

Faculty Assembly Meeting
Minutes for December 15, 2020
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, Marjy Friedrichs, Adam Gershowitz, Natoya Haskins, Catherine Levesque, Michelle Lelièvre, Alan Meese, Jennifer Mellor, Jim Olver, Christy Porter, Anne Rasmussen, Molly Swetnam-Burland, Nicole Santiago, and Evgenia Smirni

Members Absent: Harmony Dagleish

Others in Attendance: Peggy Agouris (Provost), Christopher Lee (Chief Human Resources Officer), Terry Meyers (Parliamentarian), Rowan Lockwood, Suzanne Hagedorn, Leisa Meyer, Kim Frange-Sosa, Laura Heymann, Sara Mattavelli, Susan Bosworth, Arthur Knight, Jordan Walk, and Debbie Bebout

1) Call to order

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

2) Approval of the minutes

Minutes for the November 17th meeting were approved by acclamation.

3) Provost's report

The Provost urged the faculty to support the staff in the planned pause and to take time for themselves. The summer semester plans are moving forward. It will not be a regular semester. The Provost plans to work on improving the model of shared governance, especially with the Assembly. Strategic planning will be updated in light of the last year. The search for the next VIMS Dean is beginning. The BOV deferred discussion of tuition until February. An increase in undergraduate tuition would be tone-deaf, but tuition increases in the professional schools may not be off the table. The development of a sustainable curriculum will be moving forward. The bond issue might be able to help in strategic areas, but deficits are being planned for in the next academic year and the potential revenue impacts of the spring are still unknown. Of the \$154M in bonds that were sold, \$64M is going to existing debt, \$20M is for dorms, \$10M is for COVID-19 expenses, and \$60M is for the future.

4) Assessing Teaching and Learning report

This report was presented at the last Assembly meeting. Few suggestions were made. A motion to accept the report was moved and seconded. Acceptance of the report does not mean that all of the suggestions were being endorsed. Rather, it is being forwarded to the Academic Affairs subcommittee and the Schools to consider ways that some of the suggestions might be implemented. The report was accepted unanimously.

5) Committee reports

a) **BOV liaison committee – Mark Brush**

Speakers for the BOV meetings: September, agenda too full; November, Cathy Forestell reported on the results of last year's faculty survey; February, Mark Hofer will report on innovative faculty teaching under pandemic; April, Hannah Rosen will report on COLL 350, Difference, Equity, Justice. A question was raised about the BOV's decision on the President's bonus. This 15% performance-based compensation was part of last year's contract. Deliberation was supposed to take place at the September BOV meeting, but was deferred to November. The optics of this action were poor. Some faculty have had their contracts breached. Some NTE contracts in A&S will not be renewed. These and other actions have affected faculty morale. Faculty were urged to contact David Armstrong with their concerns. They will be conveyed to the Rector.

b) **SSRL committee – Jennifer Mellor**

The advisory committee has surveyed faculty and has gathered data on faculty participation in the program. They have collated the definitions of research-active across Departments and Schools. They have documented the benefits of having the program. The parallel SSRL advisory committee formed by the Provost is on pause. The SSRL program will impact the plan to achieve a sustainable curriculum.

c) **NTE policy committee – Christy Porter**

The committee met with the related NTE advisory committees in A&S and Business. They have meetings planned with Law and Education. Of the 100 NTE faculty in A&S, 50 have contracts that end in May 2021. Two-thirds of these will be renewed. Of the remaining one-third, five will not be renewed and the rest are in the 'maybe' category. The committee raised concerns that the non-renewal notices for some of these violate the Faculty Handbook in terms of their timeliness. The Executive Committee will consider this allegation.

d) **Faculty hiring pilot project – Evgenia Smirni**

The committee has met eleven times this fall. A report will be forwarded to the Executive Committee for consideration. Members participated in Implicit Bias training sessions.

e) **COPAR – Tom Ward**

The committee will meet with Vice Provost Manos in January to receive a report on F&A funds. Ideally, this committee should be consulted about any plans for the \$60M in bond funds.

f) **Faculty Handbook committee – Chris Abelt**

The committee has met once. Work from last year's committee was archived on Box. The committee consulted with the chair of PRC about the status of previous amendments. PRC tabled the FA's amendment of Section III. D. 3 (non-academic leaves) in 2019, and it can be reconsidered. PRC's concerns on the FA's amendment to Section III.E.2 (consensual amorous relations) were provided to the committee. The committee will work on gathering data to address PRC's issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 pm.

Prepared by Chris Abelt

