GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, April 10, 2017, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
Innovation Hall room 419

Present: Alan Abramson, Mark Addleson, Lisa Billingham, J.J. Davis, Charlene Douglas, Tim Leslie, Suzanne Slayden, S. David Wu

In the absence of Keith Renshaw, Charlene Douglas chaired the meeting.

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

II. Announcements

Provost Wu: Admissions deadline is May 1st nationwide. So far all the indicators are strong, undergraduate, graduate, in-state and out-of-state; mild and better increases – too early to celebrate before the deadline, not to be taken for granted, bucking national trends. Demographics peaked a few years ago. Even for international enrollment, worry about Trump effect. Survey of admissions counselors indicates about half have had significant dips in international applications; the latter half have experienced a mild increase. Helpful for faculty who are in contact with prospective students – weekend event, to get best class of students. All our numbers are up, matters a great deal. EXC members also noted staff are an important frontline with parent/student contacts; environment where you leave your child important.

Upcoming BOV meeting (May 11, 2017): Keith Renshaw will report on changes to the Faculty Handbook at the next APDUC meeting. Provost Wu will be there to support him – joint effort – and hopes you can be there in support of whatever questions are asked. A copy of the changes will be provided in advance to Visitor Karen Alcalde, APDUC chair.

Term Faculty Task Force charged and scheduled to meet. A Joint FS-Provost Office effort – to do some data collection work in waning month and through summer, bulk of work will occur in the next academic year.

Sr. VP Davis: The next BOV Meeting on April 20th is an open meeting. A student Town Hall is scheduled for that evening. Should the FY 18 financial plan be adopted, has a moderate tuition increase. Some VA schools have announced tuition increases: JMU 6%, VCU mid 5%, not surprising in context of decreasing state support for public universities. State auditors have been in the (Budget) Office for six weeks, auditing FY 16 books. FY 17 books will soon close. FY 16 hope to close them out next week – May, FY 17 hope to close them out in June 2017.

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

A. Academic Policies – Suzanne Slayden

Change to 2017-2020 3-year Academic Calendar

The AY 2017-2020 calendar already approved, subsequent changes made to Commencement and degree completion dates. We have not approved Summer 2018,
Summer 2019, Summer 2020 calendars. We need to very carefully watch the detailed Summer 2017 calendar.

B. **Budget and Resources – Tim Leslie** – nothing new on the horizon.

C. **Faculty Matters – Alan Abramson** – The Faculty Evaluation of Administrators is still out. We need more responses, encourages everyone to participate.

D. **Nominations – Mark Addleson**

It has been difficult to get nominees – the ballot for BOV Committees will go out in the course of a week. A call for nominations will be coming out for the Student Experience Redesign Committee. We are still looking for a nominee to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee for Graduate Student Health insurance. The committee may do some work in the summer. Lisa Billingham volunteered to serve in lieu of candidacy to serve on another committee.

E. **Organization and Operations – Lisa Billingham** – we’re good.

IV. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives – no reports.

V. **New Business, Updates, and Discussion**

**Update on room for FS meetings:**

We have Robinson B113 for AY 17-18. There are a very small number of classrooms with capacity 100+. Of the 24 classrooms with capacity greater than 60, few have tiered seating. There is a large room on the first floor of Innovation Hall which could be customized for Faculty Senate meetings. The Registrar’s Office has not offered a replacement should Robinson B113 become unavailable.

Do we need to schedule more meetings or longer meetings? Are there too many guest speakers? We need to do Senate business. Chair Renshaw has written to committee chairs asking if they wish to make brief presentations. Room constraints noted above, can we get a room for a longer period of time? Some Faculty Senators teach at 4:30 p.m. Suggestion to distribute a straw poll – to start meetings earlier/later/to have longer meetings/more meetings, e.g. 2 meetings in February, 2 meetings in March? Some departments/committees schedule meetings around ours.

**Election of AY17-18 FS Chair at upcoming FS meeting**

Feedback received on slates distributed in advance of meeting to elect FS chair. Suggestion made to include reminder in advance of meeting about nomination process, important to communicate all nominations made from the floor. Some people (Senators) feel it is a closed process. People don’t know who is running; give Senators a chance to read blurbs distributed in advance by the Nominations Committee. Others do not see it as a closed process and generally oppose circulating nominations for FS chair in advance of meeting in the same way; see gateway process as an error.

Executive Committee Course Release Fall 17
FS Chair Keith Renshaw recommended Suzanne Slayden receive the course release for Fall 2017. Suzanne agreed to accept the course release. No objections were made.

New Senators – involvement in committee leadership
From an email from FS Chair Keith Renshaw: “how to engage fairly new senators in leadership of the Senate, possibly as co-chairs, or if some people are considering stepping down as chairs of their committees…. wanted to (a) get others’ thoughts on newer people they see as potential contributors, and (b) encourage everyone to think about this in regard to their own committees.”

Summer salary and budgets (Joe Scimecca)  
A general discussion about violations of the Faculty Handbook Section 3.3. Summer Salaries included various observations and suggestions:

- Summer School guidance numbers put out by central taken as biblical down the line. Central is happy to staff more things if you can put bodies in there. Faculty are told it is a budget situation. Some see this as a communication problem, others disagree.
- Sr. VP JJ Davis noted the provost meets regularly with department chairs. We are in a resource challenged environment. Another option is to go to the Associate Deans as a revenue issue.
- It is time for a new line of communication. When the Summer School was its own shop, Faculty Senators Joe Scimecca and Rick Coffinberger researched and found out summer school was a multi-million dollar business; faculty not receiving their share. The new budget model integrates summer school into academic year. Does not separate budget model in summer.
- Provost Wu sees similarity to adjunct situation. Mason operates in a decentralized fashion; variations from one school to another. The real question is should we impose a university-wide policy on summer school pay? The only way to do this is to raise the minimal ___. Colleges and schools have autonomy to raise the minimal if they wish to do so. He does not believe we could mandate that.
- The Budget and Resources committee asked for average pay for student/department = the number of bodies in class.
- Some programs are a 12 month operation. 10% summer salaries could break a department’s budget.
- Never ever say the reason summer is expensive is the cost of utilities. As programs went online, we continued to hear this excuse.
- We have a Faculty Handbook stuck in 1976, when there were few term, adjunct faculty. Most faculty were tenure-line at that time. Institution has changed radically; it needs to be changed radically.
- If the minimum number of students to meet salary costs is less, recommended salary should be pro-rated.
- Faculty as a whole should be aware of the framework, not just deans and associate deans.
- A program specific number, customized by program, college? Or university-wide guidelines?
- Supports present Handbook text, but what constitutes “financial constraints”?
- We cannot resolve this, we need new language.
• To evaluate current situation if not tenable, reconsideration does not mean unfavorable, but more viable given current situation.
• We hear complaints from faculty who are told they cannot teach in summer. Some schools have produced their own guidelines. Some units do not offer any courses during the summer.
• Faculty have option to file a grievance.
• To focus on summer offload (overload) teaching? Offload not limited to summer, other semesters, any load beyond your regular load.
• You cannot require faculty to teach a summer course.
• Every college and school has load guidelines during academic year; need to have policy/guidelines broadened for summer.
• In some colleges there are a large number of faculty teaching more than 4:4 load. Is that a good idea? To address as overload compensation?
• Sensitive issue to change policy, a seismic shift.
• Goal to look at equity, are there systemic differences by college? To obtain aggregate data by college/school, not distinct individuals. We are missing a lot of pieces to this.
• HR guidelines for full-time status preclude adjunct faculty to teach too many hours, would violate full time status.

VI. Agenda Items for April 26, 2017 FS Meeting
• Draft FS Minutes March 1 and April 5, 2017
• Announcements
  ▪ Provost Wu
  ▪ SVP Davis
• Election of Faculty Senate Chair 2017-18 (Special Orders)
• Committee Reports
  o Academic Policies – 2017-2020 3-yr Academic Calendar
  o Nominations
    ▪ Office of Graduate Education committees
    ▪ Student Experience Redesign committee
• Annual Reports 2016-17 from the Faculty Senate Standing Committees, University Standing Committees, and Ad Hoc Committees (Other Committee Reports)
• Annual Faculty Senate Evaluation of the President and Provost (received one more from Stanley Zoltek)
• Student Senate Resolution
• Brad Edwards, Assistant Vice President/Director, Intercollegiate Athletics

VII. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Meg Caniano
Faculty Senate clerk
Attachment A

I would like the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to look into what is a potential violation of the Faculty Handbook concerning summer school pay.

The Faculty Handbook reads as follows:

Summer Salaries 3.3

The University offers a summer program consisting of several sessions. Full-time faculty members assigned to teach a summer course shall be paid 3.33% per credit hour (10% per three-credit course) of their nine-month salary. If a course is valued at a higher or lower amount for workload purposes during the academic year, the summer payment will be assigned by the academic unit accordingly. Every full-time faculty member who wishes to teach in the summer shall be afforded an opportunity to teach one 3-credit course (or equivalent) at 10% of their annual nine-month salary, assuming he or she is qualified to teach the course and that the course meets minimal enrollment criteria and appropriate scheduling, curricular, and pedagogical needs. Furthermore, full-time faculty should not be excluded from teaching additional courses at 10% of their annual nine-month salary when no demonstrated financial constraints exist. Grievances over what constitutes financial constraints should be resolved at the local level, but if no agreement can be reached, then the Provost and the Faculty Senate’s Executive Committee will be the designated body to resolve the disagreement. Summer teaching is optional, and in no case may it be required of a faculty member. Faculty may be paid no more than one third of their prior academic year salary for all summer work, regardless of funding sources.

Faculty members whose contracts end in the spring semester prior to the start of summer, or whose contracts begin in the fall semester after the summer semester, will be paid for summer teaching according to the salary matrix. Exceptions can only be granted by the Provost Office.

Faculty and LAU administrators on 12-month contracts who teach during the summer do not earn additional pay for teaching unless the teaching assignment is an overload assignment. Overload teaching is paid according to the salary matrix and must be approved by the Provost.

The example I am using to point out a violation of the Faculty Handbook is based on the Summer School allocation for the Department of Sociology and Anthropology (the only departmental allocation to which I have access).
SOAN was allocated $43,288.67 for Summer 2017. According to Associate Dean of CHSS, Robert Matz, this allocation “is based on an assumption of a mix of full time and part time faculty.” This, though, is not the case concerning SOAN, which has never used a mixture, and which is not in the Faculty Handbook nor in the original Memorandum of Understanding, signed by then Provost Peter Stearns, then Faculty Senate Chair Don Bolieu, and myself, then Chair of the Senate Faculty Matters Committee. For the summer of 2017, ten full-time faculty members, 10% of whose salaries exceed $90,000, have asked to teach. If their classes met the minimum standard of 15 students (set by CHSS), according to the Faculty Handbook, they should be paid the full amount, which exceeds the $43,000 allocation. The stated reasoning behind the $43,000 allocation is that CHSS is working under financial constraints because of the new budget model. This is then used as a justification to violate the passage in the Faculty Handbook that states: “Furthermore, full-time faculty should not be excluded from teaching additional courses at 10% of their annual nine-month salary when no demonstrated financial constraints exist.”

Well over a decade ago, when as Chair of the Senate Faculty Matters Committee, I was told that the summer school was operating at a loss, and that summer school salaries should be capped at $5,000, in my position as Senate faculty Matters Chair, I investigated and found that to the contrary the summer school was producing a huge profit. Today, there seems to be similar misinterpretation concerning faculty compensation in the summer. To put it simply, if the Faculty Handbook says, to repeat, that faculty should not be excluded from teaching summer school, “when no demonstrated financial constraints exist.” If every college (again, I don’t know if it is every college) is starting out at a deficit, faculty whose raises have been a pittance over the years) are once again being forced to suffer in order to make up deficits. What it comes down to is that any college can say it needs to make money from the summer school and not pay faculty who want to teach (many of whom really need the money given the cost of living in Northern Virginia.)

The bottom line here is that by allocating a set amount of money before requests to teach go in, this allows the administration, if they so desire, to arbitrarily manufacture budget deficits for any college and opens Summer School allocations to violations of the Faculty Handbook.

If the Senate Executive Committee wants to discuss this issue further, I would be happy to meet with them.

Joe Scimecca