

Minutes of the Meeting of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences *December 5, 1989*

Dean Lutzer called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. in Rogers 100.

Referring to the minutes of the November 7th meeting, Ms. Marshall (University Librarian) offered several clarifications related to the discussion of graduate programs and library resources. Ms. Marshall is well aware that new graduate programs increase library funding; what she wished to convey is that these new programs also increase demands on the library that outstrip the increased funding. She wondered, too, if Dean Lutzer really said, or meant to say, "the library demands of undergraduate and graduate programs are not radically different" (p. 2), because such a statement is incorrect. (Dean Lutzer did not recall his exact statement, but accepted Ms. Marshall's point.) Finally, Ms. Marshall commented on Dean Scholnick's comment about the Secretary of Education "punishing publishers for exorbitant subscription rates" (p. 2): The Secretary is really punishing libraries and institutions, she said, not publishers.

The faculty approved the November 7th minutes with one correction:

pp. 1-3. The new graduate program in Public Policy offers a Master's degree, not a Ph.D.

Announcements

Dean Lutzer made these announcements:

1. The reporting deadline for first semester grades is January 2nd at 9 a.m.
2. All new telephones (221 numbers) should now be active. The old phones will become inactive in mid January.
3. Although registration data are still being analyzed, the preliminary results are very encouraging. High percentages of students received their first, second, and third priority courses.
4. Based on requests from probationary faculty members, it is very likely that Arts and Sciences will institute a program of mid-probationary-period evaluations for junior faculty starting this fall. FAC has reviewed a plan that will be presented for review by the Department Chairs Committee in the spring.
5. Mr. Delos (Physics) is rumored to have won "Virginia's Outstanding Scientist" award. Dean Lutzer said he could not confirm this rumor but wished to spread it. The faculty applauded in recognition of Mr. Delos' rumored achievement.
6. The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded W&M \$500,000 to "Endow the Freshman Year." The money will create a program of freshman seminars for at least half of each new class. Mr. Schwartz, who wrote the grant proposal after extensive faculty consultation, deserves acknowledgment and for his good work.
7. December 22nd will be an official "holiday" for classified and 12-month employees.

Ms. Marshall announced that Swem Library will be closed from December 24th through New Year's Day to permit loading the new release of LION. Philosophically, Ms. Marshall

believes that the library should remain open during the holidays; in the past, however, holiday use by W&M constituents has been minimal compared to use by outsiders, especially genealogists.

Reports of Administrative Officers

The Provost

Provost Schiavelli brought good news and bad news. The bad news (which the faculty asked to hear first) concerned the state's budget crisis. The Governor's freeze on capital outlay construction projects not funded by the lottery will delay a number of our own projects, totaling \$1.3 million. In addition, state agencies must submit "reversion" plans to save (turn back) 1% of their general fund budget. Since 80% of W&M's budget is committed to salaries and the year is half gone, we must actually plan how to turn back 20% of what is left. Mr. Schiavelli emphasized this will be a contingency plan, which he hopes will not have to be implemented. The administration's current thinking is to hold departmental M&O budgets from harm, concentrating instead on equipment, hourly wages, library purchases, and other one-time expenditures. Another possibility is to postpone filling appointments and upgrading personnel (e.g., delaying promotion raises). In any case, we should expect hardship; recovering from the last "reversion" took the College six years.

The Provost's good news was that 52 summer research grants (\$5,200 stipends) and 27 semester research assignments have been awarded. For the first time, faculty receiving semester research assignments will be offered the option of taking a full-year leave at 80% of their salary.

Committee Reports

Nominations and Elections Committee

Mr. Keifer presented the Committee's nominations for two three-year terms on the Faculty Affairs Committee (replacing Mr. Selby and Mr. Fraser) and the nomination of Mr. Eckhause (Physics) as FAC chair. Dean Lutzer asked for nominations from the floor before receiving a motion that nominations be closed. After distributing and collecting ballots, the Committee left the room to count the votes. Later in the meeting it was announced that Mr. Oakley (Classical Studies) and Mr. Hoak (History) are new FAC members and Mr. Eckhause is the new FAC chair.

Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) and Faculty Assembly

Mr. Selby reported that FAC met five times since the last A&S faculty meeting to review departmental revisions of merit evaluation procedures.

The Faculty Assembly's Executive Committee cancelled the last Assembly meeting because several committee reports had not been received. Expected for the next meeting are reports on part-time faculty, expanding undergraduate programs, and revising the faculty handbook (including policy recommendations regarding sexual harassment, professional ethics, and grievance procedures).

Mr. Winter expressed concern about plans for interim evaluation of probationary faculty: Surely everyone wants better evaluation procedures for these colleagues, but establishing an early "paper trail" may not be in a faculty member's best interest and could do harm. In Mr. Winter's view, administrative oversight of a matter departments have traditionally handled on their own should not be introduced by pseudo-administrative fiat; he hopes for full

discussion by the faculty and a full report. In response, Mr. Selby noted that FAC has looked at implications for probationary members and the institution, and that the proposal will also go to department chairs for a broader base of input. Dean Lutzer added that he will be telling prospective faculty only of the possibility of such a requirement; furthermore, a paper trail already is mandated in the form of annual departmental reviews. Mr. Ward wondered if the new requirement isn't confusing in view of existing retention-review procedures. Dean Lutzer said the problem is that some departments don't do a three-year review, and some junior faculty don't feel they get enough feedback about their performance. Mr. Kreps noted that, several years ago, new faculty members said they were unclear about what was expected of them. Has that been addressed? Mr. Selby said yes, it has. Mr. Kreps then asked if we are moving toward more formality in faculty evaluation. Mr. Selby said we are moving toward more specificity: The plan is to give departments more specific guidelines, not to mandate formal evaluation. Dean Lutzer closed the discussion, stating again that probationary evaluation will not be imposed by fiat since FAC, RPT, and the department chairs all will have input.

Assessment Steering Committee

Associate Provost Slevin, chair of the Assessment Steering Committee, announced that the College submitted its first formal assessment report to the State Council of Higher Education in July. Ms. Slevin reviewed highlights of the 620-page document in relation to its three main parts: pilot program reviews (of departments), portfolio analysis, and the senior survey.

Departments reviewing their undergraduate concentrations based outcome assessment on concentrator and alumni surveys, and all used outside evaluators. Departments found the alumni surveys especially helpful, not only in documenting the broad range of outcomes (e.g., occupations) graduates achieve but also in identifying program areas that may need improvement (e.g., concentration advising). Portfolio analysis was used with 110 students, but proved very labor intensive and only somewhat helpful in evaluating students' critical thinking and writing skills. Consequently, portfolio analysis will be put on the back burner.

The most intriguing assessment results, Ms. Slevin suggested, came from the senior survey. Referring to a handout summarizing the main findings (Appendix 1, analysis by Mr. Ito and Mr. McLean), Ms. Slevin noted that seniors rated their W&M education very positively. The students also gave favorable ratings to most components of the academic program, notable exceptions being "quality of freshman/sophomore advising" and "quality of advising in major" (Table I). The results of our first attempt to assess general knowledge are not encouraging: Students in Areas 1 and 2, especially, did not feel as competent discussing scientific topics as we would like (Table II). Ms. Slevin added that including Business concentrators in the Area 2 data may have been a mistake, since new analyses suggest their self-assessments are different from those of other Area 2 concentrators.

In general, Ms. Slevin said, the State Council thought we did a very good job assessing educational outcomes. This year's projects include an alumni survey (using an instrument being developed by Mr. Aday and Mr. Rapoport), refinement of our approach to measuring general knowledge (by Mr. Fuchs and the General Education sub-committee), and program reviews of additional concentrations.

Mr. Axtell asked for two examples of questions that will be used in the alumni survey. Ms. Slevin said the main (college-wide) instrument has not yet been developed; she deferred to Mr. Kreps and Mr. Fuchs, who commented on the alumni surveys used by the sociology and philosophy departments. Mr. Tiefel asked if the general and departmental surveys can

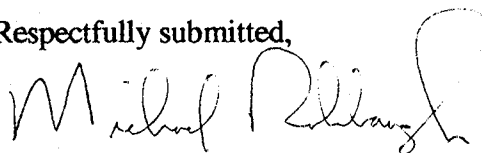
be combined so alumni don't receive two questionnaires. Ms. Slevin said her committee is considering that.

Then followed a series of questions and comments about the senior survey. Mr Chappell: Did the survey ask why students are dissatisfied with advising? Many just don't come back. The figures presented are misleading and make the faculty look bad. Ms. Slevin: Only a limited number of questions could be asked. The Dean has asked departments for more specific information about advising. Although the survey findings are "titillating," we interpret them cautiously. Mr. Chappell: But they look condemning; we need to know why students are dissatisfied. Ms. Slevin: The percentages could be worse. Dean Lutzer (interceding): The old data show the average number of freshman advising meetings had been one; now there are many more, thanks to Mr. Coleman's program. I don't interpret these survey numbers to mean there is definitely a problem; we need more specific information about advising, which I've asked departments to provide. Mr. Ward: The survey questions don't seem to address what we contribute to the students' knowledge, so the data may not be terribly useful. How will you address this problem? Ms. Slevin: By agreeing it is a problem. The survey raises more questions than it answers. Mr. Ito (responding to Mr. Chappell): Several department surveys suggest that an important neglected area is vocational advising. Ms. Slevin then closed the discussion by emphasizing that the senior survey deals with students' perceptions, nothing more and nothing less.

Provost Schiavelli had the last word. He offered to put the assessment project in perspective by making a series of observations, some of which (he warned) would be facetious. First, the Provost said, he is not surprised seniors feel incompetent to discuss the Strategic Defense Initiative; some government officials seem incompetent as well. Second, he is persuaded that no institution in Virginia has more useful assessment information than we have; indeed, W&M's program is the leader in Virginia, a leader in the nation, and perhaps in the world. Third, the key issue with assessment is accountability: The bottom line is whether the data can be used to support new requests for new money from the legislature. Finally, Mr. Schiavelli complimented the faculty for taking the assessment task seriously; for him it has been a very valuable experience. (The Provost did not indicate which of his observations were facetious.)

There was no new business. The meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Rohrbaugh
Secretary to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Appendix 1. William & Mary Senior Survey, Spring 1989 (summary of findings).