



## FACULTY SENATE

### Minutes

Thursday, March 26, 2009

Taylor 306

In attendance: Andre, Barber, Borg, Buckley, Castle, Devore, *Fordham*, Gallagher, Garren, Giovanetti, Fink, Fordham, Hall, Harris, Hoeltzel, Jerome, Kindig, Klippert, Larsen, McGraw, Parsons, Poe, Scherpereel, Scheikl, Slade, Sokoloff, Szmagaj, Tkac, Trice, Ulanski, Wasta, Wright (*Guests:* Teresa Gonzalez, Brian Keilson, Tim Chapman, Whitten Maher)

3:31PM: Call to Order

\* The minutes of the previous meeting were approved unanimously.

\* Provost's Report:

The state budget is on the governor's desk and was balanced with stimulus money, and is likely to diminish budget cuts for the next two years. With tuition increases for next year, it appears JMU will be in the economic position it occupied in 2007. It is hoped that in two years, depending on the economy, further relief will come from the legislature.

The freeze on academic leaves will continue, but it appears now that travel funds and operating budgets will remain about the same, and that the equipment trust fund will be in place next year.

The Provost noted that Mr. Charlie King, Senior Vice President of Administration and Finance, will meet with the Senate Steering Committee and with the full Senate in April, when he will have more information on next year's budget.

The Provost was asked if JMU will be in its 2007 budget position next year, is there the possibility of raises. The Provost responded that the state has transferred responsibility for raises to the university for probably the next three years, and that the BOV could choose to give raises if JMU has the money.

The Provost was asked if the salary increases for faculty promoted to associate and full professor were still available, and the Provost replied that they were.

The Provost was asked to comment on the President's raise. He responded by outlining the process used last June by the BOV to determine the President's new contract which went into effect July 1, 2008. A subcommittee of the BOV looked at presidents' salaries at peer institutions and negotiated a new contract with the President.

The Provost was asked where JMU faculty salaries fall in relation to JMU's peer institutions. The provost responded that he thinks it's around the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, having fallen some recently because of there being no salary increases. He expects data on salaries to be released in the near future to show some improvement.

\* Speaker's Report:

The Speaker reported that over this coming summer the Faculty Senate Steering Committee will develop a faculty survey that will determine what issues the faculty finds most

important for the Senate to consider.

\* Old Business:

Four motions were up for discussion and voting during Old Business.

1. Motion to amend Senate Constitution: The Speaker opened discussion on the motion to amend the Faculty Senate Constitution as follows: Article II, Section 5 should be changed to read, “The term of office for the academic unit’s senator and alternate shall be three years. No member shall serve more than six years in succession.”

Discussion initially centered on the rationale for extending senators’ terms to three years, with one concern being that a three-year commitment might inhibit many faculty from seeking senate membership, and that if the successive years were raised to six, as in the motion, but the terms left at two years, then the continuity of senator service in the motion’s intention would still be met by those willing to serve six years.

A motion was made and seconded to amend the proposed Senate Constitution amendment by eliminating the first sentence: “The term of office for the academic unit’s senator and alternate shall be three years.” After discussion the question was called and the motion to amend was passed 23 to 3 with 1 senator abstaining.

Discussion returned to the main motion, the question was called, and the motion as amended (“No member shall serve more than six years in succession”) was passed 29 to 0.

2. Motion to amend the Senate Constitution: This motion would amend the Senate Constitution to set the Speaker’s term at two years. Currently the Speaker is elected to a one-year term.

A concern was raised that because the Senate has the option to reelect the Speaker to a second term this amendment would reduce faculty options. Those who responded to the above concern pointed out that a two-year term would increase Senate productivity and effectiveness, and that the Senate would retain the authority to remove the Speaker.

The question was called and seconded, and the motion passed by a vote of 22 to 5.

Motions 1 and 2 will be presented to the faculty at large next year.

3. Motion in support of administrative memorandum: “With respect to the scheduling of undergraduate classes, the Faculty Senate supports the administrative memorandum, ‘James Madison University: Classroom Scheduling: A Case for Change,’ with respect to Parts I-III.A.”

The memorandum would require faculty to hold classes at the tradition MWF/TTH times up until 2:30pm. Concerns about the appropriateness of this standard and whether scheduling wasn’t an AUH responsibility not a Senate responsibility were raised. One response to the concerns pointed out that the Senate was only being asked to support the memorandum, not set policy, and a number of senators stated that a large numbers of classes were being held “off schedule” now, making student scheduling difficult.

The question was called and seconded. The motion passed 15 to 11 with 2 abstentions.

4. The motion reads: “All JMU undergraduate students with a class standing of ‘senior’ should be permitted to take any undergraduate class offered at the university not required for the

student's major, prerequisites notwithstanding, on a space-available basis.”

Discussion was lengthy. Those in favor maintained that the process would encourage students to take ownership of and decision-making authority over their educations, that it would provide a diversity of expertise in the classrooms and increase knowledge sharing between fields, that majors should not control students outside the major, and that a life-of-the-mind ethic would be encouraged.

Those opposed maintained the prerequisites and course sequencing are important, that the process already exists for students to request enrollment in classes from faculty, that the benefits to students and the positive challenges to faculty non-majors would bring to the class might be outweighed by less attention being give to majors, and that while authority over one's education lies with the students, expertise in the sense of what's required to enroll in a course lies with the faculty.

In addition, credentialing, legal, and health concerns about the motion were expressed by Nursing, Education, and Social Work.

A motion was made and seconded to table the discussion, and the motion was passed 25 to 3. The Senate's Academic Policy Committee will decide how to precede with the motion.

\* Committee Reports:

Dr. Bob Jerome, Chair of the Nomination and Election Committee, reminded senators to submit the names of their academic unit's senators for next year to him.

Dr. Nancy Poe, Chair of the Budget Committee, informed senators that the Budget Committee will seek to meet with Mr. Charlie King.

\* New Business: None, however, as the meeting concluded, Mr. Jason Sokoloff, Business Librarian, encouraged senators to encourage their colleagues to complete the library services survey that has been distributed via email.