senate will also serve as the body with which the administration will consult on a range of University-wide matters.

I am grateful to the UFC and its Subcommittee on Faculty Governance for their leadership on this issue. In particular, I would like to thank former UFC Chair Jan French, current UFC Chair Crystal Hoyt, and Subcommittee Chair Eric Yellin for their careful, thoughtful, collegial, and constructive guidance of this process. I also want to thank the many faculty colleagues who have served on UFC since its inception in 1984. The University has benefitted significantly from your leadership and service.

Provost Jacque Fetrow and I look forward to continued collaboration with UFC in the semester ahead and to the implementation of the Senate in June.

With best wishes as the semester begins to draw to a close,

Ed Ayers
President