I. Approval of Minutes of November 20, 2017: The minutes were approved.

II. Announcements

Provost Wu wished everyone a Happy New Year, and hoped you had a great break. We start the new year with relatively good news: outgoing Governor McAuliffe’s budget message in December. It will go through the legislative negotiations etc. Governor McAuliffe has put in base budget increase of $4M for year 1, and an increase of $10M for year 2, permanent increases. Other positive allocations include: Science and Technology campus will receive $21M to close funding gap. Some of the Robinson funding gap closes to the tune of $15M. Our collective job is to try to keep good things in Budget. Mason Lobbies party line is to keep things in, please (times 3). There is also some additional financial aid funding, not sure if it will remain or not.

The Curriculum Impact Grant Award winners will be announced this week. We received 23 strong proposals, 16 were funded; basically multidisciplinary collaborations from a wide variety of colleges. Teams already received notice before the break. This will be an annual event. The second round will begin with a half-day workshop on April 20, 2018, followed by a call for proposals, due June 1, 2018.

Discussion: How much more spending on grants compared to other years? Provost Wu: The Curriculum Impact Grant (CIG) was $15M – there were so many good proposals, they were hard to turn down. It’s a little higher than the amount spent on the multidisciplinary research proposals. The announcement will include data.

Last week we held the first department chairs workshop to give new chairs orientation. Topics included where to find the money, HR topics, etc. The workshop was well attended. We will do this on a regular basis, to give new chairs basic information and to ask existing chairs to share their experiences.

Soft launch of the new Provost Office website: took almost a year to complete, designed to be more faculty and department chair friendly; a lot of resources organized. Soft launch intended to get feedback and more user-friendly advice.

New ASLS Faculty Senator Michael Greve elected to replace Daniel Polsby.

III. Progress reports, business, and agenda items from Senate Standing Committees

A. Academic Policies – Suzanne Slayden

The Summer calendar 2018 and the 2020-2021 academic calendars are still not available.
The Associate Provost (who is the communicator between the Registrar and the committee) said this week about the 2020-2021 calendar: "[Registrar] is working on the details around that. It’s a lot more complicated. She should have that ready for review in early February."

We do not know what the complications are.

A copy of the Summer 2018 calendar was sent to us this week, with the Associate Provost saying that it was essentially the same calendar the committee had returned to the registrar last semester with only one identified error that was changed. Upon comparing the two versions (no tracked changes or other way of visualizing changes without manual line-by-line comparison), there were at least 7 changes. The changes were mostly to the drop deadlines that had been calculated differently than what we had agreed upon (again, perhaps a problem with a go-between communicator).

The committee sent the registrar two spreadsheets last semester showing how to calculate the summer Add and Drop deadlines to make them roughly proportional to the deadlines in the standard semesters. Without explanation, the drop deadlines were calculated differently, although we had offered to discuss some possible variations due to the complexity of summer meeting patterns. Included with the summer calendar was a list of Explanations on how the drop deadline dates were calculated. There is ambiguity in a couple of them and we have requested clarification.

**Course Repeat Policy**

The committee hopes to present a new course repeat policy at the February FS meeting. There will be a university-wide limit of 3 attempts. (Academic programs can establish a lower limit.) The student will need to appeal to his or her advisor to repeat courses for the 4th time. The purpose of the policy is to identify students who are struggling academically with a course. Jeannie Brown Leonard is continuing to work with the schools/colleges as well as the Registrar to address implementation issues. {See below for the current draft.}

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**Draft**

- **AP.1.3.4 Repeating a Course**

Some courses are annotated in the catalog as "repeatable for credit." These are courses which students may repeat and receive additional credit for each time the course is taken. Special topics and independent study courses are examples. The maximum number of credits is specified in each course’s description. All grades and credits earned are included in the calculation of the student’s GPA up to the maximum allowable credits. In cases where the student has exceeded allowable credits in a repeatable class, the transcript will exclude the grade and credits of the earliest registration of the class for which credit was earned.

[Note: I’ve wrestled with “exclude” vs. “replace” throughout. Here, it reads as though exclude = expunge. But that is probably not right. Is it meant: .....the grade and credits of the earliest registration of the class for which credit was earned will not be included in calculation of the GPA?]

Graduate students who have earned a satisfactory grade in a course that is not repeatable for credit are not permitted to repeat the course for replacement credit. Grades of B– and higher are considered satisfactory.
unless the academic program specifies a higher minimum satisfactory grade. Students must obtain permission from their academic program to repeat a course in which they have earned an unsatisfactory grade. Each unit establishes procedures for granting such permission. Duplicate credit is not earned. When a course is repeated, all credits attempted are used to determine warning, termination, or dismissal; the transcript shows grades for all courses attempted; and only one grade per course may be presented on the degree application.

Undergraduate students (degree-seeking or non-degree) may repeat undergraduate courses that are not repeatable for credit. There is a limit of three graded attempts for all courses. Academic programs may have more restrictive limits. A W does not count as a graded attempt. This policy applies only to repeating the same course, or courses that are designated in the catalog as equivalent. Appeals to this policy begin with the student’s academic advisor.

The grade received in a repeated course will replace the earlier grade in the calculation of the cumulative GPA, even if the more recent grade is lower. A grade in a Mason course will not be excluded from the cumulative GPA based on taking an equivalent course at another university. Duplicate credit is not earned. All courses taken and their grades remain part of the student’s transcript. The exclusion of earlier grades in repeated courses will not change the academic standing or dean's list notations for the earlier semester.

[Note: It says “exclusion of earlier grades”, when I think it is meant “exclusion of earlier grades/credits in the calculation of the GPA”. The way it is now, it seems that exclude=expunge.]

[Note: Is it necessary to say “cumulative” here? Both the semester GPA and the cumulative GPA will count the latest grade. Only “GPA” is mentioned in an earlier paragraph.]

Academic programs may restrict all students from repeating certain courses or restrict students from repeating high-demand courses for the purpose of improving a satisfactory grade. However, a student who is not a major in the program may be given permission to repeat a course after consultation between the academic program and the student's major program. Academic programs may restrict repeats of certain courses by students in their major. Excessive repeats may result in termination from the major. (See AP 5.2.4 Termination from the Major.)

[Note: The sentence “However, ....student’s major program.” was put in last semester because we needed to clarify the non-relationship between Termination and Repeats. But maybe it is not necessary now, since we have the new sentence “Appeals to this policy begin with the student’s academic advisor.” And because there may be mechanisms that stipulate this that are now in development. ]

Effective July 1, 2011 Federal Regulations no longer allow federal student aid funds to apply to courses that a student has already taken twice with a passing grade. This limitation does not include courses that are "repeatable for credit," as described above. Students should contact the Office of Student Financial Aid to determine how repeated course work would affect their financial aid eligibility.

Discussion: Concern expressed the academic calendars completed as soon as possible; not for a lack of information provided by the AP Committee. Chair Renshaw noted it should not be faculty’s job to calculate deadlines. Do we need a mediator in addition to Associate Provost Muir? Provost Wu asked if this was always done in other Virginia institutions too? He is just curious; are proportional drop deadlines common practice? Add deadlines important because of financial aid; less important in summer as most students don’t receive financial aid. The solution on the table is pretty well spelled out. The Registrar’s Office also needs to enforce permission to take courses elsewhere.
Study Elsewhere

A paragraph in the Study Elsewhere policy (AP.1.4.2) in the catalog was unaccountably removed in the 2015-2016 catalog. We do not know how that happened. The paragraph said that students who do not receive prior permission to study elsewhere will be required to re-apply for admission before their credits will be transferred. (Earlier policy was approved by the FS in October, 2012.) The sanction statement currently appears on the Study Elsewhere permission form obtained from the Registrar's office.

This semester, coincidentally, there was a chemistry major student who did not receive permission to take Math elsewhere, but did so anyway. Ultimately, after she contacted the Registrar's office, she was told (according to the student) to have the Chemistry Dept. fill out a permission form. This is contrary to the policy. The questions are: why is the registrar's office not enforcing the policy that appears on their forms (correctly stated); is the sanction necessary, and if not, how do we ensure students receive permission to study elsewhere; do we need to have students receive permission or should we allow them to do what they wish in this regard?

B. Budget and Resources – Tim Leslie

We hope to have the annual salary report in hand before the Senate meeting. In addition to our other topics, we have engaged Facilities with long and short term faculty concerns. They have offered to conduct tours for Robinson Hall, Peterson Hall and the Potomac Center to let faculty see what’s coming; and to reduce anxiety about their offices. Tim will introduce Frank Strike (Vice President, Facilities) at the next Faculty Senate meeting. B&R plans to present the budget model to the Senate in March, including developments in Indirects and separately on Multidisciplinary programs. Chair Renshaw inquired whether the discussion on indirects addressed the central infrastructure necessary for continued research support. This is not explicitly addressed in the budget model.

We have also been briefed on potential increased commonwealth support on the coming budget and things appear positive. Other topics include the possibility of reducing the credit window for undergraduates. Sr. VP J.J. Davis noted we do not charge for credit 13 to 16 – a $15M expense we do not get revenue for. Other institutions have completely closed this window. We need to look at courses students take for which they are not being charged.

Additionally, we are working on a topic we brought to the administration at the end of last year: course fees. At current there are hundreds of hand-coded fee lines for courses at Mason. Sr. VP JJ Davis noted it will take us two full years to complete the reassessment of the fee structure; the goal is not to get rid of them but to make sure requests are still relevant. She added that the BOV has not been historically friendly to tuition increases, and fees have been used by colleges to account for some of this. Provost Wu noted that with the new budget model in place that some of these incentives have been reduced. VP Davis continued that the goal is to peel back the onion (reference to complexity) and create a new model. 55% of revenue of institution comes from tuition and fees, so these decisions can have large impacts. Another Senator recalled years ago trying to get fee added on for use of collaborative technology – took months to make any headway. Provost Wu also noted that fees can be terrible for students and parents, as these values are often not included in the cost of attendance.
C. Faculty Matters – Alan Abramson and Girum Urgessa

Faculty Evaluation of Administrators: The latest report (2016-17) went out in December. Conversations about how to take a fresh look at it include suggestions from the Faculty Senators at the October 2017 meeting. We will meet with Provost Wu and the deans today to get revisions to make it a more useful instrument. Traditionally we conducted the survey in the spring and published results in the fall. It may be better to do the survey in the early fall, as the deans and administrators write a report to the Provost due July 1st; not necessary to ask them to do double-duty. So we propose skipping survey this spring and have a new survey ready to go in mid-September. Chair Renshaw suggested adding topic to March/April FS Meeting agenda to discuss what are the key pieces faculty are in a good place to evaluate?

Study Leaves: issue raised in the fall; collecting information from deans. Goal to be more consistent with practices among R1 universities.

Faculty Evaluation of Department Chairs: Need for more systemic way; various practices exist.

Summer Teaching Workload throughout the university: We sent out letters requesting information from 10 deans. The Provost was kind enough to ask them to respond: 6 of 10 responses received to date.

Discussion: Evaluation of Faculty Members: Timing varies, some struggles getting evaluations back; many faculty on 9 month schedules, not FY schedules. Provost Wu noted some colleges are switching to electronic faculty evaluation system. Not just for annual performance evaluations, but also used to update resumes, CVs, etc. Chairs need to evaluate in a timely manner. Information for raises must be in by October 2nd. Provost Wu noted every college/school does it differently; often every department does it differently. Should the university take it over for consistency? Interfolio group as one of a number of vendors brought in by Kim Eby – highly customizable to a high degree. Additional vendors will be brought in. Some have seen other institutions’ electronic (versions), sometimes not that good. It will not improve faculty morale to spend money on how department chairs organize evaluations. Has this train left the station? Moving toward customization of research, teaching, etc.?

Provost Wu: Faculty are required to be evaluated, it is better to be more consistent across the board than 2,000 different ways to do it. Software is a tool, not intended to enforce something, available if you want to use it. It would also help junior faculty prepare their dossiers for promotion and tenure. Evaluations managed here in a very decentralized manner. Kim Eby and Thulasi Kumar Associate Provost, Institutional Research and Effectiveness, to look at various tools available. Chair Renshaw will connect the Faculty Matters committee with Dr. Eby.

D. Nominations – Mark Addleson
Nominee to fill a vacancy on Mason Core Committee pending

E. Organization and Operations – Lisa Billingham
We have a meeting scheduled with J.J. and her team regarding faculty support liaison/advisor. No longer use term “ombudsman”.

We have received no feedback on proposal for bylaws change. At the December 6th Faculty Senate meeting, some serious objections were made about provisions for electronic voting.
We await a replacement for Senator Jesse Guessford as he has assumed a new position. CVPA will elect a replacement and let us know.

IV. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives

- Mason Core Committee would like to bring proposed changes to IT/Ethics requirement to FS for a “pre-read” on 2/7, then vote on 3/7. Ethics are taught in multiple places (e.g., communication), not just technology. This is the first CHSS has heard about it, please send details
- FH – anticipated changes? The Faculty Handbook committee will meet on Wednesday. Some promotion and tenure (practices) very deficient. Examples include an associate dean serving as chair of a 2nd level committee; not allowing 2nd level committee to see 1st level committee materials. Another allows absentee ballots. When ballots are emailed, they become FOIABLE, and were they sent to department’s HR person? Strong feelings about validation, only faculty serve on Promotion and Tenure Committees. The Term Faculty Task Force eventually will have standards for evaluation and promotion of term faculty to mirror – we are very interested in this. Suggestion made to have a special meeting in February, perhaps to include Gift Acceptance Policy, to present revisions for an up/down vote in March without any further changes.
- ETC should be bringing proposed items for pilot to us for 3/7 meeting: similar to the old items – CEHD “rogue pilot” working with ETC, may or may not occur in March. Need for parameters, cautious not to use measure if people coming up into promotion cycle. ETC is working on this, and also conducting focus groups with students. The CEHD group is reaching out to ETC to talk to them about considering both proposals.
- Academic Initiatives: We are dealing with a wide number of issues ranging from online education, internationalization, to Mason Impact. One push relates to diversity, and we are proposing a modification of the PTR casebook template that appears to have originated with Provost Stearns, specifically to add the ability to add in a statement on diversity and inclusiveness. The other element worth mentioning is that our relationship with Mason Korea continues to develop. They are working on a faculty handbook, and as a Faculty we should think about what it means to have Mason Korea as a college level entity with regards to inclusion in shared governance.

V. New Business, Updates, and Discussion

- Advancement & GMUF “Primer” Update: Impossible for January/February meeting. Same for the ICOIC committee request. Chair Renshaw will let them know and would like to have primer ready for March meeting.
- Increasing Engagement of Faculty in Administrative Decisions
  - Council for Academic Initiatives and New Ventures – “guinea pig”
- Undergraduate Committee Bylaws (prior changes, broader changes?).
  - Still haven’t determined whether to put these forward for a vote – not for February 7, 2018 FS Agenda.
- Faculty Salary & Evaluation of Administrators – Public
  - Awaiting info on when and why we first began requiring sign-in to view posting. A retired faculty member’s recollection was that it was a compromise, as some faculty objected to posting at all. Others recalled FEA used to be stuffed into mailboxes. Salary data was published on the IRR website, perhaps decision made to locate FEA data in the same place.
Is there a big push to have salary data widely published? It is published in the Richmond Times a year or two later. Identity theft metaphor for use elsewhere. Some feel it is OK to leave as is; some ashamed of certain discrepancies, not anxious to have salary public. Others prefer transparency, better to put it online. People who have information in this society are white males, can use as a basis for comparison. This may cause more drama when we don’t need more drama – we need a strategy for equity to do this in a systemic way.

- Do we need to be respectful of administrators who may not want evaluation information out there? Student evaluations have to be accessed on campus. The question of what we regard as confidential information has changed as the internet comes on. Vote to gather input from people being evaluated about their views on public posting: close (3 for, 4 against). Because so close, Faculty Matters will look at getting input from deans/administrators, Budget and Resources will get input from Faculty Senators. We need more information from representatives of faculty.

- Name changes to Colleges and Departments - processes and concerns: A series of name changes coming to the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS), as well as departments in the college. What is the process? Provost Wu noted CHHS had a faculty retreat about this last week; faculty input important. Some concerned whether dean can impose a name change; expenses to make new signage, etc. Chair Renshaw will report back with additional information.

VI. Agenda Items for February 7, 2018 FS Meeting

- Draft FS Minutes December 6, 2017
- Announcements
- FSSC Reports
  - Bylaw Changes – 2nd view
- Committee Reports
  - Mason Core/AP: Change to Ethics/IT requirements (first view)

VII. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Meg Caniano
Faculty Senate clerk