

**Minutes**  
**Faculty of Arts and Sciences**  
**Tuesday, February 3, 2008, 3:30 p.m.**  
**Millington 150**

*Dean Carl Strikwerda called the meeting to order at 3:34 pm.*

**I. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting on December 2, 2008 were approved as posted:  
<http://www.wm.edu/as/dean/fas/minutes/20081202.pdf>

**II. Report of Administrative Officers**

Provost Geoffrey Feiss noted that at the upcoming Charter Day ceremonies honorary degrees would be given to John Hope Franklin, Sen. Jim Webb and Glenn Lowry. He said that more budget news was expected next week and that there was not much reason for optimism. Finally he outlined some of the things that were on his agenda for the last few months before his scheduled retirement. These included: the issue of background checks for prospective employees, a revised vehicle use policy and field trip policy, a new handbook for professional faculty, finalizing plans for the expected changes in space allocation, working with the Faculty Compensation Board on the issue of early retirement, reorganization of the Office of Grants and Contracts, and the transition to the new provost.

Questions fielded by the provost included the following: whether there is any likelihood that the college might be forced to consider salary reductions, and whether such salary reductions would affect one's benefit status with VRS. Provost Feiss responded that he had no reason to think that salary reductions would occur and while he disclaimed any authoritative knowledge of the VRS issue, believed that since VRS status was based on one's highest salary years, salary reductions would not cause a reduction in VRS status. Another questioner asked whether the College would have the flexibility to raise tuition if the state provided funding below base adequacy. Provost Feiss responded that the answer was yes in theory, but that it might be politically difficult to do so, although our rising application numbers give us more flexibility than we had in the past.

Dean Carl Strikwerda reported first on personnel issues: three job searches are complete, with 19 more still in progress. This year's tenure cases have all been processed, with pre-tenure reviews now on the docket (a large group this year: 18). On the issue of strategic planning, the dean noted the continuing activity of the A&S Planning Steering Committee, and reminded all of the special strategic planning meeting to be held on February 19 at 3:30 in Millington 150.

### **III. Report from the Committee on Degrees**

Dean Kim Phillips summarized the posted report of the committee (URL below), noting in particular that there was a decline in category 1 petitions (those decided by the Committee) and an increase in category 2 petitions (those decided by the dean for educational policy herself). An increase in transfer-credit issues for study abroad programs accounted for a large part of the increase in category 2.

Posted report:

[http://web.wm.edu/as/committees/degrees/reports/COD\\_0708\\_report.pdf](http://web.wm.edu/as/committees/degrees/reports/COD_0708_report.pdf)

### **IV. Report from the Committee on Graduate Studies**

Dean Laurie Sanderson gave a presentation on the activities of the Committee and argued for the crucial role of graduate programs in general to the mission of the College. She pointed out the importance of graduate programs in several areas, including faculty recruitment and retention, and the determination of the College's peer group in the eyes of SCHEV. Among the concerns that the Committee has been dealing with is the low level of financial aid for graduate students relative to other programs in our peer group, but Dean Sanderson also stated that corporate and private sponsorship has recently allowed the creation of a number of new fellowships, stipends and awards for graduate students. Finally, she noted the Committee's oversight of the activities of the Graduate Center, including the annual Graduate Research Symposium.

Posted report:

[http://web.wm.edu/as/committees/graduatestudies/documents/COGS\\_Annual\\_Report\\_0708.pdf](http://web.wm.edu/as/committees/graduatestudies/documents/COGS_Annual_Report_0708.pdf)

### **V. Report from the A&S Graduate Ombudsperson**

Elizabeth Barnes (American Studies/English) summarized the posted report (URL below) of her activity as Ombudsperson, a report which she acknowledged was frustratingly vague since names and other details could not be divulged in public documents. One case out of the ordinary involved Prof. Barnes' unofficial efforts to mediate a grade dispute for an undergraduate student who remained unsatisfied after exhausting the processes available to undergraduates. This led to a brief discussion among the faculty of whether we should consider creating an ombudsperson for undergraduates.

Posted report:

[http://web.wm.edu/as/committees/graduatestudies/documents/ombudsreports/Ombuds\\_report\\_0708.pdf](http://web.wm.edu/as/committees/graduatestudies/documents/ombudsreports/Ombuds_report_0708.pdf)

## **VI. Committee on Nominations and Elections, A&S Committee Elections**

Julie Galambush (Religious Studies) presented the slate of nominees offered by the committee for various A&S committee posts (URL below), and asked for nominations from the floor. No new nominations were received. Prof. Galambush announced that on-line voting would open at ca. 6:00 pm.

List of Nominees:

<http://web.wm.edu/as/committees/nominations/reports/20090203.pdf>

## **VII. Report of the Faculty Affairs Committee**

Margaret Saha (Biology) reported on recent activity of the committee, which included strategic planning, a review of faculty governance bylaws, and the issue of uninhabitable buildings (for instance, the lack of heat in Washington Hall).

## **VIII. Report of the Faculty Assembly**

Gene Tracy (Physics/Applied Science) reported on issues addressed recently by the Faculty Assembly, including consideration of adding a new tuition-credit benefit (this issue will be on the next faculty survey administered by the committee), the formation of a college-wide study-abroad committee, the next capital campaign, and the committee's meeting with President Reveley, in which they impressed upon the president the importance of safeguarding faculty priorities in the strategic planning process.

## **IX. Discussion of A&S response to Grand Challenges**

Dean Strikwerda moderated a discussion that ranged freely over the six Grand Challenges. Among the points raised by individual faculty members were the following:

- That the wording of Challenge 2 (on diversity) was "hectoring", and that it reflected insufficient deliberation about the extent to which the demographics of the college should reflect the demographics of society at large.
- That the prose of the Challenges needed to be re-written
- That we should consider reducing student courseloads, and overhauling the curriculum
- That we should think about how to signal to the BOV and other entities where our priorities lie among the six challenges
- That we should emphasize financial transparency as a goal to be striven for in all areas

- That we should work to increase our rate of alumni giving, in which we lag behind most institutions in our peer group (though compare favorably to other public institutions)
- That in the realm of fundraising we should take as a model the success of the Obama campaign in mobilizing small donors, and not just focus on large donors.
- That we should re-evaluate the implications of our identity as a state institution, in terms of in-state vs. out-of-state enrollment and tuition levels.
- That we must have a serious discussion about how faculty are evaluated and rewarded for interdisciplinary work
- That if we are serious about internationalization, we must provide adequate funding for international research
- That if we are serious about our status as a research institution we should increase, rather than cut, our library budget.
- That we should reconsider the committee structure to streamline and modernize faculty governance.

Dean Strikwerda closed the discussion by mentioning some other topics that might need to be considered, including the following:

- Do we want to review the GER system?
- Should we develop a plan for capital and space priorities for A&S?
- What specifically can we do to work toward diversity goals?
- Should we attempt to coordinate our communications effort with other units at the College?

Materials relevant to this discussion are available to all A&S faculty on Blackboard under "A&S Strategic Planning Discussion." There are also places on that blackboard site where faculty can propose amendments to the Challenges and discuss other strategic-planning issues.

*Dean Strikwerda adjourned the meeting at 5:01 pm*

Respectfully Submitted,  
 William Hutton, Secretary  
 Associate Professor of Classical Studies  
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