



FACULTY SENATE Minutes

Thursday, September 4, 2008
Taylor 306

In attendance:

Andre, Barber, Bernstein (for Harris), Borg, Buckley, Castle, Cavey, Cote, Devore, Fordham, Garren, Giovanetti, Greene, Hall, Ham, Hobson, Hoeltzel, Jerome, Klippert, Larsen, Maiewski, Marler, McGraw, Mitri, Parsons, Poe, Rooker (for Szmagaj) Scheikl, Slade, Sokoloff, Szmagaj, Tkac, Wasta, Wright (*Guests*: Rose, Gonzalez, and Wheeler)

3:31PM: Call to Order

- Marshal's Report

The Senate Marshal, Dr. Bob Jerome, provided all senators with binders of information about the faculty senate and explained some of the details about how senate meetings will be run.

- The minutes from the senate meeting on 04/24/08 were approved by acclamation.

- Dr. Lynwood Rose thanked the senate for inviting him to speak and shared some information about the upcoming year, starting with JMU enrollment, which is now about 18,500, with roughly 3950 freshman and 700 new transfer students. He also discussed the current status of budget cuts, saying the state wants 5%, 10% and 15% reduction plans from all state agencies by 9/26. After giving a little background on JMU's budget funds, he added that curriculum and instruction is a big part of the budget but will be cut as little as possible. He was hopeful that it will not be too much of a hardship this year and that there will be no hiring freeze on faculty positions. He then opened the floor to questions and comments from senate members:

One senator requested that we follow the practice of some other VA universities in the last round of budget cuts (roughly 2002) and involve our faculty in these budget reduction decisions. Lyn responded that he felt it wasn't necessary last time but that we could involve faculty this time.

Another senator asked how we could involve faculty now given the short timeline. Lyn said it was difficult to do, but the forthcoming plans would just be broad plans for categories of cuts rather than details. Another senator asked whether we were locked into the categories defined at this stage, and Lyn replied that it hasn't been the case in the past and isn't likely this time.

In response to a request for clarification on the impact of cuts on salary increases already planned and on searches already advertised, he said that there is no real information yet but increases are still likely this year. He will keep the senate posted on the status of advertised positions.

Another senator asked whether, recognizing that budget cuts are a cyclical pattern in VA, we might plan ahead and get faculty involved. Lyn expressed a willingness to consider this but also reiterated that he feels JMU has always tried to protect the academic mission in these cases.

After being invited to share his thoughts on possible senate issues, Lyn expressed interest in the following areas: the diversity initiative (especially for faculty positions), environmental sustainability, alcohol and substance abuse at JMU, campus safety (especially faculty concerns about in-class issues), the physical campus master plan, faculty handbook revision, and the

Harvard Collaborative on Academic Careers (and the COACHE Survey). He also volunteered to have other staff work with us on these issues.

Additional questions were then entertained. One senator asked where information on the master plan could be found, and Steve Garren said he would circulate this information. Another senator, following up on senate conversations with the provost last year about the nature of university size, teaching, and research, asked where senators could get involved in university discussions of these issues. Lyn said he wasn't sure what discussions these would be, adding that the university is not looking at changing the institution and its values/beliefs. He recommended looking at the six-year plan, which should also be available. He also noted that the six year plan is scheduled for revision next year. In response to additional questions about research money and other issues related to the nature of the university, Lyn offered to have someone come talk to us about the six-year plan and also stated that there are no plans to change our university classification. He feels we have an almost uniquely large undergraduate emphasis for our size, and doesn't see a reason for us to join the classification of the group of existing research universities in our state. In response to a question about previous statements suggesting JMU wants to take on the qualities of a research university, Lyn said the quote was about qualities such as size, and not about more research. In response to a question about recent events and statements suggesting JMU will be placing more emphasis on STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) and on meeting the whims of industries, Lyn responded that it is a state goal for all universities to consider how they can do a better job of creating more STEM area jobs. This led to a senator's observation that JMU will in fact be moving, in terms of instruction and research, as a function of what is evaluated and rewarded, and that his department is seeing an increasing emphasis on research and is even feeling an impact on post-tenure reviews. Lyn felt that changes of that nature were coming from the faculty within the schools and programs. This brought up the issue that post-tenure review is a faculty handbook matter, that any new policies or procedures should be subject to approval for inclusion in the faculty handbook and that practice should be not change BEFORE the handbook changes. Lyn agreed. There was then a discussion of the current limitations in the extent to which violations of the faculty handbook can be prevented and corrected. Susan Wheeler noted that, currently, faculty can make a complaint, but others noted that this does not force a correction of violations. Lyn agreed that all these issues related to the faculty handbook need to be looked at. He concluded by saying he will go ask more questions himself, will consider how to get people more up to speed both on the operation of university and on the future direction of the university, and will be happy to come back to a senate meeting later in the year.

- Speaker's Report, Dr. Steven Garren
Steve provided the following beginning of the year information:
 - Assigning subcommittees issues for consideration:
 - academic calendar issues – to academic policies
 - honor code transcript notation (from last year) – to student relations
 - senate term limits – to nominations and elections
 - list of investment options for retirement plans; parking – to Faculty Concerns
 - Steve intends to make every effort to keep to 5pm limit for senate meetings.
 - He will be emailing senators information on the COACHE Survey. Because of the

introduction of this survey, the regular faculty survey will wait until next year.

- Significant issues for this year are laying groundwork for the senate to have a more central role in governance and raising the visibility of the senate

A Senator then asked about increasing email quotas for faculty. The issue was turned over to the faculty concerns committee, which will use the new information. There was also a disclaimer, however, that the issue came up last year and was rejected by IT staff who felt faculty would never be satisfied with any finite quota. A repeat-forgive registration issue was then brought up. The issue was resolved with the report that JMU is no longer allowing students to retroactively change repeat-forgive choices. Another senator brought up the issue of tuition assistance for children of faculty, which was turned over to the faculty concerns committee.

- Treasurer's Report, Dr. Val Larsen
Val reported that we are lowering flower fund dues to \$2 for this year, explained the uses of flower fund money, and gave senators copies of the correct form (which is also available on the faculty senate website's document page.)
- Report of the Academic Policies Committee, Dr. David McGraw (Chair)
David briefly explained the role of this committee, announced the first meeting, and pointed out that all are welcome to attend
- Report of the Budget Committee, Dr. Nancy Poe (Chair)
Nancy briefly explained the role of this committee, and said she will contact committee members. She sees one possible issue as the consideration of a process by which faculty would get more information and have more input. There is a lot of information from last year's chair to consider.
Report of the Faculty Appeals Committee, Dr. Mary Slade (Chair)
Mary briefly explained the role of this committee and asked that we encouraged colleagues to work with the committee when needed.
- Report of the Faculty Concerns Committee, Dr. Kenneth Wright (Chair)
Ken briefly explained the role of this committee and reported that the first meeting was already arranged.
- Report of the Student Relations Committee, Dr. Kevin Borg (Chair)
Kevin briefly explained the role of this committee.
- OLD Business
(none)
- NEW Business
(none)

Adjourned at 4:56pm.