

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2020
ELECTRONIC MEETING* – 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Present: Lisa Billingham, Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Shannon Davis (chair), Mark Ginsberg, Tim Leslie, Bethany Letiecq, Kumar Mehta, Suzanne Slayden.

I. Notice of Minutes Remaining to be Approved

Faculty Senate Meetings: March 4, March 24, April 1, April 22 and April 29.

Executive Committee Meetings: June 10, July 7, July 13 and July 22.

II. Announcements

Interim Provost Ginsberg:

- In collaboration with our peers, Mason has been following all the data on COVID's prevalence. Considering the fluidity of the situation -- instead of Aug 3rd, as originally intended, decision was made to delay a little bit to make a final determination regarding Fall and base it on the most up-to-date data. He expects a statement to be released within next few days.
- Shared that the decision that the period between post-Thanksgiving through the rest of the Fall semester, will be fully online. This was based on the advice of healthcare experts regarding the potential confluence of COVID-19 and the seasonable flu. Dorms would remain open and accessible to students who wish to remain in the dorms over that time.
- Fall move in will begin on the 15th of August. This is phased in over a period of several weeks. Every student who is moving into the residence halls is being tested pre-move-in for COVID.
- There were a couple of hiccups with the testing protocol used. He noted that it is the same protocol being used by William and Mary and VCU and had been planned to be used by Georgetown. He shared his confidence that some of the early hiccups have been ironed out. Shared updates on testing:
 - Based on reports from some of the students on the list (to receive the testing kits), all have received theirs.
 - Several students have already returned collected samples to the contractor.
 - Expects to begin receiving the results for the returned samples.
 - For students who might not have been able to get tested or test results have not been received – there are backup plans to house the students and to test them onsite when they arrive on campus.
- Fall registration numbers continue to be virtually identical to last year.

- This is good news as well as challenging. Good that we are not experience the drop in enrollment as experienced by other universities. Challenging because Mason had planned for a slight increase in student enrollment.
 - There is a slight uptick (~400) in the number of students who have enrolled and registered for classes this fall. Some students are enrolled for fewer credits than last year.
 - About 40 - 45% of undergraduate classes will have some on-site presence with almost all in the hybrid form.
 - The number of seats for on-site classes is about 15% below the level they had last year.
 - About 13,000 students in total are registered for classes with some onsite component, most of those are hybrid form.
- Full dorm capacity is 6,200 students. Currently, Mason expects to have 3,600 - 3,800 students in the dorms. Virtually all will be single rooms, again, with pre-testing prior to arrival, and prior to move-in for all students coming on campus to live in the residence facilities. There will be special programs available to the dorm students as well, many of them will be taking much of their academic program in an online format.

Q&A:

Question: With somewhat more than half of 6200 capacity on campus, how many students or what proportion of them, are going to be doubling up? Do we know whether they made the request to stay with a roommate for financial reasons, or for some other reasons?

Provost Ginsberg: It is a small percentage of students but did not have information on the reasons. They were vetted through the Housing Office. No one was assigned a double room; students requested them.

Question: There's much mention on Social Media and Reddit about Kallaco Company – which has been contracted for the testing. Can you speak to the vetting process or to the rigor involved in selecting this company?

Provost Ginsberg: Mason worked very closely with our other institutions -- VCU and William and Mary, who had their contracts first. Georgetown had a separate arrangement with Kallaco. He noted that the challenge is that almost all the entities that are involved with COVID-19 testing or home testing are basically new entities. And those that are not new, are new to the field of at-home testing. There were lots of conversations over the weekend with Kallaco as well with VCU and W&M. He shared that having backup plans is important, and that backup plans are in place just in case there is some kind of failure.

Question: Are the results coming in in timely manner or are there still delays?

Provost Ginsberg: There have not been any delays in results being reported. He shared that there were delays earlier because of the delay in having the test kits being sent to the students. Students are now beginning to send the samples to the lab. So far Mason has been assured by Kallaco that they have the ability, the supplies and the equipment to provide test results in a timely manner.

Question: Whether buildings on campus are open and the protocol for coming to campus and entering the buildings.

Provost Ginsberg offered to check into it.

Chair Davis: Her understanding is that some of the communications that were going to be coming out were going to address these questions. She noted that with so many people working on communications (colleges, provost office, president's office) Provost's follow-up and ensuring that the communication goes out would be greatly appreciated.

Question: With regard to the quarantining of students in the Global Center: It looks like INTO faculty are teaching in that building. Some faculty have expressed concern about being in the same building without extra protections, given that is where all the quarantining and testing is taking place

Provost Ginsberg: He did not know about the INTO teaching and will check.

Question: Is there an update on the acknowledgement of risk statement at the end of the training? Are we still requiring people to acknowledge that, and is there any willingness to have check a box thing to certify "I have completed the training", rather than go through the process that puts some kind of a waiver of liability in the future?

Provost Ginsberg: This morning there has been a request to take another look at the language, and possibly add modification language to it. A number of alternatives are being examined, and one of the suggestions is add something that will bring clarity about it not being a waiver.

There was follow up expressing implications of it continuing to be an acknowledgement of risk (even after modification).

Provost Ginsberg: The lawyers can disagree respectfully about what that paragraph means, what the intent of it is, what its implications are. Obviously there have been disagreements between attorneys about that issue.

Question: If the university does close or go online, what is the financial outlook and could we end up in some kind of financial exigency?

Provost Ginsberg: The most important thing is to do the right thing in terms of the health, safety and welfare of the people. He shared that financial forecast is very dire if pivot is necessary to go all online and close the campus. With closure of all residence and ancillary services for both semesters would result in additional revenue shortfall of more than \$104M. If it was for one semester, the estimate would be \$52M. The forecast is for the complete closure of everything. It does not include any further reductions in enrollment, which could be an additional source.

Right now, the shortfall anticipated is about \$124M (as reported to the BOV on Friday). Provost Ginsberg added Mason has been able to mitigate that shortfall through a combination of actions that do not include change in personnel, furloughs, or salary reductions.

There was follow up discussion on:

- Various scenarios and timings of events possibly requiring pivot to fully online, and the budget implications.
- Assumptions underlying the forecasts.
- Need for dormitory and residence facilities to be available for students for whom it is essential for their safety.
- Despite reduced population, the number of individuals on campus is still significant and needs managed.
- Timing of when State's decision regarding the budget allocation would be communicated.

Meetings with President Washington

- President Washington will meet with the full Faculty Senate on October 14th
- The Executive Committee is available on Monday, August 17, 2020 from 2:00 – 3:00 pm to meet with Dr. Washington, for a meet and greet session (via Zoom).
- Executive Committee will also schedule the regular meeting with the President in the Fall with potential timeframe of October-November.
- All events normally scheduled to take place in Mathy House have been put on pause for the time being.

BOV Meeting Follow Up

BOV Liaison to the Faculty Senate

Chair Davis: From the time of presidential search process, there has been an ongoing conversation about improving engagement and communication between the BOV and faculty. A way to enable has been to have a person on BOV, besides Rector, that can -- engage with the faculty and better understand their role as well as concerns.

She sought suggestions from the executive committee on helping define the role:

Discussion:

- Identify some clear, discrete touchpoints – for example: expectation of meeting with the Standing Committees at least once during the year
- Identify spaces so that feedback happened in spaces that are not always high-stress, or high-visibility such as Faculty Senate meetings.
- Begin informal to better feel out the role and its value in helping BOV understand “how we think”.

Chair Davis: Expectation the BOV liaison attend as many Faculty Senate meetings as possible, to hear our conversations. Open to the idea of pursuing the notion of asking liaison to meet with the Senate Standing Committees at least once per semester. For EXC to have the liaison meet with us at a mutually agreeable time once a semester. Possibly timing it before a Board meeting, so that we can have information-sharing in ways that are open and transparent.

Senate appointed positions for the academic year

Chair Davis: Rebecca Sutter will be joining us this fall as Sergeant-at-Arms this fall. Still working on confirmation whether the second person will be able to join us this fall in that capacity. Rebecca has been invited to the meeting as well, because the first meeting in many ways is all about voting. She thanked Suzanne for serving as parliamentarian again for the academic year. She thanked Melissa for serving as chair pro tempore. If second Sergeant of Arms can be determined by this meeting, they will be invited to this meeting. If not, there will be a second meeting after that. This is why Meg has requested another meeting for us so we can have another conversation about getting ourselves ready for the first Senate meeting of the academic year.

III. New Business, Updates, and Discussion

- Updating Senate Website (mock up of photos to mirror Staff Senate in some way: <https://admissions.gmu.edu/facultysenate/>) Please look at the Staff Senate website and then at the markup Azu has done to see if that is something we are potentially interested in. I am personally interested in making it easier for faculty to find the Senators that represent them. Visual helps with some folks.

IV. Next Executive Committee Meeting using Zoom – Thursday August 6, 2020 4:00 pm
with Cherie Galantis – Manager, Enterprise Collaboration, ITS and Matt Berlejung,
Videoconference Engineer, ITS

Respectfully submitted,
Kumar Mehta
Secretary