

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING
APRIL 22, 2020
Electronic Meeting - 3:00 – 4:15 p.m.

Senators present: Alan Abramson, Dominique Banville, Jim Bennett, Lisa Billingham, Ginny Blair, Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Meagan Call-Cummings, Carol Cleaveland, James Conant, Richard Craig, Shannon Davis, Betsy DeMulder, Stephanie Dodman, Michael Gilmore, Mark Ginsberg, Tamara Harvey, Aditya Johri, Brett Josephson, Larry Kerschberg, Jenna Krall, Timothy Leslie, Kumar Mehta, Daniel Menascé, Karen Reedy, Keith Renshaw, Pierre Rodgers, Zachary Schrag, Joe Scimecca, Suzanne Slayden, Kun Sun, Susan Trencher, John Zenelis.

Senators absent: Ali Andalibi, Ann Ardis, Kenneth Ball, Christine Barthold, Sonia Ben-Ouagrhan-Gormley, Alok Berry, Henry Butler, Lloyd Cohen, Rick Davis, Christy Esposito-Smythers, Daniel Garrison, Anne Holton, Dimitrios Ioannou, Germaine Louis, Linda Monson, Alpaslan Özerdem, Robert Pasnak, Maury Peiperl, Daniel Polsby, Esperanza Roman-Mendoza, Mark Rozell, Catherine Sausville, Solon Simmons, Cristiana Stan, Donglian Sun, Rebecca Sutter, David Wong, Andy Yao, Masoud Yasai, Jie Zhang.

Visitors present: LaShonda Anthony, Director, Academic Integrity, University Life; Lawrence Bray, Associate Provost – Graduate Education; Jacqueline Burek, Assistant Professor, English, CHSS; Kathleen Diemer, Associate Vice President, Advancement Relations, Office of Advancement and Alumni Relations Kelly Dunne, Executive Director, School of Integrative Studies, CHSS; Kim Eby, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Development; James Finkelstein, Professor Emeritus of Public Policy, SCHAR; Timothy Gibson Associate Professor, Communication, CHSS; Stephanie Grimm, Art and Art History Librarian, University Libraries; Matthew Hicks, Director, Information Technology and Security, CHHS; Jessica Hurley, Assistant Professor, English, CHSS; Meghan Jack, Undergraduate Academic Advisor, Criminology, Law and Society, CHSS; Haagen Klaus, Associate Professor of Anthropology, CHSS; Sr. Vice President Carol Kissal, Heidi Lawrence, Assistant Professor, English, CHSS; Jaime Lester, Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs and Strategic Initiatives, CHSS; Janette Muir, Associate Provost for Academic Initiatives and Services; Smriti Patwardhan, Academic Advisor, Electrical and Computer Engineering; Cathy Pinskey, Program Director, Facilities; Jessica Ritterhouse, Professor of History, CHSS; Jessica Scarlata, Assistant Professor, English, CHSS; Michele Schwietz, Associate Dean for Research, CHSS; ; Pamela Shepherd, Director, Communications, Provost Office; Debra Lattanzi Shutika, Professor and Chair, English, CHSS; Matt Smith, Director of Accreditation, Office of the Provost; Paul Smith, Professor, Ph.D. Program, Cultural Studies Program, CHSS; Diane Vermaaten, Executive Director, Finance and Administration, School of Business; Eleanor Weis, Advancement and Alumni Relations, School of Business; Preston Williams, Presidential Communications Manager, Office of Communications; James Willis, Associate Professor, Criminology, Law and Society, CHSS; Thomas Wood, Associate Professor, School of Integrative Studies, CHSS.

Note: the list of visitors is our best manual tracking, and likely to be incomplete.

- I. **Call to Order:** Chair Shannon Davis called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Welcome to Earth Day! She encouraged faculty to wear Mason regalia in honor of Earth Day.
- II. **Special Orders**
Election of Faculty Senate Chair 2020-21

As today was supposed to be our last regularly scheduled meeting, Chair Shannon Davis turned the floor over to chair pro tem Melissa Brockelman Post.

The floor is open for nominations. Shannon Davis was nominated to serve; the nomination was seconded. Shannon accepted the nomination. No further nominations were made from the floor and Shannon Davis was elected chair of the Faculty Senate for AY 2020-2021. Melissa returned the floor back to Shannon with congratulations! Shannon thanked the Senate and appreciates Senators' support and collaborative approach.

III. Committee Reports

A. Senate Standing Committees

Executive Committee – Shannon Davis

As a result of some regular conversations, feedback from faculty and the Executive Committee was sent to the Faculty Working Group. We are also working with the Provost Office regarding COVID-19.

Academic Policies – no report

Budget and Resources and Faculty Matters

Faculty Office Space – Robinson Replacement Building - *Joe Scimecca, Chair, Faculty Matters Committee*

Joint Motion from Budget and Resources and Faculty Matters Committee

Whereas, George Mason University faculty depend on private office space to meet with students on sensitive matters, to meet FERPA requirements, to have quiet space to prepare for teaching and to conduct scholarship, and to store valuable books and other materials needed for their research and teaching,

And, whereas the George Mason University Design Manual (§ 3.2.4.2.1) states that “in most cases, full-time faculty are assigned private offices,” of at least 90 square feet (sf),

And, whereas this standard applies equally to full-time instructional, research, and administrative/professional faculty, whether tenured, tenure-line, or term,

And, whereas the George Mason University Design Manual states that “the [assignable square feet] for offices that will be shared by multiple faculty members will be adjusted to meet the total number of faculty who will be assigned to those spaces,”

And, whereas Mason’s Six Year Capital Outlay Plan 2014-2020 justifies the replacement of Robinson Hall on the grounds that College of Humanities and Social Sciences “units are in need of additional growth space,”

And, whereas current plans for the Robinson replacement building call for up to 200 full-time faculty to be assigned shared offices whose size is not adjusted to

number of faculty, contrary to both the standards of the George Mason University Design Manual and the goals of the Six Year Capital Outlay Plan,

Now, therefore be it resolved that the George Mason Faculty Senate calls on the Interim Provost and the Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance to ensure that all full-time faculty members assigned to any of the approximately 265 120-sf offices now planned for the Robinson replacement building be allocated individual, private offices, thus meeting the standards of the George Mason University Design Manual,

And, that it be further resolved that College of Humanities and Social Sciences faculty be assigned offices that meet these standards, whether in the new building or elsewhere on the Fairfax campus.

And, that it be further resolved that the leadership of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, in cooperation with its faculty, determine a plan to meet the office space needs of its faculty. And that this plan

- Be agreed upon and shared with the College's Faculty by July 1, 2020

- Be implemented before any move-in of the Robinson Replacement Building is initiated

Senator Scimecca: The joint motion from Budget and Resources and Faculty Matters Committees has to do with move into the new building replacing Robinson. Previously, 70% of faculty offices were to be single offices and now it is being communicated that 70% to be shared. Most faculty find this arrangement completely unacceptable.

Discussion:

- Where was the provost in this discussion?
Response: Did not know.
Chair Davis: Requested if someone from Provost Office who was present and could respond?
- In paragraph four, what is the assignable square footage for all of the offices, or just one? What is the adjustment?
Response: Some offices are set up for single occupancy, some for double occupancy. The manual says all full-time faculty to have 120 square feet (10 X 12 feet). Most of the newer individual offices are smaller. Faculty, who are sharing, are also very upset that this would force them to be here less than two days/week.
- Senator shared being told during summer meeting that single offices would be 90 sqft, and shared offices were to be 180 sqft. Every single person at the meeting told the people there at the time this was not sufficient.
- Senator noted that Business School had to rent space off campus to accommodate growth.

- Sr. Vice President Kissal corrected previous statement: shared faculty space at 35%, not 70%.
- Senator noted that \$120M of taxpayer funds spent on a brand new building without design manual reference or what standards were used for selecting design of the building. A handout from 2019 indicated: 36 double offices, 24 single offices = 72% figure.
- Senator shared School of Business' concern on why are we restricted to a single college, and need to take a stand on a broader scale. Also expressed concern about the lack of a potential solution.
- Senator inquired about academic implications of sharing office in terms of recruiting faculty, impact on research, etc.? It does not look like this has been taken into consideration.

Responses:

- Cathy Pinskey, Program Director, Facilities: In terms of size of offices in the building, all are 120 square feet. Regarding flexibility of being single or double, all have three full height extra tall bookcases in them.
- Sr. VP Kissal: Regarding recruiting talent, many universities are prototyping these new models. She mentioned initiatives at Cornell and Georgia Tech. which are adopting a number of collaborative workspaces.

Discussion:

- Senator Scimecca: Expressed frustration and concern that: a) faculty were not consulted in this process, b) there was no communication and possibly miscommunication, c) implications on faculty's desire to come to campus when they do not have dedicated office space to work from, and d) pedagogical, security, and confidentiality of meeting with students.
- Senator wondered why this issue has not come up before? Noting a similar pattern involving lack of consultation and inadequate space planning with buildings for Volgenau and Peterson Hall.
- Senator expressed concern with lack of transparency with faculty and lack of faculty involvement in the decision making process.
- Senator observed that Cornell and Georgia Tech have abundant resources (compared to Mason) to experiment with, and the outcome of these experiments are yet to be understood.
- Senators expressed concern that this arrangement of shared office space may result in self-fulfilling prophecy of "faculty do not come to office".
- What are the plans for the other part of the Robinson portion?
Chair Davis: Both sides will be removed, with one building to replace it. Robinson A and Robinson B will no longer exist. CHSS faculty to move into a new building.
- What number offices assigned to individuals, what number to be shared offices?
Cathy Pinskey: Of the total 256 offices in the new building (each 120 sqft.), there are 112 furnished as single offices and 144 furnished as double offices.

(NOTE: *Information provided during the meeting was corrected. The corrected information included here was submitted by email shortly after the meeting*)

Chair Davis: Brought the discussion to a close and called for a vote, and thanked everyone for a very deliberative and robust discussion.

The motion passed with two votes opposed.

Faculty Matters – The Faculty Evaluation of Administrators has been posted online.

Nominations - *Melissa Broeckelman-Post*

Board of Visitors Representatives Election: We have successfully elected four faculty representatives to the BOV Committees and two Faculty Senate representatives to the Master Planning Working Group: Zachary Schrag and David Wong. Thanks to those who participated in the elections. We will send out a call for nominations for AY 20-21 by the end of the semester.

Organization and Operations - *Lisa Billingham*

No report this week; we will have a report next week.

B. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives

Academic Appeals Committee - *Tamara Harvey*

The Committee will return in the fall with an updated proposed revision to its name and charge.

IV. New Business – no additional new business

V. Announcements

- Interim Provost Ginsberg:
 - Honored and humbled by the opportunity to serve.
 - He to guide and facilitate the conversation with faculty and expressed his commitment to work in a collaborative, thoughtful way.
 - Over the next couple of weeks, as with all institutions in the US, Mason is also undertaking careful analyses of COVID:
 - impact on programs
 - impact on faculty, staff and students
 - Indicated his desire to be both sensitive and careful to plan for future with many ambiguities.
 - A number of very important decisions:
 - move all summer classes online
 - postpone all events on campus until August 8
 - One of the major challenges we face is planning for the fall semester.
 - With only 6 days into summer registration, the registrations are significantly ahead of same time last year.
 - We have stood up the Patriot Tiger Team, which will help to create an options analyses for consideration by senior leadership in the university for Fall planning.

- Senate chair Shannon Davis and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee leadership will be kept involved in this.
 - Overriding principle of the Patriot Tiger Team: the safety, health and welfare of entire community. It will consider all facets: student services, housing, as well as other issues around university life including -- activities, events, athletic competitions, as well as short- and long-term fiscal implications and impact on brand and reputation.
 - There are 12 people on the Patriot Tiger Team, including Keith Renshaw, Chair of the Psychology Dept and former Faculty Senate chair. The team will meet over the next three weeks, provide a report by May 8th.
 - Will discuss options with Faculty Senate, and begin a decision making process by the end of May (maybe sooner) to make a number of decisions, contingency plans.
 - Plan could be revised in July based on additional information
 - Expressed his hope to work collaboratively with faculty.
 - Expressed his appreciation for the efforts of all the faculty.
- Sr. VP Carol Kissal:
 - Welcomed Faculty Senate participation on the Master Planning Group. She expressed her commitment for much better engagement than in the past.
 - With already 4,000 responses, she encouraged everyone to respond to the survey and provide input for the master planning committee.
- Note: All Faculty Senate and University Committees will provide final reports to the Senate for discussion (if needed) at the April 29 Senate meeting.
- Written Update from Dr. Bill Hazel on planning for a possible medical school:

“I hope this finds you safe and healthy and tolerating the new world of distancing reasonably well. The COVID pandemic has certainly impacted our efforts to develop a medical school. Mason has had to refocus on moving to on-line education. All of our health care partners are struggling with addressing the virus and their financial issues due to loss of revenues. Investors (potential donors) are looking at instability in the value of their funds. In short, there is no way that we can get open in 2022. It was always an ambitious target requiring everything to go perfectly and that is not the case. At this point, the earliest that we could possibly open would be 2023. The good news is that this gives Mason time to address leadership changes and the fiscal impact as well as staging the multiple priorities and projects that the University has. Even more importantly to this effort, it gives us a chance to be very creative as we think about health professional education and training in the context of what we are learning from the COVID impact.

Our consultants are engaged through the end of July. The initial mission was to complete the data collection instrument that is the first step of the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME) accreditation process. There will be a lot that remains unanswered by mid-summer but what we can identify the major gaps that need to be addressed going forward. We will develop a much clearer vision of what we will create that can be shared with potential clinical partners and funders. Essentially, we are now developing a prospectus.

On a personal note, I have transitioned to the Claude Moore Charitable Foundation where I am the Senior Deputy Executive Director. I look forward to supporting this project from this new position.”

VI. Remarks for the Good of the General Faculty

Tomorrow the Provost Office will distribute document on considerations for deferring Faculty study leave.

There are opportunities for faculty up for tenure to pause their tenure clock; important for faculty whose research had to be paused, other events – a joint effort between the Academic Policies, Faculty Matters Committees and the Provost Office.

Kim Eby – Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Development, provided an update on Mason FACTS. We continue to move forward with RPT module – in-person testing was scheduled after spring break but moved to virtual training this next week and the following week. We do not anticipate many changes will be made and will reach out to faculty members up for RPT next year. To have committee, training etc. for faculty serving on review committee and RPT committees.

Mason Coache Faculty Satisfaction Survey results were presented in the Fall and at the general faculty meeting in January. Faculty focus groups scheduled to meet March – April, with a tentative plan to analyze the data during the summer and have a report in the fall.

VII. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kumar Mehta
Secretary