GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 20, 2015
Johnson Center Meeting Room A (325), 3:00-4:15 p.m.

Present: Charlene Douglas, Mark Houck, Timothy Leslie, Keith Renshaw, Joe Scimecca, Suzanne Slayden, Susan Trencher, Provost David Wu, Sr. Vice President J.J. Davis, Julian Williams, Vice President of Compliance, Diversity and Ethics, Vice Provost Michelle Marks.

I. Approval of Minutes of September 24, 2015: The minutes were approved.

II. Announcements /Discussion
Rector Davis and President Cabrera will address the Faculty Senate Nov. 4th

Provost Wu clarified that the proposed restructuring of the Office of Research presented by Professor Claudio Cioffi-Revilla at the last Faculty Senate meeting involved the repurposing of existing positions; no new positions were put into the research structure. He added that the Provost Office has absorbed $6.5M in administrative cuts in efforts to shrink the administrative structure of the university.
Questions/Answers
The change in research activities does not impact the Faculty Handbook.
In response to a question regarding research centers, Provost Wu also noted presently there are 185 centers, we need to more clearly define what centers really mean; a bit loose, historically, for such large number of centers. Faculty recalled long-time cycles; Provost Stearns closed lots of centers; President Merten also closed some institutes. If intention is not to expend more resources but to streamline, does this yield savings? Provost Wu noted that of $6.5M shrunk from budget, $1.5M sent back to academic units.
 A lot of units on campus would be hard pressed to see where money went; it might be helpful to let people know where it went. With straightened resources, how is university going to deal with pressing issues related to resources – such as faculty salaries? If new research initiative over ten years, would funding flow there to make it successful, and not into pressing needs?
Provost Wu: In the budget process for AY 15-16, decided collectively we did not want cuts to affect students. A big part of $1.5M used to prevent some sessions being cancelled, especially large sessions, to protect students. Administrative units took a proportionately larger cut (than academic units). Cuts made mostly through attrition, not an across-the-board cut. Sr. VP JJ Davis noted the process was very transparent, can see where cuts occurred.
Question: Are there ways to brainstorm how to couch and disseminate information to Faculty Senate and to faculty? People need to hear what BOV says - #2 Faculty Salaries, #1 Student Financial Aid (priorities).
Chair Douglas observed we all have to understand Mason as a state university is constrained on raises. $6.5M cut struck me in opposition to "administrative bloat" language. Twenty years ago, could not have a center without minimum $1M funding.

<u>Vice Provost Michelle Marks distributed handouts "Mason Online Today", and a brief report on Distance Education at Mason.</u> There are fifty programs online over the past ten years. Mason has provided support to encourage faculty to create online courses and also to support faculty and programs who want to put courses online. As of Spring 2015, 7,000 students are taking at least one online class. About 1,200 students are online students at Mason. US Census bureau statistics predict an increase to 5,000 online students by 2020. More and more universities are opting to put courses online. The market for professional graduate programs is very large on the national level. Intention to organically grow courses and programs.

Diagram "Student Life Cycle" -1- Program Development, -2- Market Assessment and Marketing, -3- Recruitment, -4- Enrollment Coordination, -5- 24x7 Help Desk/Retention Specialist, -6- Admissions and Student Finance, -7- Instruction, -8- Academic Advising, -9- Graduation. There are two ways to do this, universities by themselves (self-built model) as we have done so far; and by taking on a vendor/partner (partnership model). There are pros and cons to each approach. Market for Online Program Managers (OPMs) take non-academic functions as desired by universities, may include some instructional design, typically digital markets, may include enrollment coordination and technical support. The market keeps changing; some include publishing companies, especially in niche areas. Universities have entered into partnerships to increase enrollments; reach a new type of student market; provide higher quality online courses; provide enhanced student support; and offer a new program or degree, especially for graduate programs.   Initial market research conducted by vendors to see what programs are likely to be successful. A few years ago we put out an RFP for OPM partner, nothing came to fruition. Three committees (Distance Education Council, Mason Online Partnership RFP Advisory Committee, and the Online Partnership Negotiation Advisory Committee) have worked together to identify a refined list of finalists, but have not entered into any relationships. (Faculty Senators serving on these committees include Charlene Douglas, Keith Renshaw, Stanley Zoltek, among other faculty). We are not planning to reduce internal resources to support organic development.
 Vice Provost Marks defined a three-fold goal:
1) To meet student demand, especially for graduate and professional programs. For our foreseeable future, a minority of our students will attend that way. Students enrolled in professional graduate programs want to have more flexibility. We cannot scale/advertize in way partnerships can. Other schools have OPMs hiding behind them, we need to stay competitive.
2) To reach new markets – for some professional graduate programs, this can help us.
3) To create net revenue for schools. If a money-losing process for us, would not make sense.
Provost Wu: Bottom line: we need to be competitive in this market, but don't have the financial resources to be competitive. Revenues generated by programs to fund initiative. At the beginning, a money-losing phase – funded by partners until more income made, partner takes risk.   We are asking other schools/universities now using OPMs about their experiences; the University of Maryland, George Washington University and William and Mary are examples of partnership models.

Questions/Discussion: What is completion record for undergraduates?

Vice Provost Marks: RFP not for undergraduate courses.

Concerns expressed about intellectual property rights, copyright policy protections in tangible form, ownership needs to be stipulated in any agreement. Law is not settled in this area, not just for universities. Helpful for us to get guidance for untenured faculty and adjuncts. There will be increasing demand for online courses. Can faculty earn teaching credits for developing online courses?

It's not specific thing, or partnership which may make sense. Part of concern – we're cutting back on adjuncts for many reasons, sometimes for precarious reasons, with pernicious effects. Also issue of faculty governance as institution with top-down management without talking to stakeholders troubling, professor not protected if model is useful pedagogically but not talking about what faculty does, which is teach. Pressure for untenured faculty will be enormous.

Vice Provost Marks: In our contract we have to specify who owns it, company or university? We have to get it clearly; will need to have contractual force. The way programs and courses can or cannot be used are programmatic decisions by individual units. Different units, schools may have different ways to do it. Also accreditation requirements and discipline specific requirements must be noted. Programs would make decisions about course size, etc.

Provost Wu observed OPMs provide a platform or tool available to the university. Individual programs, departments can decide IF they wish to use it. Not a requirement, but one option. Partnership provides relatively risk-free way to provide tool.

Useful to talk with faculty involved in process. VSE has a bunch of online programs, none of three faculty he asked were aware of this.   Also listed as one goal in the ten year strategic plan, not sure you can avoid idea. Vice Provost Marks thanked faculty for their suggestions, a Town Hall on Distance Education will take place Monday, October 26th.

Chair Douglas introduced Julian Williams, Vice President of Compliance, Diversity and Ethics. VP Williams started working at Mason June 18, 2015 – to walk us through big and small picture, also here to address any concerns raised. One of his responsibilities is university investigations, response to harassment, ADA, assault, etc.

In an organization as large as ours, we do sometimes get bad actors; to meet our legal and moral obligations to campus, due process, equity for each side. Right for anyone to have an advisor, support person to attend investigation meeting.

Several committee members stressed the need for a Faculty Ombudsman, separate from the Student Ombudsman or Human Resources personnel. VP Williams noted at other universities usually one or two faculty members well versed in this. If faculty interested in getting a faculty

member more up to speed on what policy, grievance procedures look like, willing to (work with them). An Executive Committee member noted VP Williams' predecessor did raise the issue of getting paid faculty ombudsman due to the number of people who came to him, whom he couldn't directly help.

Communication as micro-level piece, he is not satisfied with level of communication a faculty member received in a case. (He was not here when case started.) There should be someone who can answer questions; lack of communication raises level of anxiety. What protections are available for faculty members? Process should in good faith (determine) policy violation or not a violation, also noted malicious filings. Investigators trained to sort this out, protections, punishments can be very substantial. Need for better communication among various touch points which may be involved; in one case, a faculty member had to get a subpoena to obtain information from the police.   There are ways to share info with FERPA compliance; ultimately person needs information, a level of closure, a place to talk through with someone.

Questions/Discussion
Are you a lawyer? VP Williams: Yes, I am.
Language about malicious complaints appears in the Misconduct in Research Policy "to clear, restore person's reputation." VP Williams: Restoration is an area we need to discuss; insular investigation from fact gathering standpoint; other side involves what faculty member goes through emotionally. Currently section on Malicious/False Complaints is nowhere in our grievance procedures, will be corrected. Misconduct in Research Policy is handled through the Office of Research Compliance, Assistant Vice President Aurali Dade.

Sr. Vice President J.J. Davis: You can find the presentation of the Budget Model and Frequently Asked Questions on the Budget Office website. We have finished the search for university police chief.   We have issued a request for information to increase housing capacity – developers to think through as dorms are full and need to find ways to accommodate increasing student demand.

Respectfully submitted,
Meg Caniano
Faculty Senate clerk