

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
AGENDA FOR THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING
APRIL 1, 2015
Robinson Hall B113, 3:00 – 4:15 p.m.

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of the Minutes of March 4, 2015

III. Announcements

Rector Tom Davis

Provost S. David Wu

Faculty Enrollment in Courses:

Our Non-Degree website has been updated. Faculty who wish to take a ND course should click on "George Mason University Employees"

<http://admissions.gmu.edu/nonDegree/>

IV. New Business – Committee Reports

A. Senate Standing Committees

Academic Policies

[Attachment A](#)

Resolution to Modify English Proficiency Scores for Undergraduate Admission

Budget and Resources

Faculty Matters

Nominations

Organization and Operations

B. Other Committee Reports

V. Other New Business

Universal Background Check Report – Linda Harber, Vice President for Human Resources/Payroll and Faculty/Staff Life

Online Degree Completion Program/Platform for Educational Innovation – Michelle Marks, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Annual Faculty Senate Evaluation of the President and Provost by Faculty Senate and University Standing Committees 2014-15

[Attachment B](#)

VI. Remarks for the Good of the General Faculty

VII. Adjournment

ATTACHMENT A

Resolution to Modify English Proficiency Scores for Undergraduate Admission

Resolution:

Revise English Language test scores for direct admissions:

- 1) Lower the minimum TOEFL score from 88 to 80, with subsections of 18 or higher.
- 2) For IELTS scores, require students to have a minimum subsection score of 6.0.

[Note: Admissions will retain some discretion over 1-2 points per TOEFL subsection, based on a holistic review of the applicant's credentials.]

Background Information:

1) Language Proficiency Testing

--There are several ways that student language proficiency can be demonstrated for admission to Mason. These include the following:

- TOEFL (*Test of English as a Foreign Language*),
- IELTS (*International English Language Testing System*)
- PTE (*Pearson English Language Test*)
- Successful completion of Academic English Level 6 (through INTO-Mason)
- SAT/ACT scores
- Successful completion of Composition courses (for transfer students)

--Different tests are available in different parts of the world; TOEFL scores are one of the most popular ways to test language proficiency.

--TOEFL subsections

- In calculating the TOEFL score, there are four subsections that determine student proficiency in writing, speaking, listening and reading. A perfect TOEFL score would be 120, with a score of 30 in each subsection.
- Currently, Mason's TOEFL requirement is 88 with no review of subsections. This is higher than most of our peer institutions.
- In the current system, a student with a TOEFL score below 88 would be required to join an INTO-Mason pathway program as a non-degree student.

--IELTS subsections

- Subsections of testing include writing, speaking, listening and reading. Currently, Mason does not look at IELTS subsection scores.

2) Market Analysis

Over the last year, an analysis of Mason's enrollment management activity was conducted by Huron Education. The Huron study is based on market data and comparisons with other similar institutions. One of the issues the study identifies is the high TOEFL score that Mason requires. The conclusion by Huron was that aligning Mason's TOEFL requirement with similar institutions will provide a more competitive option for applicants with TOEFL scores in the 80-87 range.

3) Academic Resources [Please see *Appendix A* for more details]

Historically, resources have existed for students who need help with learning English and several programs were in place through the English Language Institute (ELI). With the development of INTO Mason, ELI merged with the Center for International Student Access (CISA) and three areas are now featured: Pathway programs, Academic English and General English. Additional resources will be provided to ensure that students with language challenges are supported.

Advantages to the Change:

- *Alignment with other Institutions:* Adjusting the English proficiency score requirements for direct admission brings Mason's Admission requirements more into alignment with comparable institutions in the region and the US, including INTO partner schools and Songdo Global University Campus partners. The majority of institutions require a minimum TOEFL iBT score of 79 or 80.
- *Attracting Students into Degree Programs:* Aligning the TOEFL requirement with similar institutions increases Mason's competitiveness. Applicants with scores in the 80-87 range will likely go where they can gain direct entry to their degree program rather than spend additional time and money studying English before beginning their degree program.
- *Market Analysis:* In their assessment of Mason's Enrollment Management activity, Huron Education identified changing the TOEFL requirement as a "short-term win" for impacting incoming students this year.

Appendix A – Academic Resources

INTO Mason will continue to provide language resources for the students who need support and who may not be enrolled in the INTO Mason program. Some of these resources include: workshops for multilingual students, English conversation programs, tutoring services, and SPEAK testing.

In the short term, it is anticipated that there will be a moderate increase in student demand for Writing Center tutoring, a need for more seats in English 100 - Composition for Non-native Speakers of English, and additional tutoring services. Further, we anticipate a moderate increase in faculty use of outreach made available through the Center for Teaching Excellence in partnership with INTO Mason.

To support the change in the TOEFL score and IELTS subsection scores, the Provost Office is prepared to provide \$20,000 to the Writing Center to support non-native English speakers. Additionally, in order to support the development of speaking, listening and reading skills, \$20,000 will be provided to the Learning Resource Center, located in the Global Center. The LRC supports the administration and coordination of the International Teaching Assistant program and coordinates complimentary tutoring services for non-native English speakers. These are resources offered for one year with assessment on permanent funds and utilization going forward.

ATTACHMENT B

Evaluation of the President and Provost by Faculty Senate Standing Committees, University Standing Committees, and Ad Hoc Committees AY 2014-15

responses compiled February - March, 2015

Note that some committees did not provide responses to each question.

1. During the past calendar year has the President or Provost announced initiatives or goals or acted upon issues that fall under the charge of your Committee? If so, was your Committee consulted by the President or Provost in a timely manner before the announcement or action? If not, do you believe your Committee should have been consulted? Would it have been helpful to have had the input of your Committee from the outset?

Responses from Faculty Senate Standing Committees:

Academic Policies: Through the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, the committee was made aware that the central administration was considering lowering the TOEFL score. The proposal was sent in early March.

Budget and Resources: There have been many times during the past year that issues germane to the Budget and Resources Committee have arisen. I believe the BRC should be consulted as a regular part of business as the administration addresses budgetary concerns. And that consultation has occurred regularly and appropriately. The Chair of the BRC attends the Senate's Executive Committee meetings which are also attended by the SVP and Provost. In addition, the Chair of the BRC is a member of the Budget Planning Team that met every other week until recently when it changed to monthly meetings. The BPT is chaired by the SVP and Provost and the

rest of the membership is VPs for the major parts of the university. All budget and resource issues are discussed here. This level of interaction is needed and appreciated.

Faculty Matters: I am unaware of any specific initiatives or goals that were announced or acted upon during the past year that fall under the charge of the Faculty Matters Committee. There are ongoing issues (e.g., summer teaching, hiring of adjuncts) that have come up, but none that have involved new initiatives or goals.

Nominations: No.

Responses from University Standing Committees:

Academic Appeals: To my knowledge, neither the President nor the Provost announced any initiatives or goals, or acted upon issues that fall under the charge of the university's Academic Appeals Committee. I am unaware of any issues about which I believe that our Committee should have been consulted.

Admissions: The Provost's Office (Janette Muir) requested information over email about the process of getting Faculty Senate approval to lower the TOEFL score required for undergraduates admitted into Mason. Dr. Muir indicated that there was an interest in getting the proposal approved "as soon as possible so that Admissions can reach out to pending students." I was included on this email dated February 16th as the Chair of the Admission Committee of the Faculty Senate, as was Charlene Douglas (Chair of the Faculty Senate) and Suzanne Slayden (Chair of the Academic Policies Committee of the Faculty Senate). Although the February 16th email was the first I heard about this issue, according to Dr. Slayden, the issue was first raised by the Provost's office earlier in the fall but the action needed to move the issue along (sending the request to the O & O committee) didn't happen until the end of February. It would have been helpful for the Admissions Committee to have the opportunity to research and discuss this issue more thoroughly, particularly since it seemed there was some urgency to have the proposal approved.

Adult Learning and Executive Education: The Adult Learning & Executive Education Committee has not had business that would've required initiative from either the President or Provost at this point in time. Therefore I would not have any applicable responses to the evaluation questions on behalf of this committee.

Athletic Council: No, no initiatives or specific goals for the Athletic Council were initiated by the President or the Provost. The President reported current discussions statewide about student fee monies supporting Intercollegiate activities at our February Council Meeting. We did not have any issues under my charge with either the President or the Provost.

Faculty Handbook: No initiatives or goals fell under the charge of the committee.

Mason Core: Nothing directly germane to this committee.

Salary Equity Study Committee: The issues of faculty salary equity are related to the general budgetary situation of the university. I think our committee will be better able to respond to this survey next year. One point that is important is that a committee have strong continuity from year to year.

Technology Policy: This academic year our committee has almost all of its business related to activities involving ITS. Marilyn Smith has attended all of our meetings and brought her senior staff with her to answer questions as they arose. She has been very responsive to our committee's requests for information and has frequently sought our input. When she has not agreed with our suggested course of action, she has taken great efforts to convince us that her actions will be more appropriate. For the most part, she has convinced us that her approach is the correct one.

2. Did your Committee seek information or input from the President or Provost or members of their staffs? If so, did they respond adequately and in a timely manner?

Responses from Faculty Senate Standing Committees:

Academic Policies: The committee asked for quite a bit of information in connection with the resolution. The Associate Provost always answered promptly, but too often information that was sent did not directly answer the questions that were asked. The Associate Provost could not answer some questions definitively and asked other staff to answer. Some responses were to the point and others were not.

Budget and Resources: The BRC did seek information from the administration, in addition to the issues addressed above. The BRC requested the salary data that are posted on the Senate's website from the SVP and VP for Human Resources. Due to a change in personnel, the response to the request for these data has taken longer than expected but the process is continuing with an expectation that final delivery of the data will be forthcoming soon.

Faculty Matters: The Faculty Matters Committee did seek input from the Provost's staff regarding the annual Faculty Evaluation of Administrators. These individuals responded promptly and were enormously helpful.

Nominations: Yes.... We asked the Provost for appointees to various committee posts, and he responded promptly.

Responses from University Standing Committees:

Academic Appeals: The Academic Appeals Committee did contact the office of the Associate Provost, Dr. Janette Muir. At our initial meeting of the fall 2014 semester the committee decided that it wanted clarification of what its charge was, and whether it should change. There is language in the university catalog, as well as on the Faculty Senate website, about the Committee's

charge. I met with Dr. Muir to discuss possible changes to what the charge should include, as well as to find out the procedure that was in place for forwarding cases to the committee from the Provost's office. The only additional charge that was discussed, and which the Committee requested of the Faculty Senate to be added, was graduation appeals (which the Committee does not currently consider). Dr. Muir responded very quickly to my request for a meeting, and the meeting was arranged and held within a very short period of time, as well.

Admissions: As the Chair of the Academic Policies Committee and on behalf of the Admissions Committee, Dr. Slayden made several requests to the Provost's Office for information regarding the TOEFL issue. Responses were prompt but did not always include complete and satisfactory answers to all our questions.

Athletic Council: No, the committee did not seek specific information from the President. I meet with the President annually to provide information on the external oversight of the Intercollegiate Athletic Programs, submit a report on my work as the Faculty Athletic Representative, and discuss any issues or goals for the coming year. I meet regularly with the Chief of Staff who is charged by the President to oversee athletics.

Faculty Handbook: The committee did not seek any information or input.

Mason Core: Provost visited with Mason Core committee shortly after his arrival to understand the charge of the committee and to express some of his specific interests regarding general education. Provost Office staff have been very helpful in supplying data or background course information.

Salary Equity Study Committee: We did work with the Chair of the Faculty Senate and have appreciated very much the support of the Faculty Senate Clerk.

3. Please suggest how you believe the President, Provost and/or their staffs might more effectively interact with your Committee in the future, if necessary.

Responses from Faculty Senate Standing Committees:

Academic Policies: It would have been better for our committee if there were coordination of responses from the central administration even if that caused a delay. It would have been preferable to wait to get correct and accurate information.

Budget and Resources: I recommend that the inclusion of a member of the BRC in the BPT be continued. This interface is an important opportunity for faculty input throughout the financial decision processes.

The production of salary data in the form that has historically been posted on the Senate's website should be regularized. The administration should routinely in early Spring produce these data in the format that has been used in past years.

Faculty Matters: It does seem that it might be useful for each committee's charge to be reviewed to increase the awareness of the President, Provost, and their staffs, so that they may more proactively seek input from committees as relevant. For instance, ideas related to an online college would likely fall under the purview of Academic Policies, ideas related to adjunct faculty would fall under the purview of Faculty Matters or Academic Policies, etc.

Nominations: Give the Nominations Committee as much lead time as possible when new task forces or committees needing a Faculty representative is needed.

Responses from University Standing Committees:

Academic Appeals: I believe that the Academic Appeals Committee has a very good working relationship with the office of the Associate Provost, Dr. Muir, and it is not in need of any specific improvement that comes to mind at the moment. Right now I see no particular need for direct interaction of the Committee with the President's office. That could change given different circumstances, but that is how I see it at the current time.

Admissions: It would be helpful to have communication early enough for the committee to ensure due diligence on the issues raised.

Athletic Council: We have established effective interaction and communication. Senior administrators who report to the President, and senior administrators who report to the Provost serve as members of the Athletic Council. They attend regularly and serve on the council's sub-committees. The President and Chief of Staff also attend full council meetings at least once a year.

Faculty Handbook: Not applicable.

Mason Core: As the committee looks more carefully at global issues, would be useful to have some input from President and/or Provost regarding long term goals and perspectives regarding global understanding/significant global experiences/and campus strategic planning.

Salary Equity Study Committee: No suggestions yet.

4. Please relate any additional information you may have regarding interactions between your Committee and the President or Provost or their staff.

Responses from Faculty Senate Standing Committees:

Academic Policies: No additional information.

Faculty Matters: I find the President and Provost to be open to Committee input and involvement, but not necessarily to be proactive in seeking such input. It might be useful to try to increase the level of communication and interaction with faculty committees by routinely evaluating whether issues and ideas would fall under the purview of the various committees.

Nominations: No additional information is appropriate.

Responses from University Standing Committees:

Academic Appeals: I have nothing else to add at this time.

Admissions: N/A.

Athletic Council: I am comfortable taking any issue or situation to the President or Provost with regard to student-athlete well-being or academic performance. I continue to receive the support necessary to continue in my role as Faculty Athletic Representative and Chair of the Athletic Council from the Athletic Director, Senior Women's Administrator, and intercollegiate athletics staff.

Faculty Handbook: There is no additional information.

Mason Core: n/a.

Salary Equity Study Committee: None at this time.