

Minutes
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Tuesday, March 2, 2010, 3:30 PM
McGlothlin-Street 20

Dean Carl Strikwerda called the meeting to order at 3:37 pm.

Attendance at the start of the meeting: 38

I. Minutes of the last meeting, February 2, 2010

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as posted:

<http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/fas/minutes/20100202.pdf>

II. Report of Administrative Officers:

Provost Michael Halleran reported on the following issues:

- A new state budget is expected by the end of the week. Differences remain between the House and Senate versions, and the governor's input will also have an effect.
- To date none of the budget proposals have new restrictions on in-state/out-of-state ratios or tuition increases.
- Federal stimulus money used in FY '11 comes with an unspecific mandate to mitigate tuition increases. In FY '12 there will be no stimulus money but, likewise, no tuition mandate.
- None of the proposed budgets include an increase in base compensation but the administration is considering what it might do locally to ameliorate the effects of a third year without raises.

In questions, the provost explained the new rules being proposed in the legislature for retirement contributions (this only affects new hires, not current employees). In response to a suggestion that any furlough days demanded by the state be accomplished by canceling classes, the provost said that he would prefer to cross that bridge when and if we come to it.

The provost then invited discussion of the recently announced proposal to increase the size of the incoming class by 50. Not all of those who participated in this discussion were completely opposed to the increase. Among the less negative points raised were the following:

- The increase was a very modest one and could be easily absorbed
- An increase could lower the per-student amount of fixed costs such as building maintenance fees
- Additional students need not be accepted on a need-blind basis, potentially

increasing per-student tuition revenue

The great majority of opinions however, ranged from concern to vehement opposition:

- The most frequent and strongly stated objections concerned the lack of consultation with A&S and other faculty bodies in advance of the increase. It was pointed out that the burden of dealing with increased student numbers would fall primarily on A&S, and that the faculty had passed a resolution opposing any further increase in the student body without serious consideration of the impact of the increase. This resolution seems to have been ignored in the process. [The resolution was passed at the December 1, 2009 meeting: see <http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/fas/minutes/20091201.pdf> <http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/fas/minutes/20081202.pdf> for the minutes of that meeting and http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/committees/facultyaffairs/documents/fac_resolutions_20091201.pdf for the text of the resolution].
- Class size increases have a history of never going back down. Fifty students this year means an additional 200 students by the fourth year.
- If not handled carefully, an increase has the potential of exacerbating the gender imbalance in the student body.
- There seems to have been no consideration for how the increase would impact the College's infrastructure and its relationship with the Williamsburg community.

Dean Carl Strikwerda reported the following:

- Four of the eleven tenure-track searches for this year have been completed
- The dean is in the process of forwarding his recommendations on cases of promotion to full professor.
- Twelve new chairs and directors for departments and programs have been appointed.
- Campus visits for the program review of Biology, Chemistry, Geology, and ENSP have been completed. Preparations are underway for program reviews of Kinesiology and Health Sciences, Neuroscience, and Psychology that will take place next year.

III. Report from the Faculty Affairs Committee

Berhanu Abegaz (Economics) reported that the FAC is planning an informal open forum for Arts and Sciences faculty to discuss two issues with members of the

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BOV: the proposed re-appointment of President Reveley to a second term, including the methods by which this proposal was to be discussed and whether the faculty should consider issuing an endorsement of the president, and threats to our policy concerning non-discrimination.

In discussion, the question was raised as to whether there had been a resolution of the faculty at the time of the president's appointment that there should be a full search at the end of his first term [At the September 2 2008 meeting the topic was discussed with the faculty meeting as a committee of the whole. No minutes of this discussion were kept, and no resolution was voted on. See <http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/fas/minutes/20080902.pdf>]. It was also pointed out that President Reveley has expressed a willingness to come to our meetings, and that we should consider taking him up on that.

IV. Report from the Faculty Assembly

Gene Tracy (Physics/Applied Science) reported that the Assembly had been busy with the following issues:

- The budgetary situation
- Salary targets, in regard to which President Reveley has raised the question of the appropriate peer-group with which to compare ourselves.
- The revision of the faculty handbook to be inclusive of professional faculty. The issue was raised as to whether a comparable category should be recognized within A&S, but that will not be discussed this year.
- Complications to the effort to reformulate the College's non-discrimination policies arising from the attorney general's pronouncements on the issue
- The formation of a campus threat assessment and intervention team
- The creation and publication of databases with information on class size, student-faculty ratios, etc.
- Assessing the results of the recent faculty survey
- Considering the student athletic fee in cooperation with the University Priorities Committee

In discussion, the question was raised as to whether the attorney general had directed the College to reverse its non-discrimination policy. Provost Halleran responded that he had received no such directive but promised vigilance against pressures to weaken the College's commitment to equal opportunity for all.

V. Report from the Committee on Nominations and Elections

Larry Ventis (Psychology) proposed two additions to the posted slate of candidates for this month's elections: Don Campbell (Economics) an Area II slot on the Promotion, Retention and Tenure committee, and David Backer (Government) for a one-year term on the International Advisory Committee. These additions were

approved unanimously. Prof. Ventis announced that on-line voting would commence shortly.

The posted list of candidates:

<http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/committees/nominations/documents/20100302.pdf>

VI. Report from the Ad Hoc Joint Committee of FA and FCB on Retirement Incentives

The chair of the committee, Terry Meyers (English), proposed that this report be postponed. The postponement was approved unanimously.

VII. Report from the A & S Graduate Ombudsperson and from the Committee on Graduate Studies

On behalf of current Ombudsperson Carey Bagdassarian (Chemistry) past Ombudsperson Elizabeth Barnes (English/American Studies) summarized the posted report of the activities of the ombudsperson for 2009 and called upon faculty to make their graduate students aware of the existence of the ombudsperson.

The posted Ombudsperson report:

http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/committees/graduatestudies/documents/2009_Ombuds_Annual_Report.pdf

Laurie Sanderson (Biology/Dean of Graduate Studies and Research) summarized and expanded on the posted report of the Committee on Graduate Studies. Among the points she emphasized were the following:

- Graduate studies are vital for recruiting and retaining faculty
- Departments and programs with graduate students award approximately 40% of undergraduate degrees and generate 85% of income from recovered costs
- Graduate programs enhance the undergraduate programs, are vital for the College's profile as a liberal-arts university, and help to place the College in an elite peer-group.
- The low level of graduate stipends is a major problem, and is being addressed on the level of both A&S and the college as a whole.

She also noted some of the activities in which the office of Graduate Studies had been involved:

- The Graduate Studies advisory board awarded eight fellowships
- A website has been established to publicize the achievements of graduate students

- Corporate sponsorship supported several awards at the graduate research symposium
- The Graduate Center has sponsored workshops for graduate students, the Raft Debate and the research symposium.
- Last year's graduate research symposium attracted more participants and more students from other institutions in the region. This year's symposium will be March 26-27 at the Sadler Center.

The committee's posted report:

http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/committees/graduatestudies/documents/2009_COGS_Annual_Report.pdf

The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William Hutton, Secretary
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