

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2020**  
**ELECTRONIC MEETING\* – 3:00 – 5:00 pm**

**Present:** Lisa Billingham, Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Shannon Davis (chair), Provost Mark Ginsberg, Sr. VP Carol Kissal, Timothy Leslie, Bethany Letiecq, Kumar Mehta, Suzanne Slayden.

**I. Approval of Minutes:** June 10, July 7, July 13, July 22, August 3 and 6: deferred to our next meeting.

**II. Announcements**

Chair Davis welcomed all to the meeting. She asked Provost Ginsberg and Sr. VP Kissal to spend a little time with us at the beginning of our conversation, and then answer any questions they might have before we move into the business at hand of trying to respond to those committee concerns as we build our first agenda.

**Provost Ginsberg:**

- Noted that with change in leadership -- this is a period of transition and change for GMU.
- Would like to begin conversation with faculty and faculty senate on how university can better support faculty.
  - Acknowledged that adjustments to compensation has been an important goal, and hopes to have that continue post-COVID.
  - Would like to spend time in his role to identify gaps besides compensation, and work towards addressing those.
  - Currently working with Chair Davis and Faculty Matters Committee on the faculty evaluation process in Fall, and how to consider these evaluations.
- Stressed on the importance of the Master Plan, and its long-term implications for the university beyond the current crisis.
- Informed that a public dashboard for COVID related reports is forthcoming.
- Current status:
  - 40% of sections on campus are face-to-face and/or hybrid (60% of graduate level; 27% of undergraduate level).
  - About 1,022 faculty will be teaching on campus to some degree.
  - About 12,000 people will be coming to campus during each week.

**Discussion:**

- He was not sure whether independent studies, thesis, and dissertation courses are being considered as "on-campus" and faculty as teaching face-to-face.

- On experience of other universities pivoting back to fully online and what is Mason's threshold for pivoting:
  - Surveillance testing should help identify early and hopefully prevent an outbreak. He assured Mason's reopening is different than others, and that if decisive actions are required, it would be based on facts.
- Query regarding COVID testing of resident students. What actual test is being used, and when was the self-administered sample collection granted Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by FDA
  - Senior VP Kissal: Regional positivity ratio is around 5.5% and the goal is to keep it below 9%. The data will be reported on soon to be deployed dashboard. The Kallaco tests are PCR throat swab tests, and the lab is CLIA approved. Students arriving without tests are quarantined and have had test administered after arrival.

**Senior VP Kissal:**

- Shared that her recent focus has been on preparing campus for Fall, but going forward she will be focused on strategic goals identified by President Washington at the BOV. With her team, she aims to devise action plans that align with these strategic goals.
- Noted that with COVID, there are forthcoming paradigm shifts in higher education. She expects the Faculty Senate to be part of the conversation and development of the plans and reference goals.
- She shared that work on Master Plan is progressing with three Faculty Senators on the Steering Committee.

**Discussion:**

- Updates on budget deficit.
  - She noted that the projections are still in flux week to week. Currently, a deficit of \$125M is being projected. The enrollments, while better than Fall 2019, are short of targeted growth of 5%.
  - Through combination of 5-6% budget cuts from academic and non-academic units, and use of reserves -- Mason has avoid furloughs and layoffs.
  - Goal is to continue to support strategic initiative of retaining talent keeping in line with our status of R1 institution.
- On continuity of collaborative working structure with Faculty Senate Budget and Resources Committee
  - She shared that President Washington is committed to maintaining the engagement, and the collaboration and relationships will be continuing.

### **EXC Meeting with Dr. Washington yesterday (August 17, 2020)**

Chair Davis followed up on EXC "meet and greet" with Dr. Washington on August 17, 2020 to discuss Dr. Washington's request to send him list of actionable items from the meeting.

- Point was made that had EXC known that the conversation would have included list of faculty's priorities, we could have been prepared to have that conversation instead of reacting to points raised by President Washington.
- It was discussed as to how EXC should frame this communique and include list of our priorities.
- After discussion, it was discussed that EXC accept his request at face value - provide him with a summary of the actionable items discussed during meet and greet. Separately, EXC and Faculty Senate invite and continue to engage him in conversations to identify longer-term strategic priorities that are important to the faculty.
- Kumar would draft the requested summary of points for EXC members to review and comment before sending it to President Washington.

**Senate Officers appointed AY 20-21:** Melissa Broeckelman-Post – Chair pro Tempore, Suzanne Slayden – Parliamentarian, Rebecca Sutter and David Wong, Sergeants-at-Arms.

### **BOV Meeting Follow up:**

Chair Davis shared that Tom Davis, Board Liaison to Faculty Senate, has expressed his desire to be a resource accessible to everyone and showed his willingness to attend meetings as requested. To this end he has shared his contact information (email and telephone), which will be included in the roster on Faculty Senate website. She shared that to serve effectively as a liaison and touchpoint with BOV, she suggested: a) he meet with Senate Standing Committees once a semester (at committees' discretion), and b) he be invited to EXC meeting once a semester. She hopes that with this role there is an opportunity to engage in a 2-way conversation and develop better understanding of the thinking on both faculty and BOV sides.

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

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

Provost has called a holiday and called for canceling classes on election day. This follows a similar action for Juneteenth. This creates two main problems: a) it is in contravention of Faculty Senate's role in approving the academic calendar, and b) announcement on such short notice will cause disruption to class schedules.

Discussion points:

- State holiday is not mandated for universities
- The goal is to have these as holiday every year
- Chair Davis shared that the Provost: a) was not aware that Faculty Senate needed to approve the change to academic calendar, and b) would like to address the issue in the short term. She also shared that HR has announced it as staff holiday, and thereby no staff (including ITS) will be available on that day.
- Various options were considered to minimize the disruption and impact of canceling a Tuesday class.
- The matter was referred to AP Committee for identifying the options for Academic Calendar revision to be brought to the Faculty Senate.

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

Query and discussion on status of units using Graduate Lecturers (GL)

- Discussion on various colleges, schools and departments and their use of GL
- It was noted that selective colleges are extending partial tuition scholarships to GL from their own specific schools/colleges.
- Discussion on best option to implement the guidance on appropriate use of GL appointments:
  - It was suggested the HR within individual colleges should be familiarized with the guidance that someone should be hired as a GL only if they are ineligible to be hired as GA.
  - HR unwilling to share data for fear of violating privacy rights.
  - Suggestion was made to request aggregate data.

#### **C. Faculty Matters – Bethany Letiecq**

**Stopgap measure to protect faculty interests until [UP 4002 -- Copyright](#) can be revised.**

Under copyright faculty put their courses online and own the copyright. But under the policy, university has an open-ended non-exclusive license in perpetuity to all of the materials. The university, under COVID, has put everything up online. Anything that is on blackboard or whatever, is fair game for the university to use for educational purposes and requires no consent. The issue has become a more pressing concern: With videos, audio, or lectures – faculty's image, voice can be used by somebody else without permission.

The committee asked Aurali Dade, the new interim VP of Research, to suspend the license for one academic year, while we are in a pandemic to protect faculty interests and also to support faculty doing all things creative to meet the needs of their students in this time of crisis without fear that their image, their likeness, etc. could then be used by another in another class without their permission.

The Executive Committee agreed to support the request for the stopgap suspension of copyright for the year, while the policy is being revised.

### **Faculty Evaluation of Administrators**

The Faculty Evaluation of Administrators is coming up.

- The new president and interim provost would not be evaluated, nor two deans.
- Nor would we evaluate Anne Holton who served in an interim position.

Discussion:

- The response rate for the survey has been declining over time – now it is 20s to 30s.
- How to improve response from faculty? What may be the underlying cause for it?
- Faculty believe that the evaluation of administrators does not matter and their feedback is not relevant.
- How to engage the provost in holding people accountable and assuring faculty that this feedback matters?
- Engaging Faculty Senators to communicate with their colleagues in respective colleges and assure them that these evaluations matter to the administration and there is accountability.

### **Evaluation of faculty 2020-2021**

Chair Davis provided updates on teaching evaluations for the academic year:

- There is no suggestion to change the teaching evaluations this year. She has requested Tom Wood, Chair of the Effective Teaching Committee, to
  - Connect with the Stearns Center on ways in which the current course evaluation process can include formative feedback for faculty.
  - What ways can we offer tested opportunities for students to respond to qualitative questions around what was effective in the classroom, specific things that were effective in the classroom.

Discussion:

- Annual evaluation processes have not considered the impact of COVID. There has been notice sent out but there has been little follow up.
- Provost has expressed interest and would like to identify how to fairly evaluate faculty in midst of and post COVID.
- What are the expectations post-COVID? Given the pedagogical pressures, personal life pressures, and pressures because of dropping funding?

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

- Additional Executive Committee Meeting: After some discussion, the committee agreed to meet again on Monday, August 24, 2020 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

- It was discussed to streamline by sending out calendar invitation to the Senators for the Faculty Senate meetings.
- For contingency plans, it was suggested that every standing committee consider having co-chairs. For technical contingency, every Senate meeting will have a backup Blackboard Collaborate meeting set up to Zoom meeting.

#### **VI. Agenda Items for FS Meeting September 2, 2020**

- Approval of the Draft FS Minutes March 4 and March 24, April 1, April 22, and April 29, 2020
- Opening Remarks: Shannon Davis, Chair  
     Appointments: Chair pro tem, parliamentarian, Sergeants-at-Arms  
     Special Meeting with President Washington – Wednesday, October 14, 2020  
     President Washington will address the Faculty Senate – March 3, 2021
- **Committee Reports:**
  - A. Faculty Senate Standing Committees**  
     Executive Committee  
     Academic Policies  
     Budget and Resources  
     Faculty Matters  
     Nominations – see Special Orders  
     Organization and Operations
  - B. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives**  
     (annual reports 19-20 received from Research Advisory Committee and Writing Across the Curriculum) (Meg to ask again for annual reports from Grievance, MASC)
- **Special Orders:** Elections *Note – should be Special Orders, which would come **after** Committee Reports*
  - Election of Members of Faculty Senate Standing Committees
  - Election of Members of University Standing Committees
  - Election of Faculty Representatives
- **New Business**
- **Announcements**
  - Provost Ginsberg
  - Sr. VP Kissal
  - Reports from the Faculty Representatives to the BOV Committees
     ▪ APDUC: Christy Pichichero and Keith Renshaw
     ▪ Development: Alan Abramson and Chris Kennedy
     ▪ Finance and Land Use: David Gallay and Mohan Venigalla
     ▪ Research: Andrew Novak and June Tangney
- **Post Meeting Election of Chairs of Faculty Senate Standing Committees**  
     Respectfully submitted,  
     Kumar Mehta  
     Secretary