

Minutes of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences

The College of William and Mary

February 2, 1999, Millington 150

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m. by Dean P. Geoffrey Feiss, presiding.

I. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the December 1998 meeting were approved.

II. Reports of the Administrative Officers

Provost Cell reported that she anticipates progress in the approval of departmental post-tenure review (PTR) policies, nine sets of which are before the Procedural Review Committee (PRC); it expects to act on them soon, and the Personnel Policy Committee will act on policies already approved by PRC. Provost Cell voiced a desire to proceed with PTRs despite the fact that not all policies are yet in place (otherwise departments would be left with a large backlog of reviews to conduct), and her view that relatively few performance plans would be necessary. She reported that the State is also likely to ask for a report on the number of reviews conducted, and indicated that a small number might be a problem. Provost Cell also noted that this timetable for approving PTR policies while proceeding with reviews would not be a material issue in any possible appeal.

In answer to questions the Provost said that there is neither a percentage of PTRs to be completed within a set time frame nor an expectation that the process will turn up a certain share of negative evaluations. She also agreed that PTRs may result in departmental commendations of faculty: PRC stipulates only a negative-positive evaluation, but her office takes note of commendations.

Provost Cell also said that the State is conducting a new, largely descriptive, thoroughly detailed review of general education requirements at Virginia colleges and universities.

Finally, Provost Cell reported that BPAC (whose Arts and Sciences members are Professors Lutzer and McGlennon), along with other Vice-Presidents, will produce two documents this spring. The first, for the Board and the Virginia Secretary of Education, will focus on general 2000-2004 budget issues set out by Richmond, like cost of attendance, technology, recruitment of students and faculty, and the learning environment (which bridges learning and student affairs issues). The second document will review of implementation of the 1993 Strategic Plan.

In answer to a question, she agreed that a marked change in the demographic structure of the faculty (40% have been hired since 1992) has affected the share of FRAs that can be awarded given current funding. Associate Provost Kreps and Institutional Research are studying the issue.

III. Nominations and Elections

Gene Tracy presented the following slates of nominees [X denotes elected].

Calendar-year 1999 elected replacement for the International Studies Committee.

Monika Kaup (English)

X Kris Lane (History)

Appointments for Spring semester replacements, Faculty Assembly

X (Area I) Alan Fuchs (Philosophy)

X (Area III) Robert Orwoll (Chemistry)

Regularly scheduled elections

1. Faculty Assembly

Area I

Susan Donaldson (English)

X Alan Fuchs (Philosophy)

X John Oakley (Classical Studies)

Jack Willis (English)

Area II.

X Susan Peterson (Government)

Connie Pilkington (Psychology)

Area III

X Dave Armstrong (Physics)

X Joe Scott (Biology)

Bob Vold (Applied Science)

Hugo Woerdeman (Mathematics)

2. Chair of Faculty Affairs Committee

X Will Hausman (Economics)

IV. Faculty Affairs Committee

David Dessler introduced nominations for the Strategic Planning Update Committee (SPUC). X denotes elected.

Area I

X Francie Cate-Arries, Modern Languages

John Conlee, English

Joan Gavalier, Dance

X John Oakley, Classics

Area II

X Bob Archibald, Economics

John Charles, Kinesiology

X Leisa Meyer, History

Tomoko Hamada, Anthropology

Area III

Gary Defotis, Chemistry

Gina Hoatson, Physics

X Dave Lutzer, Math

X Laurie Sanderson, Biology

FAC then turned to a discussion of a joint FAC/Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS) draft of Section II/ B of the Faculty Manual (sub-section II/B/1, on grading and grievance procedures, is to be discussed at the March meeting, and some purely descriptive material has been excised). Associate Dean Franz Gross noted that this draft was worked out by FAC and COGS in 1998: it draws on the 1978 Policies and Procedures on graduate studies, the Statement of Policy by the Council of Graduate Studies, and the experience of the two drafting committees' members. It was stressed that all provisions approved today would be voted on again when the entire handbook comes before the Arts and Sciences faculty for a final, official endorsement.

Dean Gross noted that the word "all" should be struck from a provision on faculty involvement in graduate programs in II/B/2: it was deemed to be too strong. The change was approved.

Dean Gross noted that II/B/3 would strengthen the graduate program by allowing graduate students to register for 400-level courses but, by omission, not 300-level classes. Some faculty pointed out that the distinction between 300 and 400 level courses is often a matter of specificity--not difficulty--of subject matter, and that discouraging graduate students from taking lower-level courses goes against the document's general aim of encouraging broader faculty participation in graduate studies. Dean Gross maintained that the draft reflects a desire to move away from having graduate students take lower level courses for credit, and a desire to see the courses re-numbered upward if their content is advanced. More concern was voiced about such pressure. A suggestion was made that graduate students in 300-level courses have the option of additional work under a special course number designation, but this is done currently with 600 courses. In response to questions, he agreed that relatively few graduate students enroll in 300 level courses, but added that COGS desires to codify the practice. As for a proposal that each department or program graduate director determine whether graduate students take 300 level courses, he noted that the latter constitute COGS, which approved II/B/3. This sub-section was approved 27-25.

II/B/4/a on cross-listed courses numbered 500-599 was approved, as were sub-sections II/B/4/b/I-iii related to courses numbered 600 and above. Dean Gross agreed to consult the Dean of Students on medical withdrawal policies covered in II/B/4/b/iv. Subsequent sub-sections would allow teachers in graduate courses to modify syllabi during the semester (II/B/4/b/v), cancel classes to leave students time for research (II/B/4/b/vi), and offer takehome exams. Some faculty observed that, for undergraduates, "flexibility" with regard to syllabi is discouraged in order to protect students. Dean Gross responded that such flexibility is desirable for graduate students.

Discussion of II/B/4/b/ix centered on its language assigning the Dean of Research and Graduate the tasks of both setting a date for semester grades to be turned in and enforcing observation of that deadline. Several faculty noted that the former task belongs to the Registrar. Dean Gross agreed to take this point under advisement and consult the Registrar's Office.

The faculty then voted to approve II/B/4, except for subsections II/B/4/iv and II/B/4/ix.

II/B/5 on auditing was approved (graduate students may informally "sit in" on a graduate course, which--unlike an audit--does not go on their academic record or require payment of tuition).

Subsection II/B/6 basically codifies the same Student Course Evaluations practices as employed for undergraduates, except in such cases as departmental colloquia. It was approved.

Dean Gross noted that II/B/7 on the independent research was stimulated by the Council on Graduate Studies. In response to faculty concern about the vagueness of language requiring students to observe the "highest ethical standards of the field," he agreed to cross-reference standards outlined by the Council. He agreed to the insertion of the phrase "Faculty will ensure that..." before this subsection's first sentence so that it serves as a guideline for faculty, not an admonition to students. Dean Gross also agreed that language reading "Graduate students bear ultimate responsibility for their own education" was too strong; "ultimate" will be deleted. In discussion of the subsequent language on respecting students's freedom to carry out their own research, Provost Cell interjected that this manual should ensure that faculty members are free to reject certain research topics. Dean Gross agreed that II/B/7 would go back to COGS.

V. Annual Report of the International Studies Committee

Professor Hallet summarized the report, citing the number of study abroad programs administered by the Reves Center (the program in Mexico will be moved from Mexico city to a smaller city) and the overall share of students studying abroad in the summer or the school year..

VI. Old Business

No old business was raised.

VII.

No new business was raised

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Clay Clemens, Associate Professor of Government