



**Faculty Assembly Minutes, February 20, 2024**

**3:30 – 5 pm**

**Location: Miller Hall 2003**

Zoom: <https://cwm.zoom.us/j/7441676700>

*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, Sara Day, Christopher Del Negro, Jim Dwyer (Zoom), Marjy Friedrichs, John Gilmour, Aaron Griffith, Katherine Guthrie (zoom), Erin Hendrickson, Jessica Martin (zoom), Terry Meyers (Parliamentarian), Cristina Stancioiu, Evgenia Smirni, Betsy Talbott, Brett Wilson (zoom)

*Members Absent:* Mark Brush, Chuck Bailey, Marjy Friedrichs, Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, Randi Rashkover

*Others Attending:* Michael Halleran, David Yalof

*Others Attending on Zoom:* Camilla Andrews, Christy Porter, Silvia Tandeciarz, Jon Ward

The Meeting was Called to Order at 3:34.

- I. David Yalof presents on behalf of Provost Peggy Agouris.

David Yalof presents recent BOV meeting. David Feldman asks about whether there has been any discussion of the W&M sticker cost. General discussion about whether the BOV is focused

on what is good for their view of the commonwealth or for the institution, and discussion as to which is mandated by the charter (general agreement that their concern is supposed to be for the health of the institution). Armstrong reports that his sense is that this BOV's concern is predominantly for the institution.

President Scott Swan asks whether the committee is still on schedule to file for SCHEV approval of the New School. Yalof reports that a filing has been submitted and received a response, and that they are aiming for early March for formal submission.

Swan asks about the provost's office's perspective on the role of graduate programs in anticipation of W&M's reclassification by the Carnegie Foundation as an R1 institution, especially given the need to maintain or likely increase the numbers of PhD we produce to maintain that standing. Yalof says that he expects that there might be departments and programs interested in creating graduate programs, and that once the Data School is formalized it will increase those numbers. Armstrong points out that that there will be a roughly six year lag from admissions to graduation, and that for the last 3 years W&M has graduated 70 PhDs on average, though in the years before that the average was 78. Gilmour asks whether the number of admits has changed; Armstrong says it has gone down in the last few years. Gilmour asks about graduation rates, Armstrong says it's been high, over 80%. Also reports that Pam Eddy has been working on this. Gilmour asks about whether there would be ways to increase retention; there is general agreement that providing more money is the most effective way. Yalof reports that VIMS and Education, which are the units with which he is the most familiar, are running smoothly and have fairly consistent times to graduation, though others are more variable. Feldman suggests the idea of a Public Policy degree drawing from across departments. Armstrong reports that there are departments headed to the New School that could admit more students. Popper notes that history has capacity to take more students.

Yalof reports that the New School Dean search has met, has a pool, and ideally will have someone in the position in August.

## II. Michael Halleran presenting on behalf of the Admission Policy Advisory Committee

Halleran notes that Admissions has faced four major issues in the last few years: Supreme Court rulings, legislation concerning legacy admissions, size of the student body, and the role of test scores.

W&M's ideal size has been a persistent question. There has been a BOV plan to grow gradually, but a few years ago – especially during the pandemic – W&M's yields were often higher than their goals, leading to unanticipatedly large class sizes. Halleran reports that this has evened out and the incoming class sizes are in line with the original plan.

Halleran notes that standardized tests are currently optional and have been since 2020, but this does not seem a settled issue. Dartmouth has reinstated test scores as a criterion, MIT never abandoned it. The committee has seen data comparing the performance of students who included test scores vs those who did not. In most metrics they are roughly the same, though a slight GPA advantage to those who provided scores. The committee will continue to monitor.

Halleran reports that the Supreme Court judgment striking down Affirmative Action was expected, and that the ruling also left a clear pathway for applicants to discuss race in their applications. He notes that though the Governor has not signed the legislation, both Houses have passed legislation restricting legacy admissions. From the committee's perspective this is not particularly important here because we have a high rate of admission here (40%).

Halleran reports that there is a subcommittee for student referrals that assesses unusual and potentially intriguing students, mostly athletes, but also strong applicants with extenuating circumstances or potential draws. The committee is necessary to prevent bending of standards for athletic acumen. They keep data on such students' academic performance, who generally have a strong record at W&M.

Swan asks how we track the quality of students over time. Halleran answers that the inputs are scores, rank in class, GPA, graduation rate, and things like admission to medical school. Hendrickson asks what the standards are for academic referrals. Halleran answers that they are guided by the Admissions office.

Halleran notes that one problem the committee is looking ahead to is that there is not an infinite applicant supply, and the "demographic cliff" is coming. Notes that instate/out-of-state ratios can provide a little bit of flexibility.

Swan asks whether the committee has seen any evidence that COVID has affected student quality or habits. Halleran replies that they have no evidence of any substantive change.

### III. Faculty Productivity

David Armstrong says he and Brett Wilson attended a meeting led by Pam Eddy on the topics and categories being used to gather the data, and they were reasonably pleased. Wilson was also at a meeting concerning KPIs which had similar pieces of information and in terms of thinking about how to coordinate data across fields.

Silvia Tandeciarz asks, with regard to the Faculty Success program, what the timeline is for sorting through the many glitches. Armstrong says they are well aware of the problems, but does not know if there is a full timeline. Swan says the faculty member should be the last point of recall; Tandeciarz points out that the initial units which surveyed them had to ask faculty to look and then had to more or less retract them.

### IV. Handbook revision

Swan notes that a question concerning voting rights for emeritus faculty is being considered.

Armstrong asks whether the New School should appear in the faculty handbook the way that the other non-A&S schools do. He observes that this will be particularly meaningful in terms of establishing proportional representation on university committees. Gilmour says that he believes

the constitution has rules on this, though Meyers says he doesn't recall whether this is so. Feldman asks if the non-A&S schools have proportionate representation; Armstrong says that they are overrepresented and A&S is underrepresented, and since the New School will be derived from units previously in A&S, they might be seen as re-establishing representation. Popper disagrees because they will not be A&S seats.

Hendrickson asks what the priorities are concerning NTE rights. Swan notes that the white paper concerning NTE rights on the FA website reflects the consensus stance of the faculty. Armstrong points out there will be NTE emerita. NTE's voting rights will be determined by the schools.

#### V. Other matters

Swan reports that the Implementation Committee has been talking to A&S people about the vision for the New School, in particular what it should look like within a liberal arts tradition. Anticipates that this will be helpful for the Dean candidates.

Wilson notes that there was a meeting concerning the FA Faculty Survey, where it was agreed that the previous ones provided a strong template but that they have also drafted an addition portion to survey faculty opinion on FA itself. They also updated language concerning demographic factors. A meeting with Pam Eddy's office suggested that it could be released soon. A final request was for examples of benefits from previous surveys. Swan points out that the FA's seven white paper resolutions of support for initiatives came out of the surveys.

Feldman reports that there has been no progress on the early retirement plan; there is a bureaucratic hurdle but general positivity. Tandeciarz asks for specificity. Feldman notes that there are two pillars to the program. The first is a phased retirement for one or two years where salary is not reduced, which has been drafted and sent for legal review. The second is modeled after George Mason and is about calibrating W&M's cash contribution to retirement account for immediate retirement. Tandeciarz asks whether it will be piloted. Feldman replies that there will be initial rollout for everybody and then a second phase where there is an age window to qualify.

Del Negro reports that the police chief will be visiting FA next month.

Gilmour introduces a resolution concerning the Faculty Compensation Board tracking faculty salaries. He asks about the possibility of administrative resistance to handing over salary data; it is pointed that such data is public. Feldman asks whether the FCB would refer to COPAR; Swan says it's not determined yet. Smirni asks about how to define peer institutions. Armstrong says that there is a formal, SCHEV-approved peer institution list. Also suggests looking at other notional peers. Hendrickson notes that this is external facing and asks whether there will be any role for internal facing studies concerning faculty salaries. Gilmour says such could be done with the data with that will be collected. Yalof points out flaws with peer list; Feldman says that's why the W&M Promise which pledged to raise faculty salaries only aimed for 60<sup>th</sup> percentile, and observes that that promise has still not been fulfilled.

Motion passes unanimously (see appendix A).

Gilmour reports that COPAR will meet next week to talk about priorities and the Faculty Compensation Board.

## VI. New Business

There is a resolution in the Student Assembly to allow faculty to allow their syllabi to be attached the course description. Del Negro points out that it's likely just to produce an old syllabus graveyard since faculty will not regularly update. Feldman asks whether other units like his submit syllabi every semester. Day and Del Negro say theirs do not. Day points out that multiple instructors teach the same course with different syllabus, which would complicate this. Griffith notes this is true for his department as well; Hendrickson observes that adjuncts in the law school often teach very different classes under the same numbers. Guthrie points out that students will study syllabus and if they don't perceive them as equal they will complain. Gilmour suggests a motion, which passes unanimously. (See Appendix B)

Swan says that we will talk about intellectual diversity next time, in particular the examples of statements made by Yale and Chicago. Tandeciarz asks whether the president's office has requested this; Swan says no, that the President indicated that she supports exploring this but that there is no plan.

Meeting adjourns at 5:04.

### Appendix A

Motion regarding the tracking of faculty salaries against peer institutions:

As part of a decades long concern at W&M, without adequate tracking mechanisms, the Faculty Assembly proposes to annually examine faculty salaries at W&M. The goal would be to compare competitiveness with peer institutions over time. Financial comparisons, benefit comparisons, and other issues related to salary would be tracked. To facilitate this analysis, the FA requests that Administration share salary data, appropriately scrubbed of identifying information. The Compensation Committee will be tasked with accomplishing this analysis yearly and presenting the results to the Faculty Assembly in the spring semester.

### Appendix B

The Faculty Assembly endorses the idea of making syllabi available to students.