



Faculty Assembly Minutes, December 12, 2023

3:30 – 5 pm

Location: Board Of Visitors Room, Blow Hall

Zoom: <https://cwm.zoom.us/j/91047315062>

Officers Present: K. Scott Swan (Faculty Assembly President), David Feldman (Vice President), Nicholas Popper (Secretary)

Other Members Present: David Armstrong (Faculty Assembly Representative to the Board of Visitors), Mark Brush, Josh Burk, Jim Dwyer (zoom), John Gilmour, Erin Hendrickson (zoom), Jessica Martin (zoom), Terry Meyers (Parliamentarian), Randi Rashkover (zoom); Marc Sher (zoom), Betsy Talbott, Brett Wilson

Members Absent: Chuck Bailey, Christopher Del Negro, Marjy Friedrichs, Aaron Griffith, Katherine Guthrie, Evgenia Smirni, Cristina Stancioiu

Others in Attendance: Pam Eddy, Adam Gershowitz

The meeting was called to order at 3:32.

I. Approval of Minutes

II. Provost's Report (Pam Eddy on behalf of Peggy Agouris)

Eddy reports that Phase II of the Faculty Research Study is underway. Analysis of data gathered through the Faculty Teaching Study is ongoing. The group responsible for this is engaging

continuously with Faculty Assembly as the data comes in hand, and in January will have FA analyzing data alongside it to make sure that the right questions are getting asked and answered.

President Swan asks what will be done with the end product. Eddy responds that the goal is to put infrastructure in place to allow annual reporting and clearer comparisons with peer institutions, and that it will be phrased as “faculty contribution” as opposed to “productivity.” Vice President Feldman points out that we select our own peers situationally; Eddy agrees that different contexts matter. The intent with this is to educate the BOV, who are often very unfamiliar with higher education, and amplify the work that faculty are doing. Identifying appropriate faculty for awards might be an auxiliary benefit.

Eddy reports, in a similar vein, on discussions concerning the Key Performance Indicators for faculty research for the BOV. There will be six working groups, one for each KPI. There are present or former FA members on all. When evaluating what metrics to adopt, they paid close attention to rankings and looming R1 status. Sensible indicators picker for teaching impact, research impact, applied learning. Traditional modes of evaluating graduation outcomes, which typically compare median income of alumni with median income of high school graduates, raise the question of why institutions are punished when students choose, for example, to go into the peace corps.

Armstrong asks what the year markers are for “salaries after graduation” and points out that graduate school also is effectively nonremunerative, so wonders how this affects calculations. Eddy replies that those continuing in school are not included, but it is not longitudinal.

Feldman notes that WM is a very strong producer of future PhDs and suggests creating a place for this in the postgraduation KPs. Swan notes that this undercuts salary but indicates productivity, fits within the school’s mission, and shows how we have a culture of education here that the rankings count against us but can be turned into a strength. Talbott asks whether there is data on alumni PhDs; Feldman responds that Jeremy Martin does.

Wilson asks about the terminology of “Faculty Success” and the concern amongst some faculty about how they are being counted; Armstrong points out that anyone can in and look and upload what they want. Eddy makes clear that the data not reported out anywhere on an individual basis; it is aggregated for BOV.

Eddy reports that WM is preparing for its reclassification as R1. This relies on two measures: grant productivity and doctoral production. For grant productivity WM is well over the threshold level; on doctoral production we are cutting it close. So the administration will be looking at ways to devote resources to bolster doctoral production.

Swan notes that Del Negro, Friedrichs, and Popper will be on committee. Gilmour asks what the committee will do. Talbot responds brainstorm about what might be helpful. Swan suggests focusing on processes and how to retain R1 designation. Gilmour asks about the size and scope of the committee; Swan describes it will be more of a liaison committee than a formal one. Gilmour suggests the committee should have as many faculty from PhD granting departments as

possible. Talbott points out that grants also matter. After general conversation, it is agreed to pursue two more members, including one from VIMS.

Eddy reports on administrative searches: the COO search has split in two and is moving forward; CFO search is continuing. Expect forward movement in the spring.

Eddy reports that work is being done to prepare the application for the New School to SCHEV. This committee is receiving faculty input from the faculty heads of key units and some teaching faculty. Swan reminds that FA passed a motion that it should advise on the faculty on the implementation committee, and that this is a task to address over break. Feldman stresses need for representation from A&S faculty who are not from one of the four units going to the New School.

III. Faculty Handbook Revision Discussion with Adam Gershowitz, chair of the Faculty Handbook Writing Group

Gershowitz reports that the committee met the previous week and has started moving forward. The committee intends to start by listening to faculty and discerning what BOV wants, and then following the process. A survey will go out soon, the committee is scheduling sessions with the schools, and will also reach out to staff and administrative units.

Swan asks how the committee wants to receive FA feedback beyond the survey. Gershowitz suggests that perhaps some Working Group members could attend the next FA meeting, but also that faculty can write directly. It is pointed out that FA has identified Dwyer, Guthrie, and Hendrickson as liaisons.

Gershowitz reinforces that the committee has agreed to rule the first part of the handbook as outside their scope.

IV. Campus Climate and Free Speech

Swan reports that he recently attended the Governor's convention on free speech and intellectual diversity. WM has been assessed as in the upper echelon of promoting intellectual diversity and free speech. There are some resources available, but because of competing agendas, suggests that they are best pursued at an individual level.

Gilmour asks who in the administration is responsible for assessing repercussions of speech promoting violence. General discussion leads to a general sense that it would probably be someone from the Office of Student Affairs.

V. President Rowe's November 1 motion

Armstrong suggests minor changes to pre-circulated FA motion supporting the President's November 1 statement. Wilson proposes to add Ginger Ambler's October 27 statement, and praises the statements' focus on campus climate, culture, and behavior. General discussion, and then amendment passes.

Motion passes unanimously (see Appendix I).

VI. Other Business

Swan looked to recruit liaisons to Phase II of the Faculty Productivity Committee; Gilmour and Wilson recruited.

FA also needs a liaison for reaffirmation of accreditation processes. Eddy points out that with accreditation, KPIs, various other studies, there are lots of opportunities for faculty involvement

Wilson, in capacity as chair of Faculty Affairs Committee, reports that he and committee along with Pam Eddy have started to sketch out what will stay and what will go from the faculty survey.

Feldman reports continuing discussion and meetings with the dean's office concerning retirement incentives.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:58.

Appendix I

Faculty Assembly Motion 12/12/23

The Faculty Assembly fully endorses the statements from President Rowe on November 1 and from Vice President Ambler on October 27 affirming the importance of freedom of speech and civil discourse, while condemning hate speech, defamation, threats, or violence. Especially in these challenging times, such values are core to the university, central to the mission of higher education, and an essential part of our commitment to our students, staff, and fellow faculty.