

## **Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting**

Date: April 30, 2025

Presiding: Solon Simmons, President

### **1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m. after a quorum was established.

### **2. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the meetings on March 19 and April 2, 2025, were approved without correction.

### **3. Chair's Report**

Senate President Solon Simmons provided the following updates:

- **Board of Visitors (BOV) Meeting:** The BOV is scheduled to meet on May 1, 2025, with the university's DEI measure being a topic of significant interest.
- **International Students:** The SEVIS records for affected international students have been reinstated<sup>4</sup>. It was noted, however, that eight students may have already left the country on their own.
- **Faculty Senate of Virginia Coalition:** Simmons is in conversation with the Faculty Senate of Virginia to create a formal coalition of faculty senate leaders from across the Commonwealth. The primary purpose of this group will be for information and resource sharing to better respond to actions affecting multiple state institutions.

### **4. Election of the Faculty Senate President**

As a candidate for the office, President Simmons ceded the chair to President Pro Tem Melissa Broeckelman-Post to conduct the election.

- Solon Simmons self-nominated for the position.
- With no other nominations, Solon Simmons was approved as the next Senate President by acclamation.
- In his acceptance, President Simmons thanked the Senate for its support and affirmed his commitment to representing all faculty, including AP, instructional, research, and adjunct faculty.

## 5. Standing Committee Reports

- **Academic Policies (Doug Eyman, Chair)**

- The committee had no formal report but noted that the Graduate Council has updated several policies, including those for full-time student status (AP 6.2), non-degree student status (AP 6.4.1), and master's degree requirements (AP 6.9).
- Provost James Antony announced a new, year-long university committee, co-chaired by Solon Simmons, to develop recommendations for supporting and funding PhD and MFA students.

- **Budget and Resources (Delton Daigle, Chair)**

- A proposed tuition increase is on the agenda for the upcoming BOV meeting.
- CFO Deb Dickinson is retiring and has moved to an advisory role; Dan Stevens is serving as the interim CFO.
- The senior leadership team has approved three key recommendations from the budget model redesign process: the IDC rate recommendation, the cost of space recommendation, and the tuition revenue allocation methodology. Detailed information will be posted on the budget redesign website within a week.

- **Faculty Matters (Mohan Venigalla, Chair)**

- The Faculty Evaluation of Administrators (FEA) survey deadline was extended to Friday, May 2, due to a technical glitch that initially excluded Mason Korea. As of the meeting, the response rate was 467 out of over 1,700 faculty.
- In response to a question about the survey's impact, Provost Antony affirmed that he is a "data person" and will use the FEA data as part of his annual evaluations of deans.
- The Carter School had the highest FEA participation rate (68%), while the College of Science was among the lowest.

- **Nominations (Lee Black, Chair)**

- The full slate of nominations for standing committees will be presented at the first meeting of the fall semester.
- The committee opened the floor for nominations to fill three vacancies on the Mason Core Committee.
- Following a complex series of nominations from the floor and concerns that all potential candidates had not been considered through the formal process, a motion was made by Melissa Broeckelman-Post to table the election until the fall. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

- **Organization and Operations (Catherine Sausville, Chair)**

- **Motion 1:** A motion to amend the composition of the Faculty Matters Committee to require at least one term faculty member and three tenure-line faculty (with at least two holding tenure) was presented<sup>26</sup>. The motion passed by a voice vote.
- **Motion 2:** A motion to create a new University Standing Committee on Intellectual Property, with a specified charge and composition, was presented. The motion passed by a voice vote.
- **Motion 3:** A motion to create a temporary Graduate Grading Process Task Force to focus specifically on graduate grading was presented. The motion passed by a voice vote.
- **Faculty Handbook (Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Chair)**
  - Two handbook changes were presented for a second reading and final vote. It was noted that these changes will not go before the BOV until fall.
  - **Motion 1: Tenure Upon Hire:** An update to the policy on granting tenure at the time of appointment was discussed. The goal is to streamline the process while maintaining rigor. The motion passed by a voice vote.
  - **Motion 2: Merit-Based Salary Increases:** A change was proposed to require that each college or school establish and communicate a clear process for awarding merit-based salary increases to ensure transparency. The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.
  - **Announcement:** Non-substantive updates will be made to the handbook to reflect changes in office names (e.g., the DEI office) and position titles (e.g., Senate Chair to Senate President).
- **Technology Policy (Delton Daigle, reporting)**
  - A final reminder was issued that Blackboard will be decommissioned on July 15, 2025, and all faculty must migrate their materials to Canvas. Summer 2025 courses will be held exclusively on Canvas.
  - In response to a concern about Graduate Council archives being lost from Blackboard, it was confirmed that there is a plan to migrate all materials to Teams and/or Canvas to ensure public access is maintained.

## 6. New Business and Announcements

- **Campus Climate Survey:** An announcement was made encouraging faculty to inform their students about the Campus Climate Survey, which closes on Friday, May 2.
- **Memorial for Jim Bennett:** President Simmons announced a celebration of life for former Faculty Senate President Jim Bennett would be held at 5:00 p.m. that day in the Center for the Arts.

## **7. Provost's Remarks**

Provost James Antony thanked the faculty for their hard work, research, and commitment to shared governance. He stated he is happy he came to Mason, largely due to his "tremendous colleagues on the faculty".

## **8. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved by a voice vote. The meeting was adjourned.

### **List of attendees**

#### (40) Senators present:

Supriya Baily, Ioannis Bellos, Alok Berry, Lee Black, Johanna Bockman, Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Jamie Clark, Richard Craig, Delton Daigle, Kevin Dunayer, Kelly Dunne, Douglas Eyman, Daniel Garrison, Thalia Goldstein, Victoria Grady, Seth Hudson, Jessica Hurley, Melanie Knapp, Kerri LaCharite, Siona Listokin, Tamara Maddox, Alexandra Masterson, Alexander Monea, Valerie Olmo, Robert Osgood, Anna Pollack, Greg Robinson, Pierre Rodgers, Ellen Rowe, Catherine Sausville, Zachary Schrag, Solon Simmons, Cristiana Stan, Caroline Sutter, ANTHONY TERRELL, Benoit Van Aken, Mohan Venigalla, David Wong, Abbas Zaidi, Jie Zhang,

#### (11) Senators not present:

#### (3) Ex-officio Senators Present:

Ann Ardis, Mark Rozell, James Antony

#### (151) FULL List of attendees (senators and guests)

1703\*\*\*\*113, Abbas Zaidi, aberry, Alan Byrd, Alecia Bryan, Alecia's iPhone, Alexander Monea, Alexandra Masterson, Alok Berry, Amy Lebrecht, Andrea K Zach, Andrea Landis, Andrea Zach, Andrea, Ann Ardis, Ann L Ardis, Anna Pollack, Anne Osterman (she/her), Anne Osterman, Anthony Terrell, Ariela Sofer, Benoit Van Aken, Benoit VanAken (GMU), Bethany Letiecq, Bethany Letiecq, GMU (she/her), Caroline J Sutter, Caroline Sutter, Catherine Sausville, Cathy Tompkins, Cesar Rebellon, Charlotte Gill (she/her), Charlotte Gill, Cheryl Oetjen (she/her), Cheryl Oetjen, Courtney Wooten, Cristiana Stan, Crystal Hall Buckley, Daniel Garrison, David Wong, Delton Daigle, Dominique Banville, Don Starr, Doug McKenna, Douglas Eyman, dwong2, Elizabeth Alman (Elizabeth's iPhone), Elizabeth Alman,

Elizabeth I Woodley, Elizabeth Woodley, Ellen Rowe (she/her), Ellen Rowe, Eunkyong Park, Fatou Diouf, Gium, Greg Robinson, Heidi Blackburn, Ioannis Bellos, Jaimie Appleton, James Antony, Jamie Clark, Jamie L Clark, Janette Muir, Jenna McGwin, Jenny Meslener, Jessica Hurley (she/they), Jessica Hurley, Jie Zhang, Johanna Bockman, Keith Renshaw (he/him), Keith Renshaw, Kelly Dunne, Kerri LaCharite (she/her) George Mason University, Kerri LaCharite, Kevin Dunayer (he/him), Kevin Dunayer, Kevin L Jackson, Kim Eby, Kimberly Ford, Kimberly Jackson Davidson, Kimberly S Dight, Kristin Johnsen-Neshati • she/her/hers, Kristin Johnsen-Neshati, Kylie Sertic, Laina Lockett, Laura Wheeler Poms, Laura Poms, Lauren Reuscher, Laurence Bray, Lee Black, Lisa Billingham, Lisa Breglia, lisabillingham, Marcy Glover, Marguerite Rippey, Mark Rozell, Matt Kelly, Melanie Knapp, Melanie O'Brien, Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Michelle Lim, Mohammad Salama, Mohan Venigalla, Noel T Dickover, Paige, Pat S., Paul Allvin, Paul G Allvin, Pierre Rodgers, Preston Williams, Renate Guilford, Rene Stewart O'Neal, Richard Craig, Richard T Craig, Robert Osgood, Robyn Madar (she/her/hers), Robyn Madar, Roger Graham, Sarah Parnell, Seth Hudson (he/him), Seth Hudson, Shannon Davis, Sheena G Serslev, Sheena Serslev, Shelley Reid, Siona Listokin (robinsmith), Siona Listokin, Solon Simmons, Stephanie Aaronson, Supriya Baily (she/her), Supriya Baily, Tamara Harvey (she/her), Tamara Harvey, Tamara Maddox, Taylor Crickenberger, Thalia Goldstein (she/her), Thalia Goldstein, Tim Gibson, Tim Leslie, Tobi Walsh, Tom Bluestein, Tricia M Wilson, Tricia Wilson, Valerie Olmo (Zoom user), Valerie Olmo, Victoria Grady, Victoria M Grady, Vin Lacovara, Wayne Adams, Xiaomei Cai, Yannis Bellos, Zachary Schrag.

## Appendix A

### 2025-2026 Senate Schedule

Senate Meeting Dates
August 27
Sept 17
Oct 15
Nov 12
Dec 3
Jan 28
Feb 25
March 25
April 22

## Appendix B

### Organization and Operations Committee

April 30, 2025 meeting

1. Revision to composition of Faculty Matters Committee
2. New charge and composition for Intellectual Property Committee as a University Standing Committee
3. New charge and composition for the Graduate Grading Process Task Force

### Faculty Matters Committee (revised composition)

**Charge:** The Faculty Matters committee champions the general welfare, professional growth, pecuniary interests, equitable workload distribution, and fair performance evaluations for all faculty. The Committee shall be responsible for collaborating—with other University committees as appropriate—in interpreting, formulating, and recommending University-wide standards and policies on faculty matters, including but not limited to the following:

- A. Initial appointments, rank, renewals, reappointment, tenure and promotion;
- B. Salaries, stipends, and contract length;
- C. Study and professional development leaves;
- D. Benefits, broadly defined, including health and retirement;
- E. Workload policies, including teaching and service loads;
- F. Evaluation of faculty performance;
- G. Academic freedom; and
- H. Initiating revisions to Faculty Handbook on existing or new policies related to faculty.

**Composition:** The Faculty Matters Committee shall include at least one term faculty and at least three tenure-line faculty. At least two committee members should hold tenure.

## **Intellectual Property Committee** (new charge)

### **Charge:**

- Create and maintain a list of all intellectual policies that includes links to those full policies with a brief “human-readable” summary or guidance for each policy
- Regularly review current university policies on intellectual property
- Seek input from the wider GMU community regarding IP policies and any concerns that may exist regarding the scope, clarity, and efficacy of such policies
- Identify potential issues to address in response to faculty input or committee determination after policy review
- Propose specific modifications to current IP policies to address any identified areas of concern, either by amendment to the existing policies where possible, or by wholesale rewriting of policies when necessary.
- Communicate to all GMU faculty via the Faculty Senate regarding any concerns raised in response to solicitation of input and regarding any modifications or rewriting of existing IP policies
- The first meeting each year must be scheduled within the first six weeks of the fall semester

### **Composition:**

This committee is comprised of eight members:

- Three faculty members elected by the Senate representing at least three colleges or schools
- One faculty representative from the Technology Policy Committee, elected by that committee
- One faculty representative from the Faculty Handbook Committee, elected by that committee
- One member appointed by the Provost
- One member appointed by the Chief Information Officer
- One member appointed by the Executive Director of Engaged Teaching at the Stearns Center

One member of this committee shall serve on the Policy Management Group



## **Graduate Grading Process Task Force**

(new charge)

### **GOAL**

The Graduate Grading Process Task Force, following the prior work of the Grading Process Task Force, will consider the grading scheme used at George Mason University for its graduate students and programs and make a recommendation for our future grading processes. The Task Force is 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:

1. Review the data and findings provided by the Grading Process Task Force (spring 2025).
2. Survey graduate faculty and advisors about current grading schemes and request suggestions for changes (or a lack of change) to these schemes.
3. Make a recommendation about which grading scheme best fits the institution's mission, providing a rationale and support for that recommendation. This recommendation shall be submitted to the Graduate Council for review and ratification.
4. Graduate Council will forward the reviewed and approved recommendations to the Academic Policies committee, which will bring the recommended changes to the Faculty Senate for a vote.
5. The Task Force Chair shall be someone with a wide understanding of the Mason educational system and specifically of the graduate programs we offer.

### **DELIVERABLE OUTCOME**

The Task Force is charged to bring a report, including proposed action items and rationales, to the Faculty Senate (via the Graduate Council and Academic Policies committee) for subsequent approval and implementation by University Administration.

### **TIMELINE**

Given that the work of the Grading Process Task Force and its report will provide a starting point for this work, this new task force shall complete its work and submit its report and recommendations within one academic year of its inception.

### **COMPOSITION**

The task force shall include one faculty representative from each school or college that offers graduate degrees, a representative from the Academic Policies Committee, a representative from the Graduate Division of the Office of the Provost, a representative of GAPSA, and a representative from the University Registrar.

## Appendix C

### Faculty Handbook Revision Committee

April 30, 2025 meeting

- [2.3.2.3 Awarding of Tenure at the Time of Appointment](#)
- [3.2 Salary Increases](#)

#### 2.3.2.3 Awarding of Tenure at the Time of Appointment

##### Proposed Language

##### 2.3.2.3 Awarding of Tenure at the Time of Appointment

If a candidate is to be appointed without term, the appointment procedure is conducted as specified for competitive ([SECTION 2.3.2.1](#)) or non-competitive ([SECTION 2.3.2.2](#)) appointments. Following an affirmative decision to appoint, the eligible faculty consider whether to recommend tenure in a first-level review in conformance with [SECTION 2.7.3](#) Procedures for Promotion and Tenure. The recommendation is then sent to the second-level college/school promotion and tenure committee.

For faculty who earned tenure at their prior institution and are being hired at the same rank that they previously held, tenure at time of appointment will be considered through an expedited process that will rely primarily on materials that were submitted as part of the hiring process. The goal of this expedited process is to streamline the process while ensuring scholarly rigor. Such dossiers shall include the cover letter that was submitted as part of the job application; a comprehensive CV that includes an employment chronology and a comprehensive summary of teaching, scholarly work, and service activity; and a detailed reference list that includes references who can speak to the candidate's prior work and scholarly reputation in their discipline. Candidates may also add supplemental materials to their dossier to add further evidence that they meet the criteria for promotion and tenure, at their discretion.

Candidates are held to the same standards as other candidates in that LAU. Since such appointments may be made outside the normal annual promotion and tenure cycle, college/school promotion and tenure committees must establish and follow procedures for promptly reviewing candidates out of cycle.

##### Proposed Language with Track Changes

##### 2.3.2.3 Awarding of Tenure at the Time of Appointment

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## Current Language

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## 3.2 Salary Increases

### Proposed Language

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Subject to the availability of funding, salary increases are given annually and are based chiefly on performance. All faculty with an overall satisfactory annual evaluation (see [SECTION 2.6.1](#)) will receive at least a minimum salary increment. Salary increases may also reflect efforts to achieve equity. In the case that funding from the state is designated as a cost-of-living adjustment, it is the responsibility of the University to ensure such funds are disbursed accordingly.

Each college or school shall have a policy or documented process in place for determining and communicating merit-based salary increases or shall ensure that each of its local academic units have such policies and processes. Annual evaluations shall be the primary basis for determining merit-based salary increases. Local unit administrators shall include the faculty member's performance evaluations over multiple years in making a recommendation if salary adjustments were not made in the preceding year(s).

The salary recommendation, including a justification and the amount of the increase, shall be given to the faculty member in writing at the time it is transmitted to the next level.

Faculty members who are dissatisfied with a salary increase normally seek recourse within their local academic unit. If dissatisfaction persists, grievance procedures outlined in [SECTION 2.11.2](#) may be followed.

### Proposed Language with Track Changes

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