Present: Lisa Billingham, Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Richard Craig, Shannon Davis (Chair), Provost Mark Ginsberg, Sr. VP Carol Kissal, Tim Leslie, Kumar Mehta, Solon Simmons, Suzanne Slayden, Chief of Staff Ken Walsh (guest).

I. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of August 24, September 14, October 5, October 22, and November 16, 2020 were approved as distributed.

II. Announcements

Chair Shannon Davis welcomed Chief of Staff Ken Walsh to the meeting. Committee members introduced themselves around the room.

Provost Ginsberg

- Expressed appreciation for the work and leadership of Executive Committee members in helping prepare for Spring 2021. He shared his belief that the university has been mindful and strategic in its planning and is well-positioned and well-prepared.
- Almost 3,000 students are in process of moving into the residential facilities.
- COVID testing programs are being scaled up significantly, with plans for scaling up from 1,000/week to eventually 10,000/week.
- Spring 2021:
  - 60% of graduate classes are face-to-face or hybrid, and account for 28% of graduate students on campus at least once a week.
  - 40% of undergraduate classes are face-to-face or hybrid, and account for 17% of the undergraduate students on campus.
  - Density of campus in Spring 2021 will approximate that for Fall 2020.
- Decision regarding staffing of the campus has been deferred to the end of February.
- Conversations for planning of Fall 2021 are beginning. The hope is that faculty and staff, who are in Group 1c, will be vaccinated by Fall 2021.
- Re Vaccination, University is working in concert with local health departments in Arlington, Fairfax, Prince William and Loudon. There’s a hope and a desire to have vaccination stations on campus.
- Thanked everyone who participated in conversation with candidates for VP for Research position. He noted that close to 150 faculty attended each presentation and many have provided feedback to the search committee.

Discussion:

- Timeline for completing the search for VP for Research.
  Provost Ginsberg: After President Washington has met with the candidates, they will be meeting to decide on the next steps.
- On Chair Davis’ suggestion – he is very supportive of informally designating “spring-break week” be the “no meetings week”. He will be encouraging units around the university to do the same.
- Registrar’s office is still receiving and processing requests for Fall 2020 alternative grading. The summary report will be generated after all of the requests have been processed.
• After discussions with Senator Slayden, Senator Letiecq, and Gesele Durham (Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning) – decision was made to not publicly share student evaluation of teaching. The results have been shared with faculty and their department chairs.
• Stressed on the need to have a conversation to look carefully at question of refreshing and restarting the student evaluations.
• Continuing conversations looking at expanding online undergraduate education in Fall 2021 and beyond. He expressed interest in thinking about leveraging recent experience to increase remote and virtual learning.
• Refreshing the Vision series.
  o First in the new vision series on February 22. Professor Cynthia Lum of Department of Criminology will be our speaker. She will speak on community policing from a contemporary perspective.
  o Three total this semester: February, March, April.

Discussion:
  o Senator noted that there were already nine hours of meetings scheduled for the “no meetings week” and inquired about the plan for communicating this across the campus. Provost Ginsberg clarified that his intention is not to mandate, but to encourage. He noted that this was a recent conversation, so he will be working on a communication to include in the next Newsletter.
  o Senator shared experience of increasing number of referrals to OAI and inquired if OAI could publish aggregate statistics on referrals, cases, outcomes. This would help raise awareness for faculty and inform of any specific trends. On student side, it may serve to deter potential violation. Provost Ginsberg invited an offline conversation on the topic.

Sr. Vice President Carol Kissal
• As part of Federal stimulus, Mason received $35 million of which $10.5 million is dedicated to scholarship and fellowship. Remainder can be used for expenses related to COVID and/or offsetting lost revenue.
  o Mason started with about $115 million deficit. After Federal stimulus bill, and additional state funding – Mason will end up not needing to tap into reserves for $38 million as previously anticipated.
• The Tier III legislation is moving through the state Commonwealth right now has been passed by the House and is moving to the Senate. We fully expect it to pass. After that, Mason will have some autonomy in a number of areas.
• Horizon Hall is expected to receive certificate of occupancy today.
• Master Plan: A meeting is being scheduled in mid-February with the Steering Committee. DumontJanks will be presenting the next set of decisions that have been made, such as talking about the identity for each of the campuses and how to proceed from there.

Chief of Staff Ken Walsh
• Shared his academic background and service which has included serving in the Faculty Senate and chairing committee.
• Noted that the transition to Mason with President Washington occurred during the COVID crisis and emphasized the positive experience of working with faculty and university leadership at Mason.

Discussion:
• Chair Davis invited thoughts on General Faculty Meeting, specifically around timing, and agenda.
  o Dr. Ken Walsh noted that two items of great interest to President Washington are – anti-racism initiative and Master Plan for the university.
  o Executive Committee members discussed the quorum requirement of 10% and hope that recent experience with attendance at Zoom meetings, it is achievable.
  o The General meeting would be called by the President’s office and the Zoom event organized by them.
• Senator invited Dr. Ken Walsh to share the unexpected positive surprise and areas where collective effort is needed to meet his and the President’s expectations.
  o Dr. Ken Walsh shared that both have been pleasantly surprised by the degree to a lot of sincere conversations through this crisis have focused on what is meaningful and good for the students. The extent of existing suspicion and distrust between faculty and administration has been an unexpected challenge. President Washington is interested in building trust and working collaboratively to move forward.
• Senator inquired what Executive Committee can do to aid in building the trust.
  o Dr. Ken Walsh shared that a suggestion of trust building effort from Carter School is in process now. He shared his opinion that much of the lack of trust is historical and that his experience of interaction with Committee Chairs and with officers of the Senate have been extremely positive with everyone coming from a place of sincerity.

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

A. Academic Policies – Suzanne Slayden
   No business to report.

B. Budget and Resources – Tim Leslie
   • Committee is expected to have the salary data to release by the time of the Faculty Senate meeting.
   • Senator Leslie has an upcoming meeting with Provost to discuss release of college financial data.
   • Salary adjustments: Recommendations for low values from the first regression have been sent to the deans. The deans have now been solicited to provide a response in the form of who receives raises. He shared his understanding that the hope is to implement the first stage of those by the end of March.
   • Issue of workload and class sizes has been brought up again and Senator Leslie requested collective feedback.
Discussion:

- Chair Davis requested insight into the extent to which the Salary Equity Study Committee has been a part of the conversations around adjustments.

Senator Leslie was not aware of presence/absence of such engagement. He noted that the data used in regressions was also not going to be shared.

Chair Davis conveyed her desire to ensure that faculty elected committee has been a part of the conversation. She encouraged Senator Leslie to ensure that the Salary Equity Study Committee is engaged and part of the conversation.

Senator Leslie shared that he is not even aware of exactly what variables were used in regression and there has been no formal disclosure other than the statement that it is being done for internal equity. He expressed that he was unsure whether any further information would be forthcoming without involvement of higher authorities.

- Chair Davis requested that Budget and Resources Committee and Faculty Matters Committee jointly examine the issue of workload and class sizes to come up with recommendations for EXC on how to proceed.

Discussion:

- Provost Ginsberg observed that class size determination is a complex issue. It needs to consider pedagogical differences, resource requirements, local academic unit constraints, etc. Additionally, there are issues around Online vs. Offline. He noted that this issue offers opportunity for true collaboration between administration and faculty, colleges and registrar's office to adopt a more systemic perspective.

- Senator shared alternative models for determining workloads that factor in nature of course and enrollment.

- Chair Davis thanked the working group of Senators Leslie, Simmons and Mehta to further examine the issue and submit recommendations to Executive Committee.
C. Faculty Matters – Solon Simmons

1. Faculty Evaluations in time of COVID
   - Committee has produced and shared its report with the Provost.
   - Kim Eby (Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Development) has been reviewing this report. She has also been very active in this area of helping to make sure that faculty are fairly reviewed during this difficult time.
   - Unclear regarding the next steps.

Discussion:
   - Since all Faculty Senate Committees report to the Faculty Senate, Chair Davis requested the committee to revise its report based on recommendations from Kim Eby and share at our next Executive Committee meeting (February 16) for inclusion in the next Senate meeting agenda.

2. FEA Update/Discussion
   - The Faculty Evaluation of Administrators with quantitative scores was released on January 13, 2021.
   - The committee is working on the qualitative side and expects to release the qualitative results soon.
   - Provost Ginsberg has expressed some concern with the methodology.
   - Discussion on timing of FEA so that it can be relevant to and inform the annual evaluation of the administrators.

Discussion:
   - Provost Ginsberg:
     - Commended the committee on its report to Kim Eby
     - Noted that evaluation of administrators happens at the same time as faculty – in Fall semester.
     - Expressed support for timing FEA such that it is useful as one of the elements for the annual evaluation.
   - EXC discussed different ways to increase response rates for FEA and also ways to increase its relevance for annual evaluation.

D. Nominations – Melissa Broeckelman-Post and Richard Craig
No report at this time.

E. Organization and Operations – Lisa Billingham

1. Faculty in non-collegiate academic units and other updates on apportionment
   - Based on conversations with Janette Muir (Associate Provost for Academic Initiatives and Services) and Renate Guilford (Associate Provost for Academic Administration) with the goal of ensuring that all individuals who are members of the General Faculty have voting representation on the Senate – In concert with revision of the Charter, the committee has identified a way forward to meet this goal.
- Identified 31 full-time faculty from five different groups that do not have Senate representation. Majority of the identified faculty report to Associate Provost Janette Muir.
- Currently discussing a way to categorize these faculty and provide representation. When such codification occurs, the faculty would need to determine their own processes and procedures for determining their representative(s) to Faculty Senate.
- To enable the representative to be a voting member of Senate, Charter revision is required.

2. **Faculty Senate Charter Proposed Changes for first review**  
Chair Davis, Senator Slayden (as parliamentarian), and Senator Billingham have reviewed and discussed the revisions to the Charter.

- With the goal of 1) clarifying some parts of the Charter, 2) being inclusive and providing General Faculty access to voting representation in the Faculty Senate the revision, and 3) make recommendations about future process.
- In concert - some provisions in the Faculty Handbook under Faculty Organization have also been revised (Chapter 1).
  - Defines General Faculty as all faculty at any George Mason Univ. campus. For example, it would make Mason-Korea faculty member to be eligible to serve on any committee where General Faculty are eligible to serve.
  - Categorizes all faculty with no Collegiate affiliation as **Independent Academic Unit**.
- After consideration of enabling representation for different groups, the recommendation is to increase the number of Faculty Senators to 51. This enables colleges to maintain their current representations and adds 1 more Faculty Senator.
- Revised language to enable General Faculty to meet electronically.

**Discussion:**

- There was discussion on representation formula and if 51 represented a long-term solution or would need to be revised again.
- There was discussion on potentially revising “mail ballot” to “electronic ballot”. It was determined that “mail” can be broadly interpreted, and the change was not necessary.
- Discussion on timeline necessary for proposal to Faculty Senate and approval, for President Washington to be able to call a meeting of the General Faculty.

3. **Committee Charges under review**
   Revised charge for the Mason Core Committee, and Admissions Committee will be submitted for next Faculty Senate Meeting.
   Revisions to the charge of Athletic Council are ongoing and if completed, they will be submitted for next Faculty Senate meeting.

4. **Grading Process Task Force Update**  
There will be an update next month.
IV. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives

- Faculty Handbook – Suzanne Slayden
  - Revised definitions in Chapter One to address changes within Mason.
- Faculty Conduct Working Group – Shannon Davis
  - Expects to be able to share policy group recommendations in time for the February 3rd FS meeting, or if not for the March 3rd Senate meeting.
  - The policy recommendations and other documents will be made available to the university (and posted on the Faculty Senate website).
- Faculty Success Initiative – Shannon Davis
  - From the Faculty Success Initiative Forum:
    - Extent to which the Senate, the Senators and especially the Executive Committee were accessible to the university.
    - Chair Davis will hold a coffee session (Zoom meeting) every Friday after a scheduled Faculty Senate meeting and invite Executive Committee members to join.
    - Faculty will be to get any clarifications, get their questions answered, inquire about initiatives, etc.
    - The goal would be to increase the engagement.

V. New Business, Updates, and Discussion

- Coffee and Connect with Faculty Senate Executive Committee – Friday 9-10a after each scheduled Faculty Senate meeting (Zoom link to be listed on Senate agenda when distributed).
- Schedule special meeting with Visitor (BOV Liaison to the Faculty Senate) Tom Davis outside of Executive Committee meeting time (all committee chairs are encouraged to do the same) Meg will send out a note to all Executive Committee members to try to schedule a time outside of an Executive Committee meeting with Visitor Tom Davis.
- Planning for 2021-2022 Faculty Senate meetings
  - Continued discussion from December 2020 Executive Committee meeting
  - Fall 2021: FS meetings will be Zoom meetings because the university is not expected to be full open.
  - Decision needs made for Spring 2022
    - Discussion about logistical challenges with hybrid meeting. Namely: a) coordinating participation, b) voting, c) conducting the meeting.
    - Senator noted the newest technologies introduced in the Horizon Hall classrooms, and how they may make it easier.
    - Chair Davis noted that Room 163 represents the only room which meets the size and technology requirements to accommodate all the Senators and attendees. Especially with classroom shortages, taking any of the classrooms offline would be problematic.
    - Option to have 2021-2022 meetings all online and use that period to get more comfortable with technologies and conducting hybrid meetings.
    - Dr. Ken Walsh shared that BOV is working to enable hybrid meetings, and offered to assist in enabling a solution for the FS meetings.
    - Chair Davis concluded the discussion with request to continue deliberations.

VI. Agenda for FS Meeting February 3, 2021
Committee Reports:

A. Faculty Senate Standing Committees
   Executive Committee
   - Coffee and Connect with Faculty Senate Executive Committee
   - Special Meeting to consider proposed revisions to the Faculty Handbook:
     Wednesday, March 24, 2021 3:00 – 4:15 pm via Zoom
   - Executive Committee scheduled meetings:
     Thursday, January 21, 2021
     Tuesday, February 16, 2021
     Tuesday, March 16, 2021
     Friday, March 26, 2021
     Monday, April 12, 2021

   Academic Policies
   Budget and Resources
   Faculty Matters
   Nominations
   Organization and Operations
   - FS Charter Proposed Changes
   - Admissions Committee Proposed Changes
   - Mason Core Committee Proposed Changes

B. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives
   Faculty Handbook Committee
   - Faculty Handbook Proposed Changes – Action Item
   - Faculty Conduct Working Group Report

New Business

Announcements
- Provost Ginsberg
- SVP Kissal

Remarks for the Good of the Faculty

Adjournment -- Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted.
Kumar Mehta
Secretary
Appendix A

George Mason University

CHARTER
OF
THE FACULTY SENATE

Adopted by the General Faculty of George Mason University on April 3, 1974
last amended on September 28, 2000
and as it may be subsequently amended by the General Faculty.

I. Membership of the Faculty Senate

A. Members

Ex Officio, nonvoting members:

President of the University
Provost of the University
The Deans of the Colleges and Schools
Dean of the University Libraries
Chair of the Faculty at any Non-U.S. Mason Campus
Administrative Faculty approved by Voting Members

Voting members:

Faculty Members Elected from the Collegiate and Independent Academic Units

B. Apportionment of Elected Senators

The number of elected Senators will be specified in the bylaws of the Faculty Senate. The number of Senators representing each collegiate and independent academic unit shall be determined according to the principle of proportionality, based on the full-time equivalent size of the instructional faculty of each collegiate and independent academic unit on February 1st of each year. Instructional faculty refers to full time and part time faculty with support from appropriated funds. The following restrictions apply:

1. The threshold size for any collegiate or independent unit to receive its own individual allocation of Senate seats is set at the total University Instructional FTE divided by the maximum allowed number of elected Senators as stated in the Faculty Senate bylaws. In the instance that this ratio is not an
integer it will be rounded up to obtain the threshold size. All collegiate or independent academic units will receive at least one seat.

2. No collegiate or independent academic unit will hold more than half of the elected Senate seats. In the event that one collegiate unit exceeds 50% of the total FTE, then the threshold size will be calculated using the total FTE of the remaining units divided by one-half of the total number of elected Senate seats.

By March 1st of each academic year, the Senate Committee on Organization and Operations shall establish the representation from each unit on the basis of the figures provided by the Administration. Elections shall follow within each unit as soon as possible, to conclude before the end of the academic year.

C. Qualifications of Elected Senators

Elected Senators shall be members of the constituent Faculties they represent. A faculty member is eligible to serve on the Faculty Senate if the faculty member holds

1. A full-time instructional tenured, tenure-track, or term appointment with at least one year’s full-time service at George Mason University; or

2. A part-time instructional appointment with at least one academic year of continuous service, and completion of at least two Full Time Equivalents in appointments at George Mason University.

D. Election of Senators

Each collegiate or independent academic unit shall decide upon the method of electing its representatives, with the stipulation that they be elected for staggered terms, the maximum to be three years.

II. Responsibilities of the Faculty Senate

A. As Representative of the General Faculty

1. The Senate shall have the fundamental general responsibility to speak and act for the General Faculty on matters affecting the University as a whole.

2. The Senate, on behalf of the General Faculty, shall have the particular responsibility to formulate proposals on those matters affecting the welfare of the University as a whole. In the best traditions of American universities, these recommendations constitute the primary advice to the administration.

3. In extraordinary circumstances, the General Faculty may, by the following procedure, reverse specific decisions of the Senate:

   a. The President shall call a meeting of the General Faculty to consider reversal of a specific decision of the Senate within ten working days of receiving a petition to do so signed by at least 10% of the voting members of the General Faculty. To be valid, a petition to reverse a specific decision must be submitted no later than two weeks after the public posting of minutes reporting the Senate action. The meeting shall be conducted according to the current edition of "Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised" except as the rules and
procedures prescribed therein have been modified by adoption of bylaws or standing rules.

b. No vote on the issue shall occur at the meeting. Rather, the meeting shall determine whether or not the General Faculty should subsequently vote on the issue by mail ballot.

c. If the meeting approves a mail ballot, it shall be distributed within five instructional days of the meeting.

d. The ballots shall be tallied and the results shared with the General Faculty within five instructional days after their distribution. To pass, the motion to reverse a decision of the Senate must be approved by a majority of those eligible to vote.

4. The General Faculty may amend the Senate Charter during either a General Faculty meeting or a special meeting of the General Faculty convened for the purpose of amending the Senate Charter. The meeting shall be conducted according to the current edition of “Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised” except as the rules and procedures prescribed therein have been modified by adoption of bylaws or standing rules.

a. Regular meetings of the General Faculty may be called by the President, who serves as the presiding officer. All members of the General Faculty have voting rights on matters that pertain to the General Faculty. All members of the University community may attend meetings of the General Faculty and participate in the debate of matters that come before it.

b. The President shall call a special meeting of the General Faculty to consider amendments to the Senate Charter within ten instructional days of receiving a petition to do so signed by at least 10% of the voting members of the faculty or after receiving proposals approved by the Senate or the Provost.

i. Notice of the special meeting shall be accompanied by a copy of the proposed changes. Both should be received at least 5 instructional days before the called meeting.

ii. A quorum for the called meeting shall be 10% of the voting faculty. Debate at the meeting shall be on the proposed changes. To pass, the proposed changes must be approved by a majority of the voting faculty who are present and voting.

d. Amendments to the Senate Charter that have been approved by the General Faculty must be presented by the President to the Board of Visitors for their approval.

c. Amendments to the Senate Charter shall take effect immediately upon their passage and approval by the President and the Board of Visitors.

5. The authority of the Senate to make recommendations to the administration on behalf of the General Faculty shall not extend over the internal affairs of any single collegiate or independent academic unit except as they affect the interest of the University as a whole or the interest of other units.
a. If a disagreement arises between the Senate, acting for the General Faculty, and the faculty governance bodies of one or more single collegiate units over the question of which body properly exercises authority on a specific issue, the President shall decide by assigning the contested issue to one or another body.

b. If the Senate, acting for the General Faculty, takes an action which a collegiate faculty governance body believes violates the legitimate interests of that collegiate unit, the President shall decide.

B. As Advisor to the President

On matters affecting the entire faculty and transcending collegiate unit boundaries, the Senate shall be the primary faculty representative in consultation with the central administration and the President. The Senate and the administration recognize that consultation in such matters implies an obligation on the part of each to engage in regular communication. After due consideration of the Senate’s advice, the President will reach a final decision and communicate it to the Senate. If the decision differs from the Senate recommendation an explanation will be included in this communication.
Appendix B

Grading Process Task Force

GOAL
The Grading Process Task Force will consider the grading scheme used at George Mason University for its undergraduate and graduate students and make a recommendation for our future grading processes. This task force is intended to evaluate the university’s previous use of the plus/minus grading system prior to COVID-19, assess the implementation of the alternative grading system as a result of COVID-19, and develop a proposal for how we will transition from the optional alternative grading system used during this crisis to the grading scale that will be in place for the future. The Task Force is further asked to be mindful of students and programs with a variety of backgrounds, as well as the communicative value of grading schemas to students once they leave the institution.

CHARGE
The Grading Process Task Force is charged with doing the following:
(i) Assess the advantages and disadvantages of the current A+ to F structure in place
(ii) Conduct a thorough review of peer institutions, best practices, and existing scholarship about the advantages and disadvantages of other known schemes, including such options as Mason’s ‘Alternative Grading Scheme’ used in Spring/Fall 2020, High Pass / Pass / Fail, ranked grading, straight A-F scales, plus/minus scales, and any other system deemed worthy of consideration by members of the committee
(iii) Make a recommendation about which grading scheme best fits the institution’s mission, providing a rationale and support for that recommendation
(iv) Outline a potential timeline, cost, and a communication plan for implementing any recommended changes

DELIVERABLE OUTCOME
After deliberation and external engagement, the Task Force is charged to bring a report, including proposed action items and rationales, to the Faculty Senate for subsequent approval and implementation by University Administration. If appropriate for time-sensitive elements, intermediate reports and action items are welcomed.

COMPOSITION
The Task Force shall be composed of:
(i) One instructional faculty member from each college or school, elected by the faculty of that college or school
(ii) One member of the Academic Policies Committee
(iii) Two students: one elected member of GAPSA and one elected member of Student Senate
(iv) the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education (or designate)
(v) the Associate Provost for Graduate Education (or designate)
(vi) the Director of the Stearns Center (or designate), and
(vii) the Registrar (or designate).