

Resolution on Instructional Faculty Search Procedures

Whereas without adequately consulting the Faculty Senate, Academic Affairs has made core changes in the hiring protocol at JMU, changes that substantially downgrade the role of faculty in the selection of new faculty colleagues in their department, and

Whereas the 1966 AAUP *Statement on Shared Governance* enunciates the principle that “the faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter, and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process,” and that “faculty status and related matters are primarily a faculty responsibility; *this area includes appointments [and] reappointments*” (emphasis added), and

Whereas the AAUP *Statement on Shared Governance* continues as follows: “the primary responsibility of the faculty for such matters is based upon the fact that its judgment is central to general educational policy,” that “furthermore, scholars in a particular field or activity *have the chief competence for judging the work of their colleagues*” (emphasis added), and that “in such competence it is implicit that responsibility exists for both adverse and favorable judgments,” that “determinations in these matters should first be by faculty action through established procedures, reviewed by the chief academic officers with the concurrence of the board,” that “the governing board and president should, on questions of faculty status, as in other matters where the faculty has primary responsibility, concur with the faculty judgment except in rare instances and for compelling reasons which should be stated in detail,” and

Whereas the JMU *Faculty Handbook* III.A.2 identifies “the standards of the academic discipline” as a key parameter for the exercise of academic freedom to teach, research, and publish, and

Whereas the JMU *Faculty Handbook* III.C.2 vests responsibility, upon the rendering of due deliberative judgments on candidates on the part of the search committee, for the decision for offer of appointment with “the AUH or hiring authority...subject to approval by the dean, the appropriate vice president, the president and the BOV,” and

Whereas the JMU *Faculty Handbook* III.C.3 vests in deans responsibility for offers of appointment only in the limited case of appointments to AUH positions, and

Whereas the recently promulgated *Academic Affairs Guidelines for Recruiting and Hiring Faculty*, in direct contravention of these principles and declarations, explicitly denies to the faculty its right to make competent, nuanced judgments and differentiations among candidates for appointment to faculty positions, and to embody those judgements in a ranked list of finalists provided to the AUH, instead transferring these prerogatives to the AUH, dean, and the provost, and, additionally, leaving in ambiguity how the final selection of a candidate will be made by those administrators,¹ and

¹“Once all interviews have been concluded, the search committee should convene to discuss the attributes and potential of each candidate and determine collectively whether each is acceptable. The committee should...summarize the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate vis-à-vis their potential for success in the position....The search committee chair will then convey their overall assessment of candidate suitability (e.g.

Whereas the directives codifying these encroachments were promulgated in the absence of adequate consultation with the Faculty Senate or faculty as a whole, in violation of shared governance principles, and with the corollary effect of undermining trust and expectations of good faith between administration and faculty, and

Whereas these directives leave to the search committee the strenuous, time-consuming burden of evaluating (sometimes hundreds) of candidate dossiers, of conducting interviews with candidates, of identifying, discussing with colleagues, and listing strengths and weaknesses of each candidate, while denying to those same faculty the final ranking of those candidates based upon those evaluative activities, instead transferring that judgment to administrators who have not borne these burdens and made these investments and, thus, have not developed the insights needed to make final judgments among candidates, and

Whereas deans and the provosts, while accomplished in their own academic fields, also lack the competence to make hiring judgments in disciplines outside their own, and

Whereas the faculty recognize that the deans and provosts have an interest in the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty and that the problematic guideline changes identified above stem from a sincere concern to achieve that objective, and

Whereas the objective of recruiting and retaining diverse faculty is universally shared by JMU faculty,

Be it therefore resolved that the guideline restriction on faculty providing ranked lists of candidates be forthwith withdrawn; that the faculty's primary competence and responsibility for formulating judgments on instructional faculty appointments in the discipline be unreservedly reaffirmed; and that the Provost initiate a process of consultation with the Senate and the faculty at large on how diversity objectives in faculty recruitment might be achieved within a framework that adheres to the principles of faculty disciplinary competence, academic freedom, and shared governance that are articulated above.

acceptable or not acceptable) as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate to the AUH. The search committee may elect to share compiled assessments from individual committee members, especially if there is not unanimous agreement. The search committee does not provide a ranking of finalists. The AUH will develop a hiring plan based on the assessment of the search committee and will submit it to the dean. The dean should consult with the Provost to confirm final approval...." (*Guidelines*, p. 20).