

**Minutes of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
The College of William and Mary  
February 1, 2000, Millington 150**

The meeting was called to order at 3:31 p.m. by Dean Geoffrey Feiss.

**I. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the December 7, 1999 were approved as posted.

**II. Reports of the Administrative Officers**

Provost Cell reported on the Governor's budget plan, which--given tax cuts and transportation outlays--foresees spending only about \$108 million on higher education. There will be a \$500,000 rise in the maintenance reserve fund, and money in the second year for the Swem Library project. She noted that College faculty salaries are currently at the 54<sup>th</sup> percentile of William and Mary's peer group (up from the 14<sup>th</sup> percentile), but the 2.4% increase proposed in this year's budget would mean slipping back to the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile). A 5% increase would be required to reach the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile. Some members of the Senate Finance Committee have expressed concern about this issue, but there are no efforts in the Assembly to remedy it.

As for capital outlays, the Provost reported that the College has found Assembly sponsors for the Millington project. In line with the architect's recommendation, plans now call for a fullscale renovation, which would raise the cost estimate from \$14 to \$18 million. No general fund money is available for major building projects, only revenue from the tobacco settlement, and the Assembly has not yet definitively resolved how to allocate those resources.

On a second matter, the Provost reported that the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education would issue its report the following week, recommending Institutional Performance Assessments: these would entail moving to a new budgeting system, whereby each university/college would define its own standards (with some common denominators). At the same time, she added, this approach would not expand the College's base budget.

Undergraduate Dean Barbara Watkinson gave an interim report on the activities relating to her office. She noted that the College had obtained a grant from the National Conference for Undergraduate Research: William and Mary was one of only four schools to receive this seed money out of one hundred that applied. She thanked Joel Schwartz and those involved with the Environmental Policy Center. The grant will fund students from several disciplines who will research different dimensions of the Crossroads project, the plan to develop property adjacent to the College. Secondly, Dean Watkinson noted that the Beckman Foundation had renewed its undergraduate research grant in Biology and Chemistry. She congratulated professors Saha, Shakes and Hinkle, who have guided the research of three student grant recipients.

Dean Watkinson also reported that the Writing Committee, in tandem with EPC, has examined the freshman writing proficiency and evaluated how well it is integrated with the concentration

writing proficiency. She said that there are plans for specific guidelines for teaching seminars with the "W" attached, noting the Committee's sense that the fourth credit of such courses should be devoted to writing. She noted the option of May seminars to train faculty in writing and the availability on-line of forms for getting a class designated as fulfilling the writing proficiency.

Dean Watkinson also reported on discussion of ways to help ease the transition of students back into the College from a semester off or a junior year abroad. The chief obstacle traditionally has been that they must disenroll while gone. She voiced hope that the on-line "enterprise" system will help. The Reves Center will prepare booklets of forms and materials for easing the return of students studying abroad. Finally the Student Information Network will be accessible to those students not present on the campus, and on-line registration, where practicable, will also help.

Finally, Dean Watkinson reported on concerns about cheating raised by two recent developments--the theft of graded papers from boxes outside faculty offices, and an advertising supplement for on-line term paper services that appeared in student copies of the Flat Hat last fall. In response, she said, the College might consider an institutional subscription to plagiarism.org, an on-line system to compare papers with materials available elsewhere. Some faculty endorsed that idea, although she noted its high price. Other faculty resisted a step that might imply widespread cheating, especially since it is unclear how common this problem is, or whether there may be legal issues involved in such monitoring: she confirmed that it is indeed inherently hard to measure incidents of cheating, but did not see any legal complications. In response to questions, Dean Watkinson confirmed that the Honor Council will be involved in discussion of the problem and new measures that may be taken in response.

Some faculty members reported their impressions that violations of academic integrity are more severe than ever and that this problem needs remedy beyond even an on-line counter-plagiarism service. Some dissatisfaction was also expressed with current procedures of the Honor Council. Others expressed a reluctance to be monitoring students and/or reservations about faculty practices. One noted that placing graded assignments outside an office is was not permissible at many schools for reasons of confidentiality. Others recommend that faculty consider more proactive steps, above all designing tests or papers in such a way as to minimize opportunities for cheating. It was also emphasized that cases should be taken to the Honor Council and that penalties for academic violations of the Code should be made more widely available.

In later discussion, a proposal was made that the Faculty Affairs Committee look into the issue of cheating, especially in light of concerns about a perceived diminution of faculty authority in dealing with violations of the Honor Code. On behalf of FAC, Will Hausman agreed to address concerns about the functioning of the Honor system. The Provost pointed out the increasing complexity of such issues, given the apparently growing involvement of parents and even lawyers in cases of alleged violations. She urged faculty not to deal with violations themselves, but to take them to the Honor Council, lest they or the institution be put at risk: if the system is broke it should be fixed, she noted, but there needs to be a system for dealing with such charges.

### **III. Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC)**

Will Hausman reported that the Committee continues monitoring progress toward approval of

departmental post-tenure review plans. He also delivered FAC's report on the conclusions of the Committee to Update the Strategic Plan (the report was posted on the web). A motion was made to endorse the FAC report, and it passed unanimously on a voice vote.

#### **IV. Committee on Graduate Studies**

Graduate Dean Franz Gross delivered the annual COGs report. Among other things, it highlights the launching of Graduate House, a new facility that serves as the location of his office, VIMs on campus, the graduate student ombudsperson (Leisa Meyer), etc., as well as providing a place for graduate students to gather during the day and a place for seminars or talks.

Dean Gross also reported on the establishment of a new Graduate Center, which is a program rather than a facility. It is designed to deal with issues that currently face graduate studies, including inadequate financial support; the potential of a comparatively small set of programs being overshadowed by a large, strong undergraduate program; and the perception of the latter as too narrow or esoteric, designed mainly to replicate academics. Dean Gross also mentioned current efforts to institutionalize hitherto ad hoc "College" courses across the graduate curriculum (in writing, for example), a pilot project on GK-12, and a Friday seminar series. Finally he drew attention the report's data on trends in graduate student enrollment.

In response to a question, Dean Gross agreed that--in the context of the Strategic Plan Update--COGS would review the consequences of having eliminated the MA program in English

#### **V. New Business**

[Discussion here returned to the issue of cheating, described above under item II]

The meeting adjourned at 4:40

Respectfully submitted,

Clay Clemens

Associate Professor of Government

**Secretary' s Note:** Recently one of the students who helps tape record faculty meetings glanced around Millington 150 and, sizing up the demographics, inquired "Aren't younger teachers allowed to come?" With that in mind, and fresh memories of the CVC campaign's successful incentives, please note the following offer: all chairs who know that more than half of their tenured/tenure-eligible faculty below the age of forty (i.e., not old enough to have personal memories of anything from World War II to Woodstock, inclusive) attend next month's meeting are invited to notify the Secretary, so that the minutes may record these departments by name.