

James Madison University
Faculty Senate Minutes
Taylor Hall 306 January 29, 2004

1. Faculty Marshall, Larry Ham, called the meeting to order at 3:31. Members present included: **Jon Kastendeik** (for Sharon Babcock), Biology; **Jose Bario-Olano**, Foreign Languages and Literatures; **David Bernstein**, Computer Science; **Michael Busing**, Computer Information Systems; **Stephanie Chisolm**, Health Science; **Rory DePaolis**, Communication Sciences and Disorders; **Beth Eck**, Sociology; **Geoff Egekwu**, ISAT; **Roger Hall**, Theatre and Dance; **Alex Gabbin**, Accounting; **G. Edgar Parker**, Mathematics and Statistics; **Oris Griffin**, Education; **Larry Ham**, Kinesiology; **Jason Haney**, School of Music; **Andy Kohen** (for Bob Jerome), Economics; **Bill Knorpp**, Philosophy and Religion; **Val Larsen**, Marketing; **Reba Leiding**, Libraries; **Bob Lembright**, History; **Brooks Marshall**, Finance and Business Law; **Dietrich Maune**, Media Arts and Design; **Roberta Mitchell**, Communications Studies; **Aashir Nasim**, Psychology; **Bill O'Meara**, Philosophy and Religion; **Claudia O'Neill**, Nursing; **Traci Pipkins**, Writing Program; **Gene Robinson**, Geology; **Mark Rooker**, Art and Art History; **Jim Ruff**, English; **Karen Santos**, Education; **Tammy Gilligan** (for Craig Shealy), Psychology; **Michael Smilowitz**, Communication Studies; **John Wolf**, Military Science; **Kent Zimmerman**, Management; and **David Zimmerman**, Education. Guests included **Doug Brown** and **Susan Wheeler**, Office of the Provost; and two unidentified members of the SGA.

2. Doug Brown reported that there are budget proposals by the Governor and Senator Chichester, each of which proposes substantial increases in the tax base, part of which would flow into K-12 as well as higher education. He anticipates that the final proposal will lie somewhere between the two proposals. The Republicans seem to recognize the need to re-capitalize. Gasoline tax, income tax, sales tax and other user fees are being considered. Universities will be permitted to offset costs with tuition increases. We should know the results of these deliberations by the end of February. JMU is beginning the recruitment of new positions. The new Board of Visitors is determined to support the academic enterprise and to help us repopulate our faculty. Within the next three weeks new positions will be authorized for recruitment. It is hoped that these positions will be filled by next year. \$250,000 is in the governor's budget to support research activity at JMU. This is a first. There is also a substantial increase in the equipment trust fund budget. There is a \$3 million increase in our operating budget. 116 salary adjustments were put in place in January 2004. Over 100 were put in place last July, and another round of salary adjustments will be made this coming July. Doug hopes to continue this every six months until the problem is resolved. Salary compression is now the focus of salary adjustments. New faculty positions are being assigned to majors with high needs in the upper division. New positions are being advertised at current market standards. Between 40 and 100 new faculty positions will be filled during the coming academic year. This will have to be done for several years before we are at a full faculty complement and can address the issue of faculty loads. New transfer student admissions will be strictly managed and the size of the incoming freshman class will be stabilized at its current level. We currently have 15,000 undergraduate students and between 1000 and 1100 graduate students.

In response to a question from Aashir Nasim, Doug indicated that we shall continue to seek diversity among our student body by continuing to generate additional scholarship opportunities and to work directly with high schools throughout the state. Our distance from high schools with diverse student populations and urban areas in general, work to our disadvantage.

3. The minutes of the December 4, 2003 meeting were accepted as electronically distributed.

4. The balance in the flower fund is \$1155.51. The university account contains \$4219.00 in personal service and \$2943.16 in non-personal service. Senators were reminded to complete the gathering of dues from their faculty colleagues. Application forms for the upcoming computer lottery are available online and must be completed and sent by February 13th. Winners will be notified by February 20th. Winners must indicate their acceptance of the funds by February 27th and receipts for the equipment purchased must be submitted to Geoff by March 31st.

5. **A.** Speaker Michael Smilowitz welcomed new/alternate senators to the meeting. The three amendments to the faculty senate constitution were all passed: #1 – 94.4% approval; #2 – 87.2% approval; and #3 – 91.7% approval. These results will be reported to the president and, after his approval, the amendments will be considered by the Board of Visitors.

B. Michael reviewed the results of the quantitative portion of the faculty morale survey. After presenting this report to the Board of Visitors, the chair of the education committee directed the administration to present information on three issues which were identified in the morale survey as being of great concern to the faculty: salary and merit pay, research support and teaching load, and general education. The Provost deserves credit for discussing these issues with the chair of the education committee before the BOV meeting. Since then, Michael has received a letter from President Rose stating that those issues identified in the survey will be addressed. The items that elicited the greatest satisfaction among the faculty were the services offered by the library and collegiality among the faculty. Those items showing the greatest degree of dissatisfaction are enumerated earlier in this paragraph. 434 faculty responded to this survey from a possible 620.

6. Committee Reports:

Marshall Larry Ham proposed several alternatives to remain within “Robert’s Rules of Order” in considering two resolutions concerning the present withdrawal policy.

A. Academic Policies -- Beth Eck introduced David Bernstein, member of the Academic Policies committee, who explained the committee’s proposal. This proposal would permit faculty to assign grades of *WP* (withdrawal while passing) or *WF* (withdrawal while failing) to students who had not withdrawn from a course by the end of the “free drop” period. The instructor would still be able to assign a grade of *F* to a student who had stopped attending classes or had not completed all assignments. This would be at the instructor’s discretion and could be appealed by the student through the normal grade appeal procedure. This proposal was placed on the table by a unanimous vote so that a competing motion could be considered.

Dietrich Maune presented a motion to keep the current withdrawal policy and grading procedure in place. Discussion ensued concerning the reasons for assigning the *WP* and *WF* grades and whether or not the faculty wanted to become involved in the withdrawal process after the “free drop” period is over. The question was called and a vote to accept the Dietrich Maune proposal (retain the current withdrawal policy) was taken. 7 voted to accept the resolution and 17 voted to reject it.

The academic policy resolution was taken off the table and discussion continued. Susan Wheeler reiterated that a medical withdrawal from all classes was still possible after the free drop period. Under the new policy, the faculty member will have the option of assigning a regular letter grade (*A* through *F*) or a *WP* or *WF*. A grade of *W* will only be assigned for a student withdrawing during the free drop/add period or if a student is granted a withdrawal from *all* classes due to medical or other extenuating circumstances. The original motion was taken off the table and the vote to accept was 18 senators for the proposal and 13 opposed. Beth will communicate this information to the Provost.

B. Faculty Concerns: In Cynthia Gilliatt’s absence, Michael reported that the retirement reception after the last senate meeting of the current academic year will be held and that Andy Kohen will assist with the planning. Her committee is also reviewing AAUP guidelines as they apply to adjunct faculty.

C. Student Relations: No report.

D. Institutional Budget Priorities: Val Larsen reported that his committee would meet next week.

7. **Old Business:** Bill O’Meara reported that the faculty handbook committee has prepared a statement on academic freedom that will be the opening statement in the faculty handbook following letters from the Board of Visitors, the President of the University and the Speaker of the Senate. As this is a motion from the steering committee it required no second and discussion followed. Alex Gabbin questioned certain wording in the statement and the motion was tabled.

8. **New Business:** Bill O’Meara proposed that an annual lecture be presented regarding academic freedom. Roger Hall questioned the timing of the lecture planning process and Andy Kohen asked that the funding for the lecture be shared with the visiting scholars program. Item 1.a. was changed from “During each fall semester...” to “No later than the semester before the lecture...” Michael Smilowitz stated that the university budget for the senate is frequently unspent at the end of the academic year and that this may be a good use of these funds. The motion to accept the concept of the annual lecture on academic freedom was accepted with one vote against and one abstention.

Larry Ham reminded the senators that elections must be held within the next month and that the entire steering committee will consist of new members next year. He encouraged the members of the nominations and elections committee to speak to their colleagues about running for these offices.

There being no further business, the senate adjourned at 4:56.

Respectfully submitted:

David P. Zimmerman, secretary