

JMU Faculty Senate Minutes
April 24, 2003
Taylor 306

Faculty Marshall Larry Ham called the meeting to order at 3:35pm.

Election of Officers: The Nominations and Elections Committee proposed the following senators to serve as faculty senate officers for the 2003/2004 academic year:

Speaker: Michael Smilowitz
Speaker Pro Tempore: Cynthia Gilliatt
Faculty Marshall: Larry Ham
Secretary: David Zimmerman
Treasurer: Geoff Egekwu

There were no nominations from the floor and all were elected unanimously.

Speaker Michael Smilowitz thanked the steering committee for their service to the senate last year.

Approval of Minutes: David Zimmerman asked for approval of the March minutes. In response to a question by Cynthia Gilliatt regarding the Student Government resolution discussed at the last senate meeting, Michael indicated that a copy of the resolution will be placed on the senate Web site. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Report of the Provost: Doug Brown outlined the events that occurred at the last meeting of the Board of Visitors. Budget matters took precedence over social concerns. Just under \$300,000 was approved for salary increments. Promotion increments were increased for the first time in 15 years. (Assistant to Associate: \$3500, Associate to Full Professor: \$5000) These figures will be revisited each year in the future. Future increments should include an across-the-board amount plus a percentage of existing salary. This should help avoid salary compression issues that we are currently experiencing. \$200,000 was also approved for salary adjustments for mid-range and senior faculty. Approximately \$2 million was added to the budget as a result of increased tuition, primarily from out-of-state students. \$500,000 was approved in base budget adequacy for the library. \$1 million was approved for new faculty positions that will translate into approximately 15 new faculty positions. \$300,000 was approved for additional student aid as a way of offsetting tuition increases imposed. When the current 5% cap is lifted from in-state tuition increases, tuition will have to be increased significantly. In closed session, Doug explained the need for an additional \$30 million for 115 new faculty positions if we are to maintain parity with our peer institutions.

Doug thanked Violet Allain and Cynthia Gilliatt for their presentation to the board concerning JMU's Safe Zone Program. Additional information will be provided at the next meeting of the Board. Various social issues, including Safe Zones and the birth control services, are matters of academic freedom and free speech and the Board should not have leverage to regulate whether various groups should or should not form on campus and should or should not discuss various issues. The lines of authority regarding the birth control issue are being discussed and tested throughout the country. Doug anticipates a change in focus by the Board of Visitors when new members take office in October, 2003. Doug thanked Michael for his tenacity and effectiveness in his dealings with the office of the President, Provost and the Board of Visitors.

Faculty Emeriti: Michael hopes to have a report from this committee by the next Board meeting and it will be discussed at the first meeting of the senate in the fall.

Psychology Concerns: In response to Charles Lockett's report at the March meeting of the senate, Michael met with Dean Jerry Benson and the issue appears to have been resolved.

Treasurer's Report: The current balance in the non-personal account is \$1,232.51. \$4,209 remains in the personal service fund and \$2,846 in the non-personal service fund. All but three of the 50 people who were selected to receive funds for the purchase of computer equipment have responded.

Bill O'Meara proposed the following resolution:

Whereas, the JMU Foundation has for many years generously funded the faculty senate computer lottery for faculty purchase of computers and peripheral products.
And Whereas, the JMU Foundation has again this year provided another \$25,000 to support another computer lottery by the senate that allowed 50 faculty to purchase and enrich their computers for classroom and research usage.
And Whereas, faculty have been enabled to improve their expertise in technology and enrich their teaching,
Therefore, be it resolved, that the JMU Faculty Senate expresses its thanks for this generous support by the President and the Foundation as well as our appreciation for the excellent working relationship between the senate and the JMU Foundation.
The resolution was passed unanimously.

Committee Reports:

Academic Policies: Beth Eck reported a concern regarding the selection criteria for valedictorian that was brought to the committee's attention by a student who earned a higher GPA than the individual named valedictorian for 2003. The criteria for valedictorian is the completion of at least 100 credit hours earned while attending JMU and that one earns at least an average of 14 credit hours per semester. These criteria are not published in the University Catalog nor are they available on the Web. The committee decided that these criteria are reasonable. After discussion of this matter the senate voted unanimously to approve the committee's affirmation of the criteria for selection of the valedictorian and that only one individual be named valedictorian for 2003.

The academic policies committee also discussed grade inflation during the past year. A two-page report was distributed. (This information is available on the senate Web site). The committee proposes the inclusion of a weighted GPA in addition to an absolute GPA on a student's transcript based on average grades given in each class. The committee also proposes that the withdraw date be moved from 8 weeks into the semester to 6 weeks into the semester. Freshmen would be exempt from this change. Faculty should also be informed of grade distribution in their own departments. A motion to accept the committee's recommendations regarding grade inflation was tabled until the fall was passed with one abstention.

Faculty Affairs: Cynthia Gilliatt reported that a decision was made to conduct the RTA survey with hard copies rather than with a Web-based survey. The results of the survey will be examined and released at the first meeting of the senate in the fall. Cynthia also thanked the committee with their assistance in choosing gifts for retiring faculty. She also thanked Silver Lake Mill and Chris Bolgiano for their assistance with this project as well.

Institutional Budget Priorities: Val Larsen reported that the committee has met and two broad directions for further discussion have emerged. One is to look at the ways the current academic affairs budget is expended. Alternate methods of faculty compensation were considered, such as travel and equipment funds. The second was to look at the future allocations to academic affairs as a proportion of the overall University budget and to see if adjustments to this percentage might be in order.

Old Business:

Larry ham reported that a request for proposals was published during the past week for the JMU day care center.

New Business:

Cynthia Gilliatt offered the following resolution:

The JMU faculty senate supports the University Health Center's established policy of prescribing and dispensing legal birth control products for JMU students.

Following discussion, a motion to accept the resolution passed unanimously.

David Kaplan offered the following resolution:

The JMU faculty senate recognizes the importance of the Safe Zone program and encourages the Board of Visitors to support it as well.

Discussion ensued regarding the political ramifications of such a motion. Doug Brown stated that the resolution needs to go beyond this specific program and should include the support of free speech, free assembly and the right of free discourse among individuals. The resolution was amended to read:

The JMU faculty senate recognizes the importance of the Safe Zone program that supports the diversity of the University population in its academic mission.

After further discussion a motion to accept the resolution as amended was passed unanimously.

Current members who will be leaving the senate at the end of the academic year introduced incoming faculty senators. Michael indicated that the steering committee will meet during the summer to finalize the faculty morale survey and to discuss various other initiatives to be brought before the senate next year. The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 pm. After committees met to elect chairs, the senate recognized those JMU faculty members retiring from the University at a reception in an adjacent room.

Respectfully submitted,

David P. Zimmerman