

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING
DECEMBER 8, 2021
Electronic Meeting*, 3:00 – 4:15 p.m.

Number of attendees: 94

[List of names](#) at end of minutes

- I. Call to Order:** Chair Melissa Broeckelman-Post called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.
- II. Approval of the Minutes:** November 17, 2021: The minutes were approved as submitted.
- III. Opening Remarks – Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Chair**
- Chair Broeckelman-Post welcomed everyone, and noted that the first Faculty Senate meeting for Spring 2022 had been scheduled prior to the start of the semester, on Jan 19. That meeting is canceled, and Executive Committee will meet then, instead. First full Faculty Senate meeting in Spring 2022 will be February 9, 2022.

IV. Committee Reports
A. Senate Standing Committees

Executive Committee – Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Chair

- Reminder – coffee chat on Friday, December 10, 9:30 a.m.

Academic Policies – Suzanne Slayden, Chair

- Current language in Catalog regarding qualifications for Dean’s list (AP.5.5) did not preclude anyone who earned an F in a class from qualifying, as long as they had a semester GPA of 3.50 or higher (which is possible with an F). However, Registrar had been denying students from being on the Dean’s List if they had an F. Although the AP Committee did not agree with the Registrar’s Office having made a unilateral decision like that in the past, they agreed with the spirit of that decision. They moved that a student with a grade lower than C in any semester be disallowed from qualifying for the Dean’s List, as reflected in the proposed added text (in italics) to AP.5.5 below:
 - *The Dean’s List recognizes undergraduates who achieve a high level of academic performance during a semester. Students in degree status who take at least 6 credits in a semester (excluding courses graded satisfactory/no credit) and earn a semester GPA of 3.50 or higher with no grade below C, merit placement on the Dean's List. Courses subsequently repeated and excluded will not retroactively affect Dean's List status. This notation will be placed on the individual's permanent record.*
- The motion was approved.

Budget and Resources - Kumar Mehta and Matt Theeke, Co-Chairs

- No report.

Faculty Matters – Solon Simmons, Chair

- Chair Simmons apologized for delay with the Faculty Evaluation of Administrators survey – work was delayed by the urgency of the Provost Extension Review Committee work

- He noted that a number of important surveys would be coming in the spring, each measuring something different: (1) COACHE survey of faculty members, coming from the Office of Faculty Affairs and Development (compares us to other faculty at similar institutions), (2) Gallup poll focused on faculty and staff (compares us to employees in other industries/entities), and (3) Faculty Evaluation of Administrators (feedback about administrators). Recognizing that numerous surveys are tiresome, they are each important in their own right. We need strong response rates – please complete and encourage your colleagues to complete.

Nominations – Richard Craig and Charlotte Gill, Co-Chairs

- No report.

Organization and Operations – Lisa Billingham, Chair

- Committee has met and is working on some committee charges that are being sent back to committee and being sent forward to the Executive Committee. Should have items for Senate in February.

B. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives

- The Adult Learning and Executive Education Committee submitted a [report](#) that was included in the agenda – no questions were raised.
- The Capital Planning Steering Committee submitted a [report](#) that was included in the agenda – no questions were raised.
- The Effective Teaching Committee submitted a [report](#) that was included in the agenda. Chair Tom Wood also spoke, noting that the committee would work with faculty, staff, and academic units to implement the new Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) items starting in Spring 2022. He noted that much of the work was grounded in equity – trying to use items and tools that best protect against discrimination and best promote faculty development and improvement.
 - A Senator noted that results of evaluations conducted in Blue (new software platform for SETs) are not publicly available, like they have been in the past – this prevents students from accessing them, which they have done in the past to help in picking classes. Chair Wood indicated he was unaware of this change. Gesele Durham, Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, indicated that unit heads could get this information. Another Senator recalled that the Faculty Senate may have passed a motion to prevent the release of student evaluations of teaching conducted during the pandemic. AP Durham noted that she would have to look into whether Blue has capacity to allow for this, but that Department Chairs could choose to release that information if they wished (it was not made clear how Chairs could do this in a widely accessible manner).
 - A Senator asked about the low response rate on the online version of the SETs. Chair Wood indicated the best solution might be to use time during class to have students complete the online version – some faculty expressed concerns that students would need devices in class to do so.
 - Another Senator asked if all units had to use the electronic system, or whether some units could elect to maintain paper evaluations. AP Durham noted that units would have to be responsible for creating, distributing, collecting, and analyzing the survey – it would not be supported centrally. She also noted that the question of whether it would be permitted was a separate issue. Provost Mark Ginsberg noted that this would create large problems for the university, which is trying to collect systematic data related to the entire university. He indicated that if this raised serious concerns, they should be

addressed outside of Faculty Senate meeting time, as separate evaluation systems across units would be a significant problem for the university. Chair Wood noted that units can always collect *additional* information beyond the SETs, and the finding new and improved ways of evaluating teaching is a continued focus.

- Another Senator voiced a similar concern about not returning to paper, and noted that faculty should be consulted before this decision was finalized. A separate Senator recalled that this issue had been discussed in depth for over 1 year in the recent past, and after extensive discussion, the decision was ultimately made to proceed with online evaluations, with full awareness of the challenges such a move would bring. Those challenges were deemed as outweighed by the financial and environmental costs to continuing with paper evaluations.
- A Senator asked if the law school had requested to opt out of the changes to items on the form when the Faculty Senate had passed the new items. Chair Broeckelman-Post indicated that may have been in relation to alternative grading, not the SET items. The Senator from the Law School indicated she would consult with a colleague who was Senator at the time. Some discussion of the perceived pros of the “overall” evaluations of teaching and the course (items that have been omitted from the new form) was followed by discussion reminding the Senate of the numerous publications and data that have demonstrated that those types of “overall” evaluation questions appear to have the least validity and are most susceptible to bias against women faculty and faculty of color.
- A Senator raised concerns about the deadline for SETs to be complete, which was the Sunday before reading days – the Senator indicated waiting until final exams begin would be preferable. Chair Wood noted that they are working with OIEP on the deadline, which has also been raised by other faculty as a problem.
- Another Senator noted that the form does work on smartphones, and almost every student has a smartphone.
- A comment from the chat was read by Secretary Renshaw, asking whether something could be implemented such that students cannot access their grades until they complete the evaluation (or at least explicitly opt to not complete it). Secretary Renshaw went on to share that, in his department, they are reviewing who got the highest response rates and then asking what they did, to see if they can determine what actions are most likely to contribute to higher response rates.
- Chair Wood indicated that the Effective Teaching Committee is also engaging with the Student Senate to generate ideas.
- The Grievance Committee submitted a [report](#) that was included in the agenda – no questions were raised.

V. New Business

- No new business was raised.

VI. Announcements

- The following announcement was submitted by LaShonda Anthony, Director of Academic Integrity, on behalf of the Office of Academic Integrity for inclusion in the agenda:
 - Please share with your departments that the final Honor Committee Hearing of this semester will be December 9th. If faculty have not received a decision by December 10th, they should submit a grade of HC for any student with a pending honor code case. This will generate an NR on their transcript until the case is resolved. It is critical that faculty do this to avoid issues with students erroneously receiving grades that may impact graduation or subsequent courses.
- Provost Ginsberg made a series of announcements:

- He thanked faculty colleagues for participating in the review of his potential appointment extension. He is honored to have been asked to continue, has agreed, and is looking forward to it.
- He expressed gratitude to the faculty for all of their work over another challenging semester, and reminded everyone of the various Winter graduation ceremonies that would take place next week.
- He noted that Spring registration overall looked strong – currently running a bit ahead of Spring 2021, and a bit behind Spring 2020 (at comparable times). Likely to have one of the largest – if not the largest – entering transfer class ever this coming Spring. For Spring, virtual classes are again filling more quickly than face-to-face classes. Most students are taking a combination of virtual, face-to-face, and/or hybrid classes. As of now, about 75% of Spring classes are scheduled as face-to-face or hybrid, but about 33% of registrations are in fully virtual classes.
- He mentioned awareness of concerns about the omicron variant, and encouraged everyone to get their booster shot if they had not yet done so. All students will be tested upon return to campus for the Spring 2022 semester.
- A Senator noted that at the prior week’s Faculty Senate meeting, the President appeared to say that punishing workloads and faculty burnout were not systemic issues. He asked Provost Ginsberg if he agreed with that view. Provost Ginsberg responded that it was an important issue, and that he did not know if it was systemic or not. He indicated it is an important issue that needs to be assessed, and that he is prepared to do so and to work with the Senate on ensuring that we have the right environment, including workload and supports for both faculty and students. He further noted that it was not only related to writing or communication courses. There are many courses that require intense preparatory work.
- Faculty Matters Chair Simmons followed up the prior comments again stressing the importance of upcoming surveys (notably Gallup and COACHE) in helping to identify these types of issues.
- A Senator raised a concern that Mason was one of four universities in Virginia that could exempt itself from paying prevailing wages on construction and other related projects. The Senator noted that, given that so many people who work in construction are persons of color and immigrants, that for a university committed to racial and social justice, this was problematic. Provost Ginsberg responded that he had heard about this issue, but did not know the university’s position – it would likely be a good question to ask Senior VP Carol Kissal in a future meeting. Chair Broeckelman-Post noted that Budget and Resources Chair Kumar Mehta reported a couple of meetings ago about his service on a committee helping to select a new contractor for custodial services, and noted that their choice was very intentional about selecting a contractor who paid solid wages, had sick leave, and may have been a woman- and minority-owned business.

VII. Remarks for the Good of the General Faculty

- Chair Broeckelman-Post thanked everyone for their work this semester, which continued to be unprecedented and difficult. She wished everyone a good break.

VIII. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
 Keith Renshaw
 Secretary

Appendix A Committee Reports

Adult Learning and Executive Education Committee – submitted by Evelyn Tomaszewski, Chair

Adult Learning and Executive Education

Adult Learning and Executive Education Committee met for the second time this semester on November 18, 2021. Current Committee members: Ioulia Rytikova, Virginia Hoy, Susan Trencher, Evelyn Tomaszewski (Chair).

During our recent meeting, the committee reviewed and discussed the charge and how to best interpret to guide our work. The Committee plans to research current resources and programs available at Mason that fall under “adult learning” and “executive education.” We defined some guiding questions and starting points for data collection. The Committee hopes to generate an overview of the current and emerging resources by starting with four Colleges.

The Committee will be reaching out to Vice Provost, Academic Administration, Renate Guilford to schedule a meeting.

Respectfully submitted by,
Evelyn P. Tomaszewski, Chair

Capital Planning Steering Committee – submitted by Samuel Frye, Faculty Representative, November 30, 2021

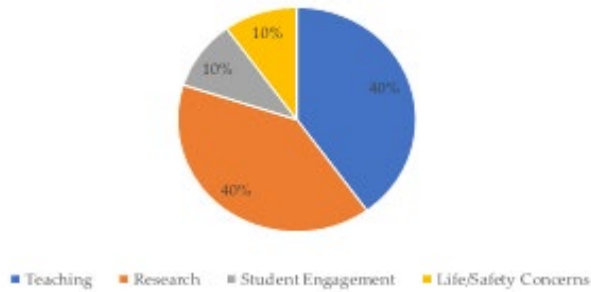
Capital Planning Report

Prepared for the Faculty Senate by Samuel L. Frye

December 8, 2021

The Capital Planning team is pleased to announce the launch of Mason’s inaugural Small Capital Improvement program (“small caps”) which is designed to fund building and renovation projects that cost between \$100k and \$1M. This program allows units to self-identify and prioritize projects based on their operational needs. The budget for fiscal year 2021-2022 is \$4M, the funds for which have been accumulated from budget balances across several completed capital projects. Small caps improvement projects impact the following four categories:

Small Capital Improvement Budget Allocation



<i>Category</i>	<i>Example Projects</i>
Teaching	Improvements to instructional space
Research	Space improvement for new hires
Student Engagement	Support for auxiliary programming
Life/Safety Concerns	Correct building deficiencies

Proposals and budgets¹ for academic-related projects are due February 1, 2022. All requests will be pre-screened to ensure they meet minimum requirements. Proposals that pass the initial screening will be reviewed during a day-long review workshop.² The review committee will consist of planning staff and two faculty representatives who will serve two-year terms. Proposals that are recommended for funding will be sent to Budget Ways and Means for final approval.

Questions and proposals may be sent to smallcap@gmu.edu.

¹ Please contact Capital Planning if you need support with estimating costs for your project.

² See [slide deck](#) for review criteria and submission timeline (link shared with permission).

Effective Teaching Committee – submitted by Tom Wood, Chair, November 30, 2021

Effective Teaching Committee Fall 2021 Summary Statement

The Effective Teaching Committee successfully put forth a resolution to modify the Student Evaluation of Teaching instrument effective Spring 2022. Working with the Senate Chair, the Provost and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning the committee prepared a strategy to communicate these changes to administration, faculty and students during the Spring 2022 semester. Committee members also worked within units across campus to adjust some course evaluation procedures, including administration procedures associated with the newly implemented online instrument BLUE. The work of the committee has produced significant changes toward creating a climate of fair evaluation of teaching with faculty development and student learning outcomes central to these efforts.

Grievance Committee – submitted by John Farina, Chair, November 19, 2021

The grievance committee had no business during this period.

LIST OF ATTENDEES

December 8, 2021

Senators present: Alan Abramson, Matt Andre, Ann Ardis, Alok Berry, Lisa Billingham, Ginny Blair, Michelle Boardman, Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Hyun Young Cho, Jim Conant, Betsy DeMulder, Doug Eymann, Daniel Garrison, Edward Gero, Tim Gibson, Charlotte Gill, Mark Ginsberg, Ken Griffin, Bijan Jabbari, Lauren Kuykendall, Kerri LaCharite, Bethany Letiecq, Lisa Lister, Tamara Maddox, Kumar Mehta, Daniel Menascé, Laurie Miller, Rachelle Perkins, Marvin Powell, Keith Renshaw, Greg Robinson, Esperanza Roman-Mendoza, Catherine Sausville, Jessica Scarlata, Zachary Schrag, Gene Shuman, Solon Simmons, Suzanne Slayden, Cristiana Stan, Kun Sun, Rebecca Sutter, Matt Theeke, Mohan Venigalla, David Wong, Tom Wood, John Zenelis, Jie Zhang.

Senators absent: Karen Akerlof, Robert Baker, Ken Ball, Richard Craig, Rick Davis, David Gallay, Victoria Grady, Germaine Louis, Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm, Alpaslan Özerdem, Maury Peiperl, Ken Randall, Pierre Rodgers, Mark Rozell, Benjamin Steger, Susan Trencher, Anne Verhoeven, Gregory Washington.

Visitors present: Mary Bramley (Director, Donor Relations and Stewardship, University Advancement and Alumni Relations), Laurence Bray (Associate Provost for Graduate Education), Lisa Breglia ((Senior Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs, CHSS), Alecia Bryan (Associate Director of Development, CHSS), Tom Butler (Senior Associate Registrar), Andre Clayborne (Assistant Professor, Chemistry and Biochemistry, COS), Deb Dickenson ((Vice President for Finance, Fiscal Services), Fatou Diouf (Term Assistant Professor, Info Systems and Operations Management, School of Business), Gesele Durham (Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, OIEP), Kim Eby (Associate Provost, Faculty Affairs and Development), Kimberly Ford (Director of Personnel Operations/Academic Administration and Operations/Office of the Provost), Isaac Gang (Associate Professor, CEC, DAEN), Saiid Ganjalizadeh (Assistant Professor, Information Systems and Operations Management, School of Business), Marcy Glover (Ops Manager/Office of the Provost), Brooke Gowl (Associate Director of Research Development, Dean's Office, CHSS), Renate Guilford (Associate Provost for Academic Administration), Mollie Herth (Program Manager, Faculty Affairs and Development, Office of the Provost), Virginia Hoy (Term Asst Professor, English & BIS), Eugene Kim (Term Assistant Professor, Bioengineering, VSE), Jaime Lester (Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs, Strategic Initiatives, CHSS), Kim MacVaugh (Librarians' Council Vice-Chair), Karen Manley (Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning), Andre Marshall (Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact), Alexandra Masterson (Assistant Professor, Biology/IT Committee), Doug McKenna (University Registrar), Janette Muir (Vice Provost, Academic Affairs), Lisa Nguyen (Associate Director of Data Analytics, Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning), Amanda Ogisi (Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs, CHSS), Kyeung Mi Oh (Associate Professor, School of Nursing, CHHS), Eunkyong Park (Director of Co-Curricular Assessment, Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning), Nicola Pitter, Andrea Reeves (Senior Personnel Operations Analyst, Office of the Provost), Shelley Reid (Stearns Center), Lauren Reuscher (Staff Senator), Marguerite Rippey (Associate Dean, CHSS), Pam Shepherd (Communications Director, Office of the Provost), Jasmine Spitler (Assessment Librarian/University Libraries), Holly Stephens (Student Government Liaison), Kate Sweeney (Term Instructor, Journalism, CHSS), Gium Urgessa (Associate Professor/CEIE), Bethany Usher (Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education), Ken Walsh (Chief of Staff, Office of the President), Eleanor Weis (Director of Development, College of Humanities and Social Sciences), Bob Witeck (BOV Liaison to the Faculty Senate), Elizabeth Woodley (University Ethics Officer, Institutional Compliance), Melanie Yousefi (Assistant Professor).