**THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**

**THE VISITORS OF JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**

#### Minutes of the Academic Excellence Committee

The Academic Excellence Committee met on Thursday, February 17, 2022, in the Highlands Room of the Festival Conference and Student Center at James Madison University. Lucy Hutchinson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

# Present:

Gray-Keeling, Matthew

Hutchinson, Lucy, Chair

Herod, Maribeth

Lynch, John

**Others:**

Akers, Jeremy, Professor and Program Coordinator, Dietetics

Armstrong, Kirk, Academic Unit Head, Health Professions

Coltman, Heather, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Gabbin, Joanne, Executive Director, Furious Flower Poetry Center

Guerrero, Ben, Preparing Future Faculty Fellow, Office of Access and Inclusion

Larsen, Val, Speaker, Faculty Senate

L’Esperance, Mark, Dean, College of Education

Lovell, Sharon, Dean, College of Health and Behavioral Studies

Major, Lara, Rector

Nowviskie, Bethany, Dean of Libraries and Chief Academic Technology Officer,

Schilling, Hannah, Class of 2022, International Affairs

Stewart, Michael, Assistant Professor, Computer Science

Stringham, David, Director of Research, Entrepreneurship, and Engagement, College of Visual and Performing Arts

Tongen, Anthony, Vice Provost, Research and Scholarship

**Approval of Minutes**

On motion by Matthew Gray-Keeling and seconded by Maribeth Herod, the Academic and Student Life Committee minutes of November 18, 2021 were approved.

**Divisional Update and Organizational Overview of Academic Affairs**

Dr. Heather Coltman told the committee that, with the new committee structure allowing time for in-depth discussion, she and Chair Lucy Hutchinson were creating more comprehensive agendas to provide additional context about the division. Heather began her update with a broad overview of Academic Affairs and its interwoven parts.

The Provost discussed the role of faculty, describing their responsibilities for teaching, research and service in advancement of the institution’s academic mission.  She discussed how the recent traumatic incidents on campus, combined with the lingering effects of the pandemic, were affecting faculty, staff and students. She also described how AA was providing resources for faculty in both working with students and for faculty to take care of themselves, as well as the resources being provided to students. The Provost also shared the details of a meeting she held with students and how their concerns were addressed.

The Provost updated the committee on the status of the nearly 50 remaining active hiring searches within the division. Many searches for staff, faculty and leadership positions have concluded, and others are proceeding as planned.

Her update concluded with reference to JMU’s achievement of R2 status.

**Partnership School Update**

Dr. Mark L’Esperance, Dean of the College of Education, shared a brief update related to the new lab school process being outlined by the Virginia Secretary of Education. He also identified potential models moving forward: an expansion of the Young Children’s Program and a potential high school partnership with local school districts.

**Curriculum and Policy Update**

College of Health and Behavioral Studies Dean, Dr. Sharon Lovell, and Academic Unit Head for Health Professions, Dr. Kirk Armstrong, presented a proposal for the creation of a new degree program: The Master of Science in Applied Nutrition. This 50-credit hour graduate program addresses changes made by their external accreditor to professional entry-level degree requirements and implements a move to competency-based education, both of which will prepare future graduates for the Virginia labor market. In addition to reviewing the curriculum, the committee heard information on the Labor Market Projections and duplication of the degree program, as required by the State Council of Education for Virginia (SCHEV).

On motion by Matthew Gray-Keeling and seconded by Maribeth Herod, the committee unanimously approved this new graduate degree program.

**Inclusive Excellence in Research and Scholarship**

This presentation introduced services and programs under the purview of the Office of Research and Scholarship (R&S) that support the JMU and regional research and innovation ecosystem, while advancing inclusive excellence. In order to connect those services with activities at JMU, partners in Academic Affairs provided brief summaries of projects that include research administrative support from R&S offices and/or collaborative efforts between academic units (e.g., departments, colleges, institutes and centers) and R&S.

Projects highlighted included:

* Furious Flower Poetry Center and JMU Libraries – The Flowerings Project Phase II: Seeding & Tending Furious Flower’s Digital Archives & Infrastructure;
* College of Visual & Performing Arts, Access & Inclusion, and Computer Science – CPRMusic; and
* College of Education – Virginia New Teacher Support Program, Virginia Principal Support Program, and Content Teaching Academy.

A link to a student video summarizing academic fellowship experiences supported by the Office of Fellowships and Awards was shared with the committee members. The student presenter is currently studying Arabic language and culture in Oman on a Boren Scholarship.

**Faculty Senate Speaker Report**

Dr. Val Larsen, The Faculty Senate Speaker spoke about the unique faculty responsibilities related to the shared governance process. The Speaker described five principles that must be honored for effective shared governance including faculty primacy in the hiring process, faculty ownership of the curriculum, academic freedom, tenure, and compliance with the Faculty Handbook and other procedural mandates.

In his written report, the Faculty Senate Speaker included information about several resolutions including a new resolution which proposes that faculty have discretion to determine whether their Fall 2020 course ratings count in their ultimate performance evaluation. Information was also provided related to a November Senate resolution which calls for the 2021 hiring guidelines to be rescinded.

There being no further business, on the motion of John Lynch and seconded by Matthew Gray-Keeling, the Academic Excellence Committee meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lucy Hutchinson, Chair

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Donna Harper, Secretary to the Board