



## FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Special Summer WebEx Meeting with the Provost

**In attendance:** Larsen (Speaker); Accounting: Briggs; Biology: Seifert; Comm. Sci. and Disorders: Clinard; Comm. Studies: Woo; Comp. Inf. Sci. & Bus Analytics: Wang; Computer Science: El-Tawab; Early ELED & Reading: Mathur; Economics: Cavusoglu; Engineering: Harper; English: Lo; 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; Management: Lee; Marketing: Ozcan; Math & Stats: Garren; Media Arts & Design: Mitchell; Mid, Second, & Math: Shoffner; Music: Stringham; Nursing: Lam; Philosophy & Religion: Knorpp; Physics: Butner; Political Science: Lee; Psychology: Melchiori; Soc. & Anth.: Tanaka; Social Work: Bryson; Strategic Leadership Studies: Vanhove; Theatre & Dance: Finkelstein; Writing Rhetoric & Tech Comm: McDonnell; Part-time Faculty Reps: Harlacker, Janow; Guests—Coltman (Provost), Johnson (Vice Provost), Shackelford (Assistant Vice Provost)

**I. Call to Order**—3:30 p.m. This special meeting was called to hear information from Provost Coltman about plans for the upcoming academic year amid the global COVID-19 pandemic.

**II. Provost's Report**—Heather Coltman ([coltmahj@jmu.edu](mailto:coltmahj@jmu.edu))

- Higher education was already undergoing significant change in enrollment with demographic trends shifting.
- Across Virginia, administrators have been collaborating; however, everyone is having to think about matters that we're not necessarily trained to manage.
- This situation has been hugely disruptive, but our guiding principles and mission remain foremost.
- She encourages everyone to be as generous as they can be as we all work to handle this crisis. The administration aims to be as transparent as possible.
- People have been working incredibly hard and burning the candle on both ends to plan for these urgent circumstances. The provost expressed her sincere appreciation and respect for the way that the faculty have responded to this unprecedented situation.
- As the situation snowballed in March, committees and working groups were formed. Faculty participation is invited; however, faculty was already burdened with having to move courses online. If faculty and senators would like to be more involved, participation is welcomed.
- *Policy on remote teaching:* As is enumerated in the Faculty Handbook, the AUH confirms all faculty assignments, which is why requests to teach fully online must be done in consultation with the AUH. Many courses simply cannot be taught online (e.g., labs). The AUH also has the view of the whole range of course options and scheduling. The decision process is very much a conversation between AUHs and faculty. No power struggle is anticipated.
  - The freshman experience is being prioritized to offer first-year students as much high-touch interaction as possible, though health and safety come first.
  - Note that these plans are being implemented for this one exceptional semester.
- *Modifying the fall schedule:* The schedule has been changed according to the best guidance, which allows for 50% classroom capacity and masking. Larger spaces are being deployed for handling larger classes. Spaces where students congregate (DHall, DHub) are being evaluated.
- *Semester calendar (e.g., Thanksgiving break):* Senior leadership is leaving all options open, including modifying the semester calendar.
- *Adjuncts:* The administration is sensitive to the increased workload for adjuncts. Because of room capacity, more sections of course are needed. As a result, there may be more opportunities

- for adjuncts. The email chain for adjunct faculty is complicated; however, AUHs have been asked to forward emails to their adjuncts as a back-up to ensure they are receiving communications.
- *Quarantining:* Decisions about how and when to quarantine JMU community members will be made in consultation with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the University Health Center (UHC). Dr. Andrew Guertler is the UHC medical director who will be asked to offer expertise about issues such reporting the number of cases on campus.
  - *Childcare:* This is an enormous issue, and there are a great deal of unknowns at this point (e.g., plans for local school systems). Adjustments will be made whenever possible. The Provost expects AUHs to be supportive and sympathetic. She empathizes because she's a single parent.
  - *Communication:* Efforts are made to communicate information and updates to faculty before informing students, though this doesn't always happen. An archive of messages will be hosted on the [provost's webpage](#) and on the university's [main COVID site](#).
  - *Exam proctoring:* Vice Provost Halpern is heading up a group to address this concern. JMU is looking at what our counterparts are doing and hopes to have a plan in place by the fall exam period.
  - *Commencement:* Donna Harper has been leading the planning. Family groups will be kept together with spacing between groups.
  - *Faculty voice in decision-making:* In response to the concern that only 7% of the makeup of planning groups are faculty, the provost welcomed more representation from the faculty, though she explained that initially she hesitated to ask since the intense work extends beyond the contract period. The speaker will put a process in place to solicit interest from faculty about participation in working groups. The provost is very open to suggestions and input from faculty, especially those with relevant expertise.
  - *Mental health concerns:* The Counseling Center has responded valiantly to the demands. The provost is chair of the mental health summit being held this summer (which has been scaled back because of the circumstances).
  - *Ventilation:* Understanding of the spread of COVID-19 is evolving. There's active conversation and new research into transmission. Planning is ongoing. Towana Moore and Charlie King will be consulted about the buildings concerns that have been expressed.
  - *Privacy concerns:* Faculty are not required to disclose information and are not required to go through HR unless applying for ADA accommodations. This is a big concern and is part of the whole dynamic of issues that are being grappled with.
  - *Student behaviors:* Student peer-to-peer leadership will be tapped to encourage safety among students.
  - *Late evening classes* (e.g., the 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. block): This concern was addressed on a case-by-case matter when students enrolled in certain sections had conflicts with the new schedule.
  - *Splitting classes into groups:* She's trusting the units to look at their situation. Faculty are in the best position to figure out creative approaches to face-to-face, hybrid, synchronous, asynchronous, and rotations for class meetings. Make the best judgment that you can. New capacities might open up if larger sections move online.
  - *Masks:* If a student is not wearing a mask, offer a disposable mask, which will be provided in the classroom. If the student refuses, ask the student to leave class until they have a mask; however, instructors should state this requirement in their syllabus. If the situation escalates, instructors have the option of calling Public Safety ([Academic Affairs Policy #12](#)).
  - *Plexiglass:* If the faculty member is behind a shield, a mask may not be needed.
  - *Bandwidth:* Questions about this will go to the group that is working on the technology concerns (this group includes Dale Hulvey and Bethany Nowviskie).
  - *Legal standard of care:* More clarity and guidance about life insurance and workers' compensation is expected.
  - *Impact on quality of online instruction:* JMU is assessing the results of the spring semester's shift to online teaching. It is possible for SLOs to be met, though of course it is not ideal. The provost is grateful to CFI and the Libraries for their leadership and to the faculty who did an outstanding job of making the transition.

## II. Adjournment 5:00 p.m.