



FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

Thursday, January 25, 2024 (meeting held via Zoom)

In attendance: Speaker: Ott Walter; Communications Director: McDonnell; Accounting: Briggs; Art, Design, and Art History: Brooks; Biology: May; Chemistry: Kokhan; Comm. Sci. and Disorders: Clinard; Comm. Studies: Nelson; Comp. Inf. Sys. & Bus. Analytics: Wang; Computer Science: El-Kadi Rizvi; Early ELED & Reading: Mathur; Economics: Elwood; Edu. Found. & Exception: Brown; Engineering: Morton; English: Gerber; Finance & Bus. Law: Parker; Foreign Languages: Lang-Rigal; Geol. & Environ. Science: McGary; Grad. Psych.: LeBlanc; Hart School of HSRM: Hallmon; Health Sciences: Lassiter; History: McCleary; IDLS: Schmitt-Harsh; Integrated Sciences: York; Justice Studies: Castle; Kinesiology: McKay; Learning Tech. & LE: Wiley; Libraries: Price; Management: Pattie; Math & Stats: Garren (proxy); Media Arts. & Design: Mitchell; Mid, Second, & Math: Shoffner; Military Science: Morris; Music: Suggs; Nursing: Lewis; Phil. & Rel.: van Leeuwen; Physics: Butner; Psychology: Melchiori; Social Work: Yeom; Soc. & Anth.: Trouille; Strategic Leadership Studies: Vanhove; Theatre & Dance: De Sanctis; Writing Rhetoric & Tech Comm: Hickman; Part-time Faculty Reps: Harlacker, Janow, Trocchia; Guests—Oldmixon, Shackelford, Carter-Hoyt, Knight, Matos, Carter, and others.

- I. **Call to Order**—3:55 p.m.
- II. The minutes from December were approved.
- III. **Provost's Report**—Dr. Elizabeth Oldmixon, Vice Provost
 - The email about inviting a BOV member to classes was clarified via a Canvas announcement by the speaker.
 - The state fully approved the COE Lab School, a partnership with BRCC and Broadway and East Rockingham High Schools, expected to bring in \$12 million in additional revenue beginning in fall 2024.
- IV. **Speaker's Report**—**Dr. Katherine Ott Walter**
 - The speaker reiterated the main idea from the 1/25 Canvas announcement about BOV class observations: Many BOV members aren't educators, so observing classes can help to inform them about what faculty do. Inviting BOV members to your class is purely voluntary. Do not feel obligated to respond.
 - A volunteer is needed for the [A&P Faculty Hiring Review Task Force](#), which is co-chaired by Erica Lewis and Michael O'Fallon and meets Wednesdays from 3 to 4. The task force expects to complete their work this semester.
 - Send feedback about the new math standard proposal to the speaker (ottwalmk@jmu.edu). One suggestion was made to clarify on the website that JMU has the resources to help students succeed in their majors (so as not to accidentally give a false negative impression to prospective students).

- If you're serving on a search committee and have feedback, send it to the speaker (ottwalmk@jmu.edu).
- Guests invited to discuss campus safety: Malika Carter-Hoyt, Jack Knight, Anthony Matos, and Christi Carter.
 - Dr. Carter-Hoyt is the Vice President of DEI and Chief Diversity Officer. She emphasized that free speech underpins diversity and that we must uphold robust protections for academic freedom. Nevertheless, [the Office of Equal Opportunity](#) protects workers from discrimination and harassment. Discrimination and [harassment](#) are not covered by free speech.
 - Jack Knight is University Counsel for JMU. He serves at the pleasure of the Commonwealth of Virginia Attorney General. JMU is an open campus—open to the public as a general matter, though people can be asked to leave if they don't have legitimate business on campus. Last semester, the gentleman posting unapproved flyers was violating [Policy 3104](#).
 - Anthony Matos is the Chief Law Enforcement Officer at JMU. He's been here for about two years after retiring from Fairfax County. Campus Police can respond to any situation that arises on or off campus since they have concurrent jurisdiction in the City of Harrisonburg.
 - Christi Carter is the director of the Office of Equal Opportunity.
 - The following questions (in italics) were asked and responded to:
 - *Where do the policies live? And what can we do better so that faculty, especially those who teach at night, will feel safe? Is there a distinction between visitors having access to grounds versus buildings (GMU has, for example, a policy that limits access to buildings)?* Policies can be accessed [here](#). JMU does not have a policy that dictates access to our buildings separate from access to grounds, though some buildings (e.g., dorms) do require card access. JMU's buildings are public property. Further card access can be looked into.
 - *If someone violates policy, what action can be taken?* Call Campus Police. However, a policy violation is not punishable by law enforcement unless an unlawful activity occurs. The Policy Committee, chaired by Rick Larson, can review any policy [if someone has a suggestion for how a policy could be amended](#).
 - *Faculty and students felt uncomfortable and unsafe as a result of [the incidents in the fall](#). It wasn't clear what the university was doing to respond to these concerns.* The university has legal obligations and humanistic obligations. That's what's being grappled with in such circumstances.
 - *How are the decisions made about which buildings require JACard access after hours? Adjunct faculty, in particular, have been denied access to buildings they need to get into.* Consult the [building coordinator](#).

- *What if someone appears to be sleeping in a building?* Call Campus Police. Campus Police are trained to be sensitive to law-enforcement interventions in such situations.
- *Has the repeat offender in question from last semester been banned from campus?* No. JMU has to look at the criminal law. When he's asked to leave, he always complies with the request from police.
- *Does an incident have to escalate to a threat of violence before a ban can be imposed?* The physical safety of campus is the main focus for the police. The flier fellow has not been deemed a physical danger to society.
- *This specific person aside, what protection does a faculty member have?* Contact Campus Police. They can be anywhere on campus in ninety seconds. Officers do foot patrols every night. One goal is to make people feel safe. The LiveSafe app has a panic button with geolocation. Dr. Wendy Rippon is JMU's threat assessment analyst, and there are a tremendous number of people working behind the scenes to keep campus safe. Campus policies are living documents that can be changed, though they can't be overbroad (based on Supreme Court rulings).
- *"Your security is yours to manage"—Is this the message that senators should be relaying to faculty colleagues (that building access is essentially equivalent to access to the Quad)?* In this day and age, you should always do your due diligence.

V. Treasurer's Report

- Treasurer Cathy McKay reported a total of \$5,297.37 in the senate's combined accounts.
- Six bereavement forms were processed since the last meeting, for a total of twenty-six this academic year, which started in May.
- One department, Business Management, still owes dues (now two months overdue).

VI. Committee reports

- A. Faculty Concerns—Chair Kristen McCleary noted that the authors of a statement about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict are working to revise. The goal of such a statement will be to promote education and conversation. The [Faculty Concerns](#) Committee met with the Policies Committee in December to revise AA Policy #2 about the AUH model. They will next meet on 2/1 or 2/8. They have a couple of more resolutions to discuss, including on the use of course grade distributions in annual evaluations.
- B. Policies—Chair Smita Mathur reported that the committee has been working on AA Policy #2 and expects to submit the policy to Elizabeth Oldmixon and Michael O'Fallon by 2/7.

- C. Adjunct Affairs—Chair Leslie Harlacker is working to schedule the committee’s first meeting of the semester. They will discuss compensation and contributing to the workload conversation. They also plan to work on access to facilities across breaks for adjunct faculty who are continuing to teach for JMU. In addition, the committee will consider definitions of different types of online teaching.
- D. Teaching and Student Relations—Chair Kala Melchiori proposed that the committee meet on 2/8. They will discuss class size (single versus double versus triple) and also defining online learning.
- E. Budget & Compensation and Government Relations—no report
- F. Faculty Appeals—no report
- G. Research and Scholarship—Chair Melanie Shoffner emphasized the upcoming January 31 deadline for [mini-grant proposals](#). The committee will work quickly, with the aim of announcing winners in the first week of February.
- H. Shared Governance—Chair Sasha Kokhan announced that the committee will hold its first meeting on Monday, 1/29.
- I. Other Committee Reports—Faculty Handbook Committee Chair Jennifer Lang-Rigal reiterated information sent to faculty in an email: 11:59 p.m. on February 4 marks the end of the public comment period. The committee will read every comment and send proposals to the speaker, the provost, and the president. An absence of comments tends to be interpreted as support.

The speaker has been in conversation with Elizabeth Oldmixon about convening a committee to overhaul the faculty handbook.

Christine May, who serves on the Core Curriculum Appraisal Task Force, reported that the group is working to open up avenues for faculty input and discussion about GenEd renewal. Last semester, [conversations were held, including opportunities to hear from speakers about national models](#). Expect an announcement soon about upcoming open forums.

Michael Hickman, who serves on the GenEd Council (GEC), reported that they are looking at the recent APR. Some members will be attending [the AAC&U Institute](#). They seek insight into how to ask the right questions and how to engage constituents.

Sarah Brooks, who represents the GEC on CAP, reported that the group is focusing on the larger process for making change—how change happens logistically.

VII. Open Discussion

- *Questions about snow day policies were raised. There was confusion among faculty and students about what appeared to be mixed messaging. Perhaps those in charge of messaging can come talk to the Faculty Senate. The [delayed opening](#) wording changed in order to provide clarity (not because of a different message), but clear communication is often challenging. Delayed openings occur on the hour (not at class start times) because of classified staff, YCP, bus schedules, etc.*

VIII. Adjournment: 5:27 p.m.