

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING FRIDAY,**  
**NOVEMBER 22, 2019, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.**  
**Nguyen Engineering Building 2903**

**Present:** Lisa Billingham\*, Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Shannon Davis, Tim Leslie, Bethany Letiecq\*, Kumar Mehta, Suzanne Slayden, Provost Wu. (*\*by teleconference*)

**I. Approval of Minutes of September 20, 2019:** The minutes were approved.

**II. Announcements**

The Faculty Senator Working Group (Keith Renshaw, Bethany Letiecq and Solon Simmons) working with the faculty representatives on the Presidential Search Committee (Shannon Davis, Denise Albanese and Gorum Urgessa) to identify a set of potential methods to allow faculty to engage with finalists for the position of GMU President, provided an update. Bethany Letiecq reported the group has received 32 responses to the survey, and was examining these responses. After the planned meeting on November 26<sup>th</sup> at noon further updates will be provided.

Chair Shannon Davis expressed appreciation for the updates and receiving the report in advance so it can be sent with the agenda on Wednesday. One of the members of the working group will present their recommendations to the Senate. This will be the first item on the agenda for the meeting on December 4, 2019.

Discussion:

The working group will present the options at the Faculty Senate meeting to be voted on. In interest of time, and the need to arrive to a resolution on December 4, 2019 meeting -- faculty will be encouraged to engage with and send their thoughts, reservations and contributions to the working group in advance of the meeting. Email announcement of the Faculty Senate meeting will reinforce the expectation that given work already done by working group in consultation with faculty, no new suggestions can be discussed and all communications with the working group be handled prior to the meeting. It will be left up to the working group to amend (or not to amend) the options presented before the Faculty Senate.

Updates from Provost Wu:

- Ongoing state budget process after submission of six-year plan: the November election results are expected to be very significant for George Mason University. The Northern Virginia delegation, who are long-term supporters of GMU, are present on many of the committees. GMU has been engaged with the Northern

Virginia delegation very substantively. GMU has a long-term funding gap of \$40M. Given additional overall higher education allocation is \$45M, GMU's funding gap will not be addressed within a single year. . Through our six-year plan, GMU has requested \$15M in Year 1, and \$20M in following year. While the final outcome is not known, there is a positive expectation towards assistance in addressing the funding gap.

- Technology Talent Initiative: \$75M to higher education over 20 years. GMU will receive approximately a third of this allocation, and this is pretty significant. The allocation is expected to have a positive impact on entire university, not just technology-centric majors, because of the breadth of coursework that is required for earning a bachelors degree.
- Funding: \$125M is allocated toward the development of Innovation District, divided between capital and operating expenses. Kicked off earlier this week at 40- year anniversary of Arlington campus celebration. The plans call for not just replacement of the old building but a broader vision of an innovation district that connects Ballston and Roslyn. There is much interest amongst developers to partner with GMU in this development. He also assured that GMU will retain control of the planning and development, with significant faculty input.
- Engaging with community and other Virginia universities: GMU is discussing establishing Graduate Program Pathways with number of Virginia universities -- University of Mary Washington, James Madison University and Marymount University. We are currently exploring pathway programs to graduate degrees such as 4 +1 and 3 +2. The discussion is currently between Offices of the Provosts , with some college-level discussions. The pathways are expected to broaden the economic impact Mason's degree programs.
- Provost Wu has reviewed the preliminary draft, but has not yet received official report from the School of Computing Working Group. The final report will be shared with the campus community.

Discussion:

Will the School of Computing be a virtual school or a traditional one?

Provost Wu: The recommendation on the structure will be part of the working group's report, and could be a hybrid of the two. It is expected to be multidisciplinary.

Follow up: Faculty handbook requires that a School/College should have tenured faculty appointed to the, faculty-established courses, programs, accreditation, FTE funds, and a dean or chief administrative officer.

Provost Wu: No, as he understands it currently, it would be a pretty straightforward structure.

Will some departments leave their current schools to move to School of Computing?  
When you say traditional school, departments with programs?

Provost Wu: Would prefer to not get ahead of the working group recommendations. What is the timing in term of the general faculty meeting? To dispel rumors? To get broader input from the faculty?

Provost Wu anticipates receipt of report by December BOV meeting. He will update APDUC on the report's recommendations.

- COACHE survey completed, Provost Wu has announced release of Executive Summary, coming from leadership group, to be discussed at General Faculty Meeting in January. Main message: both strengths and weakness of faculty engagement in comparison with some peers. To take concerns such as faculty have - a good benchmark and data; as a beginning guideline to do that.
- Michelle Marks and Provost Wu have done six engagement sessions for online education: 3 different models: (1) acquisition, (2) partnership, (3) home-grown Campus does not favor acquisition model with a different faculty configuration, and as a result this option is now no longer being considered. The other two options are under consideration. Mason has also requested funding from Commonwealth of Virginia.

Discussion:

Where are you with tuition sharing with a third party?

Provost Wu: Revenue sharing? If Commonwealth of Virginia is willing to fund significant portions of the infrastructure requirements, then Mason will have more negotiating power and options in terms of: (1) revenue-sharing, (2) fee for service, or (3) combination of 1 and 2. A one time infrastructure funding request for \$11M has been submitted. This is a non-trivial investment, and we are awaiting their response. As a model, we have looked at NOVA Community College, which has a very impressive operation in the city of Fairfax

Chair Shannon Davis received an email from Senator Dominique Banville asking the Faculty Senate to look into why 9 month faculty cannot take their pay over 12 months: *"to investigate more closely why the decision was made to go 9 over 9 (rather than 9 over 12) and by whom, and potentially seek more input from the faculty impacted by this decision to determine what would be the best choice for the majority of faculty impacted by this decision."* SVP Kissal not here today. Shannon will forward the email to her and to the Executive Committee.

Discussion:

There is an IRS cap on deferred income of \$90K. Often people do overloads and go past this amount. This puts a huge liability on the University as individual would not get penalized but the university would (as the party sending IRS the withheld taxes). Another facet to 12-month challenge – tax withheld on monthly salary X 12, shields you for liability of overpayment.

A previous study (about ten years ago) mathematicians asked HR/Payroll to explain; they hired an accounting firm. Linda Harber said was a very complex computation: those who went to 12-month option were disadvantaged by not having their money; the only way to stop it was to put everybody on 9mo/9mo.

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

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

To include the motion from the previous meeting (Nov. 6) on drop deadlines.

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

We submitted our annual request for salary data.

The University Budget Planning Advisory Council and all its working groups is up and running. We have faculty on just about every group, mostly members of the Budget and Resources Committee, with one BOV rep.

Tim met with members of the Provost's Office and HR to discuss the differentiation between graduate lecturers and adjunct faculty, specifically regarding the tuition benefit. The tuition benefit for adjuncts shares the same benefit pool as other faculty and staff, which raises concerns over maintaining the FICA exemption for graduate students. No real answers yet, although Provost's office is encouraging units to use assistantships rather than graduate lecturers when appropriate. Also discussed health insurance and out-of-state-tuition benefit for non-PhD students, as well as making tuition assistance more consistent across the University.

#### Discussion:

GMU has far too many categorizations and classifications for employing Graduate students. Graduate students within the same unit doing the same work, may be classified differently and as a result being not only compensated very differently, but also receiving different tuition benefits.

As the undergraduate population at Mason continues to grow, there is real need for good quality graduate instructors.

Provost Wu: At Mason, Graduate Education is highly decentralized unlike at other universities. Like the admissions process, Central has a function in managing graduate student quality, but because of historical decentralization, there is a huge amount of resistance at the unit level. There is also an ongoing search for a Provost for Graduate Education.

Their purpose is to support the department in its curricular mandate. The hope is that with the new budget model, the units with higher instructional loads, gets

more money back and they would use it to reinvest in their students. Using money to boost TA and faculty support is what new budget model is designed to do. Policy-wise, there is a need for a university-wide standards with graduate students stipends and benefits.

The Budget and Resources Committee will continue to follow up on graduate compensation and equity across the institution.

**C. Faculty Matters – Bethany Letiecq**

The Faculty Evaluation of Administrators survey closes on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. 23% response rate; usually by this time most people have already responded.

A non-Faculty Matters resolution in support of In-State Tuition for all Virginians without regard to their immigration status will be presented at the Faculty Senate Meeting. This resolution will be shared with the FSVA and the VA Conference of the AAUP, and for inclusion as a topic of advocacy for Virginia Higher Education Advocacy Day on January 9<sup>th</sup>. Faculty are encouraged to drive to Richmond to attend the events. Efforts to ensure dissemination of this information to the Dreamers student organization will be made, and to keep them updated.

**D. Nominations – Melissa Broeckelman-Post**

The election of three Faculty Senators to work with the faculty representatives to the Presidential Search Committee was concluded.

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

We are working on the Parking Advisory Committee representation and will send the tabulation of reports for ombudsperson to send to EXC in December, and will send report to the working group to Lester Arnold (VP – Human Resources).

**IV. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives**

Shannon added the working group on faculty conduct is close to getting procedures, not for December meeting, anticipate early spring.

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

- Response to report on server use to bring before the Senate: Shannon working with Keith Renshaw and Provost Wu to update recommendations, then back to EXC; may not be ready until February meeting.
- Explanation of how violations of Faculty Handbook, including suggestions for its modifications are handled by the Faculty Handbook Revision Committee, in concert with representatives from the Provost Office, Human Resources and the Faculty Senate and ultimately BOV approval of proposed changes.

- Faculty Senate Meetings Merten 1201 in AY 2020-21: Availability of Merten 1201 with some asterisks. We may have a solution in Research Hall room 163. It is not a classroom, more central to campus, with enough space for use and teleconference capability. Currently held by VSE for their faculty meetings, she has asked Dean Ball if he plans to do meetings at the same time, if he will release them. Should we have a standard room in Research 163 or to keep our regular schedule of meetings? Discussion included extra space available in time? Not written in stone, to have this ready for December meeting? To have a virtual meeting? To encourage participation electronically but not encourage it; feels people may disappear. All of these rooms have WebEx enabled. How to identify Senators? When they can speak or not speak? Participation limited but viewership is not.

## **VI. Agenda Items for December 4, 2019 FS Meeting**

- Draft FS Minutes November 6, 2019
- Unfinished Business
  - Report from Faculty Senator Working Group re: Presidential Search
- Committee Reports
  - Academic Policies: Report including motion on drop deadlines
  - Faculty Matters: Resolution in Support of In-State Tuition for all Virginians
  - Effective Teaching Committee – Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) Pilot Update
- New Business
  - Chosen Names and Pronouns Policy – Jeannie Brown Leonard and Josh Kinchen
  - Faculty Activity and Collaboration Tools (FACTs) – Kim Eby and/or Molli Herth
- Announcements
 

Provost Wu

General Faculty Meeting – January 29, 2020, 3:00 – 4:30 pm in Johnson Center Cinema. It will have WebEx participation to type in questions and participate in that way.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kumar Mehta  
Secretary