

**Faculty Assembly Meeting
Minutes for March 28, 2017
3:30-5:00 pm
Blow Hall Board Room**

Officers Present: Sophia Serghi (President), Cathy Forestell (Vice President), Chris Abelt (Secretary) and Eric Chason (Faculty Representative to the Board of Visitors)

Other Members Present: John Eisele, Carl Friedrichs, Courtney Harris, Rex Kincaid, Scott McCoy, Christy Porter, Patty Roberts, Ron Schechter, Cynthia Ward and Sibel Zandi-Sayek

Members Absent: Danielle Dallaire, Mark Forsyth, Ron Hess, Mark Hofer, Steve Holliday, Megan Tschannen-Moran and Tricia Vahle

Others in Attendance: Michael Halleran (Provost), Terry Meyers (Parliamentarian)

Ms. Serghi called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm.

1. Approval of Minutes for February 28, 2017

The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

2. Provost's Report

The Provost complimented the Tack Lecture given by Peter Vishton on March 22nd. Undergraduate admissions looks as strong as it was two years ago. Email messages were just sent out to those who would be getting acceptance packages in the regular mail. There will be a special conference on higher education and social mobility after the Board meeting in April. The state budget has not changed since the last FA meeting. As a result, two scheduled COPAR meetings were postponed.

3. Consideration of changes to the Faculty Handbook from the FAFAC.

Ms. Ward and Mr. Eisele reported for Faculty Affairs. Ms. Ward reminded the FA about the charge to FAFAC: to review the Threat Assessment policy, to review faculty suspension policies and to resolve the status of faculty who are not able to return from medical leave. There was concern that some of these policies were not consistent with the Faculty Handbook. FAFAC had meetings with John Poma and Kiersten Boyce. The committee concluded that a broader reassessment of the Handbook was needed. They suggested that a special task force be created to deal with Threat Assessment and the status of faculty who cannot return from medical leave. They formulated a new section of the Handbook on faculty suspension policies. They are asking the Assembly to approve the taskforce suggestion. Mr. Eisele led the discussion on the proposed new section III.G. A threat

can arise from a violation of policy, a medical condition or both. Assembly members made a number of suggestions to the draft. Ms. Roberts pointed out that the other duties to which faculty may be assigned be specified as duties that are expected for a faculty member. Ms. Ward said that the word 'threat' be modified to 'imminent threat.' Mr. Chason suggested that the Assembly only discuss the draft today and send it back to the subcommittee to produce another draft. He also said that assigning other duties and suspension may not be mutually exclusive, and that the draft should not state that other duties be in lieu of suspension. Mr. McCoy asked about the consultation with the Executive Committee. The Provost stated that it is a dialog and that the Provost is not seeking permission to issue a suspension. Ms. Porter asked about the process for ending a suspension. Ms. Roberts asked about the 120 day period. The Provost said that the time period matches that in the FLMA policy. Ms. Forestell asked whether there can be other investigations that are coincident with the suspension. The Provost said that proposed section would allow for that possibility. Ms. Porter commented that the initial report to the Executive Committee should be made as soon as possible. Mr. Kincaid hoped that there would be some explanation for the process for ending a suspension. Ms. Roberts noted that the FLMA policy has the return-to-work requirements documented. The Provost noted that the investigation can be a lengthy process, and could even take more than 300 days. Nevertheless, this policy does not incentivize misconduct as a way to be paid for not working. Ms. Porter asked if the Threat Assessment policy had any overlap with the proposed section. Mr. Eisele said that it did not. The discussion ended with the document being sent back to FAFAC. Assembly members were urged to send specific comments to Ms. Tschannen-Moran.

The discussion turned to the suggestion of forming an ad hoc committee to formulate changes to the Handbook. Ms. Ward said the Assembly should pass a motion creating the committee today. Ms. Serghi asked who would be on the task force and what it would look like. There should be some representation from the professional schools. Ms. Ward said that not all of the professional schools needed to be represented. There was a question about representation from the Personnel Policy Committee. Mr. Chason suggested that only Assembly members be on the committee and that administrators either be invited as needed or be *ex officio*. Ms. Ward concurred but suggested that others with institutional memory also be on the committee. Mr. Chason felt that the product should come from faculty only. Mr. Eisele wondered if the time frame for the report was reasonable. Ms. Roberts was concerned that a committee of three may be too small. Mr. Ward suggested that staging

the reports may be appropriate. Ms. Porter said that a committee of three is small and nimble given the large amount of work. Ms. Serghi wondered about a course release for those on the committee. Ms. Ward noted that the Assembly itself is too unwieldy for such a task. Mr. Chason suggested that the size and composition be left up to the Executive Committee. The charge was updated to incorporate the previous discussion. The following authorization of an ad hoc task force was approved by unanimous vote:

The Executive Committee shall commission an Ad Hoc Committee to work on a substantive revision of the Faculty Handbook. This Committee shall be made up of faculty members, at least one of whom shall be from the professional schools. The Ad Hoc Committee shall report on its work to the Executive Committee on a regular basis.

4. Reports from Standing Committees

Executive Committee: Sophia Serghi

The Executive Committee discussed the FAFAC reports.

Liaison Committee: Cathy Forestell

The Liaison Committee decided to give a presentation on two creative adaptation projects: 1) the Innovation Lab Summer Institute (led by Mark Hofer, School of Education) and 2) the Mason entrepreneurship center (led by Graham Henshaw, School of Business).

COPAR: Patty Roberts

The COPAR report was essentially given in the Provost's report.

Academic Affairs: Christie Porter

The committee met with Michele Jackson, Associate Provost for University eLearning Initiatives. The committee's report will focus on online learning, not be confused with eLearning, which covers any use of technology.

5. Old/New Business

No old business was discussed. Under new business the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs contacted the Assembly concerning accessibility issues with the Assembly Meetings. In

particular, the Vice Provost suggested that the meetings be broadcast. Ms. Forestell said that everyone has access to the minutes, but that some may find it difficult to attend a meeting. Mr. Chason wondered what the disability issue was given that the meeting space has to be accessible. Ms. Serghi said that it is possible to be stuck at home. The Provost gave the example of someone undergoing chemotherapy. Mr. Kincaid noted that the Arts and Sciences Faculty Affairs committee was considering this accommodation for the Arts and Sciences meetings. They were considering using Skype if given 24-48 hours notice. Ms. Harris noted that using Skype can be a distraction. Mr. Schechter said that how often it is used is not relevant. Ms. Forestell said making such an accommodation is an important statement on inclusivity. Mr. Friedrichs noted that the advances in technology will make this type of accommodation trivial. Ms. Porter asked whether anyone can attend Assembly meetings. Mr. Meyers said that anyone can attend, the President can allow guests to participate in the discussion, but that one must be present to vote. Ms. Roberts said that this is worth doing at every meeting as a matter of course. The broadcast should be mentioning in the agenda. Mr. McCoy asked about the rights of visitors. Mr. Meyers reminded members that if one is going to be absent, they should arrange for a substitute. Ms. Forestell will contact IT about the necessary technology and will proceed with a broadcast with 24-48 hours notice.

Ms. Serghi adjourned the meeting at 4:47.

Prepared by Chris Abelt