

Faculty Assembly Meeting
Minutes for March 16, 2021
3:30-5:00 pm
Remotely via Zoom

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

Other Members Present: Tonya Boone, Josh Burk, Harmony Dalglish, Marjy Friedrichs, Adam Gershowitz, Natoya Haskins, Catherine Levesque, Alan Meese, Jennifer Mellor, Christy Porter, Anne Rasmussen, Molly Swetnam-Burland, Nicole Santiago, Evgenia Smirni, and Scott Swan

Members Absent: Michelle Lelièvre

Others in Attendance: Peggy Agouris (Provost), Christopher Lee (Chief Human Resources Officer), Terry Meyers (Parliamentarian), Joe McClain, Kate Hoving, Sara Mattavelli

1) Call to order

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

2) Approval of the minutes

Minutes for the February 16th meeting were approved without dissent.

3) Provost's report

Summer sessions will be on-line, but fall is expected to be in-person. Like last summer, no on-campus housing will be provided for research students. Strategic planning is starting up again, but with a focus on shorter-term (3 years) goals. The previously created white papers are still relevant. A workshop on research and innovation was conducted last Friday that had an emphasis on multidisciplinary collaboration. Slides from the workshop will be shared. The Provost asked the Deans for representatives to form a group to suggest positive changes to the Faculty Hiring Pilot Plan based on the report recently approved by the Assembly.

4) SSRL *ad hoc* committee report – Harmony Dalglish

The report addressed implementation, policies at peer institutions, benefits, costs, and recommendations. SSRL's are available every 7th year. Faculty may elect to take a semester at 100% salary or a year at 80%. VIMS offers 100% salary for 6 months or 50% salary for 12 months. A&S offers 90% salary for a year SSRL taken over two academic years. Faculty must be research active, submit a pre-leave proposal, and a post-leave report. The academic year option is the most popular. Units deal with SSRL leaves by cancelling the courses, having other faculty cover the courses, or hiring a visiting assistant professor or adjuncts. Most units have quantitative definitions for being research active. Most of our peer institutions offer a similar leave program at the same frequency. The SSRL provides time for faculty to maintain the teacher-scholar model. It is valuable for recruitment and retention. The lack of research support is the second most cited reason for securing employment elsewhere. The annual cost for the SSRL program is estimated to be \$940,000 based on using visiting assistant professors to replace the courses. The report

recommends that the research-active definition be certified and that a centralized database be created for these. The actual cost for the SSRL program should be determined and reported to the Assembly yearly. Faculty should provide a summary of their research over the prior six years and explain how the SSRL impacted their research trajectory in the post SSRL report. Deans should publish the research activity of their faculty and the Communications Office should publicize some of these.

The report was accepted by a vote of 18-0 with no abstentions.

5) Committee reports

a) **Executive committee – David Armstrong**

The decision to be remote this summer is driven in part by giving staff a respite. The Assembly was not consulted with the formation of the search committee for the Athletic Director. It is not clear that such consultation is required because the AD position is not a Vice President-level position. A draft of the University DEI plan, required by the Commonwealth, was distributed. Chon Glover will talk about this plan at the next Assembly meeting. It contains a Faculty Hiring Plan. The administration is looking for recommendations for how the proposed 5% raise pool is to be distributed. The General Assembly only funds a portion of the raise. The University must raise the remainder. The Academic Affairs committee will be charged with finding action items in the Teaching Evaluation report. The Faculty Affairs committee will be charged with looking at the intellectual property policy and how it deals with recorded lecture videos. The NTE policy committee is close to finalizing their report. The *ad hoc* athletic advisory committee has not gotten started and may not be necessary with the reinstatement of all of the athletic teams and AD search.

b) **Liaison committee – Mark Brush**

Cathy Forestell presented the results of the Faculty Survey in November. Mark Hofer spoke on innovative teaching under pandemic in February. Hannah Rosen will talk about the COLL 350 implementation in April.

c) **COPAR – Tom Ward**

Academic Affairs – Natoya Haskins

Faculty Affairs – Alan Meese

No updates.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:43 pm.

Prepared by Chris Abelt