

**Faculty Matters Committee Meeting
George Mason University Faculty Senate
Annual Report 2022-2023**

Members:, Tim Gibson Co-Chair Fall (CHSS), Lisa Lister (CHSS), Anna Pollack (CHHS), Solon Simmons, Co-Chair (CONF), Benjamin Steger Co-Chair Spring(CVPA) Mohan Venigalla Co-Chair Spring (CEC)

Overview

The Faculty Matters Committee (FM) had a great deal of turnover this year, with four members serving as co-chair. There were many projects that touch on faculty concerns and much discussion about the role and future direction of the committee. In the first meeting in September, the committee settled on a seven-point agenda for the year. Accomplishments with respect to those agenda items was mixed, but it was a very busy year of transition of the central feature of the committee work, the Faculty Evaluation of Administrators survey (FEA). The FEA has been done in house for two decades, but this year, the Faculty Senate partnered with human resources, which had just rebooted its Quality of Worklife survey (QWL) through a partnership with the Gallup organization, naming the new survey The Faculty and Staff Engagement Survey (FSE).. Although the university did not field the FSE this spring, the FEA did move forward, administered and analyzed by the Gallup organization. This new arrangement allows for an impartial collection of evaluation data, no longer relying on the faculty leaders for data analysis.

The seven-point agenda for the year

1. Focus on becoming a sincere and committed partner of faculty workload issues, in particular those that concern term faculty on 4/4 loads in feedback intensive classes.

Most of the progress in this area came in the form of debate. Questions were raised about about pay equity and how it is adjudicated, whether FM has a role in questions about bylaws and standing rules, who is pushing for workload reform amid all the talk about the issue, and how all of this translates into the faculty handbook. At the end of year, the committee recommends that since all colleges and departments are tasked with reviewing their bylaws and standing rules, FM should play some role in ensuring that this is done properly and in compliance with the faculty handbook.

2. Build partnerships in data gathering with key university stakeholders in Faculty Affairs and Development (Provost Office) and Performance Management and Employee Engagement (Human Resources and Payroll).

There was much done in the area of agenda item 2. The transition of the FEA to the Gallup poll involved a larger commitment than was anticipated with weekly meetings with the Gallup team and human resources leaders as well. A leadership team in the human resources

evidence-building effort was established, even as top leadership in HR transitioned due to staff turnover. There is now a well-developed team of leaders working on employee satisfaction issues that is working at the highest levels of university administration.

3. Participate in the Faculty Annual Evaluation Work Group (Solon)

As part of the mandate of the ad hoc Faculty Annual Evaluation Committee, Professor Simmons was assigned from FM to represent faculty interests as a whole. The committee report was delivered and its findings worked into this year's faculty handbook revisions. Issues before the committee were thoroughly discussed in committee meetings.

4. Participate in the Term Faculty Committee (Lisa)

The Term Faculty Committee requires a representative from the FM committee. Professor Lister served as the representative to that committee and

Biggest issue is workload, especially in feedback intensive courses. Concerns about how this played out in Faculty Handbook. Issues that came before that committee included:

- Drafting Faculty Handbook language revisions re: multi-year reappointment processes
- Creating draft of Term Faculty retirement transition plan
- Identifying and planning mentoring and professional development opportunities
- Understanding how Schools/Colleges have used our Guidance for Workload Policies
- Examining COACHE and Gallup data to understand term faculty satisfaction and needs
- Creating guidance on how to represent teaching in dossiers and for annual review documentation

5. Partner with Faculty Roles and Rewards Committee (All)

There was limited engagement with the standing committee established to work on issues of faculty roles and rewards. There was discussion on FM about sunseting ad hoc committees like this one when their assigned task is finished.

6. Pay close attention to university plans to work toward zero emissions

There was little done on this item, but its presence did raise questions of what way issues of advocacy that are relevant to faculty interests might be surfaced and handled. For example, there was a contentious debate about the issue of advocacy for K-12 teachers and their right speak about DEI issues. In addition, there is an issue of the contract that GMU has with custodians. There is need for further clarification about when and where it is appropriate for faculty to engage on these political issues.

7. Remain available to advocate for academic freedom on all of our four campuses.

The issue of academic freedom is at the core of our conception of shared governance, and all members of the FM committee are constantly vigilant in our attention to issues related to any potential constraint of academic freedom.