

Faculty Assembly Meeting
Minutes for March 31, 2020
3:30-5:00 pm
Remotely via Zoom

Officers Present: Tom Ward (President), David Armstrong (Vice President), Chris Abelt (Secretary) and Cathy Forestell (Faculty Representative to the Board of Visitors)

Other Members Present: Mark Brush, Josh Burk, Lynda Butler, Marji Friedrichs, Brennan Harris, Natoya Haskins, Bill Hutton, Lisa Landino, Rowan Lockwood, Michael Luchs, Alan Meese, Jennifer Mellor, John Riofrio, Sophia Serghi, Scott Swan, Molly Swetnam-Burland and Brad Weiss

Members Absent: none

Others in Attendance: Katherine Rowe (President), Peggy Agouris (Provost), Ann Marie Stock (Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs), Martha Wescoat-Andes (Senior Associate Provost), Chris Lee (Chief Human Resources Officer), Carrie Nee (University Counsel), Terry Meyers (Parliamentarian), Dan Runfola, Laura Heymann

1. Call to order

Mr. Ward called the meeting to order at 3:31 pm.

2. President's Report

The President talked about the institution's response to operating under pandemic conditions. The current episode is phase I. The peak infections in Virginia should occur in late May. The stay-at-home order may extend to June 10. If so, Summer Session I cannot be in-person. A unified communications team has been created. Enterprise risk management is focusing on retention and new enrollment. These are challenges since the pandemic timeline may extend 18-24 months. The fall semester may be conducted with hybrid courses. The date for commencement is still unknown. The business school has embraced an online component. They have reached out to students who would otherwise not attend W&M, for example working adults. Students give their online courses a net promoter score of 95%. These students feel that they are part of the institution. The pandemic may be an opportunity for other units to experiment with their curriculum delivery using a "little bet" approach. However, entirely online or hybrid delivery is not the goal of William & Mary going forward. The cabinet has been expanded from 20 to 60. Short term decisions are the current priority.

3. Provost's Report

The Provost picked up on the President's remarks. There will be a short-term focus on hybrid and blended programs leading to new minors, certificates, and badges. The institution will still preserve its character and values. The transition from residential delivery to remote delivery was greatly facilitated by IT, STLI and the library. The transition has created some stress and anxiety. Some policies and procedures have been created to address some of these. The pass/fail option has been expanded. The last day to drop a course has been extended.

Tenure clock. The possibility of extending the tenure clock as an option to pre-tenure faculty was

discussed. The Faculty Handbook allows for an extension for a faculty member “who has experienced circumstances which, at the faculty member’s election, could have resulted in a significant period of ... leave.” The question is whether the current conditions qualify or whether an amendment to the Handbook is necessary.

Course evaluations. Rowan Lockwood and the Faculty Affairs subcommittee will suggest new policies for course evaluations. One suggestion is to make the summative evaluation optional for merit and tenure. A formative evaluation would be especially useful for improving online delivery. The question of a uniform policy through the Handbook vs. local practices by each of the schools was raised. A “one size fits all” approach is not reasonable. However, some components of the policy must be constant. Schools coming to different conclusions on evaluations would create risk. If the policies were to err, they should do so on the side of doing good. There is a sense of urgency for developing policies to alleviate faculty fears.

Research continuity. Dennis Manos and the Research Committee are developing guidelines for research continuity. The committee will define what research is critical. Under strict stay-at-home orders, it may be necessary to carry documentation of mission-critical status. These deliberations are guided by the safety and the health of the students and faculty.

4. Faculty Survey

Cathy Forestell asked members to send her feedback on the report. Going forward the Assembly needs to approve the report and then to send it to the upper administration.

5. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5: 08. The Executive Committee will be convened to hear the COPAR report.

Prepared by Chris Abelt