

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING
OCTOBER 9, 2013
Robinson Hall B113, 3:00 - 4:15 p.m.

Senators Present: Dominique Banville, Sheryl Beach, Jim Bennett, Alok Berry, Lisa Billingham, Doris Bitler Davis, Ángel Cabrera, John Cantiello, Carol Cleaveland, Rick Coffinberger, Arie Croitoru, Betsy DeMulder, Charlene Douglas, Mark Houck, Dimitrios Ioannou, Kathryn Jacobsen, David Kuebrich, Timothy Leslie, Daniel Menascé, Linda Monson, Star Muir, Peter Pober, Keith Renshaw, Pierre Rodgers, Joe Scimecca, Suzanne Scott, Suzanne Slayden, Bob Smith, Peter Stearns, June Tangney, Susan Trencher, Iosif Vaisman, Jenice View, Phil Wiest, Shelley Wong, Stanley Zoltek.

Senators Absent: Mark Addleson, Peggy Agouris, Changwoo Ahn, Kenneth Ball, Deborah Boehm-Davis, Lloyd Cohen, Yvonne Demory, Robert Dudley, Helen Frederick, Janos Gertler, Mark Ginsberg, Ghassan Husseinali, Bruce Johnsen, Ning Li, Stuart Malawer, Elavie Ndura, Sarah Nutter, Paula Petrik, Daniel Polsby, Thomas Prohaska, William Reeder, Mark Rozell, Lesley Smith, Anand Vidyashankar, John Zenelis.

Visitors Present: Gil Brown, Assistant Vice President/Chief Budget Officer; J.J. Davis, Senior Vice President; Esther Elstun, Professor *emerita*, Modern and Classical Languages; Daniel Garrison, Faculty, Applied Information Technology, Volgenau School of Engineering; Dolores Gomez-Roman, University Ombudsman; Linda Harber, Associate Vice President, Human Resources/Payroll; Claudia Holland, Head, Copyright Resources Office/Chair, Librarians' Council; Kevin Jackson, Jr., Undersecretary for State Government Affairs, Student Government; Megan Kirk, Vice Chair, Staff Senate; Michelle Lim, Faculty Business Partner, Human Resources/Payroll; Janette Muir, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education; Frank Muraca, Executive Editor, Fourth Estate; David Robinson, Director, TSD - Client Relations; Professor Jim Sanford, Psychology; Professor Mark D. Uhen, Atmospheric, Oceanic and Earth Sciences; Rosemarie Westberg, Graduate Clinical Coordinator, Nursing.

- I. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m.
- II. Approval of the Minutes of September 4, 2013:** The minutes were approved as submitted.
- III. Announcements**

Chair Charlene Douglas welcomed President Cabrera. He is here mostly to answer your questions, and included brief remarks on a variety of topics.

Strategic Plan: Some of you came to the [Town Hall](#) we just had. Overall the process is evolving well, better defining critical goals; creates a more coherent structure of how we tell our story. He thanked the faculty who participated here and appreciated the many involved on the [Task Forces](#).

The Board of Visitors met last week. We welcomed the largest freshman class in our history! He acknowledged the additional pressure in system, amazing how people stepped up and made things work! Congratulations also to recognitions received in the past few months. Accolades included [Academic Ranking of World Universities \(ARWU\)](#), in which Mason ranked in the top 200 of world's 500 best universities; among the top 150 national universities in [US News and World Report's](#) 2014 rankings, only three other Virginia institutions (University of Virginia, William and Mary, and Virginia Tech) included in that description.

A joint committee of the General Assembly, the Joint Legislative and Audit Review Committee (JLARC) has just released a study on the auxiliary side: “[Review of Non Academic Services and Costs at Virginia’s Public Higher Education Institutions.](#)” We have one of the lowest tuition and fees in the commonwealth. Mason’s approach is also innovative in that athletic facilities are also offered to the public, which is better than other universities, and costs us less.

Now coming to academic side, every time we measure outcomes, GMU does well, also acknowledging the burden placed on administrative staff. [SCHEV](#) leads the US in transparency and data available to the public. Mason is #1 in wages earned by graduates in the United States. Last month Virginia student debt numbers published, average student debt for 4 year degrees in Virginia is \$24,000. Mason is among the four Virginia public universities with medium debt at/less than \$18,000, also includes Virginia Military Institute, William and Mary, and University of Virginia. The national student loan default rates for 4 year degrees at 7.5%; in Virginia at 4.5%, and at Mason 1.3%.

Praising Professor Linda Monson’s initiative to fund new [Steinway pianos](#), President Cabrera appealed to faculty for help; many fundraising successes due to individual professors. Last year was a banner year for fundraising; we are ahead of where we were last year. Janet Bingham is the new Vice President for Development and Alumni Affairs. She says we should call it “Advancement”, not “Development”, term is passé.

Provost Search: We are making progress, finally constituted a search committee, chaired by Mills Kelly. He thanked faculty serving on the committee, some were elected, and some were appointed. This is the most important search we will conduct this year. We need to find the top person to do this job, need to find a world-class provost, needs everyone’s involvement. Town Halls will be organized. He also encouraged faculty to send committee members emails, encourages people to apply and to nominate people. Greenwood and Asher have been hired as search consultants. He welcomed the fact they were situated put best resources to work for us – professional search consultant who can tap resources. We manage the process, we set the rules. Adding that Senate chair Charlene Douglas is a member of the search committee, he encouraged all to participate in whatever way to add value.

Discussion/Questions on the Provost Search Process:

A Senator asked: What is the time frame?

President Cabrera: Provost Stearns will retire at the end of the academic year.

A second Senator expressed concern among faculty about time frame. We elected our representatives last summer and have known Provost’s retirement date for several years. Even faculty searches begin the summer before. Will an advertisement be sent out this semester?

President Cabrera is not running the process. The Committee knows we need a new Provost by July 1st. He trusts the people involved and does not feel we are too late.

A third Senator: Will the finalists be brought to campus? The [Faculty Handbook](#) (Section 1.2.5) asks candidates who are finalists for the Provost be brought to campus (to include opportunities to meet with the General Faculty). This is also strongly recommended by the AAUP.

President Cabrera: It is my strong preference that we bring candidates to meet faculty; a huge part of job for them is to meet the faculty. Of the candidates, he used example “we fall in love with one candidate who is not willing to expose himself – will not go unless you can give him some assurance. What to do?”

A fourth Senator: Find another one.

President Cabrera: You can find other people. He reiterated he trusts the committee and wants finalists to be brought to campus. I get it, I understand it. To get best possible provost we can get.

A fifth Senator: Regarding the Strategic Plan, at what point will the committee make decisions about funding levels?

President Cabrera: In the current version of plan, centered goals and values then a section on resources, big categories. Capital resources include compensation for faculty/staff, GTAs, research assistants. Many areas. Some things will generate resources, others consume resources.

A sixth Senator: Is it carrot or stick-based? Targeted or drown if you don't make the goal?

President Cabrera: The Senior Vice President of Finance and Administration is working with the Deans and others to revise our budget system. There are some intended as well as unintended consequences.

A fifth Senator: In some areas there are quantitative goals, e.g. 100,000 graduates, concerned about quality.

President Cabrera: The number you see increase not per enrollment, but completion of degrees. A little bigger and better in completion. Also goal of internal investment for the student – we need to deliver on that, students getting the right jobs, as best control for quality. In other parts of document, you will find those objectives, not growth for the sake of growth.

Chair Douglas will invite Professor T. Mills Kelly, chair of the Provost Search Committee, to the next Faculty Senate meeting (November 6th), and thanked President Cabrera for his visit.

In response to a question raised by a seventh Senator asking whether provost search committee members were required to sign a confidentiality agreement prohibiting them from talking about the search, Chair Douglas responded committee members have signed a basic confidentiality agreement in use for any search committee. She cautioned Senators not to presuppose this search will mimic (presidential) search. We also solicited faculty input (for the five most important criteria for provost candidates).

An eighth Senator was very concerned about using the same search firm as the Presidential search. It also would have been useful for the Presidential Search Committee to know about concerns in the popular business press regarding financial issues at the Thunderbird School of Management. A member of the Presidential Search Committee responded those on the committee were not privy to the information the eighth Senator knew about.

The [Mason Dreamers](#) are a student organization whose mission is "to create a more inclusive environment for immigrants and undocumented students through education and advocacy." Corey Jackson serves on their advisory committee.

Mason Lobbies – Kevin Jackson Jr., Undersecretary for State Government Affairs, Student Government.

Mr. Jackson invited faculty to attend Mason Lobbies, which will take place on Thursday, January 30, 2014.

Now an annual event, student government partners together with different organizations on campus and alumni affairs, faculty, staff, and administration. Last year we lobbied on behalf of a fairer tuition rate for students as well as salary increases for faculty and staff. He thanked previous Senate Chair June Tangney and Senator Alok Berry for their support, and recalled Chair Tangney wrote letters to excuse students from class last year. Senator Berry praised the students; they did a wonderful job; about 55-60 persons attended, welcomed by President Cabrera. We hope to take four buses this year. The Faculty Senate applauded and thanked the students for the effort involved. Please see Attachment A for information about the inaugural 2013 Mason Lobbies.

IV. New Business - Committee Reports

A. Senate Standing Committees

Executive Committee – no report

Academic Policies- Suzanne Scott, Chair

Approval of Academic Calendar 2017-18

Attachment B

The calendar for 2017-18 is submitted for approval three years in advance. One typographical change was made: under Spring 2018, the first day of spring classes was listed as Tuesday, January 22 and was corrected to Monday, January 22. The calendar was approved as amended.

Budget & Resources- Susan Trencher, Chair

We will shortly send out the request for faculty salary data for this cycle; a little early.

Faculty Matters – Joe Scimecca, Chair

We have no items to report today.

Nominations – Jim Bennett, Chair

Senate Chair Douglas noted concern expressed by a Senator not listed as nominee to a committee at the beginning of the year, and appreciated the hard work of the Nominations Committee to fill many slots. Senator Bennett responded that nominations from the floor are always welcome; we did our job as dictated by our charge.

Kumar Mehta (SOM) is nominated to serve as Faculty Senate representative to the University Smoking Policy Working Group. Monique Van Hoek (COS) is nominated to serve on the Salary Equity Study Committee. He also asked for unanimous consent to include nomination of Yvonne Demory (SOM) to fill a vacancy on the Academic Policies Committee. The vacancy occurred after the agenda was sent out. Nominations from the floor are welcome. The nominees were approved unanimously.

Organization & Operations- Star Muir, Chair

We are examining a number of committee charges to reflect changes over time.

B. Other Committees

Faculty Handbook Committee – Suzanne Slayden, Chair

Last spring we sent revisions approved by the Faculty Senate at our special meeting on [February 13, 2013](#) to the BOV for consideration at its meeting in March 2013. The BOV approved only one part of the proposed revisions submitted. In subsequent discussions addressing the concerns of the BOV, we sent all but a few of the remaining proposed revisions to the May 2013 BOV meeting, at which they were approved. There have been ongoing discussions with the BOV on remaining issues. As the BOV this year has decided to have fewer meetings, Senator Slayden suggested the Faculty Senate consider revisions as they occur, not wait for annual special Faculty Senate meeting as in the past. Revisions approved by the Senate would be sent as a package to the BOV for their May meeting.

A Senator: The Faculty Senate has to look carefully at the Faculty Handbook in terms of when we changed it in 2009. We need to have a calendar and mechanism for adjustments. Revisions to the Faculty Handbook every year don't give us enough experience. BOV membership changes every year, not to have expectation they can change faculty practices every year. Piecemeal changes good and bad, we must be careful to protect interest of faculty.

Senator Slayden agrees in what could be considered piecemeal changes, but added the BOV wanted out of its role in the Promotion and Tenure appeals process/changes. Now the appeals procedure is much better than before. There are examples this year for immediate and necessary changes. 1) There is an unfortunate "orphaned" paragraph in the FH that does not unambiguously assign jurisdiction for some grievance cases. 2) The FH states that term faculty can be promoted after 6 years of service, but term

faculty are now being promoted earlier than that. It is better if the change is made public and official so all faculty are aware of what is actually being done.

A second Senator asked for an example of proposals from last year (spring) which the Board put on hold. Senator Slayden responded Chapter One, a mainly definitional chapter, includes paragraphs (describing) duties of the BOV and President's Council, for example. The BOV seems to think this could tie their hands in some way. We do not completely understand all their concerns yet; some are nebulous.

V. Other New Business

Resolution in Support of Providing Benefits for Same-Sex Couples

Sponsored by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate

Whereas the Board of Visitors of George Mason University has issued a resolution (March 24, 2010) concerning discrimination against all persons in their dealings with the University;

Whereas the Faculty of George Mason University believes that all employees and students of the Commonwealth deserve equitable treatment and statutory protection against discrimination;

Whereas the American Association of University Professors has vigorously advocated its support for non-discrimination policies, and that this support is joined by that of the Virginia Conference of the AAUP and of the AAUP Committee on Sexual Diversity and Gender Identity;

Whereas the Faculty Senate of George Mason University continues to support University Policy 1201 that promotes a culture of inclusivity and non-discrimination;

Whereas Mason strives to recruit and retain a diverse faculty with strong research and teaching records, in part by offering them the opportunity to participate fully in the Mason community.

Whereas peer institutions within our region, with whom we compete for faculty, offer comprehensive benefits to same-sex couples and their families;

Whereas the federal government no longer defines marriage as between one man and one woman and now recognizes as legally binding the marriages of same-sex couples who are married within states that have authorized same-sex marriage;

Whereas the IRS now recognizes as legally married all same sex couples who were married in states that recognize same-sex marriage, even if the couple does not reside in a state that recognizes same-sex marriage;

Whereas the United States military now offers equal benefits in housing, health care, and community life to all legally married members, regardless of the gender of the spouses;

Whereas the legally married same-sex partners of Virginia National Guard members will be eligible for the same federal benefits as opposite-sex married couples; and

Whereas the Faculty Senate of George Mason University supports full benefits for same-sex couples in the continuing pursuit of equity, justice, and non-discrimination;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate of George Mason University strongly urges the University to ensure the rights of same-sex married couples employed by the University by extending to these couples the same benefits that are offered by the University to other married couples.

Discussion:

A Senator proposed insertion of “married and same sex couples” in the title of the resolution. Another Senator observed that Virginia does not yet allow same sex couples to marry. Other parts of the resolution include recognition of federal rights of same-sex couples married in other states, so it was agreed to amend the title of the resolution to include “married” between “same-sex” and “couples” so that the title becomes: “Resolution in Support of Providing Benefits for Same Sex **Married** Couples”.

Linda Harber, Vice President for Human Resources, noted that the university is not the provider of health care benefits package, they are provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia. We do not have the authority to make this change.

On behalf of Mason [LGBTQ](#), Mark Uhen spoke in support of this very important resolution. The Commonwealth of Virginia will not allow it right now, but very important to add our support to the BOV and the GMU administration to support this resolution, at a unique point in history.

The resolution was further amended to insert “and the Commonwealth” in two places of the final paragraph of the resolution as appears below in **bold** type: “Therefore, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate of George Mason University strongly urges the University **and the Commonwealth** to ensure the rights of same-sex married couples employed by the University by extending to these couples the same benefits that are offered by the University **and the Commonwealth** to other married couples.

The resolution as amended was approved unanimously by the Faculty Senate.

VI. Remarks for the Good of the General Faculty

In response to a question about an element in the University Strategic Plan regarding on-line path to General Ed requirements, Provost Stearns responded that as far as he knows, students can already complete general education requirements online; this is not new. Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education Janette Muir added that just about every category of General Education is available on line and what is not there can possibly be shared with other institutions that are part of the 4-VA Consortium.

A Senator returned to the Provost Search Committee discussion. President Cabrera says he’d like to follow the Faculty Handbook but not to shoot ourselves in the foot –should the Faculty Senate express our concern about this at our next meeting or informally now? Another Senator expressed concerns the search can be complicated, does not know as much about it. A third Senator suggested affirming previous resolution approved by the Senate (supporting opportunities for the General Faculty to meet finalists) during the Presidential search process. A fourth Senator expressed concern about taking great risks and not trusting colleagues here, concerned we may be sharing something that does not need to be shared. After some discussion, the following motion was presented:

“THE FACULTY SENATE AFFIRMS THAT FINALISTS FOR THE PROVOST BE BROUGHT TO CAMPUS FOR OPEN MEETINGS.”

The motion was approved by a show of hands, 20 votes in favor, 5 votes opposed.

VII. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Pober
Secretary

Attachment A



Mason Lobbies 2013

- **Overview**
 - For the first time, Mason's undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, administration, and alumni are coming down to Richmond to collectively advocate for the same set of issues and policy proposals on behalf of the Mason community.
 - Mason Lobbies 2013 is an idea that originated within GMU's Student Government (SG), but quickly found support from the Office of State Government Relations, the office of Alumni Affairs, the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GAPSA), members of the Faculty, Staff, and Mason families.
 - The event will take place on February 7, 2013 during the annual meeting of the Virginia Assembly. We currently have funds allotted to bring down 60 students. The interest from students to participate has been overwhelming as we hope to show Richmond that we truly are one school, with one voice.
- **Why Lobby?**
 - Other large institutions in the commonwealth consistently send contingents of students to the General Assembly as Mason has seen state funding decrease, and it is time for us to go to Richmond and speak up for ourselves the same way that other large institutions do annually. In the last 40 years, Mason has grown exponentially and has managed to develop so that we are as competitive and innovative as we are now without the same funding that other universities are getting. Imagine how successful we can be if we were funded like UVA and Virginia Tech.
- **Logistics**
 - The following components hope to bring the following numbers during the third week of the Spring Semester to advocate on behalf of Mason:
 - Student Government: 50-75 undergraduate students
 - GAPSA: 20 graduate students
 - Alumni Association: 20-35 alumni
 - Faculty/Staff: at least 15-20
 - Administration: President Cabrera and State Government Relations Department
- **The Issues**
 - Salary increases for faculty and staff
 - Allows Mason to continue to hire the best of the best so that students are truly gaining a competitive edge in academia.
 - Enhances the value of the degree of "the Mason Graduate"
 - Stabilized State Funding to create a more fairer tuition rate
- **Student Training Program**
 - Student Government will be working with various individuals to create a student lobbying training program that will teach us how to present ourselves in front of legislative officials.

One School! One Voice!

**ATTACHMENT B George Mason University
Three Year Calendar: Fall 2015 – Spring 2018**

FALL SEMESTER	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017
First day of classes	Mon Aug 31	Mon Aug 29	Mon Aug 28
Labor Day (University closed)	Mon Sept 7	Mon Sept 5	Mon Sept 4
Last Day to Add (Census)	Tues Sept 8	Tues Sept 6	Tues Sept 5
Last Day to Drop	Fri Oct 2	Fri Sept 30	Fri Sept 29
Saturday Classes in session	Sat Oct 10	Sat Oct 8	Sat Oct 7
Columbus Day Recess	Mon Oct 12	Mon Oct 10	Mon Oct 9
Mon classes meet instead of Tues classes this day only	Tues Oct 13	Tues Oct 11	Tues Oct 10
Mid-term evaluation period for full-semester 100-200 level classes	Mon Sept 28 – Fri Oct 23	Mon Sept 26 – Fri Oct 21	Mon Sept 25 – Fri Oct 13
Selective Withdrawal Period – undergraduate	Mon Oct 5 – Fri Oct 30	Mon Oct 3 – Fri Oct 28	Mon Oct 2 – Fri Oct 27
Thanksgiving (No classes Wed; Recess Thurs - Sun)	Wed Nov 25 – Sun Nov 29	Wed Nov 23 – Sun Nov 27	Wed Nov 22 - Sun Nov 24
Dissertation/Thesis Deadline	Fri Dec 11	Fri Dec 9	Fri Dec 8
Last Day of Class	Sat Dec 12	Sat Dec 10	Sat Dec 9
Reading Day(s)	Not Scheduled	Mon Dec 12	Mon Dec 11 – Tues Dec 12
Examination Period	Mon Dec 14 – Mon Dec 21	Tues Dec 13-Tues Dec 20	Wed Dec 13 – Wed Dec 20
Winter Degree Date	Tues Dec 22	Wed Dec 21	Thu Dec 21
SPRING SEMESTER	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018
<i>January 1 Day of Week</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>
MLK Day - (no classes)	Mon Jan 18	Mon Jan 16	Mon Jan 15
First Day of Spring Classes	Tues Jan 19	Mon Jan 23	Tues Mon Jan 22
Last Day to Add (Census)	Tues Jan 26	Tues Jan 31	Tues Jan 30
Last Day to Drop	Fri Feb 19	Fri Feb 24	Fri Feb 23
Saturday Classes in session	Sat Mar 5	Sat Mar 11	Sat Mar 10
Spring Recess	Mon Mar 7 – Sun Mar 13	Mon Mar 13 – Sun Mar 19	Mon Mar 12 - Sun Mar 18
Mid-term evaluation period for full-semester 100-200 level classes	Mon Feb 15 - Fri Mar 18	Mon Feb 20 - Fri Mar 24	Mon Feb 19 - Fri Mar 23
Selective Withdrawal Period – undergraduate	Mon Feb 22 – Fri Mar 25	Mon Feb 27 – Fri Mar 31	Mon Feb 26 – Fri Mar 30
Dissertation/Thesis Deadline	Fri April 29	Fri May 5	Fri May 4
Last Day of Class	Mon May 2	Sat May 6	Sat May 5
Reading Day(s)	Tues May 3	Mon May 8 – Tues May 9	Mon May 7 – Tues May 8
Examination Period	Wed May 4 – Wed May 11	Wed May 10 – Wed May 17	Wed May 9 – Wed May 16
Commencement	Sat May 14	Sat May 20	Sat May 19
SPRING TERM	Summer 2016	Summer 2017	Summer 2018
Summer Term Dates	Mon May 16 – Fri Aug 5	Mon May 22 – Fri Aug 11	Mon May 21 – Fri Aug 10

AY Calendar 2017-18 Approved by Faculty Senate: TBD

Senate approval needed for Academic Year 2017-18 only. The previous two years were approved last year.