GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Friday, August 16, 2019, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon, SUB I Meeting Room 3A

Present: Lisa Billingham, Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Shannon Davis, Tim Leslie, Keith Renshaw, Suzanne Slayden, Girum Urgessa, Provost David Wu

I. Approval of Minutes of March 22, 2019 and April 8, 2019: The minutes were approved.

II. Announcements
Chair Shannon Davis welcomed everyone to the meeting. A lot going on throughout the summer, thank you for being willing to be here today. This will be Girum’s last time for now. He will be serving on other committees. Keith Renshaw has served as interim secretary over the summer. She thanked him for his three years of service as Faculty Senate chair, and for the EXC Minutes.

Provost Wu provided updates from a busy summer:

- Presidential Transition: Anne Holton began (as interim president) August 1st. Before that date she has been very much on-site getting things going. Shannon Davis has been very involved interacting with the BOV on Presidential Transition. He praised her role as co-chair of the Search Committee. This is no small thing, and not typical to happen. The faculty engagement sessions went very well.

- On administrative side, busy this summer. The same week Ángel Cabrera’s announcement came out, the Executive Council retreat had already been scheduled at Front Royal Smithsonian site. Very timely, it gave the Executive Council opportunity to come together and figure out what to do in coming year to maintain momentum of university – morale, cohesion to maintain. Ángel was not present at the retreat, as he was in Atlanta for the announcement. We established 2019-20 goals for campus at the meeting. They were also discussed at the President’s Council Retreat, which Shannon attended and contributed to. The overarching goal is to support a smooth presidential transition by keeping momentum on key university initiatives while maintaining campus morale and cohesion. Big categories:

  **Access to excellence**: improve student success and expand access, with some sub-goals.

  **Thriving together**: strengthen thriving, inclusive academic community. Academic community dialogue on different issues, particularly with instructional and research faculty. Added set of goals with Virginia Commonwealth initiative.

  **Talent ecosystem**: enhance national and state-wide leadership in talent creation. To enhance leadership, not just technical talent. Some of this is multidisciplinary in focus, some are specific additions, in line with a new bill that came out of Richmond. 

  **Innovation engine**: Maximize research, innovation, and economic impact. Includes medical education feasibility study, expanding research infrastructure, how to expand
Arlington campus.

**Institutional Effectiveness**: strengthen Mason’s foundation. Under the umbrella of institutional effectiveness, Sr. Vice President Carol Kissal felt strongly institutional support system not on par with the university’s size, scope and status. Completed six hires, including HR, Budget and Planning, and Auxiliary Enterprises with very strong, service-oriented approach. Also, Shannon and Provost Wu have been meeting with Brian Platt, outgoing Presidential Fellow, to get faculty input into institutional effectiveness. Shannon will talk later about their conversations – how to engage earlier in conversations around things.

The goals are our marching orders. Things are surprisingly relatively calm, considering changes and transitions.

Questions/Discussion:
Why were faculty not involved in the recent HR/Sr. VP hiring process? Of the recent hires, why were none internal candidates? That suggests a lack of professional development of our own staff, if no one internally is qualified to move up.

Provost Wu: Sr. Vice President Carol Kissal’s team was almost completely decimated by significant exits since (former Sr. VP) J.J. Davis left. The bench was not particularly deep – part of the problem. Also, there was no well-established succession plan in place. Carol feels strongly need to build it up. It’s partially a management style issue: the SVP’s Office has been more central and hierarchical over the past few years, as compared to the provost area, which is more decentralized. There were some internal candidates: ultimately, the selection of candidates is the work of the search committees. With regard to faculty involvement in the process, Carol had to fill some critical positions quickly, as GMU budget was due to the state by late July. Can’t speak for her, but she may have wanted to include more faculty in process, but then couldn’t due to timing aspects.

Follow up: internal hires at Associate Provost level, but not for dean of S-CAR. Search for new dean of COS?

Provost Wu: Although the Associate Provosts have all been internal (hires), we are doing open searches. Best practices – even with highly qualified internal candidates, to stand up against best candidates; but I get your point. Obviously internal candidates will be considered for these posts. Again, it’s the function of search committee to decide.

With regard to the student experience redesign, no one is in charge of advising for pre-medical students, even with recent reorganization in the Provost office. Most
people know about redesign, but there are pieces in redesign left out – two years ago, there was a pre-med advisor full time, then half time, now none, without any technical support from GMU for students applying to medical school. A lot of folks are feeling anxiety about this. It might be helpful to give a status update about the student experience redesign at the beginning of the academic year.

Provost Wu: Idea to better integrate academic advising and non-academic advising, coaching in a very diverse environment. The new structure is to integrate two sides into one whole, which is a cultural change in perspective, although many trained in the same way. The goal is to better manage to get them to work together, but the anxiety with that change is the most difficult part. He feels strongly about pre-med advising and pre-professional advising in general. For example, financial decisions are often not well thought out. There is also a disconnect between goals and majors – students need coaching. To cross train academic advisors and coaches is a best practice, but involves a very large number of people. He does not think non-degree students will fall through the cracks; new systems should serve them better. The university is investing a significant amount of resources to hire additional coaches and advisors, particularly at the front end. Bethany Usher is looking to fill pre-med advisor positions, along with Rose Pascarell, among many others.

Bethany Usher’s shop (Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education) has done a tremendous job in graduation rate and retention rates.

Who are the contacts? New people hired, need to provide channels to direct whom to talk to. Shannon will reach out to Carol Kissal and Kim Eby to make sure new people hired see relationship with faculty (e.g. new Registrar, new HR director) and will introduce them as part of our first Senate meeting.

Provost Wu: New faculty orientation: 170 new full-time faculty (about the same number hired for third year in a row). Some new faculty may know new administrators more than faculty already here.

Another point: the Faculty Senate charter mandates annual meeting by president – faculty convocation is not a called meeting of the general faculty. Could be joint with barbecue, but has to be advertised as a general meeting. Opportunity to go back to charter to do what we are supposed to do. To discuss with President Holton.

How to facilitate participation engaging in a key moment of transition in the university? Listening sessions, including electronic participation. About 200-250 people participated throughout all the presidential search forums. That is a good degree of participation, especially during summer, but more still needed.

Suggestions included scheduling a meeting at the beginning of spring semester, before
faculty are supposed to be here, such as the Friday before Martin Luther King Day? Many people may go away. Or prior to graduation, before the end of the semester, such as reading days? Faculty still here, not teaching. To have a positive spin, to introduce awards, acknowledge your success? An opportunity to ask questions? Maybe it could be a way to look at all the things faculty have been awarded, ways to engage in celebration in building of community, in a celebratory space. Then also use as an opportunity to talk about ways toward greater engagement between faculty and administration? To send people information about key issues in advance, and give them an opportunity to weigh in. Possibilities to think through and capitalize on Faculty Senate charter. We could reach out to deans to ask how they encourage attendance.

At the Summer Town Hall focused on the medical education study, there were 25-30 people in the room. There will be another open session this fall, conversation with those in the working group who are mostly faculty. Provost Wu impressed by Dr. Hazel’s recognition of importance of engaging faculty early and frequently

Chair Davis reported on the New Senator Orientation, held on Monday, July 29, 2019. Met with four new Senators, a robust conversation; they were very excited about joining the Faculty Senate. They wanted to know what the expected mechanisms for Faculty Senators are to take back to their colleges. Nothing written down. To discuss with internal college units to set up two-way communication.

Discussion: The Faculty Senate Secretary will be taking more charge in terms of communication, could put out a summary to serve as “talking points” for individual Senators to bring back to units. Examples from EXC members included that CVPA has set time on their college agenda; VSE meetings well attended (dean pays for lunch), and Senators are allowed to speak about Senate issues. Suggestion in terms of modelling with others’ experiences, to promote more communication.

Other Announcements:
- Rector Davis will address the Faculty Senate on Oct. 2, 2019 and Feb. 5, 2020
- Interim President Holton will address the Faculty Senate on Nov. 6, 2019 and March 4, 2020
- FS Reception at Mathy House: Tuesday, September 24, 2019, 5:30 – 7:30 pm. We could not get a meeting on a Wednesday.
- EC meeting with President Holton: Friday, November 1, 2019, 10:30 am -12:00 pm
- Appointment of Officers 19-20
  - Chair pro tem: Melissa Broeckelman-Post
  - Parliamentarian: Suzanne Slayden
  - Sergeants at Arms: Richard Craig and (waiting to hear from Catherine Sausville) – Keith noted that she had indicated last year would be her final in this role
III. Progress reports, business, and agenda items from Senate Standing Committees

A. Academic Policies – Suzanne Slayden

- We have a whole list of items. There are still some issues with the 2019-2022 calendar; Monday before Labor Day is very late, would push winter graduation to December 23rd. The Registrar’s Office idea to begin the first Monday of the first full week of classes before the last week of August sometimes results in classes starting two weeks before Labor Day. AP Committee will propose to start classes on the 4th Monday of August, which is fine with the Registrar’s office. We need to come to decision by January for a permanent drop deadline.
- AP will propose a small catalog change regarding credits earned for determination of academic standing in the first semester. The problem is caused by students who present IB/AP credits.
- Selective Withdrawal - proposal to allow non-degree Undergraduate students to become eligible. At present, non-degree students cannot use Selective withdrawal. There is a limit of three withdrawals through entire academic career here, 3 total whether degree or non-degree student.
- UG Certificates - information item to be given to FS

B. Budget and Resources – Tim Leslie

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We are continuing our work on faculty ranks in salary system. There are a number of differences, with one of the drivers being that faculty often do not sign their contracts for a substantial period of time. In IRR accreditation system, this makes faculty look more junior than it is. Provost Wu acknowledged the importance of having correct data on our faculty for the upcoming.

B&R Reported the following:

Promotion Cases (information as of 8/9/19)

43 Success Cases through BoV in May
- 15 Promotion to Full Professor
- 5 Tenured to Associate Professor
- 24 Promotion and Tenured to Associate Professor

Of those cases,

15 contracts have been fully executed and updated in the system;
23 contracts have been returned to the unit and they are waiting for the faculty member to sign the contract,
3 contracts are in the stage of getting signed by the Provost & President; and
2 cases that were successful have resigned from the university.

Discordance in Salary Database (information as of 8/15/19)

37 Discordances Identified from last year's dataset
Of those cases, 2 were correct (honorary values in the title location)
10 were corrected by the Provost’s Office in late spring
4 were corrected by the Provost’s Office over the summer
12 are errors on the banner side that will need to be updated by HR
6 were outstanding contracts that were signed after being contacted by the Provost’s office
3 are outstanding contracts that haven't been signed by the faculty member

Provost Wu provided an update on the 50:50 salary contracts: COS redid a fairly large number of these contracts after the new Interim Dean was in place. It appears that all faculty in Climate have been transitioned.

Concerns continue regarding retention. Of the approximately 175 hires, it appears that about 140 were replacements - only 1 in 5 net increase in institution.

There are a number of new VPs in the Sr. VP Office, and we will work to develop relationships with these individuals in the coming year.

C. Faculty Matters – Girum Urgessa
We listed five items we are working on in our annual report, with suggestions for future actions. FEA 19-20 survey to be distributed in the fall. Chair evaluations: Shannon has a potentially willing dean to pilot this. Teaching loads issue from CHHS – provost guidelines, some schools have their own guidelines, not always posted by each college/school.

D. Nominations – Melissa Broeckelman-Post - distributed a list of volunteers to serve on various committees, appreciates any recommendations you may have.

E. Organization and Operations – Lisa Billingham
Faculty Ombudsperson: Shannon and I met with Lester Arnold (VP, Human Resources and Payroll). We brought what we had passed on the table. They think it’s time we have an ombudsperson. Part of a process, discussed in partnership with working group, if we're looking for full position, we do not have one (not in budget line). Lester recommends starting with one ombudsperson. Lisa will contact O&O and report back to her team.

To build on this, Lester believes not improbable as best practice coming out of working group to include recommendation for ombudsperson. Timeline for recommendations in the spring to include budget line item, as part of recommendations from the working group to be supported and rolled out in the fall.

Questions/Discussion:
The ombudsperson would be a freestanding office, but there are reports expected to roll up to the president. They expect this to be working outside organizational structure. It might be a little too soon to report on this in September, but important to note ombudsperson working independent of HR. Lisa will work on a script, set the stage, and send around for review.

Suggestion for nominations to serve on a “Working Group on Faculty Conduct” related to allegations of Faculty Misconduct. Lisa will look at committee charges. There is interest in this. To coordinate with Brian Platt to get more faculty involvement.

Former FS Chair Keith Renshaw sees need to rethink entire structure. By and large, USCs do more stand-alone work, cites examples of where this works. Brian Platt is working on where we can embed faculty.

Looking over the Grievance Committee charge, it has problems and mistakes. Will distribute to EXC for input.

No presidential fellow this year, some people applied for it. To offer positions somewhere else in the provost space?

IV. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives

The Mason Core committee will provide a brief report at the Sept. 4th Senate meeting.

V. New Business, Updates, and Discussion

- Presidential Search Committee – Girum Urgessa is a member, along with Shannon Davis (co-chair) and Denise Albanese. The committee is working with a search firm and all have agreed that non-disclosure agreements are not necessary. There is a representative from the VA Attorney General’s Office who has briefed the committee on FOIA and the responsibilities of the committee to the public and confidentiality as required by law. The committee will be asked to agree to a Code of Ethics as written by one of the experts in the field. The timeline is not yet clear but should be after the committee meets the Friday before classes start.

- Investigation of Allegations of Faculty Misconduct: Shannon will provide an update at the first FS meeting. Letter of response from Provost Wu and Sr. VP Kissal to the Working Group was discussed. We are working on ways we can inform procedures.

- Term Faculty Committee composition: Kim Eby, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Development asked for Faculty Senate input into the composition of the Term Faculty Committee: The question was whether it made sense to have the composition be similar to the Task Force, which was negotiated between Faculty Senate EC and the Provost Office. The composition seemed to work quite well for the task force, and she would be an advocate of keeping it reasonably similar.
Having said that, it was quite big, so a bit smaller could also work. Here’s what we did last time, with attention to distribution across schools/colleges:

- Co-chairs: Term Faculty member and Faculty Affairs/Development (K. Eby)
- Members: four term faculty from different colleges/schools and tenured faculty member

Ensure that we have the following reps in the constitution

- associate dean rep (tenure-line or not)*chair/LAU head rep (tenured faculty member)
- * Faculty Senate rep (term or not)

How to identify the Faculty Senate rep? Girum Urgessa no longer a Faculty Senator, perhaps he may be willing to serve as our tenured faculty member. It will be important to have some returning members (for continuity) and some new members.

Discussion: Should the Faculty Senate representative come from the Faculty Matters Committee? Consensus emerged to continue with Executive Committee member (19-20 EXC membership to be confirmed after Sept. 4th EXC meeting) as Faculty Senate rep to the Term Faculty Committee.

- Formation of a Reaffirmation Planning Group – Matt Smith, new GMU Director of Accreditation – to respond after the first Faculty Senate meeting.

- **ISSUES FROM 18-19 FLAGGED FOR EXC FUTURE CONSIDERATION/DISCUSSION:** deferred to our next meeting.

**VI. Agenda Items for September 4, 2019 FS Meeting**

- Draft FS Minutes April 24, 2019
- Opening Remarks: Shannon Davis, Chair (to include introductions of new people in places of import in administrative roles; where does announcement of Mathy House go?)
- Provost Wu
- Sr. VP Carol Kissal
- Appointments: Chair pro tem, parliamentarian, Sergeants-at-Arms
- Committee Reports
  - **Executive Committee:** Email server use by non-Mason affiliates; Faculty conduct working group
  - **Academic Policies:** we plan to have action items on the 3-year calendar and the catalog change for credits earned at Mason. The selective withdrawal extended to UG non-degree will be an info item prior to action in Oct. The UG Certificates will be an info item.
Mason Core

- Nominees to the Faculty Senate Standing Committees and University Standing Committees; Faculty Representatives to Committees
  o Note – should be Special Orders, which would come after Committee Reports
- New business
  o Background Check Report for AY 18-19
  o Honor Committee Report AY 18-19
- Post Meeting Election of Chairs of Faculty Senate Standing Committees

Respectfully submitted,
Meg Caniano
Faculty Senate clerk