

Faculty Assembly Meeting
Minutes for November 17, 2020
3:30-5:00 pm
Remotely via Zoom

Officers Present: David Armstrong (President), Mark Brush (Vice President), Chris Abelt (Secretary)

Other Members Present: Tonya Boone, Josh Burk, Harmony Dagleish, Marjy Friedrichs, Adam Gershowitz, Natoya Haskins, Catherine Levesque, Michelle Lelièvre, Alan Meese, Jennifer Mellor, Jim Olver, Christy Porter, Molly Swetnam-Burland, Nicole Santiago, and Evgenia Smirni

Members Absent: Anne Rasmussen, Tom Ward (Faculty Representative to the Board of Visitors)

Others in Attendance: Peggy Agouris (Provost), Christopher Lee (Chief Human Resources Officer), Terry Meyers (Parliamentarian), Rowan Lockwood, Joe McCain, Suzanne Hagedorn.

1. Call to order

Mr. Armstrong called the meeting to order at 3:32 pm.

2. Approval of the minutes

Minutes for the October 20th meeting were approved without objection.

3. Provost's report

The BOV meets this week. Richmond will help institutions with COVID-related expenses. The level of future state funding is uncertain, as is spring enrollment. The spring phased-move-in is modeled after the successful fall process. Funding for higher education at the state level had structural problems before COVID. It was hoped that adjusting the in-state/out-of-state ratio could offer some relief. Admissions are up 5% currently. Any adjustments to the spring schedule will be issued three weeks before the start of classes. The BOV hopes that more in-person sections could be offered in the spring.

4. Teaching evaluation white paper – Rowan Lockwood

Rowan Lockwood presented a draft report on evaluation and assessment of teaching at W&M from last year's Faculty Assembly Academic Affairs Committee. The information they gathered were literature reviews, current practices, current policies, and several case studies from other institutions. They determined that because the Schools are so different, there should be no single approach to improvements. They recommended that each School develop a committee to address evaluation and assessment of teaching. The process should be designed centrally and adopted consistently. New processes could be piloted as soon as Fall 2022. Each unit needs to define effective teaching and teaching expectations. The importance of teaching *vs.* other functions should be emphasized. This importance will vary with career stage, tenure status, and research activity. The importance of teaching needs to be communicated to faculty, administrators, and students. The committee recommends a change in the culture and mindset with evaluations moving away from a summative approach to a formative approach. In addition to the quantitative scores from evaluations, formative input can be gathered from peer observations, feedback from

administrators, self-assessment, teaching portfolios, course materials, student work, and workshops. The current system suffers from being uni-dimensional. Mean (or median) scores should be reported with standard deviations. Many factors affect student scores: 1) instructor race, ethnicity, age, and gender, 2) course difficulty, 3) course time, 4) course topic, and 5) teaching space. For the current system of course evaluations, issues concerning sample size, validity, fairness, and ways to game the system should be addressed. Distinctions should be made between degree programs and areas. Outside work should be considered. New processes should be developed by faculty, administrators, and students. Students were important agents in the external case studies. Any changes to the Faculty Handbook should be streamlined. While numerous new dimensions can be added to the evaluation process, the ideal number of these may be just one. Some of the best evaluation examples are from Smith College and the University of Oregon. Students should not be forced to complete evaluations. At Smith College students are able to “fine” each other if they do not complete the course evaluation. William & Mary has had a good reputation as an institution that values teaching. It may be that we have been resting on our laurels and that we are slipping. Reforming the evaluation process can be a step in restoring the prior cultural emphasis on teaching. Teaching evaluations also affect annual merit. However, there are perceptions amongst some that there is little correlation between merit scores and raises. The proper incentives must be in place to make any new processes work effectively. The assessment of student learning is also important. PIEs evaluate learning at the level of the major, but there is no overall assessment of student learning.

The committee will make changes based on feedback. The final report will be presented to the Assembly for approval at the next meeting in December. The report will be submitted to the administration.

Reports from sub-committees were postponed to the next meeting due to the lack of time.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 pm.

Prepared by Chris Abelt