Present: Jim Bennett, Charlene Douglas, Mark Houck, Tim Leslie, Keith Renshaw, Joe Scimecca, Suzanne Slayden, Susan Trencher, Provost S. David Wu.

I. Approval of Minutes of February 18, 2016: The minutes were approved with one correction.

II. Announcements

Provost Wu reported the state budget is now in the hands of Governor McAuliffe. He can still veto or adjust it by April 15th. Highlights of the proposed budget include:

- Salary raise of 3% for this year (2016). We have to fund half (1.5%) of the 3% raise. There is no particular plan to hold back some of the 3% by deans or provost. Merit raise percentage will be discussed at the next BOV meeting. Salary raise of 2% for 2017. Both 3% and 2% raises are subject to tax revenue projection. If there are significant changes, they reserve the right to take it back. Proposed budget is a lot better than original governor’s budget.

  Discussion: Several committee members recalled resentment generated the last time over allocation of piddling amounts of raises to a few faculty. Funding cut off the top in the past was held back for a variety of reasons, not just merit. If you hold back 1.5% of 3% raise, you are not fulfilling state mandate for 3% raise. Provost Wu reiterated there is no such plan about holding back (funding for raises).

- Undergraduate financial aid increase over $3M – the largest proportion allocated for GMU than for any other VA institutions. Financial aid and compensation are top priorities for us.

- Graduate financial aid: As we continue to fall behind other doctoral institutions in Virginia, they did not respond to our request for additional financial aid for graduate students. Instead we received a lump sum for enrollment growth with “catch” to cap tuition increase at 3% or less. Budget planning anticipated a 5% tuition increase, consistent with previous two years.

- Robinson Hall: Over $110M approved for Robinson Hall – a big item. He recalled trips to Richmond from late fall to mid-March and the visit of the House Finance and Appropriations Committee to Mason in November. During the visit, they were given a tour of Robinson Hall; our strategy worked!

Discussion about messaging, need to better communicate significant news such as majority and minority student graduation rates are the same; admissions numbers in terms of quality have increased over the past five years. Class size did not increase that rapidly, slowed down a bit. Our promise to SCHEV is to graduate 100,000 students over the next ten years. Faculty judge improvement by student performance in individual classes, do not know what students’ scores are.

Mason Korea: Information requested not just including statistics about how they are doing, but also comparison to projections. The Academic Initiatives Committee is working on this issue. Some faculty heard Korean campus students’ performances very poor; “huge and troubling questions in terms of educational mission,” not just revenue. The new President of Mason Korea will report to the BOV APDUC Committee on March 31st; Provost Wu encouraged faculty to attend. The numbers have been revised a few times. We are exceeding revised target of 240; right now we are close to 250 students. There is a
large contingent of Korean students from international schools there; not so much rejects from the Korean university system, but not a good fit for it.

FERPA and the release of student information: Charlene Douglas volunteered to serve as Faculty Representative to the FERPA Committee.

Rector Davis will attend the April 6th Faculty Senate Meeting. There was a meeting yesterday of the Donor Task Force. General consensus to present report in the fall.

Student name preferences in Banner: Some cultures have religious names, or adopt American names; individual choices could also include "odd" names. A small number of students may also be transitioning. Charlene will find out whether legal name would no longer appear in Banner?

State parameters/procedures re changing Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples’ Day pending response from JJ Davis.

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

A. Academic Policies – Suzanne Slayden

Continuing issue of Drop Deadline – why 67% liability deadline was not changed when other deadlines were. What matters most to faculty is 67% drop deadline is totally arbitrary, determined by faculty. Whatever institution decides for drop/add deadlines, not a federal government decision. If it is not arbitrary and cannot move it without affecting deadlines we need to know.

Provost Wu discussed issue with Eve Dauer, University Registrar:

1. Student accounts – about 1500 veterans would not be certified; a big impact on them, would delay third party invoicing.
2. In terms of Institutional Research and Reporting, does not affect census in itself.
3. In terms of financial aid, no impact on R2T4 dates – aid recalculation based on withdrawal dates (R2T4 dates = return of Title IV funds by the student – per Eve Dauer).
4. The Registrar’s Office will work with students encountering difficulties on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion: Strong concerns expressed about lack of consultation of faculty about academic deadline. Other issues include (Registrar's Office) dropping class and classroom space when faculty go on study leave, even when we can find another faculty member to teach the course; meetings take place during the summer when 9 month instructional faculty are away. Unions do not consult and do not listen to us – for many years, management from the top. Pervasive sense administrative offices do not know to consult academic offices.

Provost Wu: In context of snow days, we had an unprecedented number early in the semester. Office under a lot of pressure to make decisions in a timely manner. We were bombarded by student emails – time pressure real. Faculty Senate wants to provide flexibility for make-ups – some faculty prefer set dates.

The Executive Committee concurred they did do a good job with this, but the final drop deadline was not a time stressed decision. They were not concerned about first two drop deadlines. Keith Renshaw's snow day options email to faculty was praised. Larger context taps into sentient
culture in which a lot of decisions appear to be made by administrative side. Faculty disengage – we are caught in a cycle, need for broader cultural shift, we need to do something about it. For example, summer school issues occur each year. Everyone agreed to think about broad contingency plan to get engagement, faculty feedback in the future.

Confidentiality of Student Comments in Evaluation Forms: Provost Wu investigated and was told more in category of practice than policy. There is nothing in the Faculty Handbook, no official policy one way or the other. He finds practice argument believable as he reviews Promotion and Tenure packages. Some include student comments; in practice people share them freely.

Discussion: No one in Faculty Senate recalls the former Provost announcing at a Faculty Senate meeting confidentiality of student comments no longer in effect. New cover sheets state one’s supervisor reads them. Sometimes comments can be taken out of context, may not be statistically significant, not measureable. Practice changed without consulting faculty. Also noted some departments use a lot of adjunct faculty, comments may signal problems. Chairs contacted do not remember former provost telling them they could read comments. In some schools and departments, administrators have always read them.

B. Budget and Resources – Susan Trencher
Salary data on its way to being posted – tackled language a little bit. New this year – bottom tabs include 5th tab for stipends. Data does not indicate whether term or tenure-line faculty, but we did not ask for it. Should be possible to discern by title “e.g. term assistant professor” but not always indicated. Recalls term faculty base salary levels set 7-8 years ago; some term faculty earn much more.
The committee will meet with Sr. Vice President J.J. Davis April 8th, requested additional info about new budget model.

C. Faculty Matters – Keith Renshaw and Joe Scimecca
The team implementing the recommendations Presidential Task Force on Sexual Assault and Interpersonal Violence asks if the Faculty Senate willing to vote to require language included on syllabi:

   “Guidelines for Reporting Sexual Misconduct
Mason is committed to a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and incidents of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. As faculty members, we are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730 and/or http://integrity.gmu.edu/compliance/titleIX.cfm).”

Discussion: About 8 lines required on syllabi, has no problem adding one more line, but also to let the Task Force representatives know this is not how to get the message out. Others include only academic statements on syllabi, general consensus not to include statement, but no objection to presenting to Faculty Senate for a vote.

Criminal Background Check reports: In the past, Human Resources has provided responses to questions, no one has balked or refused. The committee decided to include future reports on the agenda of the first Faculty Senate meeting of the academic year (early September).
Other Items: Faculty are getting offices while on study leave in the library. Ongoing issue COS tenured faculty having to raise half their salary – grievance filed. The Grievance Committee will come to decision soon. This will become a very important policy issue.

D. Nominations – Jim Bennett
University Distinguished Professor Peter Boettke is nominated to serve as Faculty Senate Representative to the GMU Foundation. Charlene Douglas is nominated to serve as Faculty Senate representative to the FERPA Committee. We have just learned that Paula Petrik retires in May and will need another committee member to replace her on the University Promotion, Tenure, and Renewal Appeal (UPTRAC) Committee.

E. Organization and Operations - Mark Houck: The committee is working on the Multilingual Task Force Committee charge.

IV. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives
University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee – T. Leslie
Tim has worked with Janette Muir to make final edits to bylaws; to present at April 6 FS Meeting.

V. New Business, Updates, and Discussion
• Sexual Harassment Language in Syllabi; see Faculty Matters Committee report.
• Discussion about case of colleague falsely accused of multiple sexual harassment – an open and shut case. Student allowed to withdraw “W”, not “D” or “F” with notation about Honor Code violation. Faculty member went to court - in public record. Nothing supporting the faculty member involved – has this issue just diffused? Feels this is very egregious – what are faculty rights? In Misconduct in Research and Scholarship Policy, if respondent is found innocent of misconduct, university to make every effort to restore his/her reputation. There needs to be a letter of exoneration placed in the innocent faculty member’s file. The faculty member received a form letter from the Equity Office, then a revised letter drafted, which the faculty member received. In a case this open and shut, the institution cannot explicitly say student was wrong, faculty member was right (innocent)? Provost Wu will check with Sr. Vice President JJ Davis regarding letter of exoneration. Faculty outrage student was not expelled; if in this case, student allowed to walk away and there is no institutional recognition of faculty member’s exoneration, how should faculty conduct themselves? There is nothing in the Faculty Handbook about this; you can gripe to Human Resources. Legalities be damned, not an unreasonable request to say faculty member was exonerated of all charges.
• Misconduct in Research and Scholarship Policy Draft - for April 6th Faculty Senate meeting, presentation by Dr. Aurali Dade, Assistant Vice President for Research Compliance. Development of new procedures and policies by Aurali Dade and faculty committee with language which coalesces to make it work for faculty and students. Recall Faculty Senate voted on copyright and patent policies, to continue tradition of Faculty Senate voting on this.
Discussion: Does this solve problems?
Suzanne Slayden: Better timelines now, a lot tighter. The involvement of Aurali Dade as ORIA professional means issues no longer left to Vice Presidents. Many faculty worked on this which helped her understand faculty point of view.

VI. Agenda Items for April 6, 2016 FS Meeting

- Draft FS Minutes March 2, 2016
- Rector Davis
- Provost Wu
- Announcements
  Charlene Douglas (CHHS) nominated to serve as Faculty Senate representative to the FERPA Committee; University Distinguished Professor Peter Boettke is nominated to serve as Faculty Senate Representative to the GMU Foundation. (Nominations)
- Annual Faculty Senate Evaluation of the President and Provost by Faculty Senate and University Standing Committees 2015-16 (Other Committees/Faculty Reps)
- Misconduct in Research and Scholarship Policy Draft – Aurali Dade (New Business)
- University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee – Tim Leslie (Other Committees/Faculty Reps)

Respectfully submitted,
Meg Caniano
Faculty Senate clerk