



## **FACULTY SENATE MINUTES**

Thursday, April 24, 2025 (meeting held via Zoom)

**In attendance:** Speaker: Ott Walter; Communications Director: McDonnell; Accounting: Briggs; Art, Design, and Art History: Brooks; Biology: L. Doyle; Chemistry: Kokhan; Comm. Sci. and Disorders: Harbick; Comm. Studies: Nelson; Computer Inf. Sys. & Bus. Analytics: Wang; Computer Science: El-Khadi Rizvi; Early ELED & Reading: Mathur; Economics: Smith; Engineering: Harper; English: Gerber, Lo (incoming); Finance & Bus. Law: Parker; Foreign Languages: Galarreta; Grad. Psych: LeBlanc; Hart School of HSRM: Hallmon; Health Sciences: Lassiter; History: McCleary; IDLS: Schmitt-Harsh; Integrated Sciences: Davis; Justice Studies: Castle Svigelj (incoming); Kinesiology: Wigglesworth, Walters (incoming); Learning, Tech. & L.E.: Jin; Libraries: Price; Management: Pattie; Marketing: Snyder; Math & Stats: C. Lubert, Garren (incoming); Media Arts. & Design: Mitchell; Mid, Second, & Math: Shoffner; Military Science: Marshall (proxy); Music: Suggs; Phil. & Rel.: van Leeuwen; Physics: Butner; Political Science: H. Lubert; Psychology: Zinn; Soc. & Anth.: Trouille; Strategic Leadership Studies: Selznick; Writing Rhetoric & Tech Comm: Hickman; Part-time Faculty Rep: Harlacker, Janow; Guests—Kolvoord, Oldmixon, Shackelford, O'Fallon, and others.

### **Organizational Meeting for the 2025–2026 Faculty Senate**

- I. **Call to Order**—3:55 p.m.
  
- II. **Election of Officers** (NB: Katherine Ott Walter will be in her second year as speaker)
  - Speaker Pro Tempore: Sasha Kokhan
  - Marshal: Benjamin S. Selznick
  - Treasurer: Talé Mitchell
  - Director of Communications: Karen McDonnell
  
- III. **Election of Committee Chairs**
  - Adjunct Affairs: Leslie Harlacker
  - Budget, Compensation, and Government Relations: Harold Butner
  - Faculty Appeals: Melanie Shoffner
  - Policies: Steve Garren
  - Shared Governance: Kristen McCleary
  - Teaching and Student Relations: Anne van Leeuwen

### **Final meeting of the 2024–2025 Faculty Senate**

- I. **Call to Order**—4:21 p.m.

II. The minutes from March were approved.

III. **Provost's Report**—Dr. Bob Kolvoord

- Updates: AA Policy 2 (about evaluating AUHs) is almost done and will be sent out soon. The plan is to follow a similar template for deans.
  - Policy 1306 about additional work (and the 33% cap above regular salary) will be out for review and should be in place for this summer. Intent: only summer work counts toward the 33%. Question: Is the first-year advising issue taken care of? Yes, but it's tricky because some extra pay bleeds into different time periods.
  - Okta is in place. Tweaks are being made, e.g., the time limit in Canvas was expanded. Comment: The [Yubikey](#) offers a convenient way to log in without your phone (works from off campus too). Congratulations to the IT team for the successful transition.
  - The changes will allow new hires to use JMU's systems sooner and will smooth over access problems for adjuncts who may not teach consecutive semesters.
  - Core HR and finance systems will be replaced with Oracle. Contracts are being worked out now. The transition begins 7/1/25 and will take a full year. Student systems changes are projected for 2028.
  - One change being explored is replacing landlines with voice over IP (VoIP), which would allow calls to office numbers to be forwarded to personal devices.
- Incoming President Schmidt's official start date at JMU is 7/1/25. He will be on campus on 5/8 and 5/9/25, at which time he'll meet with the Steering Committee. He has been given a set of documents and data describing each division.
- Many changes are occurring with federal and state grant-supported faculty work. If faculty have student workers whose funding is interrupted or canceled, JMU will honor the commitments by funding the work.
- The inversion and compression study has elicited data that reveals, in particular, effects on full professors. Because there was a time when there were no raises, senior faculty salaries have not kept up with [JMU's peer institutions](#). Assistant and associate salaries are comparable to our peers. The plan is to address inversion and compression in the next fiscal year, depending on the budget passed in Richmond.
- Latin honors and valedictorian guidelines are slated for review next year. The current rules don't seem to apply equitably across all circumstances (e.g., transfer students). One proposal is to select a valedictorian from each college.
- Also under consideration next year are equitable workloads.
- The provost shared a new initiative that Academic Council, in conversation with Faculty Senate, aims to develop: "sunsetting protocols." If JMU is in a circumstance where a program within Academic Affairs (academic program, center, etc.) might need to be closed, what process will be used? What factors should be considered? The provost emphasized that the university is currently in a position of strength and we are not being asked to close

academic or other types of programs. Therefore, now is the time to be proactive—to put a plan in place to prepare for the possibility that circumstances can change. He emphasized that AC had begun discussion of a protocol, but nothing had been decided or implemented and will not be until senate has weighed in.

- Q: Since language plays such an important role in communicating, why use “sunsetting,” which may be seen as a euphemism? We need to think critically about the terminology. It’s important to include all stakeholders rather than using a top-down process.
- A: “Sunsetting” suggests gradual change. We want the process to be thoughtful.
- Q: In a budget crisis, tough decisions have to be made, and feelings are often hurt. It’s important that developing a process comes at a time of strength and similarly that the faculty senate is involved in the process. However, in CAL, there’s already a profound existential dread, which contradicts the “time of strength” claims. It feels like a precarious time to be introducing the sunsetting language. This task must be handled very, very carefully.
- A: JMU enrollments are strong. Budgets are stable. In comparison to other universities, we are in a position of relative strength. We acknowledge the challenges besetting higher education right now, but we want to create a procedure before one is given to us.
- Comment: At WVU, a consulting firm, RPK, was used, but JMU should avoid that approach. A: Fair point. Arriving at a plan we can agree on would be preferable, but no one can dictate what a future president or president can/can’t do.
- Q: There has been a consistent message about not being able to offer as many courses to adjuncts, so to some, it feels like a crisis.
- A: We don’t yet have a clear idea of what the sunsetting process would look like. I hope that the adjunct voice would be at the table, along with the rest of senate. Over the last thirty years, JMU has solved many problems by growing. If we stop growing, faculty positions may become “a zero-sum game.”

#### IV. **Speaker’s Report**—Dr. Katherine Ott Walter

- The speaker will post a lengthier report to Canvas.
- The BOV met. The speaker reports offered at the meetings are posted to Canvas. Send interesting projects your colleagues are working on to highlight at future BOV meetings ([ottwalmk@jmu.edu](mailto:ottwalmk@jmu.edu)).
- The remembrance ceremony held in April was lovely and emotional. It’s a great opportunity for families to see that the university really does care.
- The Faculty Senate of Virginia meets Saturday, April 26, 2025. On the agenda is a motion from multiple universities to form a group to support higher education institutions.
- Deans should share out goals and objectives of AUHs, AAUHs, and dean roles so that faculty can evaluate them.

- External committees for next year: The committees are posted on Canvas. Please review the committees, and let the speaker know if you are interested in serving ([ottwalmk@jmu.edu](mailto:ottwalmk@jmu.edu)).
- The steering committee meets over the summer to plan for next year's faculty senate.

V. **Treasurer's Report—Dr. Talé Mitchell**

- The current total for the bank accounts is \$4,274. One bereavement was processed since the last meeting. Two departments (Geology and Management) still owe dues.

VI. **Committee Reports**

- Faculty Concerns— Chair Kristen McCleary reported that the committee met and lobbied for Policy 2 changes.
- Policies—Chair Smita Mathur thanked the committee and the provost for the work on Policy 2, which has taken six years but is finally completed. Next year, the committee will begin work on a similar policy for the evaluation of deans.
- Adjunct Affairs—no report
- Teaching and Student Relations—no report
- Budget & Compensation and Government Relations—Chair Harold Butner noted that the committee will review and solicit feedback on the forthcoming Policy 1306 draft.
- Faculty Appeals—Chair Talé Mitchell reported that enough faculty have volunteered to hear the current appeal, which may take another thirty to sixty days to complete.
- Research and Scholarship—no report
- Shared Governance—no report
- Other Committee Reports—none

VII. **No New Business**

VIII. **Unfinished Business**

- The [Resolution in Appreciation of Interim President Charlie King](#) passed with 93% support.
- The [Resolution on External Challenges to Faculty Roles and Responsibilities](#), which was adapted from a resolution by UVA's faculty senate, passed after being slightly amended.

IX. **Adjournment:** 5:35 p.m.

