

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

**Total participants = 150.**

**Senators present:** Alan Abramson, Karen Akerlof, Matt Andre, Kenneth Ball, Alok Berry, Lisa Billingham, Virginia Blair, Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Meagan Call-Cummings, Eric Claeys, Carol Cleaveland, James Conant, Richard Craig, Shannon Davis (chair), Betsy DeMulder, Daniel Garrison, Edward Gero, Timothy Gibson, Mark Ginsberg, Victoria Grady, Kenneth Griffin, Dimitrios Ioannou, Timothy Leslie, Tamara Maddox, Kumar Mehta, Daniel Menascé, Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm, Robert Pasnak, Rachelle Perkins, Marvin Powell, Keith Renshaw, Gregory Robinson, Pierre Rodgers, Esperanza Roman-Mendoza, Catherine Sausville, Jessica Scarlata, Zachary Schrag, Joseph Scimecca, Solon Simmons, Suzanne Slayden, Cristiana Stan, Benjamin Steger, Kun Sun, Rebecca Sutter, Matthew Theeke, Susan Trencher, Gregory Washington, David Wong, Thomas Wood, John Zenelis, Jie Zhang.

**Senators absent:** Ann Ardis, Robert Baker, James Bennett, Rick Davis, Aditya Johri, Brett Josephson, Larry Kerschberg, Germaine Louis, Alpaslan Özerdem, Maury Peiperl, Ken Randall, Mark Rozell.

**Visitors present:** Lester Arnold, (Vice President for Human Resources and Payroll); Dominique Banville (Faculty Athletic Representative, Academic Program Coordinator Health and Physical Education Program, School of Education), Alecia Bryan (Associate Director of Development, CHSS Development and Alumni Relations); Andrew Bunting (Executive Director, Enrollment Services), Tom Butler (Senior Associate Registrar, Office of the Registrar), Kathleen Chang (Clinical Instructor, Nursing, College of Health and Human Services), Jenny Chism (Director of Admissions Operations), Aurali Dade (Interim Vice President for Research, Innovation and Economic Impact); Matthew DeSantis (Executive Director for Institutional Effectiveness (Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (OIEP)); Kathleen Diemer (Associate Vice President, Advancement and Alumni Relations); Vicki Dominick (Associate Director, Learning Services, Counseling and Psychological Services), Kim Eby (Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Development); Kimberly Ford (Director of Personnel Operations, Office of the Provost), Cynthia Fuchs (Interim Director, College of Visual and Performing Arts), Marcy Glover (Operations Manager, Academic Initiatives and Services/4-VA Dep Campus Coordinator, Office of the Provost), Jo Ann Henson (Business and Economics Librarian University Libraries), Kimberly Hoffman (Lead, Science and Technology Team, and Mercer Library), Virginia Hoy (Instructor, English), Rebecca Jones (Associate Professor and STEM Accelerator, Chemistry and Biochemistry, COS), Misty Krell (Director of Academic Affairs, School of Integrative Studies), Kimberly MacVaugh (Policy and Government Librarian, Arlington Campus Library), Doug McKenna (University Registrar), Laurie Miller (Term Instructor, English Language/Course Coordinator, UGIPP, INTO Mason) Esther Namubiru (Term Instructor, INTO Mason), Maria Nykyforovych (Assistant Professor, Accounting School of Business), Eunkyong Park (Director of Assessment and Planning, University Life), Shernita Parker (Assistant Vice President, HR Strategy and Talent Management, Human Resources/Payroll), Christy Pichichero (Associate Professor of French and History, Modern and Classical Languages, History and Art History), Allison Redlich (Professor, Criminology, Law and Society, CHSS); Shelley Reid (Director for Teaching Excellence, Stearns Center), Lauren Reuscher (Chair, Staff Senate), Marguerite Rippey (Associate Dean, Graduate Academic Affairs, CHSS), David Rosenblum (Professor and Chair, Computer Science, Volgenau School of Engineering), Catherine Saunders (Term Associate Professor, English CHSS), Sheena Serslev (Associate Director of Institutional Assessment, Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning), Pam Shepherd (Director for Communications, Office of the Provost), Chris Shore Matt Smith (Director of Accreditation, Office of the Provost), Evelyn Tomaszewski (MSW Program Director, Social Work, College of Health and Human Services), Girum Urgessa (Associate Professor, Civil, Environmental and Infrastructure Engineering, Volgenau School of Engineering/ Faculty Conduct Working Group/Faculty Handbook Revision

Committee), Bethany Usher (Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education); Ken Walsh (Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Chief of Staff), Tobi Walsh (Assistant Vice President, Capital Strategy and Planning); Michelle Williams (Assistant Professor, Global and Community Health, College of Health and Human Services), Elizabeth Woodley (University Ethics Officer and Policy Manager, CDE); Andrea Zach (Term Assistant Professor, Modern and Classical Languages).

I. **Call to Order:** Chair Shannon Davis called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

II. **Approval of the Minutes of February 3, 2021:** The minutes were approved.

III. **Opening Remarks – Shannon Davis, Chair**

Chair Davis welcomed President Washington. She noted Rector Hazel has been rescheduled to attend the March 31, 2021 Faculty Senate meeting.

President Gregory Washington

- Encouraged attendees to engage in the next Town Hall for the Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence (ARIE) Task Force on March 4, 2021, and to provide feedback. These will represent some of the highest priorities for the institution.
- He reiterated his desire to be transparent and open to receiving feedback so that he can address the questions at the General Faculty Meeting on March 17, 2021.
- He announced that Mason has been putting mechanisms in place whereby all faculty and staff can be vaccinated before end of May. The plan for execution is most likely to approved. Following faculty and staff, Mason is planning to offer vaccination to the students with goal of vaccinating most students before opening in Fall and be able to vaccinate remaining as they are returning to campus. This would position us to open safely in Fall with greater resemblance to pre-pandemic, with appropriate continuing safety measures in place.
- The vaccination clinics at Mason is run by our faculty, staff, and students with no cost to the community. Over 10,000 individuals in the community have been vaccinated. More than 1/3 of vaccinations in Prince William County are being administered by Mason. He noted that this is a largely volunteer effort and whatever costs are incurred, they are borne centrally by the university. There are plans to expand the capacity as well as start mobile vaccination clinic to reach communities that are otherwise hard to reach.

Discussion / Q&A:

- Senator thanked President Washington for decision to appoint a consultant to look into to investigate allegations of worker mistreatment at LT services and inquired if in response to GMU AAUP petition President would agree to work with stakeholders to develop and institute a responsible contractor policy.

President Washington:

- Emphasized his desire to see an environment where no one on Mason campus is mistreated.
- Noted that the settlement in question (by LT Services) involved no admission of guilt.
- Mason will fully investigate workers' claims and put in place corrective actions based on the findings.
- Observed that Mason is an agency of Commonwealth of Virginia and must abide by Commonwealth's responsible contract policy. Mason, as a state agency, cannot individually dictate or negotiate labor wages with each contractor. Mason can ensure that the individuals on work on Mason premises are working in accordance with the law and are treating people with respect and dignity.
- Asked that the investigative process be allowed to complete and submit its outcomes. At that point, additional feedback and engagement will be invited.

- Senator thanked President Washington for the plan to provide vaccination for the Mason community. Noting that the different vaccines have different levels of efficacies across the variants, he requested that this information be considered when choosing the vaccines to offer Mason's staff, students and faculty.

President Washington:

- Noting that vaccines are difficult to obtain, President Washington conveyed that the choice of vaccine to provide Mason for vaccinating staff, students and faculty will be determined by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Based on preliminary information it is likely to be Pfizer vaccine for Staff and Faculty, and Johnson & Johnson vaccine for students. He emphasized that all of this could change by the time vaccinations are administered.
- Senator asked if President Washington supported extending the graduation time limits (due to the pandemic) for graduate students. Specifically, extending the timeline for the students to complete coursework, dissertation/thesis.

President Washington:

- Was not aware that this was a problem, and if indeed was, he would follow up with Provost for additional information.
- Provost Ginsberg followed up with offer to further discuss the issue with faculty and expressed willingness to support considering that deadlines for many other stakeholders have been extended.
- President Washington noting that as long as it was within the purview of university's policies, he supported looking into possibility of making the accommodations.
- Noting that multiple members of administration received salary adjustments exceeding \$10,000 when no raises were available for faculty, Senator asked: a) what commitment President Washington is willing to make to keep administrative faculty salaries in check and prioritize faculty salary raises, and b) how would coming year's salary pool be allocated (across the board, merit, some combination)?

President Washington:

- Coming salary raises will be a combination of across the board plus merit. The final numbers have not been determined yet.
- Within the academic units University has had to offer adjustments because of competitive offers from other institutions. This did not happen in administrative ranks.
- Shared findings of in-depth study on salaries that while faculty are underpaid across the board, it is more so for highest performers. University is putting in place salary support framework that would allow for raising these salaries. This is being undertaken with budget support from state as well as university's own budget. Noting that this has been a chronic problem, he stated that going forward, his office is committed to finding way to continually support faculty salary increases.
- With plans to hire 300 to 500 additional faculty, Senator inquired about President's thoughts about committing to making tenure-track faculty as central part of the future of the university.

President Washington:

- Bulk of the hires will be tenure-track faculty.
- Discussed the basis for hires as being projection of student population growth, and noted that while 3% annual growth in student population till 2025 is possible, it would be difficult

to maintain the same beyond 2025. As a result, the number of new faculty would be a minimum of 250 over next 5 years, with 350-400 as possible.

- Senator thanked President Washington for work towards the salary raises and expressed concerns about the process by which merit is decided. Noting that the criteria for this tends to be extremely arbitrary and often ignores contributions to teaching and service.

President Washington:

- Noting the differences in disciplines amongst colleges and schools, he shared his belief that the proper and fair way to do it would be to provide Deans with significant latitude to determine how merit component of raises is adjudicated and implemented.
  - He observed that the structure at Mason provides faculty with lot of opportunities to determine the leadership. He noted his commitment to continue to support that, and at the same time reiterated that he will not micromanage the Deans.
- Senator inquired about President's thoughts on ways to attract higher quality students to enroll in Mason's undergraduate programs.

President Washington:

- Shared his observation that Mason has been lacking in communicating all the great things that are happening at Mason. Lacking that information, students accordingly place lower value on Mason.
- Noted that plans are being developed to allow improved communication and highlighting of all the great things that happen at Mason.
- He also shared his values on continuing with the inclusive mindset – “not on who we exclude but who we include”, and on creating opportunities for students who may not be admitted elsewhere but are academically and professionally successful because of their education and opportunities provided at Mason.

Chair Davis thanked Dr. Washington.

Chair Davis announced that Rector Jimmy Hazel will be attending the March 31, 2021 meeting.

#### **IV. Committee Reports**

##### **A. Senate Standing Committees**

*Executive Committee* – Shannon Davis, Chair

- Update on 2021-2022 Faculty Senate Meeting Scheduling
  - Anticipates expanding the number of meetings for the Faculty Senate to enable handling all of Faculty Senate business and expanding the engagement with President and Rector.
  - The schedule will be made available no later than the April 7 meeting.
- Coffee and Connect with Faculty Senate Executive Committee [Appendix A](#)
  - Invited general faculty and senators to engage with Faculty Senate Executive Committee on Friday following the Faculty Senate Meeting.

*Academic Policies* – Suzanne Slayden, Chair

- No report.

*Budget and Resources* - Tim Leslie, Chair

- In collaboration with the Provost's office, the faculty raise matrix for faculty promotions (Assistant to Associate, and Associate to Full) has been adjusted. The adjustment for 12

month appointments will be 11/9ths of the raise that nine months faculty were to account for their additional time.

*Faculty Matters* – Solon Simmons, Chair

- Faculty Evaluations in Time of COVID (First read) [Appendix B](#)
  - Senator Simmons presented the document, summarized the main objectives, and invited feedback from faculty before making final recommendations to the Provost's office.

Discussion:

- Senator inquired why "no evaluation of faculty by chairs" was not considered as an option? Senator elaborated on the benefits of such an option as reducing the administering cost on both the faculty and the chair, as well as noted that it would reduce the burden on faculty to have to document the impact of COVID.

Senator Simmons:

- The intent of the recommendations is not limited to addressing this year, but long-term impacts.
- The framework would allow each unit to work with Provost's office to develop their own processes.

Follow-up discussion:

- Senator on the Faculty Matters Committee expanded on the thought process behind creating recommendations that address both the short and the longer-term impacts of the pandemic on faculty evaluations.
- Senator noted that not conducting evaluations would ignore the accomplishments of those who were very productive in the year despite the pandemic.
- Senator shared that the Effective Teaching Committee has been working with Faculty Matters Committee to identify ways to determine better student learning outcomes, support teachers, and create environment where evaluations allow faculty to better assess effectiveness of teaching.
- For anyone interested in providing additional comments/feedback, Chair Davis invited them to join the Executive Committee at the coffee chat on Friday.

- Faculty Evaluation of Administrators Update:
  - Committee is in the final stages of processing the qualitative aspects of the Faculty Evaluation of Administrators and expects to release them soon.

*Nominations* – Melissa Broeckelman-Post and Richard Craig, Co-chairs

1. Election: Capital Planning Steering Committee

Nominee from the Nominations Committee: Dr. Samuel Frye,

<https://integrative.gmu.edu/people/sfrye4>

Nominee statement

[Appendix C](#)

Senator Broeckelman-Post, co-chair:

- Provided the context for this new position and noted that it was a sign of growing role of faculty in governance.
- Presented the rationale for committee's selecting the nominee Dr. Samuel Frye.

- Invited any additional nominations from the floor.

There were no additional nominations from the floor.

Chair Davis:

- With only one nominee for the position, noted unanimous consent hearing no objections to moving forward with Dr Samuel Frye as the nominee for the Capital Planning Steering Committee.
- Dr. Samuel Frye was appointed as Faculty Senate's representative to the Capital Planning Steering Committee.

## 2. Updated nominations and elections timeline (announcement):

**March-April:** Solicit nominees for BOV representatives, University Committees (except for seats that must be filled by Senators), and General faculty representatives to other committees

**Last meeting of the spring semester:** General faculty elects BOV representatives; Senate elects University Committee members and representatives to other committees

**Summer:** After all colleges have elected their Senators, calls will go out to all Senators soliciting nominations for Senate Committees, Senate representatives to University Committees, and Senate representatives to other committees.

**First meeting of the fall semester:** Elect members of Senate Committees, Senate seats on University Committees (where still needed), and Senate representatives to other committees.

Senator Richard Craig, co-chair:

- Introduced the revised nominations and elections timeline.

Discussion:

- Senator noted that the proposed revisions will not accord with the current bylaws, which can be possibly amended after the revision of the Charter is approved at the General Faculty Meeting on March 17, 2021.
- There was some discussion regarding interpretation of the bylaws.

Senator Broeckelman-Post, co-chair:

- Provided context and rationale for the proposed revision of the timeline: a) challenge posed by having to conduct all of the elections at the first meeting in Fall, and b) a lot of the committees begin their work with start of the semester and also do their work during the summer. Because of this, faculty nominees on these committees were left out of lot of important conversation that happen at the start. The objective of revised timeline is to better align the nomination and election timelines with start of committee work to enable timely transition and meaningful engagement.

Discussion:

- Senator shared concern that the process by which the committees are assigned is not transparent.

Senator Broeckelman-Post:

- Use of Qualtrics for soliciting volunteers has resulted in large number of volunteers for positions.
- Bylaws task the committee with the responsibility to present a slate with one nominee for each position to the Faculty Senate. Committee has been intentional in nominating non-senators for one seat only, and senators for up to two.
- Committee has attempted to do its best to balance between returning members to maintain institutional memory, balancing disciplines, ideological perspectives and expertise in making the determinations.

Issue was referred back to committee for further review.

*Organization and Operations* - Lisa Billingham, Chair

- Thanked President Washington and Ken Walsh for their trust in committee's research and for their support for the Ombudsperson.

1. Allocation of Senators AY 21-22

- Presented allocation of Senators based on FTE, with contingent allocations in last column – should Charter revision approve adding an additional Faculty Senate seat.

School/College	2020 FTE Full Time Faculty	2020 FTE Part Time Faculty	2020 FTE Total	%of total Instructional Faculty	x 50 Seats	Recomm. Allocation 2021-2022	Recomm. Allocation 2021-2022 if Charter is amended
Antonin Scalia School of Law	45	19.19	64.19	3.61%	1.81	2	2
College of Educ & Human Development	128	58.88	186.88	10.52%	5.26	5	5
College of Health & Human Services	91	39.56	130.56	7.35%	3.67	4	4
College Humanities & Social Sciences	380	94.88	474.88	26.73%	13.36	13	13
College of Science	222	30.92	252.92	14.23%	7.12	7	7
College of Visual & Performing Arts	91	46.48	137.48	7.74%	3.87	4	4
Carter School	18	4.83	22.83	1.29%	0.64	1	1
School of Business	120	20.42	140.42	7.90%	3.95	4	4
Schar School of Policy and Government	69	19.33	88.33	4.97%	2.49	2	2
Volgenau School of Engineering	208	70.35	278.35	15.67%	7.83	8	8
Unaffiliated (Independent)	data and calculations available upon request						1
			1776.84	100%	50	50	51

Discussion:

- Senator noted that appointments in library are faculty, and wondered why they do not have representation.

Chair Davis: The appointments are administrative faculty and not general faculty under the charter. Library faculty have an ex-officio non-voting member.

2. Grading Process Task Force

**Grading Process Task Force (Long-Term Project)**

GOAL

The Grading Process Task Force will consider the grading scheme used at George Mason University for its undergraduate and graduate students and make a recommendation for our future grading processes. This task force is intended to evaluate the university's previous use of the plus/minus grading system prior to COVID-19, assess the implementation of the alternative grading system as a result of COVID-19, and develop a proposal for how we will



transition from the optional alternative grading system used during this crisis to the grading scale that will be in place for the future. The Task Force is further asked to be mindful of students and programs with a variety of backgrounds, as well as the communicative value of grading schemas to students once they leave the institution.

#### CHARGE

The Grading Process Task Force is charged with doing the following:

- (i) Assess the advantages and disadvantages of the current A+ to F structure in place
- (ii) Conduct a thorough review of peer institutions, best practices, and existing scholarship about the advantages and disadvantages of other known schemes, including such options as Mason's 'Alternative Grading Scheme' used in Spring/Fall 2020, High Pass / Pass / Fail, ranked grading, straight A-F scales, plus/minus scales, and any other system deemed worthy of consideration by members of the committee
- (iii) Make a recommendation about which grading scheme best fits the institution's mission, providing a rationale and support for that recommendation
- (iv) Outline a potential timeline, cost, and a communication plan for implementing any recommended changes
- (v) The Task Force a Chair shall someone with a wide understanding of the Mason educational system.

#### DELIVERABLE OUTCOME

After deliberation and external engagement, the Task Force is charged to bring a report, including proposed action items and rationales, to the Faculty Senate for subsequent approval and implementation by University Administration. If appropriate for time-sensitive elements, intermediate reports and action items are welcomed.

#### TIMELINE

The Grading Process Task Force shall deliver a preliminary report to Faculty Senate the semester following its inception, and in year two a report for final recommendations. The committee is encouraged to share monthly progress as a part of the Faculty Senate announcements.

#### COMPOSITION

The Task Force shall be composed of:

- (i) One instructional faculty member from each college or school, elected by the faculty of that college or school, (this is not limited to tenure-track faculty)
  - (ii) One member of the Academic Policies Committee
  - (iii) Two students: one elected member of GAPSA and one elected member of Student Senate
  - (iv) the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education (or designate)
  - (v) the Associate Provost for Graduate Education (or designate)
  - (vi) the Director of the Stearns Center (or designate), and
  - (vii) the Registrar (or designate).
-

Senator Lisa Billingham, Chair:

- The proposal was brought to Executive Committee in November 2020 and has been discussed between Executive Committee and O&O.
- Consideration of task force with charge of two years maximum.
- Offered amendments:
  - Composition: One instructional faculty member from each college or school, a member from the Academic Policies Committee, two students that are members of GAPSA and one elected person from the Student Senate, designates from the associate provost for undergrad graduate education, a designate from the Stearns Center and the registrar.
  - Consider recommending someone to represent the academic advisors.
- Invited individuals to provide feedback by email or at coffee chat on Friday.

Chair Davis:

- Encouraged everyone to:
  - Review the submitted proposals and reach out to individuals to provide feedback.
  - Join the Executive Committee at the coffee chat to provide additional input.
- Noted the number of committee reports on the agenda and acknowledged the work of number of colleagues on behalf of the full faculty.

## **B. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives**

[Appendix D](#)

Academic Appeals  
Academic Initiatives  
Admissions Committee  
Adult Learning and Executive Education  
Athletic Council  
Faculty Equity and Inclusion Committee  
Gift Acceptance Committee\*  
GMU Foundation Board of Trustees  
Graduate Council  
Grievance Committee  
Intellectual Property Committee  
Mason Core Committee  
Master Plan Steering Committee  
Salary Equity Study Committee\*  
Research Advisory Committee\*

## **V. New Business**

No new business

## **VI. Announcements**

- Mason COACHE Update – Kim Eby (Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Development) and Dr. Supriya Baily (College of Education and Human Development)
  - The Mason COACHE Leadership Team continues to work on sharing the findings from our Mason COACHE Faculty Engagement initiative broadly across the community. Through our Summary Reports, we have highlighted trends and actions items specific to different faculty populations. Members of the team have presented various Summary Reports and led discussions in nearly a dozen forums since early December, including the Faculty

Senate Focus Group, Academic Council, and Deans Council to ensure wide dissemination on the matters raised in the Summary Reports.

- Perhaps of particular interest, we have presented the Underrepresented Minority Faculty Summary Report to the Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence (ARIE) Task Force, the Term Faculty Summary Report to the Term Faculty Committee, and the Faculty with Inter/Multidisciplinary Research Interests Summary Report to Research Council and the Associate Deans for Research.
- New this semester, we have added a Pre-Tenure Faculty Summary Report and a Full Professor Summary Report to the website that houses all of our data and reports. The Summary Reports can be accessed at the following link: <https://oiep.gmu.edu/data-analytics-research/survey-results/coache/> Please note that Two-Factor Authentication is required. As a reminder, these reports provide an overview of the COACHE work and specifically share trends and action items that emerged from our qualitative data collection at the end of spring 2020.
- *COACHE Leadership Team members would be willing to come share findings to additional faculty groups, please contact [facaffs@gmu.edu](mailto:facaffs@gmu.edu) if interested.*
- Mason FACT's Update – Molli Herth, Program Manager

The Mason FACTs' Review, Promotion & Tenure (RPT) Implementation Team, in collaboration, with the Administrator Working Group are happy to announce:

- The Term New Multi-Year Appointment templates are being tested and pending unit approval for use to route term cases for the 2021/2022 academic year.
- The Term Promotion w/ New Multi-Year Appointment and Tenure-Track Renewal templates have been drafted and are awaiting testing for a Spring 2021 launch.
- Synchronized user trainings for upcoming templates are scheduled to begin April 2021 and asynchronous training materials remain available via the Mason FACTs website for continued post training support and reference.

**VII. Remarks for the Good of the General Faculty** – none.

**VIII. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kumar Mehta  
Secretary

## Appendix A

### Faculty Senate Executive Committee Coffee Chat – March 5, 2021 9:00 – 10:00 am

Topic: Faculty Senate Executive Committee Coffee Chat

Time: Mar 5, 2021 09:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://gmu.zoom.us/j/98723324270?pwd=dXM1VFFibzJZcy96WFdzYjZVRUwvUT09>

Meeting ID: 987 2332 4270

Passcode: 060669

One tap mobile

+12678310333,,98723324270#,,,,\*060669# US (Philadelphia)

+13017158592,,98723324270#,,,,\*060669# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location

+1 267 831 0333 US (Philadelphia)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

Meeting ID: 987 2332 4270

Passcode: 060669

Find your local number: <https://gmu.zoom.us/j/98723324270?pwd=dXM1VFFibzJZcy96WFdzYjZVRUwvUT09>

## Appendix B

### Faculty Evaluation Recommendations during the Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic

Prepared by the Faculty Matters Committee, a Standing Committee of the GMU Faculty Senate  
Bethany Letiecq (Co-Chair), Solon Simmons (Co-Chair), Keith Renshaw,  
Benjamin Steger, Victoria Grady

February 12, 2021

#### Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in millions of cases and hundreds of thousands of deaths in the U.S. since March 2020, with numbers expected to rise well into 2021. The death toll is staggering. Less understood are the physical and mental health complications of COVID-19 survivors. The disproportionate effects of the pandemic<sup>1,2</sup> for Black, Indigenous, immigrant, and other communities of color, coupled with the movement for Black lives, has laid bare deeply-entrenched racial and economic inequities and injustices produced by and instantiated in our social systems.

Universities and those they serve have been far from immune. The pandemic has also upended the work of university faculty with disparate effects. In March, instructional faculty were required to convert their in-person courses to fully online. These conversions continued through the summer and fall of 2020 (and will likely continue through summer 2021). Many faculty were forced to shift their workloads significantly, increasing their time spent teaching and in service to the institution. Faculty had to work from home, many without private home offices, the equipment necessary for virtual work and/or high-speed internet. Term faculty teaching 4-4 loads have been particularly burdened in a variety of ways, including increased course caps, new class preparations, student emotional support and mentoring, and online course conversions. In addition to the extra time many have had to devote to teaching and service, research projects have been delayed or canceled, conferences have been canceled or moved to fully virtual offerings. Finally, there is reason to believe that these challenges are not proportionate in impact, with much of the extra work falling on women and minority faculty members.<sup>3</sup>

Virtually all daycare, preschool, K-12 schools, and other care-based services were closed or severely curtailed during this time. This placed an additional burden on faculty with young and/or school-aged children and/or other caregiving demands within their families, with few to no supports other than offers of flexibility or reduced effort for reduced pay from their employers. It is well documented that women have been especially impacted<sup>4,5,6,7</sup>.

Given these significant disruptions and the likelihood that these will continue through 2021, the Faculty Matters Committee is recommending *pandemic-centered criteria* for evaluating instructional/research faculty for the 2020-2021 academic year and, possibly, in future years depending on the course of the pandemic. Moreover, we recommend that evaluations account for disproportionate disruptions for different faculty, to the extent possible.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/05/us/coronavirus-latinos-african-americans-cdc-data.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://familyinequality.wordpress.com/2020/12/11/covid-19-mortality-rates-by-race-ethnicity-and-age/>

<sup>3</sup> The University of Michigan ADVANCE report notes that, "Faculty of color and women are doing more emotional labor through supporting students and performing service." Their citation is Gonzales, L.D., & Griffin, K.A. (2020). *Supporting faculty during & after COVID-19: Don't let go of equity*. Washington, DC: Aspire Alliance.

<sup>4</sup> <https://advance.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UM-ADVANCE-Faculty-Equity-and-COVID-19-Oct-2020.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.preprints.org/manuscript/202009.0632/v1>

<sup>6</sup> Squazzoni, Flaminio and Bravo, Giangiacomo and Grimaldo, Francisco and Garcia-Costa, Daniel and Farjam, Mike and Mehmani, Bahar, No Tickets for Women in the COVID-19 Race? A Study on Manuscript Submissions and Reviews in 2347 Elsevier Journals during the Pandemic (October 16, 2020). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3712813> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3712813>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www-nature-com.mutex.gmu.edu/articles/d41586-020-01294-9>

## Pandemic-Specific Evaluation Recommendations

Consistent with the GMU *Faculty Handbook*, expectations for teaching, research, and service are “in large measure a faculty responsibility,” and generally originate at the level of the local academic unit (LAU). Thus, these recommendations should be taken up at the LAU level in conversation with the individual faculty member for consideration, adoption, and implementation of accommodation procedures.

### Teaching

Student evaluations of teaching (SET) during the period of the pandemic should not be used in a routine way to evaluate faculty teaching, either in annual evaluations or in RPT reviews. Rather, whether courses were taught in-person, online, or hybrid, the SETs should be treated as informative only, not as a determinative evaluation criterion during the pandemic. In effect, faculty should be held harmless. Researchers and administrators have long recognized gender and racial [biases](#) built into evaluations by students<sup>8</sup>. The extraordinary teaching conditions brought on by the pandemic may exacerbate bias in evaluations<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, experts have raised questions about the validity of using survey items developed for face-to-face courses in evaluations of teaching in a wholly online environment<sup>10, 11</sup>.

Instead, we recommend allowing faculty to include SET data *if they wish*, but also advising that faculty can submit alternative evidence of their teaching performance. The goal is not to place an extra burden on faculty members already under stress, nor on their peers to evaluate them, but to provide for alternative means of performance assessment based on forms of evidence that the faculty member has an opportunity to shape. This alternative evidence may include:

- Peer observation of synchronous teaching (if applicable)
- Self and/or peer review of online teaching (if applicable), using resources found here: <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/online-teaching/online-course-quality/>
- Formative feedback from students made periodically during the semester
- Sample(s) of work developed in this period, such as revised syllabus for online teaching, sample assessments with or without de-identified examples of feedback provided
- Evidence related to work outside the classroom (e.g., students advised, student outreach to promote engagement in online courses)
- Optional brief reflective statements on the impact of COVID about what went well, what was challenging, and what adjustments a faculty was forced to make to meet work objectives.

Again, we do **not** advocate adding extensive additional work for faculty to generate evidence of their performance during this time. Faculty should be encouraged to provide whatever evidence can be readily generated. Faculty should be supported in their efforts to expand their documented evidence of teaching effectiveness beyond the SET over time.

Beyond these basic recommendations, we also recommend that faculty, LAUs, and Colleges/Schools consult the guidance provided by the [Effective Teaching Committee](#) (ETC) on assessing teaching effectiveness during the pandemic. Also, we recommend that LAUs work directly with instructors who request additional teaching supports, are identified as in need of additional supports, or are experiencing burnout. Possible considerations might include reducing teaching loads, adjusting assignments, and connecting faculty to university resources, including the Stearns Center and employee assistance programs.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11199-005-8292-4>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/09/04/advice-academic-administrators-how-best-support-faculty-during-pandemic-opinion>

<sup>10</sup> <https://academeblog.org/2020/04/17/suspend-student-evaluations-during-pandemic/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.aacu.org/blog/student-evaluation-teaching-covid-19-considerations-validity-and-fairness>

Finally, most if not all faculty have engaged in significant additional work to meet the needs of students, and this work should be recognized. LAUs are encouraged to pay attention those faculty who went above and beyond the call, either due to the number or complexity of courses converted, ingenuity of approaches developed, extra work to engage and mentor students, and/or assistance provided to other instructors. In addition to explicitly counting these activities as significant contributions in annual review and RPT, additional recognition could include monetary awards, future release time, or future study leaves.

## **Research**

Criteria for the evaluation of scholarship and research should be altered to account for the pandemic and subsequent years of post-pandemic recovery. Pre-pandemic expectations regarding external funding and publications, for example, should be reconsidered during this time and in subsequent years that are affected by pandemic research interruptions.

We recommend that each LAU re-evaluate its current criteria for research and scholarship to determine what adjustments are necessary to match those criteria to the new reality of the pandemic. This re-evaluation should consider immediate effects (e.g., annual evaluation criteria for the 2020-2021 academic year) and longer-term effects (e.g., criteria for annual evaluations and RPT over the next several years, based in the reality of how research interruptions during this period are likely to affect faculty members' productivity in years to come).

In addition, we recommend and encourage each LAU assess potential disparate effects of the pandemic on individual faculty members and incorporate these disparities of impact when re-evaluating their criteria. The re-evaluation process should engage all unit faculty, with the results clearly recorded and disseminated to all faculty in the unit. Finally, we recommend that each College/School engage in similar processes in re-evaluating their college-level P&T criteria and ensuring transparent recording and dissemination of the results. The burden of developing such a plan is in no way insignificant and LAUs are already themselves facing increased pressures from the same causes. What is clear is that complicated processes like these will need to be developed both for annual reviews and for RPT processes and will require some form of collaboration between and among representatives from the LAU, the school or college level, and the provost office. Results of these processes should be made public in a timely way and disseminated through the Faculty Affairs and Development website.

Again, we do **not** advocate adding extensive additional work for faculty to generate evidence of their performance in scholarship and research during the pandemic. Indeed, faculty and administrators should consider ways to minimize the burden to faculty of assembling evaluation packets or explaining their individual and/or familial circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic (beginning Spring 2020). We provide additional guidance below. Faculty who request additional supports or who are identified as in need of additional supports should be provided or directed to the resources necessary to recover and/or reconceive of their programs of research.

Tenure-track faculty have already been granted extensions to their tenure clocks. There is some evidence that these extensions have differential impacts by gender, whereby men benefit more than women, and that they can stymie the acquisition of external funds<sup>12,13</sup>. Extensions can also further instantiate inequities regarding pay (e.g., delayed raises). In regard to this latter point, the University should consider the feasibility of making raises tied to tenure and promotion retroactive to the period that a faculty member *would* have been promoted in the absence of an extension. Also, the university should study the effectiveness of tenure clock extensions as a function of gender and discipline.

## **Service**

During the pandemic, many faculty have experienced both disruptions to their service and opportunities and requests to engage in unplanned, new service endeavors in support of the university's mission. We recommend

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<sup>12</sup> <https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/aer.20160613>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.asanet.org/news-events/asa-news/call-higher-education-administrators-support-caregivers-during-covid-19>

that faculty be strongly encouraged to duly capture these endeavors, including hidden forms of service that are time-consuming and invaluable to the university and broader community (e.g., mentoring colleagues and students, engaging in public scholarship, university level initiatives). We furthermore strongly encourage supervisors and committees to give due weight to activities that have been crucial to the maintenance of Mason's mission and the promotion of health and safety more broadly during this unprecedented time

Beyond university-based service or service to one's profession, many faculty may have engaged in community-based service and/or volunteerism to help meet the critical needs of communities confronting the COVID-19 pandemic. Service may look different during this time, and we recommend that LAUs encourage faculty members to include community-based service and volunteer efforts in their evaluative documentation. Consistent with the university's mission to be a community builder, we encourage LAUs to consider the broader impacts of service in faculty evaluations. Moreover, service in the time of the pandemic has demonstrated the importance of faculty leadership in an atypical way. The university should use this opportunity to revisit service criteria to include a category of "faculty engagement and leadership" that would place service on a level more on par with the traditionally more critical criteria of research and teaching.

### **Assessing COVID Impact: Faculty Checklist**

Many universities are recommending faculty produce COVID Impact Statements to delineate the professional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in their evaluative documentation. Because some faculty may find these statements burdensome to produce and because many faculty, especially those most impacted by the pandemic, may question how these statements will be used and whether there will be any negative repercussions or unintended consequences associated with such statements, the statements should be entirely voluntary. If a faculty member does not wish to produce such a statement, they should not be forced to do so.

We have developed a preliminary **Faculty Checklist of COVID Impact** (see below) to support faculty self-assessment of disparate COVID disruptions to their work and life. However, the checklist should **not** be required by LAUs unless specific parameters are agreed upon by the faculty and instantiated at each level of review to ensure faculty are not harmed by – and are indeed supported for – their honest appraisals of their pandemic experiences. As noted, disruptions during the pandemic have not been equally felt as a function of individual and familial characteristics (e.g., race, gender, family configuration), scholarly discipline, faculty rank and position, number and type of courses taught, type of scholarship, among other factors.

Assessment of COVID impact raises salient concerns about privacy and use in terms of who will have access to self-assessments and how the data will be used. We strongly recommend that the checklist **not** be used in the aggregate or to establish norms for comparative purposes. LAUs should be very clear that the checklist will be used to capture disparate effects of the pandemic for different faculty and to build supports for faculty recovery from the pandemic. If the checklist is used for evaluative purposes by LAUs or the administration, it will only further erode faculty morale and mistrust of the university system.

Importantly, we recognize that the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic can include both disruptions and reduced productivity, as well as new or unusual contributions made in response to the crisis. Faculty are also encouraged to document the ways in which they were able to increase their production or contribute to the pandemic response during this time. However, the checklist of COVID impact centers most pointedly on the challenges that emerged for different faculty during the pandemic both professionally and personally. The checklist is not comprehensive and should be modified at the local level to reflect discipline-specific criteria.

### **RPT and External Evaluator Letter Solicitation**

While this document focuses primarily on annual evaluation of faculty, LAUs should consider adaptations for faculty review, promotion, and tenure (RPT). Units may consider including the following language in external



evaluator letter solicitation<sup>14</sup>: As stated in the research section, above, it will be important for each LAU to coordinate a complex process between and among members of the LAU, the school or college and the Provost office. It is not possible to specify what these local processes will look like in every case, but they should be started as soon as possible and they should be adapted to the specific needs of the LAU.

*Beginning in the Spring 2020 semester, faculty across the University experienced a significant disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Spring 2020, as a result of the health crisis, all faculty moved their courses online, research facilities including labs and libraries were closed, and student evaluation of teaching was modified. In conjunction with the disruptions experienced on-campus, many faculty were working out of their homes while simultaneously providing childcare due to closures of daycare facilities and K-12 schooling. Research disruptions, significant shifts in teaching modalities, limited childcare, and remote work persisted into the Spring of 2021. We ask that you take these unprecedented events into consideration when evaluating work performed during the Spring 2020 to Spring 2021.*

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<sup>14</sup> Adapted from Michelle Budig, Vice Provost for Faculty Development at UMass Amherst “Documenting COVID-19 Impacts in Faculty Personnel Review Materials” PPT Presentation

## Faculty Checklist of COVID Impact<sup>15</sup>

This checklist is presented as a way to start the conversation. A final version would have to be the result of the coordination of stakeholders at the LAU, school or college level and the provost office.

<b>Teaching Impacts</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Notes (optional)</b>
Did you have to convert course(s) for remote learning? (Note how many courses)				
Had you taught online before?				
Did you experience an increase in student needs for support (e.g., technical, emotional)?				
Did you provide increased support or increase engagement with students?				
Did you have adequate supports and resources (e.g., time, equipment, space, internet access, funding) to convert and/or deliver courses online?				
Did your students have adequate supports and resources to successfully engage in your courses?				
Did you adapt your approach to advising or mentoring students?				
Did the increased workload for transitioning to remote learning restrict time for research/service?				
<b>Research Impacts</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Was your research program adversely affected by the pandemic?				
Did your research pivot to address emergent questions/issues related to the pandemic?				
Did your research program benefit from the pandemic (e.g., funding sources shifted to your area of expertise, had more time to write)?				
Did you donate your time, equipment, PPE, or other resources to support a COVID-19 response?				
Were you affected by cancellation, delay, or alteration of conferences, invited talks, or performance venues for you to present your research/creative activity?				
Were your research lab, studio, field site, and/or study populations inaccessible?				
Were grant proposal submissions delayed or calls for proposals shifted away from your areas of expertise during the pandemic?				
Did travel restrictions impact your ability to staff your lab, visit a field site, or conduct research?				

<sup>15</sup> Adapted from Michelle Budig, Vice Provost for Faculty Development at UMass Amherst “Documenting COVID-19 Impacts in Faculty Personnel Review Materials” PPT Presentation

Were specific scholarly products (manuscripts, manuscript reviews, experiments, performances) slowed, delayed, or canceled due to the pandemic?				
Were you on release time or sabbatical during 2020 but unable to carry out scholarly plans?				
<b>Service Impacts</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Did you perform services (or hidden labor) important to sustaining the campus mission during the pandemic, such as serving on Safe Return to Campus committees, helping other faculty with IT or remote learning, helping students navigate remote learning and relocation, pitching in to support coworkers in their tasks?				
Were your professional service endeavors curtailed during the pandemic?				
Did you engage in or increase mentorship or outreach (locally, nationally) during the pandemic response?				
Did you engage in community-based service or volunteerism related to the pandemic?				
Were you able to engage in consequential service?				
Did the increased demands for service as a result of the pandemic affect your productivity?				
<b>Personal Impacts*</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Was your time for research, teaching, or service altered or restricted due to caregiving demands for family members or others?				
Were you a parent primarily responsible for homeschooling and/or caring for young or school-aged child(ren)?				
Were you providing eldercare or special needs care to a family member during the pandemic?				
Was your time restricted due to health issues experienced in your household or network?				
Was a chronic health condition <sup>16</sup> exacerbated due to the pandemic and/or changes in access to health care?				
Did you or a household member have to quarantine or isolate due to COVID-19?				
Did you experience a severe illness or death in your family, household, or network?				
Was anyone in your immediate household a frontline worker during COVID-19?				
Did someone in your household/extended familial network experience job loss				

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.aup.org/article/chronic-illness-and-academic-career#.X9ZHKs1KjIV>

and/or economic hardship during the pandemic?				
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**If you wish, please include any additional information beyond what is captured in the checklist below.**

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*\*Faculty may wish to denote their personal circumstances in the checklist. Revealing such circumstances should be done at the sole discretion of faculty members.*

## Appendix C

### Nominations Committee

#### **Election: Capital Planning Steering Committee**

Nominee from the Nominations Committee: Dr. Samuel Frye, <https://integrative.gmu.edu/people/sfrye4>

Nominee statement:

Between 2012 and 2017, I served as a mayor-appointed planning commissioner for Altoona, Pennsylvania prior to moving to Virginia. During my tenure, I reviewed plans for new development in the city and contributed to the city's comprehensive plan. While in this position, I learned how to read architectural documents and communicate effectively with members of the community.

As third-year term faculty at Mason, I coordinate the Nonprofit Fellows program for the School of Integrative Studies in which undergraduate students earn a minor in Nonprofit Studies in a single semester. As faculty instructor and advisor for the program, I develop relationships with numerous nonprofit organizations in Northern Virginia and D.C., work which includes creating internship opportunities and inviting local community leaders to campus to participate in research projects and serve as guest speakers.

I also stress the importance of community engagement in my teaching. For example, in my Neighborhood, Community, and Identity course I regularly include assignments in which I ask students to review campus maps, conduct observations, and reflect on the design and use of campus space and the surrounding neighborhoods in order to make recommendations for changes.

I believe my interest and experience in community planning, my connections with other departments as an interdisciplinary faculty member, and my relationships with community organizations will help me effectively communicate capital planning processes and contribute substantively to planning studies.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the university beyond my home department and college.

## Appendix G

### Reports from University Committees/Faculty Representatives to Committees

#### **Academic Appeals Committee (Submitted by Tamara Harvey, Chair – February 18, 2021)**

The academic appeals committee is currently working on revising our charge. We finalized a draft on February 17 that we are now sharing with the offices of the Associate Deans of Undergraduate and Graduate Education for feedback. We hope to be able to ask for a vote from the faculty senate on a revised charge for our committee in April.

#### **Admissions Committee (Submitted by Tim Curby, Chair – February 19, 2021)**

Admissions Committee Update

The Admissions Committee continues to meet on a monthly basis to learn more about the admission and enrollment process at Mason. As a committee, we've attended an Admissions 101 introductory session

with our Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Melissa Bevacqua, and our Senior Associate Director of Graduate Admissions, Crystal Hall Brett. In the next few months, we will be learning more about financial aid and scholarship leveraging, demographic shifts impacting enrollment and niche programs at Mason. We are excited to continue to grow our knowledge of these areas and the overall higher education enrollment landscape in order for faculty to support in the best way possible the important work of the Admission Office.

The Admissions Office has noted that as of 2/17/21, for Fall 2021, freshmen applications are down 2.5%, transfer applications are up 6.1% and graduate applications are up 18.6%. We are in a good position to meet enrollment targets as long as applications flow in as they did in previous years. The Admissions Office is closely monitoring the impacts from the ongoing global pandemic, where the ability to finance higher education remains a critical issue for families and students. Spring virtual event attendance has been good thus far, and the office is focused on personalized interactions and high-touch engagement with admitted students.

### **Adult Learning and Executive Education (Submitted by Evelyn Tomaszewski, Chair – February 27, 2021)**

Report of the Adult Learning and Executive Education Committee

The committee met on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Committee members: Virginia Hoy (CHSS), Robert Pasnak (CHSS), Ioulia Rytikova (VSE), Kammy Sanghera (VSE), Evelyn Tomaszewski (CHSS), Chair

The Committee met 2/4/21 to review and discuss the committee charge, and to continue to learn about the range of issues that may fall within the committee charge. Kurt Lazaroff, Director of Academic Services, Bachelor of Individualized Study joined the meeting, and provided an overview of BIS. He highlighted the impressive completion rates of graduates (80%), the high percentage of students who onto graduate programs (40%), examples of how BIS graduates have used the degree for career advancement and how BIS fits/hopes to fit re: both Mason on-campus and on-line programs. We had a brief discussion about committee support of BIS and agreed to continue discussions at the next meeting.

The Committee convened again on 2/9/21 to continue the review of the Committee Charge and agreed we need to seek clarity regarding our consultative role. Members also are seeking information as to the availability of a central location (or mapping) of Adult Programs at Mason.

### **Athletic Council – (Submitted by Dominique Banville, Chair and Faculty Athletic Representative – February 19, 2021)**

The Athletic Council met on January 28 with members of the Inter-Collegiate Athletic (ICA) department, faculty members, administrators, and one student-athlete(SA). The Athletic Director, Mr. Brad Edwards provided a report of the status of ICA. He thanked the entire ICA staff for their commitment to ensuring that safety protocols are followed and Student-Athletes (Sas) are safe. He indicated that 22 sports will be competing this Spring which will put great pressure on the ICA staff. Basketball is being played in front of no more than 250 patrons in Eagle Bank Arena while only 30 patrons are allowed for the volleyball matches. Wrestling and indoor track do not accept any fans. The other sports will start their schedule in February. The 20-21 “Be a Patriot” fundraising campaign is ongoing and 80% of the \$600K goal has been reached so far. Nena Rodgers and her team continue to support the Sas academically and she also leads the internal ICA committee on diversity and inclusion and represents ICA on the University’s Anti-racism & Inclusive Excellence Task Force. She also participates, along with Duane Simpkins (men’s basketball associate head coach), Hamal Strayhorn (university life), and Brad, on the A-10’s Commission on Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Academically, there was a record 65 Sas honored with the “Peter Sterns Provost Scholar-Athlete Award” in a ceremony held virtually on Monday, February 15, 2021. As the Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR), I participated in multiple conference calls with A10 FARs to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on competition and academics; Name, Image and Likeness (NIL), transfer legislation, and the expanded Association-wide campus sexual violence policy to be implemented in 22-23. I also attended sessions within the NCAA Virtual Convention related to the mental health of Sas, Social Justice, and reports on two studies, the “[COVID-19 Well-Being Study](#)” and the Gallup Study on [Undergraduate Experiences and Post-College Outcomes of NCAA Student-Athletes](#). I also worked with Kristi Giddings (Compliance) and Nena Rogers (Academic support) on the Academic Progress Rate (APR) to determine how to best achieve the qualifying score of 985 to have access to Revenue Distribution money provided by the NCAA. This work will be ongoing from now on. For the coming weeks, I will work with the sub-committee “Gender, Diversity, and Student Well-Being” to update, if needed, the end-of-the-year survey that will be distributed electronically to all Sas at the end of the semester. I will also monitor the progress of the NIL and transfer legislation. Finally, I look forward to the outdoor sports to start their competitions so that I can go and cheer our Sas on!

In closing, I would ask all faculty members, full-time and part-time, to be even more understanding this semester of Sas schedule of competitions. Several schedule changes occurred with basketball because of COVID-19 cases, almost all with our opponents, and I anticipate that this will continue to occur throughout the Spring semester. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

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Dominique Banville, PhD  
Faculty Athletic Representative  
Academic Program Coordinator, Health and Physical Education Licensure Program  
School of Education | College of Education and Human Development | George Mason University

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**Faculty Equity and Inclusion Committee (Submitted by Betsy DeMulder, co-chair – February 22, 2021)**

FACULTY EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE (FEIC) 2020-2021

Meeting: February 19, 2021

10-11am

Via Zoom

Committee Members Present:

Xiaomei Cai (CHSS – 2021)

Sherrice M. Mojgani (CVPA - 2022)

Ricardo Vivancos-Perez (CHSS – 2021) Co-Chair

Betsy DeMulder (CEHD – 2021) Co-Chair

Guests Present: Equity Advisors/Officers/Representatives

Christopher Carr: Volgenau School of Engineering

Gerald Weatherspoon: COS  
Lillian Virgil: COS  
Yoosun Chung: CEHD  
Grace Francis: CEHD  
Carmen Rioux-Bailey: CEHD  
Cathy Tompkins: CHHS  
Kim Holmes: CHHS  
Jeanne Booth: CHHS  
Cheryl Druehl: School of Business

The FEIC is continuing to provide a forum for college-level equity advisors, officers and representatives as well as representatives from the Office of Compliance, Diversity and Ethics to come together each month. These meetings inform the FEIC, and more importantly, create a space to share and discuss college-level antiracism/equity plans, initiatives and challenges with the goal of advancing efforts across the board related to faculty equity and inclusion. The February meeting continued to serve as a sharing and discussion space, bridging ARIE Task Force and college-level efforts, given that several FEIC members and guests also serve on the ARIE Task Force and other equity-oriented working groups. These forum opportunities are helping to reveal the “big picture” of current and ongoing efforts at Mason to foster equity and inclusion and to improve recruitment, retention, and overall well-being of under-represented faculty members.

**Gift Acceptance Committee (Submitted by Chris Kennedy, Faculty Representative – February 17, 2021)**

Our esteemed colleague Dr. Abramson continues to work with others on the sub-committee to clarify some of the definitions associated with the Gift Acceptance Policy and ensure the concerns / recommendations of the University Auditor and other committee members are addressed. At the February meeting Dr. Abramson noted that the sub-committee report will be available in March. There will be a new Task Force (similar to the one convened three years ago) to use the report to provide suggested Gift Acceptance Policy changes, with the expectations that the policy changes be brought to the Faculty Senate before the end of the spring semester.

**GMU Foundation Board of Trustees (Submitted by Keith Renshaw, Faculty Representative – February 15, 2021)**

As the faculty representative to the GMU Foundation’s Board of Trustees, I serve on the “Finance” subcommittee. That subcommittee met on Thu Feb 4, at 8:00 a.m. Below is a summary of information from that meeting. The next meeting is a Full Board meeting, scheduled for Fri, Mar 5 at 9:00 a.m.



At the opening of the meeting, President of the GMUF BOT Trishana Bowden gave an update on the state of affairs at George Mason. That summary was similar in nature to that provided to the Faculty Senate by SVP Kissal and Provost Ginsberg, centering primarily around issues such as enrollment, financial health, etc.

After that there was a thorough review of the GMUF finances. Primary notes are as follows:

- Through Dec 31, 2020 – overall revenue is higher than project, and overall expenses are lower than projected
  - GMUF has already achieved 80% projected revenue for the year, even though just halfway
    - Partially due to outperforming expected returns
    - Partially due to experiencing no dip in real estate funds (i.e., rentals), despite having anticipated some – only tenant that is behind in rent is a single restaurant on Arlington’s campus, which is applying for additional loans (and represents a very small portion of total revenue)
  - GMUF has spent only about 46% of expected yearly expense, even though halfway through
    - There have actually been slightly higher than projected expenses for operations of GMUF (primarily due to an unfilled position that resulted in having to contract for temporary accounting services, but also due to slightly higher tech costs than projected).
    - However, there have been lower expenses for GMU Advancement than projected, mostly due to decreased expenses on events
- With regard to the review of “long-term debt”...
  - GMUF’s total debt is not large, and it contains very little risk right now, which represents a significant decrease from what it was in 2014 (due to refinancing, etc. over past 6 years)
    - Almost all of the small amount of risk is solely related to potential default of tenants in Arlington campus (none of which is likely)
  - Also, insurance levels appear adequate – GMUF might reassess insurance post-pandemic, and also possibly consider pandemic-related insurance
- Finally, with regard to an assessment of Emergency Risk Management Compliance...
  - Liquidity – overall, seems very strong; GMUF is addressing possible system deficiency with new software
  - Primary threats (all of which look unworrisome now):
    - Endowment assets drop off
    - Investment yield
    - Donations drop-off
    - Tenant risk

**Graduate Council (Submitted by Cristiana Stan, Faculty Senate Representative – February 19, 2021)**

Report from the Graduate Council Meeting

January 20, 2021

**Updates and Announcements:**

- **3MT and Mason Graduate Interdisciplinary Conference (MGIC):**
  - The Mason Graduate Interdisciplinary Conference will be held virtually on April 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. [Proposals](#) are currently being accepted till 5 P.M. on Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
  - The 3MT preliminary elimination round will occur on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The top 10 finalists will compete at MGIC. The [registration](#) deadline is at 5 P.M on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
- **Presidential Scholarship Nominations:**
  - Nominations for the AY 2021-2022 Presidential Scholarship will now be accepted through an online platform. Details about the process is forthcoming.
  - The Summer Research Fellowships [application](#) is currently open through 5pm, Friday, January 29, 2021.
- **PROV 701: Preparing for Careers in the Academy:**
  - Applications are currently open and can be accessed [here](#). The deadline is May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.
- **Time Limit Extensions:** Dr. Bray reported that there is continued concern amongst graduate students regarding degree conferral time limits during the pandemic. Please communicate with students that the units and the Provost

Office are still offering flexibility with time limit extensions for students who are approaching their time limit but have been unable to complete their studies due to COVID-19.

#### **Work in Progress:**

- Dissertation Credits Working Group: The [dissertation credits working group](#) recommend two catalog changes to reduce some financial burden on students regarding excess credits of 998 and 999.
- Reduction of Credit (AP.6.5.2) Policy Alignment between Masters and Doctoral degrees.

Respectfully Submitted by Cristiana Stan, Faculty Senate Representative to the Graduate Council 2020-2021

#### **Grievance Committee (Submitted by John Farina, Chair – February 15, 2021)**

No new business at the grievance committee. No current cases.

#### **Intellectual Property Committee (Submitted by Tamara Maddox, Chair – February 23, 2021)**

The Intellectual Property Committee has met both by subcommittee (focused on student matters) and as a full committee since the last Senate meeting. So far, our focus has been to delineate the issues relevant to both faculty and student IP matters. Both subcommittees agreed that a Town Hall would be an excellent way to engage with the GMU community and to provide a wide net so that we are aware of all community concerns as we work to update the current IP policy. A date for the Town Hall has not yet been set, but we are looking at a Friday afternoon in mid or late March. We expect to provide a mechanism whereby questions can be submitted in advance of the Town Hall, but also to permit live questions during the event.

#### **Mason Core Committee (Submitted by Melissa Broeckelman Post, co-chair – February 15, 2021)**

##### **Mason Core Committee Report**

January 28 and February 11 meetings

##### **Courses with announcements about changes:**

- ARAB 351: Media Arabic II (Spoken Media) is being removed as a capstone course
- COS 301: Great Ideas in Science had the prefix changed from PROV to COS

##### **Courses approved to carry a Mason Core attribute**

- ANTH 121: People of the Earth: Humanity's First Five Million Years (SBS)
- BIOL 102: Introductory Biology I-Survey of Biodiversity and Ecology (NSL)
- BIOL 103: Introductory Biology II-Survey of Cell and Molecular Biology (NSNL)
- BIOL 105: Introductory Biology II Laboratory (NSL)
- COS 310: Introduction to Science Policy (SYNTH)
- ECON 495: RS: Honors Thesis in Economics (CAP)
- EVPP 381: Nature and Culture in Global Wetlands (GU)
- FRLN 331: Contexts for Global Cinema (GU)
- SOCI 308: Race and Ethnicity in a Changing (SBS)
- SOCI 360: Youth Culture and Society (SBS)
- SOCI 371: The Individual and Society (SBS)
- SYST 130: Introduction to Computing for Digital Systems Engineering (IT)
- UNIV 381: Foundations for Building a Just Society (GU and SBS)

##### **Courses approved pending minor revision**

- ECON 491: Capstone in Economics (CAP)
- ECON 493: Capstone Internship (CAP)

- INTS 390: International Internship (GU)
- SOCI 330: US Immigrants and Immigration (GU)

#### **Courses rolled back for revision**

- ARAB 355: Advanced Arabic Media: Debates & Context (CAP)
- ECON 460: Senior Seminar in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (CAP)

#### **Additional discussions**

*January 28*

Jan Allbeck met with the committee to explain the articulation plan for how students who leave the Honors College will receive some Mason Core credit for some of the courses taken. The committee voted to endorse the plan that the Honors College has been using in these transfer situations.

*February 11*

We began talking about possible ways to address the capstone/synthesis challenges. We had also planned to begin a conversation about degree outcomes but ran out of time.

Mason Core Report

February 25, 2021 meeting

Courses approved:

- ECED 492: Internship in Early Childhood Education (Non-Licensure) (CAP)
- FAVS 204: Ways of Seeing: Perception, Form and Film (ARTS)
- FAVS 320: Afrofuturism and Their Kin (GU)
- FAVS 280: Writing for the Moving Image (ARTS)
- ASTR 303: Black Holes (NSNL)
- GGS 317: Geography of China (GU)
- GGS 301: Political Geography (SBS)

After reviewing proposals, we also spent some time working with a set of outcomes that are embedded across different areas on campus to identify themes that can be a starting point for thinking about outcomes for a Mason Undergraduate degree.

#### **Master Plan Steering Committee (Submitted by Shannon Davis, Zachary Schrag and David Wong, Faculty Senate representatives – February 17, 2021)**

The Master Plan Steering Committee met on February 12, 2021. The consultant (Greg Janks) presented frameworks for the development of the three campuses. The current proposal provides a framework whereby the three campuses will assume different identities. They are "Policy, Professional and Partnerships" for Arlington, "Health, Innovation and Primarily a graduate campus" for SciTech, and "Core Collaboration, Undergrad (and grad) home." This proposed framework with the identities are expected to be shared with the community at the next town hall, scheduled for Tuesday, March 2, from 10:30 a.m. - noon.

We encourage senators to attend the town hall and to alert their colleagues to that event.

**Research Advisory Committee (Submitted by Lance Liotta, Chair)**

The Research Advisory Committee has been working with the Interim Vice President for Research, Innovation and Economic Impact on a number of topics. The committee is discussing a proposal by Aurali Dade to consolidate the Faculty Senate Research Subcommittee with the Faculty Advisory Board for Policy Development ("The Advisory Board serves as a vehicle for faculty to provide guidance and input into policies related to research at George Mason University. The Vice President for Research appoints the Faculty Advisory Board for Policy Development".)

**Salary Equity Study Committee (Submitted by Allison Redlich, Committee Chair – February 17, 2021)**

Salary Equity Study Committee Report (March 3, 2021 meeting)

Members of the Salary Equity Study (SES) Committee recently met with a representative of the College of Science (COS) workgroup charged with developing a compensation tool for COS faculty (see accompanying 'Statement regarding faculty compensation tool development in College of Science'). We were surprised and alarmed to learn of the COS workgroup and their charge, as their work appears to be directly relevant to the SES committee. The manner in which we learned of this COS workgroup was not from Mason HR representatives (despite repeated requests for information that went unanswered) but rather from a person intimately connected to the COS process. We are alarmed because this lack of transparency appears to violate the tenets of shared governance that we at Mason value and strive for. The lack of involvement of the SES committee in a process directly concerned with compensation prompted us to refer our concerns to the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate. In addition, we will be working with the Organizations and Operations Committee to reassess the charge and name of the SES committee. Without access to relevant data, it has been difficult to impossible to effectively engage in studies of salary equity.

## Statement regarding faculty compensation tool development in College of Science

### Background

In October 2020, the College of Science faculty at Mason learned of a collaboration with central administration and Segal Consulting to develop an instructional faculty salary analysis tool. The tool was intended to generate comprehensive salary reviews that include a market analysis by academic discipline. These salary reviews would be used to support efforts to equitably compensate faculty. We were informed the initial structure of the tool was complete and invited to volunteer to participate in virtual design sessions with the consultants to talk through the factors and weighting in the tool. A small group of COS faculty were selected to participate in these design sessions, which occurred on November 4, 2020 and December 10, 2020. Discussions during and after these meetings prompted the following statement to be communicated with the COS Dean, the Salary Equity Study standing committee, and COS faculty senators during the week of February 8, 2021.

**The faculty compensation tool under development has fundamental flaws and probable biases which will impede its effectiveness.**

Our concerns with the tool include the following:

- **A cost of living adjustment (COLA) is not being included.**
  - There is no explicit cost of living adjustment, despite this being one of the primary reasons faculty have left Mason and top candidates have turned down job offers.
  - If one of the purposes of this tool is to retain and attract outstanding faculty, then we must include COLA
  - Segal has pledged to include regional peer institutions in the data set, however it unclear if this will be an effectual alternative to an explicit inclusion of relative COLA percentages.
- **The Segal tool will perpetuate inequities in faculty salaries.**
  - The dataset being used for this tool cannot be tested for systematic bias because race/ethnicity/ gender/age are not required variables.
  - Gender bias in academia is a well-established reality. We have no assurance that the salary data being used in this tool are truly representative of market value or divergent due to bias.
  - It is very possible the gender bias repeatedly observed is “baked in” to the data and the salaries are representative of both bias and market. For example, if a mostly women female biology department has lower salaries and a mostly male physics department has higher salaries, can we conclude the difference is because of the market for biology vs. physics professors? Or are they different because of a gender bias? We cannot distinguish between these variables in this case.
- **The tool cannot offer a true peer comparison of many unique faculty positions.**
  - There is no clear way to evaluate how administrative or outreach activities for example may influence market value. To compensate, the tool allows for “weights” to be added for certain activities, but there is no clear way to apply these weights consistently.
  - How will activities that add to Mason’s success (improve image, recruit students, attract top talent and students, etc.) in the academy be counted?
- **The tool has too many “fudge factors” to be meaningful.**
  - These factors will artificially sway salaries up or down at the whim of whoever is using the tool, thus rendering the results useless.
  - Values of teaching, research, and service are challenging to quantify and one role should not dominate the calculations.

## Statement regarding faculty compensation tool development in College of Science

- **The dataset being used is incomplete and unreliable.**
  - CUPA HR data are reported by HR officials
  - Faculty are labeled with CIP codes, which have not been shown to be appropriate for people and may negatively reflect on faculty with diverse expertise
  - Years of faculty experience are not included
  - No cost of living adjustment (COLA) is included to equate salaries across localities.
  - No specific details about job type and responsibilities are included in the dataset
  - No demographic information is included.
  - Has not been benchmarked against salaries compiled and publicly available from resources such as field-specific professional societies, such as the American Chemical Society
- **Appropriate and knowledgeable University elected faculty representatives have not been engaged in this process**
  - It is our understanding that the tool being developed is related to the work of the Salary Equity Study standing committee at Mason. Why has that faculty group, with a specific charge to study salary equity, not been involved in this process?

The new tool from Segal is not going to address equity. **How can we seriously talk about faculty compensation, when there is no discussion about remediating existing inequities?** We do not know where in Mason or COS are the major equity gaps. We do know these gaps exist because publicly reported numbers show it. Why have equity study results not been shared with faculty? **Why aren't strategic plans to ameliorate inequities not taking precedent over developing a "market value" tool.**

If plans persist to deploy this tool, there must be a **test phase and opportunities for revision pending results from those tests.** Furthermore, we advocate for explicit procedures that constrain its use and invite the consideration of other datasets and professional salary sources appropriate to each discipline.

We urge the College of Science and Mason administration to seriously consider these objections and concerns. **Administration and faculty stakeholders should explore and review methodologies to ensure that faculty are equitably represented.** This compensation tool has the potential to influence many faculty salaries and careers at Mason. We appreciate your attention on this important matter.