



FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

Thursday, September 3, 2020

In attendance: Larsen (Speaker); Accounting: Briggs; Art, Design, and Art Hist.: Phaup; Biology: Seifert; Chemistry: Hughey; Comm. Sci. and Disorders: Clinard; Comm. Studies: Woo; Comp. Inf. Sci. & Bus Analytics: Tchommo; Computer Science: Kirkpatrick; Early ELED & Reading: Mathur; Economics: Cavusoglu; Ed. Found. & Exceptionalities: Wiley; Engineering: Harper; English: Lo; Finance & Bus. Law: Parker; Foreign Languages: Lang-Rigal; Geology: McGary; Grad. Psych: Critchfield; Hart School of HSRM: Anaza; Health Professions: Skelly; Health Sciences: Ott Walter; History: McCleary; IDLS: Chamberlin; Integrated Sciences: McGraw; Justice Studies: De Fazio; Kinesiology: McKay; Learning Tech. & LE: Beverly; Libraries: Wilson; Management: Yankey; Marketing: Ozcan; Math & Stats: Garren; Media Arts & Design: Mitchell; Mid, Second, & Math: Shoffner; Military Science: Turnboo; Music: Stringham; Nursing: Lam; Physics: Butner; Political Science: Lee; Psychology: Melchiori; Soc. & Anth.: Tanaka; Social Work: Trull; Strategic Leadership Studies: Vanhove; Theatre & Dance: Finkelstein; Writing Rhetoric & Tech Comm: McDonnell; Part-time Faculty Reps: Harlacker, Janow, Munier; Guests—Coltman (Provost), Bauerle (Interim Vice Provost), dozens of observers attended

Call to Order—4:05 p.m.

I. Provost's Report—Heather Coltman

- This is a tumultuous time, certainly in the past week with significant shifts in how to respond to the pandemic on campus.
- The provost expressed admiration for the army of people who are working so hard to do the right thing in this unprecedented time.
- The administration is making difficult decisions with many pressures from parents, alumni, the media, social media. She acknowledged the strain that people are under.
- The temporary shift to online teaching starts Monday. [This website](#) answers questions about what drove the decision, what's happening with student refunds, etc. The information was also included in an email sent at 5:00 p.m.
- What follows are encapsulated versions of the questions asked and answers given:
 - Q: The university has lost a lot of trust. What will be done differently in October?
 - A: There are an array of factors to look at. It's important to preserve the option to come back. We'll continue to be guided by the CDC and VDH. There are currently too many unknowns.
 - Q: New and minority faculty members felt pressured to teach in person (for job security and to be a team player). The tone and degree of flexibility varied across departments. How can you guarantee that AUHs will be aligned and consistent in allowing faculty to be free to make these decisions?
 - A: There should be no pressure based on a faculty member's career trajectory. The revised form is more streamlined. In AUH and coordinator meetings, this issue will be brought up as a discussion topic to ensure equity and sensitivity to all.
 - Q: How can the administration be more transparent? Is upper administration considering taking a pay cut?
 - A: We're committed to improving communication. It's difficult when the answer is "I don't know." With the census date pushed back, finances are going to be uncertain for a while. We don't have numbers yet. We don't know the scope of it. The primary goal is to ensure student academic progress. We're focused on principles and the priority of the academic mission.
 - Q: Students received information about the withdrawal deadline shift before faculty. Without improved communication channels and flow, it's hard to be effective for our students.

A: The provost acknowledged the difficulty. The administration tries very hard to coordinate and synchronize, but inevitably, there are misses. It's something they'll continue to address, and they're open to suggestions.

Q: There was a question about the 50% capacity in classrooms.

A: After this short experiment, if you determined that something doesn't work, let the administration know.

Q: Adjuncts would feel better if there were a commitment about protecting them as much as possible, some sort of reassurance.

A: Thanks was expressed for Leslie Harlacker's advocacy on this front. The university is committed to ensuring that adjunct service to the university continues. Their contributions are essential to student progress.

Q: Can you specify the criteria that the administration will use?

A: Dr. Guertler guided decision-making based on the number of positive tests, the number of tests available, the number of quarantine beds, and the status of the local community.

II. Speaker's Report—Val Larsen

- Problems in higher education that were imminent have come earlier.
- When the AAUP questioned the lack of representation of faculty on committees, the provost welcomed faculty participation. Thirty-two volunteers are listed in Canvas, and more volunteers are invited. Faculty input and governance are important.
- The Senate bylaws mandate the tracking of past resolutions. Open resolutions are dispersed among the committees to determine whether further action needs to be taken to ensure implementation.

III. Treasurer's Report—Treasurer Nevin Cavusoglu reported that the Senate account has \$8,365.69, about half in checking and half in savings.

IV. Committee Reports

- A. Faculty Concerns—Chair Steve Harper announced that the committee will meet jointly next week with the Budget and Compensation Committee to review the AAUP financial exigency resolution about how to increase Senate input into budget decisions. Geology and Environmental Sciences has inquired about suspending the tenure clock. Childminding services have been added as an option for those seeking childcare.
- B. Academic Policies—Chair Smita Mathur announced that the committee will meet at 4:00 on September 10. Two major items on the committee agenda this year are the Latin Honors requirements and advocating for racial justice. One proposal is a for-credit requirement for all JMU students. Another potential focus is amplifying scholarship that centers on breaking the cycle of racism.
- C. Adjunct Affairs—Chair Leslie Harlacker has scheduled the first committee meeting for 4:00 on September 17. The committee will continue to advocate for better compensation, coordinate with the adjunct task force, and survey adjunct faculty.
- D. Student Relations—Chair Cheri Beverly is meeting next Friday with Dr. Tim Miller and plans to meet with the committee later in the month. Both a graduate student representative and an SGA representative are invited to join Faculty Senate meetings.
- E. The Faculty Appeals Committee, chaired by David McGraw, currently has no cases.

- F. Budget and Compensation—Committee Chair Kimiko Tanaka encouraged senators to share the two salary reports compiled last spring by Steve Garren. The link for the joint committee meeting with Faculty Concerns (9/10 at 4:00) is coming soon.
- G. Nominations & Elections—Chair Steve Garren noted that most external committees have been filled, but the General Education Council still needs a Senate representative. If you had any trouble accessing the meeting via WebEx, send him an email. The observers who were included in this meeting will be able to access future meetings too.

V. New Business

Six motions were introduced for a first reading. They are not discussed or voted upon until the next month so that senators have time to share them with their departments.

- Because of the complications of the current circumstances, a motion was put forward to postpone the collection of Faculty Senate dues to the spring of 2021.
- A motion passed by the Faculty Senate of Virginia advocates for best practices in managing DACA and other undocumented students who seek enrollment at Virginia colleges. The motion calls for adoption of those best practices at JMU.
- A revision is proposed to Robert's Rules of Order that would allow a show of hands to indicate how many senators still have points to raise when a move to call the question and end debate occurs.
- A motion is put forward to show solidarity with the faculty of Radford University after the president and board of visitors suspended the faculty handbook.
- A motion to expand the charge of the Budget and Compensation Committee has been proposed. The new charge would include advocating for higher education on the state level and fostering relations with local legislators.
- A motion has been put forward to seek documentation if a financial exigency were to be declared. The motion is under committee review.

VI. Open Discussion

The provost answered further questions:

Q: Many students are not comfortable being in person. The new form to request staying online indicates a lack of trust in the faculty.

A: It's important to document the plans going forward and to know what the class formats look like.

Q: If transmission is an off-campus issue, what would change in the next four weeks that JMU has control of and that would avoid a repeat of what just happened?

A: Three sorority houses on campus and athletic teams had outbreaks. We can't say with certainty where the virus was contracted. The rapid increase threatened a shortfall of isolation and quarantine capacity.

Q: For online teaching approval, are high-risk criteria necessary?

A: No, and this was not a requirement in the past either. The goal is to ensure quality of instruction.

Q: Why is it necessary to request to stay online?

A: The information will indicate how the university can best prepare (e.g., do we need to look at the technical capacity?).

Q: What advice is being sought beyond the CDC?

A: The administration is seeking input from Sentara RMH, the nursing faculty, other faculty experts. If there are other relevant voices, don't hesitate to share.

Q: Is there a channel between JMU leadership and the Harrisonburg community?

A: There are conversations with the mayor, emergency management, and public safety. EMU and Bridgewater are part of the conversation as well.

Q: The uncertainty about returning creates stress. What other approaches can be considered to create certainty? If we return in October, the COVID-safe app is better for contact tracing and privacy than the self-reporting app.

A: The uncertainty is much harder to handle. Decisions weren't made to please any particular group. If the COVID-safe app has more potential to help, then the provost will reach out to learn more.

Q: Vets who receive GI Bill support are under a timeline for adding courses, and waivers are needed for learners who have hardships.

A: The withdrawal deadline was extended, but the add date hasn't changed. International students and students who feel that they can't be successful away from campus are granted waivers.

Q: How will you be inclusive of faculty input, and how will faculty access reports and survey results?

A: Including faculty is the goal. The president's new Task Force on Racial Equity seeks self-nominations from faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Faculty representation is certainly valued. Timelines will be made public.

Adjournment 5:35 p.m.