

Meeting Minutes

Date: September 18, 2025

Time: 15:02 - 16:16

Location: Virtual Meeting

Chair: Solon Simmons

Opening Remarks

- Chair: Solon Simmons announced Board of Visitor Rector Cully Stimson will not attend today's meeting and the postponement of the Board of Visitors meeting originally scheduled for September 25. The bylaws indicate the board must meet at least once a year, but current composition of 6 BOV members may affect its business.

Institutional Updates

- Next Faculty Senate Meeting: October 15, with President Washington expected to attend.
- Faculty Reception for Faculty Senators: September 24th at the Mather House, from 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- Clerk Position: Solon Simmons noted that final interviews for a new clerk are underway, aiming to improve Senate operations.

Special Guests

- Zi Wang and Nelcy: Discussed the new meal plan options for faculty and staff, highlighting the benefits of dining plans and the new dining partner, Chartwells. Emphasized the social and practical benefits of meal plans.

Discussion on University Governance

- Board of Visitors: Solon Simmons addressed concerns about the current lack of a quorum, impacting governance and the ability to address university business.
- Legal and Political Context: Solon Simmons and Bethany Letiecq discussed the Faculty Senate's involvement in a document preservation request due to an ongoing investigation, with emphasis on maintaining transparency and legal compliance.

Committee Reports

Academic Policies

- Update by Douglas Eyman:
 - Policy Management Group: Working on a reasonable accommodation policy based on religion and updating the hazing policy.
 - Graduate Council: Approved changes to AP 6.6 regarding academic standing for graduate students and discussed a new program in quantum science and engineering. The updated graduate student handbook will apply next catalog year.

Budget and Resources

- Update by Delton Daigle:
 - Financial Status: University is \$39 million cash positive, slightly down from previous reports. Efforts to achieve full Tier 3 status for debt management are ongoing.
 - Financial Reporting: Despite the postponed Board of Visitors meeting, financial reporting obligations to state and federal bodies remain.

Faculty Matters

- Update by Mohan Venigalla:
 - Faculty Evaluation of Administrators scorecards are nearly ready for release. Ongoing work on faculty evaluation of chairs to ensure valid data and appropriate dissemination.

Nominations

- Update by Lee Black:
 - Committee Vacancies: Jessica Hurley was elected as the Faculty Senate representative to the Recreation Advisory Committee. Efforts are ongoing to fill a vacancy on the nominations committee, faculty senators, contact Lee if interested.

Organization and Operations (O&O)

- Update by Catherine Sausville:
 - Bylaws Review: Plans to review bylaws and standing rules for updates and improvements. Encouragement for committees to propose changes to their charges or membership.

New Business

- Faculty Handbook: Lisa Billingham emphasized updating the handbook to strengthen faculty positions concerning tenure, shared governance, and academic freedom.

Closing Remarks

- Acknowledgments: Recognition of George Mason University's visibility in national discussions and the importance of viewpoint diversity.

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn at 4:16pm.

Next Meeting: October 15, 2025, at 3pm.