

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING June 9, 2021
ELECTRONIC MEETING 1:00-3:00pm

Present: Lisa Billingham, Melissa Broeckelman-Post, (Chair), Richard Craig, Mark Ginsberg, Tim Leslie, Kumar Mehta, Solon Simmons, Suzanne Slayden.

I. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of April 12, 2021 approved.

II. Announcement

Provost Ginsberg

- Announced that Governor Northam is formally approving Tier III status for GMU.
- US State Dept. is starting to approve study abroad for Fall 2021, and demand from students is greater than ever before. GMU is positioning to maximize the opportunities to undertake study abroad for the students.

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

A. Academic Policies – Suzanne Slayden

- AP Committee has been looking into religious accommodation policy.
- Current policies are inadequate and identified deficiencies in clarity.

Discussion:

- Senators expressed concern that individual faculty member was expected to provide accommodations in too many different situations. This would cause inconsistency in process, decision to accommodate and nature of accommodation granted.
- Concern was also expressed about possibly introducing too much bureaucracy into the process.
- Senators discussed the various accommodations related offices that exist, and ways in which the process can be reengineered to enable improved management for all concerned (students, faculty and administration).
- It was decided that:
 - AP Committee will continue to examine the issue and propose appropriate revisions for Faculty Senate to consider for approval.
 - Senators Leslie and Mehta will draft proposal for their suggestion of a single accommodations office for EXEC to consider.

B. Budget and Resources – Tim Leslie

No Updates.

Discussion:

- Senators stressed on need for improved communication from local academic units to individual faculty regarding the raises.

C. Faculty Matters – Solon Simmons

No updates other than discussion on “Task Force on Reimagining Faculty Roles in Support of University Success” under New Business.

D. Nominations – Richard Craig

- Received communications from Renate Guilford requesting participation by a member of the EXC in the new Custodial Service Contract Committee. The committee plans on making decision by latter part of July and no later than August.

Discussion:

- After some discussion Senator Mehta volunteered to serve on the committee.

E. Organization and Operations – Lisa Billingham

- Provided update on search for Ombudsperson.
- Informed that there is an ongoing conversation on revising the charge of Academic Technology Advisory Council (ATAC). The charge overlaps with Technology Policy Committee. The charge was presented for discussion by EXC.

Discussion:

- Senators discussed the various IT-related committees and their charge.
- There was extensive discussion on resources controlled and deployed for IT services – both centrally and by local academic units. The need for better management of these resources to reduce duplication and improve utilization.
- Senators discussed need for and appropriateness of faculty senate engagement in governance of the IT resources.
- Senators agreed that ATAC should be allowed to go forward as we continue to have broader discussion regarding faculty's role.

IV. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives

V. New Business, Updates, and Discussion

- A. Draft for discussion and revision: Task Force on Reimagining Faculty Roles in Support of University Success
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Task Force on Reimagining Faculty Roles in Support of University Success DRAFT

Whereas the roles of Faculty of George Mason University are often in roles beyond those typically ascribed to Research and Teaching functions, where multiple roles are complementary, and faculty can shift roles over time;

Whereas the Faculty Handbook recognizes the two pathways to promotion and tenure: genuine excellence in teaching and genuine excellence in research;

Whereas the institutional structures of contracting and promotion can substantially affect the success and well-being of its faculty;

Whereas the metrics we use to regularly assess our faculty and the institution are not regularly gathered or agreed-upon by the faculty and administration

Whereas George Mason University has been designated as a Research-Intensive (R1) Doctoral University and is a top-50 research institution with different structures, goals, and needs than were envisioned when the institution was founded;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate creates and charges the Task Force on Reimagining Faculty Roles in Support of University Success to propose potential improvements to the institution by:

- Conducting an analysis of faculty roles that are in place or actively and publicly being considered by peer institutions, along with the evaluation and promotion criteria associated with each role or type of contract. This analysis should include different types of tenured and non-tenured faculty roles, including an analysis of promotion criteria for each role (e.g., research-intensive, teaching-intensive, administrative/leadership/service-intensive, and other roles that may be identified in this analysis, both with and without tenure). Each potential type of position should be evaluated for its fit within GMU's existing Faculty Handbook and Policy structure, the policy changes necessary to accommodate each, and the relative viability of creating such roles at Mason.
- Assessing the established policies and procedures in place at the University and Unit-level for "genuine excellence in teaching," and evaluating whether they are suitable for term faculty whose intellectual identities are centered on instruction and mentoring students.
- Considering the possibility of providing pathways to Associate or Full Professor for University contributions to Leadership activities, to include (but not limited to) efforts in diversity, equity, inclusion, community engagement. If these pathways are considered potentially viable, an initial proposal of the necessary modifications to University policies and the Faculty Handbook are also expected.
- Proposing what incentives, policies, or processes should be in place to allow faculty to transition from one type of role/contract to another (e.g., from research-intensive to teaching-intensive roles, from term to tenure-line roles, etc.). This proposal should include details about determining agency, time frames, requirements, and an appeals process. This process should rely as much as possible on existing policies and procedures that emphasize accessibility, fairness, and transparency.
- Establishing metrics and processes that should be the basis of Faculty Accountability in research, teaching, and other activities at George Mason University. These measures should feed into the established (and proposed) processes for promotion in research, teaching, and other pathways. These metrics should be informed by best practices in assessment as well as internal efforts such as the COACHE survey
- Proposing a set of metrics that can be tracked at the University and Unit level that can be part of a public-facing reporting/accountability dashboard structure. These metrics should be useful for understanding the University's relative success within the context of R1 Universities as well as along its own goal programming. Accountability processes for the ownership and responsiveness of these metrics should additionally be documented.

- Bringing progress milestones to the Faculty Senate as often as appropriate for implementation of policy implementations, but no less often than once each academic year.

Composition

This task force shall be composed of

- Faculty
- Office of Faculty Affairs
- Other President's or Provost office representatives
- HR, legal counsel, or other representatives

A few resources and other models to examine:

Inside Higher Ed articles on need for teaching-intensive tenured faculty

- [Initial position paper- Lisa M. Di Bartolomeo and Pablo Garcia Loaeza](#)
- [Gordon Gee's response paper](#)

University of California

- [Guidelines for LPSOE/LSOE series faculty](#)—operationalizes “educational leadership”
- [Research study evaluating teaching-focused tenure-line faculty \[L\(P\)SOE\]](#)
- [Appointment and promotion guidelines](#)—see Appendix B for option to temporarily move from a full-time tenure-line appointment to a part-time appointment with half of the productivity expectations in order to accommodate family needs
- [Development of Lecturer with Potential Security of Employment role](#)—L(P)SOE article

IUPUI Path to Promotion and Tenure for Enhancing Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity

- [IUPUI press release](#)
- [Inside Higher Ed article](#)
- [Examples](#) of other institutions that they modeled their policy after
- [Full guidelines and standards](#)

[Clemson University Department of Communication Guidelines for Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion](#): does a nice job of defining expectations for research-intensive and teaching-intensive tenure-line faculty.

[GMU CEHD workload policy](#)—allows faculty to be defined as University Researcher (most TT and tenured faculty), University Scholar (tenured faculty who opts for a teaching-intensive role as an associate professor), and University Teacher (term faculty)

[GMU guidelines for Genuine Excellence in Teaching](#)

[Article about some ways](#) faculty life will need to be reimagined post-Covid—not really about tenure,

Discussion:

- Senators discussed pros-and-cons of expanding the charge to include “tenure for term-faculty” within this, or to pursue the two separately.
- Senators also expressed concern with conflating the proposal with “Faculty Success Initiative”.
- Senators agreed that the broader conversation is much needed instead of piecemeal conversations on different aspects.
- Senators discussed various examples of the different ways in which faculty contribute to the success of the university and the need for a more holistic thinking around faculty contribution.
- It was agreed to continue the discussion over the summer to revise and improve on the charge.

The meeting adjourned at 3:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kumar Mehta
Secretary