

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Monday, February 13, 2017, 3:00 –4:30 p.m.**  
**SUB I room 3A**

**Present:** Alan Abramson, Mark Addleson, Lisa Billingham, J.J. Davis, Charlene Douglas, Timothy Leslie, Keith Renshaw, Suzanne Slayden, Julie Shank, S. David Wu.

**I. Approval of Minutes of November 21, 2016:** The minutes were approved.

**II. Announcements**

Chair Keith Renshaw introduced Julie Shank, a graduate student enrolled in the Leadership in Higher Education Program.

**Provost Wu** noted the Symposium for Student Experience Project took place today. It basically looks at how we serve students, including academic and residential life contact points. About 250 people attended. Team has been working on this for a few months; gathering to get university community involved; great energy, brainstorming, to get various aspects of student experience together. Targeting for 2019 implementation, smaller projects may come earlier than that.

Chair of Academic Initiatives committee asked if the project is intentionally not curriculum-based, noticed not a lot of faculty involved – the Academic Initiatives Committee is reaching out to Michelle Marks and David Burge for more information. Chair Renshaw responded it is not directed at the classroom, but glad AI has taken an interest.

Term Faculty Task Force Update: Provost Wu asked Kim Eby (Associate Provost for Faculty Development) to co-chair this. A term faculty member to be identified will serve as co-chair. Provost Wu has been working with her on the charge. Kim has been in contact with Keith Renshaw also. Similar timeline to adjunct Task Force, in terms of survey. In the next weeks and months, Task Force to get together and distribute survey. A lot of data will be available in the fall, so will have a lot of work ready for early fall, coming together.

Suggestions for membership on the Task Force included whether the Faculty Senate should put out a call for new members; and to identify a member of the Faculty Matters Committee to serve on the Task Force. We don't want the issue to be lost. Provost Wu responded the Task Force is a joint Provost-Faculty Senate effort, and was receptive to connections with the Senate. Perhaps we could do a combination based on composition of the Task Force.

**Senior Vice President J.J. Davis** distributed an 18 page report: "Preliminary Summary of Governor's, House and Senate Amended Budget Bill – As of February 5, 2017" Compensation remains our biggest issue. There are major differences between House and Senate versions. Now in conference, we should know more within the next 15 days. She highlighted various details of proposals from the Senate, House, and the Governor's Amendments. Compensation, basic budget cuts and tuition are the big Three. A Budget Town Hall meeting takes place tomorrow (Feb. 14).

VA Degree Completion Network: Provost Wu explained Mason was selected with Old Dominion University (ODU) to put this together. The portal is up already, we have very few undergraduate online courses to offer. ODU has a lot of online courses (99% of portal). This may help us in the long run in terms of setting up on-line process. State assistance, but not at level we require. Michelle Marks, (Vice President for Academic Innovation and New Ventures, Office of the Provost), goes to give testimony to the House and Senate next week. Designed for all Virginia public universities to use this portal for online degree.

Undergraduate Need Based Financial aid will continue next year.

Higher Education Research Opportunities: There will be funding for research, but not at original level; competitively based, not just an allocation.

Reminder: Rector Davis will attend March 1, 2017 FS Meeting

### **III. Progress reports, business, and agenda items from Senate Standing Committees**

#### **A. Academic Policies – Suzanne Slayden**

Ethics Across the Curriculum Requirement proposed by the Mason Core Committee: We await response from the Mason Core Committee (see discussion Executive Committee January 21, 2017/Faculty Senate Minutes December 7, 2016). We will send a representative to the Mason Core Committee meeting. Bethany Usher (Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education) wants to look at General Education again, not a bad idea to redo. SACS requires 30 credits (of General Education).

Janette Muir (Associate Provost for Academic Initiatives and Services) is now in charge of Registrar's Office and received revisions to the academic calendar from AP. We continue to see errors in calendars from the Registrar's Office – from now on, we will simply send them back when containing logistical errors (e.g., wrong dates). The new online Wiley courses are designed in eight week modules. Goal is to have 2 modules per semester: 16 weeks. However, 3 sets of 16 weeks adds up to 48 of the 52 weeks in the year, and they do not align with our typical academic calendar. The AP Committee presents academic calendars to the Faculty Senate for its approval. . The Registrar's Office is preparing revisions to already approved AY 2017-2020 calendar with missing columns and new dates. Beginning Fall 2017 shows Columbus Day recess for Monday and Tuesday; an immediate issue.

Provost Wu: The issue of aligning 8-week modules with the overarching academic calendar is not something simply triggered by Wiley partnership. The School of Business had 8-week modules ongoing for quite a few years, general idea to create a symmetrical semester: summer, fall, and spring. A lot of implications if you make (changes) to a university calendar – chaos of this nature. He feels we need a three year transition period into this. Five programs in Wiley contract have been following this for some time.

Senator Slayden reiterated the Fall 2017 academic calendar is an immediate issue. Right now they propose Columbus Day recess Monday and Tuesday. Issues of class days not coming out even, as they did before. To fix this, the last day of classes will be on a Monday, so we will lose one of only two reading days. Another Senator noted some classes have deep content and clinical days to be fulfilled. It was stressed that faculty members must have a say in Columbus Day – there are academic consequences. Other proposed changes further in the future include beginning classes in Spring semester before Martin Luther King Day, and then moving up the start date of summer. To move up the beginning of summer school would cut into revenue in from students from other schools who enroll during the summer to take classes here (they would not be finished with their own spring semester yet). Impacts also felt in global studies programs, intercessions.

Chair Renshaw noted Senator Slayden is doing the work of fact checker and date checker – faculty members should not have to check to count the number of weeks, days. This has been going on for a while now.

Provost Wu sees two issues: (1) Converting to 8 week calendar cycle; (2) Issues to errors with calendar right now. He wants to put a working group together to look into the first issue, which would have implications all over campus.

A senator noted that only the School of Business and other Wiley programs are opting into 8 week module. Why not have regular classes on regular schedule and module classes on module schedule?

Senator Slayden: The only real alignment is the first day of classes; 15 week mandate of academic semester. Many universities have gone on that cycle . Such a change is no problem for schools that already operated on a 16-week semester. For us, however, it means starting spring not just a week, but 2 weeks, earlier than we do now.

Chair Renshaw: We need a bigger group to work this out. Fall 2017 is the immediate problem. Need to find out from the faculty how these larger changes affect them – we need a representative group. For now, immediate issue is the Fall 2017 calendar.

Provost Wu: The intent has always been to engage the whole campus community about this. It's not a done deal. School of Business and five online programs are doing this. We need 3 years to make this happen. Unfortunate it has been communicated as a done deal, it is not. Deans don't know about it yet.

Note that another change on the upcoming calendars is that Commencement Day has changed to Friday on 2 of 3 years (1 erroneously left unchanged), by presidential fiat.

The AP Committee has no intention of approving changes to already approved calendar (i.e., Fall 2017) without faculty feedback about what they want first. Will work to get an understanding of what prompted the additional day off (Tue after Columbus Day), then can bring to the FS.

**B. Budget and Resources – Tim Leslie**

Salaries are posted; adjunct faculty salaries are coming. Brad Edwards is going to talk about contributions of Athletics to other groups. J.J.'s office has stood up three Task Forces (1) indirect (expenditures), (2) research support, and (3) Multidisciplinary Budget Module. We are keeping an eye on budget model and trying to engage the Tuition Task Force.

We went to Advancement about how to message with faculty – and gave them some inputs. They were open to our inputs, not just preaching.

**C. Faculty Matters – Alan Abramson**

We are wrapping up the Faculty Evaluation of Administrators 15-16 and planning next year's. We meet next Monday, agenda items include: 1) Faculty governance, deepening faculty engagement; (2) Professor Watchlist; (3) Minimum Qualifications for Department Chairs; (4) requirement faculty generate salaries through grants; (6) Trigger warnings; (7) Sabbatical (study leave) ideas as more routine for faculty to get them.

**D. Nominations – Mark Addleson**

We are trying to fill a vacancy on the Effective Teaching Committee and will put out a general call. We are contacting present Faculty Representatives to the BOV Committees whose terms end this year in preparation for elections.

**E. Organization and Operations – Lisa Billingham**

Allocation of Senate seats 2017-18: We will contact IRR person.

We will follow up with Elavie Ndura, Chair of the Minority and Diversity Issues Committee about updates to their committee charge (see [Attachment A](#)).

Chair Renshaw has also reached out to the Grievance and UPTRAC Committees about changes and updates to their charges.

**IV. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives**

**A. Faculty Handbook Committee**

Proposed Revisions to the Faculty Handbook – Final Reading just the proposed changes for a vote at March 1, 2017 meeting.

**V. New Business, Updates, and Discussion**

- Professor Watchlist – decision: The Faculty Matters Committee is working on this. Chair Renshaw noted he has seen little about this in higher ed news circles since late November.
- New room for FS meetings starting Fall 2017: Research 163 is reserved; we will also check with Registrar's Office to confirm availability of Robinson B113 for AY 17-18; it is usually reserved in advance. Robinson Hall to be knocked down.
- Faculty engagement in faculty governance: Faculty Matters Committee: different levels of engagement among faculty Senators but not a lot at beginning, we might all benefit if faculty become more engaged. Suggestion to have Chair Renshaw and another Faculty Senator

make presentations to departments/schools about Faculty Senate and faculty governance. We would like to have your thoughts on the general topic now or in the future.

Discussion: Meetings of the general faculty have not taken place since 1995. President Cabrera, Provost Wu and J.J. often hold meetings, town halls, etc. People can be engaged if they want to be. Should we send items to departments?

Someone noted that HR also recently held focus groups on faculty engagement. Is there overlap? Provost Wu responded he does not see a whole lot of overlap; the HR focus is on understanding better what is driving university morale (engagement in university as a whole, not just in faculty governance)– send ideas to Alan Abramson ([aabramso@gmu.edu](mailto:aabramso@gmu.edu)). It is our responsibility as Faculty Senators to report back to our colleges – we do so at our monthly meeting. Even if we volunteer, we have a responsibility to go back and report material.

- Foundation/Fundraising: The Chronicle of Higher Education wrote about Mason students suing for GMU Foundation records. There is a long tradition of anonymity in philanthropy; a long tradition of transparency in public institutions. Funding will be spent on lawyers to make the university's case.
- UVA Statement on Immigration ban (see [Attachment B](#)): Observations included: Whatever UVA may say, we are not in a position to be that righteous; not to put target on our back;, we are too close to the action, cannot afford to do this. Senator Tim Kaine visited Mason and spoke out against a travel ban. Several students spoke about their experiences. President Cabrera and Provost Wu have made strong language in their statements. Consensus emerged to say we support President Cabrera's and Provost Wu's statements.

#### **VI. Agenda Items for March 1, 2017 FS Meeting**

- Draft FS Minutes February 1, 2017
- Announcements
  - Rector Davis
  - Provost Wu
  - Senior VP Davis
- Committee Reports
  - Organization and Operations
    - Allocation of Senate seats 2017-18
    - Minority and Diversity Committee charge
  - Faculty Handbook Revision Committee: Proposed Revisions to the Faculty Handbook (2<sup>nd</sup> view)

**VII. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Meg Caniano  
Faculty Senate clerk

## Attachment A

### Current Charge

#### Minority and Diversity Issues Committee

*The Minority and Diversity Issues Committee (approved by the Faculty Senate on March 18, 1998) incorporated and revised duties previously addressed by the ad hoc Minority Affairs Committee and the ad hoc Diversity Issues Committee; effective September 1998. Revision to the charge to include term faculty was approved by the Faculty Senate November 1, 2010. Further revision to update the language around diversity and reflect the University's changes to the names of relevant offices was approved by the Faculty Senate March 1, 2017.*

**Composition:** Five members. Term, tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible to serve on this Committee. Members serve staggered two-year terms.

**Charge:** To work in concert with the ~~Equity Office, Minority Students Services Office, Office of Compliance, Diversity and Ethics and the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Multicultural Education (ODIME)~~, other pertinent administrators, and campus organizations in developing and implementing means to ensure nondiscrimination, ~~tolerance~~ acceptance, and protection of the rights of all persons affiliated with the University; and to facilitate dialogue among those connected with the University and those in the broader community on matters concerning minority marginalized populations and diversity issues.

## Attachment B

### UVA Faculty Senate Executive committee Resolution on Immigration Executive Order

The President's recent executive order banning entry to the United States of citizens from seven predominately Muslim countries, as well as refugees from all countries, is a moral outrage. It threatens lives and divides families, including those of students, staff, and faculty of the University of Virginia. It also threatens the basic values of inclusiveness, equality, and respect for human dignity that we stand for as a university in the public trust. Rather than addressing legitimate security and safety concerns in a responsible and measured way, this drastically overbroad policy needlessly harms decent and talented people who have already been strictly vetted and who pose no demonstrable risk. Despite recent court orders staying parts of the order, much of it remains in effect, and it is therefore an active threat to refugees, immigrants, and Muslim-Americans, including those in our community. We condemn it unequivocally.

We condemn it not only as an offense to human decency and the Constitution, but also because it harms our ability to do our jobs. We are scientists and engineers, physicians and lawyers, historians and philosophers, and business innovators and public servants. We come from all corners of the world to this great University to learn and share knowledge. We depend in turn on communities of learning across the world to enrich our own scholarly endeavors. This discriminatory executive order imperils these relationships, even as it threatens our students and shames our nation.

We call on all faculty to contact their legislators and ask them to condemn this executive order and to urge the President to withdraw it.

As faculty we stand with our students and colleagues who might be harmed by this order, and we resolve to defend their rights and safety to the best of our lawful ability.

Faculty Senate Executive Council & General Faculty Council Executive Council