Faculty Senate Minutes  
November 7, 2002  
Taylor 306

1. Faculty Marshal, Larry Ham, called the meeting to order at 3:35PM. Speaker Michael Smilowitz thanked the senate for encouraging their faculty to sign the letter encouraging alumni to support higher education and the recent bond issue. Close to 90% of the eligible faculty signed the letters.

2. Laura Flint made a presentation from the group, Citizens Against Sexual Assault. The statistics reported in the JMU “Your Right to Know” publication differ dramatically from the cases reported to CASA. This may be due to the fact that rape is generally underreported but the statistics cited in “Your Right to Know” may give the JMU community a false sense of security regarding sexual assault on campus. There were nine sexual assaults reported in the JMU publication for 2001 and yet there were twenty cases brought to the attention of CASA since the beginning of classes this semester (Fall 2002). The definition of sexual assault is very likely one reason for the variation in reported sexual assault cases by JMU and CASA since the University reports only those cases, which result in criminal charges being filed. A 24-hour hotline is available as well as support groups to provide support to victims of sexual assault. Publications were distributed to the senators.

3. The minutes of October 3, 2002 were approved as distributed.

4. Doug Brown reported that the Board of Visitors had approved a $170/student tuition increase for Spring 2003 to help offset the current budget deficit. This increase and all future increases will go to the academic budget. Additional money has been transferred from the auxiliary budget into the academic budget. Next year JMU will have to revert approximately $10 million to the state. This will include $2.5 million from salary savings that, in most years, is available due to retirements or resignations. JMU is funded at 97% of approved positions and in previous years have had between 6% and 8% of approved positions vacant due to retirements and resignations. We are currently spending all of our salary allocation and do not have these funds available. This means that things will be extremely tight next year. Retirement incentive plans have been approved and may be implemented. One plan involves retirement with part-time teaching responsibilities for faculty retirees. We are doing quite a bit better than many other Virginia institutions of higher education. Our cut is 10.4% while Virginia Tech, Radford, Longwood and VCU are laying off faculty. Virginia Tech has cut its library allocation by $750,000. Our advantage is our stability. We have a strong faculty and a strong applicant pool for future available positions. We shall consider administrative realignment to streamline administrative overhead and to enhance the number of teaching faculty. The faculty will be consulted and will be an active part of this process.

In response to a question by Andy Kohen, Doug Brown indicated that we shall be considering future tuition increases to pay for the services students and parents have come to expect from JMU. UVA and William and Mary have increased their tuition by over $400 for the Spring 2003 semester. Our alumni have strongly voiced their support for continued academic funding. Student aid is rising with tuition increases. This should lessen the economic impact on students from lower economic households. JMU continues to be the most popular university in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The question of diversity was raised and Dr. Brown expressed the view that JMU will continue to consider diversity in admissions decisions. We do not anticipate expanding our out-of-state percentage that is currently 30% of our total student population. Dr. Brown formally thanked the faculty senate for its efforts on behalf of the bond issue.

5. Michael Smilowitz asked for volunteers to attend the Virginia Faculty Senate meeting in Charlottesville on Saturday, November 9, 2002. He also asked for two volunteers to serve on the steering committee for the Expanding Horizons program.
6. Geoff Egekwu thanked the senators for collecting dues and he encouraged senators to complete the task as soon as possible. The balance in the Flower Fund is $1,543.41. The university account contains $4,209 in personal services and $2,716 in non-personal services. $200 was donated to WMRA during their annual fund drive. The application form for the 2003 computer lottery will be available on the Web by the end of the semester.

7. **A. Academic Policies:** Beth Eck reported that the academic policies and the faculty concerns committees had met jointly to discuss the academic advising initiative. A draft document outlining best practices for academic advising has been generated and the senate committees have created a joint response consisting of a series of questions:

1. How is the existing advising system problematic? Are the problems present across all academic areas, primarily in general education or confined to one specific group — for example, athletes?

2. Is there a correlation between dissatisfaction of advising and failure to meet with assigned advisors?

3. How does the level of dissatisfaction on the JMU campus compare with that at other institutions?

4. Is the initiative aimed at advising or mentoring?

Dr. Karen Sproles directed the committees to the advising blackboard site. An executive summary will be available here. Michael Smilowitz reiterated that while 20% of our students express dissatisfaction with advising, 80% appear to be satisfied. Several senators expressed concern that significant resources have been expended on this concern and we don’t have specific problems to consider. Michael Smilowitz, after considerable discussion, asked that we table the report and consider it at our next meeting.

**B. Faculty Concerns:** Beth Eck, reporting for Cynthia Gilliatt, reported that the committee will be crafting the final version of the RTA survey and will be further considering the advising enhancement initiative. Long-term care benefits will also be considered.

Andy Kohen reported that the general education council is actively considering revision of each component of the general education program. The learning objectives for the five clusters are being reviewed. These objectives will be revised downward in terms of size. A “menu approach” to general education is being considered. It may resemble the former liberal studies program design. The recent academic program review of general education called for the general education council to be chaired by a full-time faculty member and that the membership be primarily composed of full time faculty members with members of the general education administration serving in an ex officio capacity. The student who sits on the council will continue to have a vote.

**C. Student/Faculty Relations:** Reba Leiding reported that she and Alex Gabbin will be alternately attending future S.G.A. meetings. A member of the S.G.A. will attend all future faculty senate meetings. A report concerning Dr. Rose’s request that the faculty assist in promoting student attendance at future events featuring invited speakers was accepted unanimously. Over 1100 students attended the presentation by Dr. Ruth last week.

8. **Old Business:** Bill O’Meara presented amendments to the faculty senate constitution (these changes will appear on the faculty senate’s Web site). Questions concerning the accession of the speaker of the faculty senate will be considered by the nominations and elections committee during the coming month.
Michael Smilowitz thanked Larry Ham for his and his committee’s work on the child care questionnaire.

9. **New Business:** Bill O’Meara reported that the faculty handbook committee has met and has a final draft of internal guidelines for the committee. Information will be made available on the senate Web site. The work of this committee will be made available to faculty primarily through the senate.

Respectfully submitted,

David P. Zimmerman,
Secretary