



## FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

Thursday, October 2, 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: Reynolds; Computer Info. Systems & Bus. Analytics: Wang; Computer Science: El-Khadi Rizvi; Economics: J. Doyle; Edu. Found. & Exception: Wiley; Engineering: Harper; English: Lo; Finance & Bus. Law: Parker; Geol. & Environ. Science: Pyle; Grad. Psych.: LeBlanc; Hart School of HSRM: Hallmon; Health Sciences: Zaman; History: McCleary; IDLS: Schmitt-Harsh; Integrated Sciences: Davis; Justice Studies: Svigelj; Learning, Tech., & LE: Jin; Libraries: Price; Marketing: Snyder; Math & Stats: Garren; Media Arts. & Design: Mitchell; Mid, Second, & Math: Shoffner; Music: Suggs; Nursing: Armstrong; Phil. & Rel.: van Leeuwen; Physics: Butner; Political Science: Lubert; Psychology: Zinn; Social Work: Miller; Soc. & Anth.: Porter; Strategic Leadership Studies: Selznick; Theatre & Dance: Zazzali; Writing Rhetoric & Tech Comm: Hickman; Part-time Faculty Reps: Harlacker; Smith; Guests—Kolvoord, Liu, Oldmixon, O’Fallon, and others.

- I. **Call to Order**—3:55 p.m.
- II. The minutes from September 2025 will be considered at the next meeting.
- III. **Provost’s Report**—Dr. Bob Kolvoord
  - The interim provost reported that President Schmidt will have visited all colleges by the next week.
  - GenEd renewal: The Core Curriculum Committee will review the feedback gathered by various constituencies and will soon propose the next model. Feedback will again be sought.
  - The Faculty Handbook Committee is closing in on the latest revision.
  - Having just returned from an AI conference, the provost noted that thinking now about ethical and appropriate uses of AI is critical.
  - The following questions were asked and answered:
    - Is there a policy that a class with fewer than twelve students will be canceled? No, it’s not a hard and fast number. The question is Are we using our resources in the most efficient and effective way? If, for example, there are two sections of the same class with eight students each, there needs to be a good reason for it.
    - In front of Wilson Hall on the first day of classes, there were “Welcome to 13<sup>th</sup> Grade” signs, which is not a message that we ought to be sending to students (that college is simply a continuation of high school). The provost will contact student affairs about this matter.

- Scooter riders on the sidewalks are a hazard. This is another issue that the provost will raise with Tim Miller.
- New forms of transportation and how we move through campus—this is an appropriate issue to address in the strategic plan.

#### IV. **Speaker's Report**

- Guest Dr. Bethany Blackstone co-chairs the Strategic Planning Committee with Sheila Smith and Dirron Allen.
  - President Schmidt's goal is to get to know people and to encourage constituents to generate big, bold, audacious ideas. These ideas can be shared through [the online survey](#).
  - The plan is to listen, outline core pillars in November, build teams, draft the plan, share it, and launch implementation in April.
  - The following questions/comments were raised:
    - Does JMU intend to seek R1 status? The president has raised this issue, but there's no secret R1 plan. How we want to be a research university is very much part of the conversation (not just R1 status).
    - The president meets with CAL next and then COB on October 10.
    - The next idea forum is October 8 from 2 to 3:30 in Highlands. Register on the website.
- The speaker gave the following report:
  - The BOV met on September 18 and 19. Faculty and students gave presentations to clarify to the board what research and scholarship entail. The career center presented on the placement of our graduates. The speaker's written and oral reports to the BOV are posted to Canvas.
  - The Mutual Academic Defense Compact aims to share resources and offer support with the goals of preventing encroachments on academic freedom and freedom of speech.
  - Speaker Ott Walter is the president of the National Council of Faculty Senates. There will be a webinar in November.
  - In response to a question about whether JMU has responded to recent events in higher education, the speaker noted that free speech is critically important to President Schmidt.

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

- There's \$3,300 in the senate's accounts.
- The computer lottery announcement was sent out. October 13 is the deadline to submit documentation of purchases.
- Faculty Senate dues (\$5 from all full-time faculty members) are to be sent to the treasurer by October 15.

#### VI. **Committee Reports**

- A. Faculty Concerns—Chair Sasha Kokhan reported that the committee met and discussed priorities. They are drafting a list of faculty concerns. Dr. Kokhan announced that he submitted some IT-related concerns to Robin Bryan, who will be coming to the next faculty senate meeting. Send your concerns to [kokhaos@jmu.edu](mailto:kokhaos@jmu.edu). He will submit the questions in advance of the meeting.
- B. Policies—Chair Steve Garren noted that the committee is discussing Policy 1304 about outside employment and policy 12 about disruption of class. The committee is drafting a new policy about adopting transcript notations for online classes in the effort to encourage in-person classes whenever possible.
- C. Adjunct Affairs—Chair Leslie Harlacker reported that the committee met. They plan to survey adjuncts to determine what to push for.
- D. Teaching and Student Relations—Chair Anne van Leeuwen announced that the committee's priority for this year will be to discuss AI. Senators should solicit information about pressing issues around AI in our classes and disciplines.
- E. Budget & Compensation and Government Relations—no report.
- F. Faculty Appeals—no report.
- G. Research and Scholarship—Chair Ben Selznick announced mini-grant proposals would be accepted until 11:59 p.m. on October 6, 2025. Fifteen proposals had been submitted, with about twenty more in progress. The chair will be included in REDI liaison meetings.
- H. Shared Governance—Chair Kristen McCleary reported that the committee met. They reviewed the Shared Governance Task Force report and discussed priorities for the year. She co-chairs with Elizabeth Oldmixon the Shared Governance Implementation Team (SGIT), which also met. Their focus will be shared governance at the unit level. Both committees discussed item M2 ("Slow down") from the SG task force report and item M5 ("Meaningfully include staff and students"). On item M2, the committee proposes that no decisions be made in the summer for items which impact faculty. If emergency decisions must be made, there should be follow-up embedded in the process. Concerns about timing might be filed as grievances. This committee would be the likely place to go for faculty who have questions about how or if to file a grievance once the new handbook is in place. There is a need for a faculty advocate in the process.
- I. Other Committee Reports
  - Although the parking committee doesn't meet often, at issue are parking passes for graduate teaching assistants—to give them closer access to classes for which they are the instructor of record. The form incorrectly said that parking passes were just for PhD students.

## VII. No New Business

## VIII. **No Unfinished Business**

## IX. **Open Discussion**

- The following questions/comments were discussed:
  - Solidarity seems important in this moment. It's a time for causing "good trouble." If JMU wants to lead, this body is an important locus.
  - In a time when many universities are struggling, we are fortunate because we have strong communication between faculty and the administration.
  - How much data does the administration have about summer online teaching now versus pre-Covid? The quality of online learning (especially asynchronous) is a concern (e.g., cheating). What quality controls are in place? What limits exist for class sizes in online courses? In Math & Stats and Health Sciences, when faculty members would try to teach in person, the classes wouldn't make. Matriculated students are allowed to take only 10 credit hours of GenEd courses outside of JMU. A similar cap could be implemented for online courses. The suggestion was made to invite Fletcher Linder to a meeting since this is his area.
  - Questions were raised about the letter sent to nine universities from the Trump administration. There's a WSJ article about it.
  - ICE activities have concerned the community. CAL faculty will meet with the dean to discuss the matter.
  - Custodial staff salaries have not increased, but their duties have. Follow-up is needed to address this inequity. There is a schedule in place to address ALICE individuals. Increases can't all be done at the same time. This question will be taken to Towana Moore.

## X. **Adjournment:** 5:19 p.m.