GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING
APRIL 7, 2021
Electronic Meeting, 3:00 – 4:15 p.m.

Number of attendees: 148


Visitors present: Julia Adams (Human Resources Specialist, INTO Mason), Melissa Ainsworth (Assistant Professor, Division of Special Education, Kellar Inst. for Human disabilities), Quentin Alexander (Senior Director of Academic Advising, Undergraduate Education, Office of the Provost), Pam Baker (Director, Special Educ and disAbility Research/Associate Professor, CEHD), Laurence Bray (Associate Provost for Graduate Education), Lisa Breglia (Senior Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs, CHSS), Alecia Bryan (Associate Director of Development, CHSS Development and Alumni Relations); Tom Butler (Senior Associate Registrar, Office of the Registrar), Felicia Carr (Assistant Dean, Strategic Communications and Marketing, CHSS), James Casey (Associate Director, Virginia Serious Games; Assistant Professor, Computer Game Design, CVPA), Jessica Clark (Development and Communications Officer, University Libraries), Elizabeth Dean (Special Assistant to the Dean, VSE), Angela Detlev (Assistant Provost, Institutional Research), Kathleen Diemer (Associate Vice President, Advancement and Alumni Relations), Sharon Doetsch-Kidder (Term Assistant Professor, English/PW Assistant Program Coordinator, INTO), John Dooris (Assistant Director, Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning), Edward Douthett (Associate Professor of Accounting, Northern Chapter VSCPA Professor, SBUS), Gesele Durham (Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning), Kim Eby (Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Development), Cody Edwards (Associate Provost for a Sustainable Earth; Executive Director, Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation), Bridget Euliano (Assistant University Librarian, Access and Resource Management), James Finkelstein (Professor Emeritus of Public Policy, Schar School of Policy and Government), Brian Fitzpatrick (Part-time Faculty, English), Stephanie Flores (HR Project Manager, College of Science), Kimberly Ford (Director of Personnel Operations, Office of the Provost), Saidi Ganjalidadeh (Assistant Professor, Information Systems and Operations Management, School of Business), Chris Galvan (Systems Operations Engineer, Learning Support Services, Information Technology Services), Brian Gant (Finance Director, Information Technology Services), Marcy Glover (Operations Manager, Academic Initiatives and Services/4-VA Dep Campus Coordinator, Office of the Provost), Renate Guilford (Associate Provost for Academic Administration), Molli Herth (Program Manager, Faculty Affairs and Development, Office of the Provost), Jo Ann Henson (Business and Economics Librarian University Libraries), Kimberly Hoffman (Lead, Science and Technology Team, and Mercer Library), Alex Iszard (Associate Vice President of Planning, Design and Construction, Facilities), Marcy Jerome (SD Program Coordinator, Kellar Inst. for Human disAbilities), Matt Karush (Professor, History and Art History, CHSS), Stevie Kelly (Administrative and Program Specialist, Faculty Affairs and Development, Office of the Provost), Maoria Kirker (Lead, Teaching & Learning Team, University Libraries), Sr. Vice President Carol Kissal, Laura Kosoglu (Associate Dept. Chair and Associate Professor, Civil, Environmental and Infrastructure Engineering, VSE), Jamie Lester (Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs/Strategic Initiatives, CHSS), Bethany Letiecq (Associate Professor, Human Development and Family Science, CEHD), Nelli Levin (Senior
I. **Call to Order:** Chair Shannon Davis called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

II. **Approval of the Minutes of March 3, 2021:**
Approval of minutes was postponed to next meeting.

III. **Opening Remarks – Shannon Davis, Chair**
Opened the meeting by thanking everyone for all their work and engagement.

IV. **Committee Reports**

A. **Senate Standing Committees**

   **Executive Committee – Shannon Davis, Chair**

   • Mason Korea Faculty Assembly Updates: [Bylaws](#) and Officer Elections
     - Mason Korea Faculty Assembly has voted to approve their bylaws (link above).
     - Currently, the Assembly is collecting nominations for their assembly officers, expects to have their elections completed during the week of April 19.
     - Expect to provide a link to the information through Faculty Senate website.

   • Coffee and Connect with Faculty Senate Executive Committee [Appendix A](#)
     - Thanked those who joined previous sessions, and invited members of Faculty Senate and General Faculty to join the Executive Committee on April 9 for any questions/discussions.
Joint Resolution with Staff Senate: Feasibility Study for Dependent Tuition Waiver
  • On behalf of the Executive Committee, presented the joint resolution (included below) and called for discussion.
  
  There was no discussion. The motion passed.

Joint Resolution of George Mason University Faculty Staff and Staff Senate to be Delivered to Administration and Board of Visitors

April 2021

WHEREAS Mason faculty are compensated at the 37th percentile relative to our peer institutions; and
WHEREAS Mason staff have reported increasing concern with compensation levels when asked in the Quality of Work-Life survey; and
WHEREAS the regional high cost of living affects all Mason employees and their families; and
WHEREAS dependent tuition waivers are an important recruitment and retention benefit that can help to keep employees at Mason, and is currently a benefit that often draws faculty and staff to other institutions,
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate calls upon the Administration and Board of Visitors to authorize a study to evaluate the feasibility, costs, and steps needed to offer a dependent tuition waiver as a benefit to Mason employees; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this study should include the possibility of a reciprocal agreement among all Commonwealth state university employees; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the results of this feasibility study should be shared with the Faculty Senate and Staff Senate by April 1, 2022.

B. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives
  Faculty Handbook Revision Committee – Senator Suzanne Slayden

  Faculty Handbook Revision Committee
  Proposed Revisions to the Faculty Handbook
  Faculty Senate meeting

  April 7, 2021

  Proposed revisions to the 2020 Faculty Handbook were presented to the Faculty Senate on March 24, 2021. After discussion during the Faculty Senate meeting, the committee recommended changes in three sections.

  The revisions text is linked to

  On behalf of the Committee, it is moved
  That the Faculty Senate approve the proposed changes to the 2020 Faculty Handbook as submitted by the Faculty Handbook Revision Committee.
committee this year who represented the Term Faculty Committee and they met at additional time separately from us. Although some of the revisions were simple, others were discussed repeatedly by the committee during the year until we were able to agree on the final language. So the revisions that were presented on March 24 were the result of deliberate collaborative work by that committee. The changes brought back to you today were in response to concerns expressed by the faculty then, and since. An important aspect here is that we strive for consensus. If you all were to propose any changes today to the revisions that were previously submitted that are on the agenda, these are not likely to have been thoroughly discussed, nor would there have been any prior notice given to the senators or to the larger community that such changes would be proposed, and any of the changes that might be proposed today or even voted on today would necessarily be referrals back to the committee, because they've not been considered and approved by the administration, nor have they been reviewed by the university's legal counsel. Legal counsel goes through all of our proposed revisions as we make them and then afterwards. It is because of this lengthy collaborative work that's done by the committee, representing both the faculty and the administration that we ask you today to vote without any further changes.

Discussion:

- Senator made a motion to strike the following words from the presented motion: “as submitted by the Faculty Handbook Revision Committee”.
  
  Follow-up
  
  - Chair Davis ruled the motion out of order since the proposed amendment would essentially be the negative of the main motion.
  - There was discussion on Robert’s Rules and parliamentary procedures.
  - The Chair's decision to rule the amendment out of order was appealed.
    - A vote was called on whether or not the decision of the Chair should be sustained:
      - The result was 20 votes in favor; and 15 votes against sustaining the Chair’s decision.
      - The Chair’s decision was sustained.
  - Senator expressed concerns about removal of language that has a cap of 25% in terms of full-time faculty who can be on limited term contract.
    - Follow-up:
      - The Faculty Handbook Committee Chair shared data (Appendix B) to emphasize on the concerns about rapidly increasing proportion of term faculty:
        - In terms of % faculty composition at university level for term, tenured, and on-track over last 10 years.
        - Comparative data with SCHEV approved Public Peers and R1 universities in Virginia to highlight the differences in proportion of term faculty.
        - College/School level trends over past 5 years.
  - There was discussion on: a) the reasoning for removing the language, b) the need for revisions to be accepted by all parties including Provost’s Office, President and BOV, c) Handbook revisions being an ongoing process.
  - A motion was made and seconded to end debate and vote immediately on the question: Votes: 22 votes in favor of ending debate; 16 votes against. Failing to obtain 2/3 majority - the debate continued.
  - Senator proposed voting on approving the revision and voting on a motion instructing Chair of Faculty Senate to appoint a task force to work with administration on creating the guidelines for future faculty hiring.
    - Follow-up:
      - Recognizing there was a motion already on the floor, Chair Davis noted that she could not recognize the motion for the task force.
  - Following further discussion, a motion was made and seconded to extend the session by 10
minutes. The motion was approved.

- There were clarification questions regarding the timing and importance of voting on the motion during this meeting. Chair Davis informed everyone that for the revisions to be on BOV meeting agenda for May, it was her understanding that the revisions would have to be voted on during the current meeting.

- Motion was made to postpone discussion of the motion on the floor to next meeting.
  - Follow-up:
    - Senator proposed exploring possibility of calling a special meeting to continue discussion.
    - Chair Davis noted a special meeting requires one week notice as per bylaws. If the purpose of the meeting is to suggest additional revisions, if approved, those revisions would also need to be approved by full Faculty Handbook Committee, the Provost, and a review by legal counsel before they can be submitted to the BOV.
    - Vote was called on the motion to postpone the discussion: Votes: 18 votes in support of motion to postpone discussion; 20 votes opposed. The motion to postpone discussion did not pass.

- There being no further discussion, Chair Davis called for vote on the motion. Votes:
  - 27 votes in affirmative
  - 15 votes opposed

  The motion passed.

A motion was made and seconded to extend the meeting ten minutes. The motion did not pass.

V. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kumar Mehta
Secretary