

Minutes of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences

The College of William and Mary

October 3, Millington 150

(Revised 1/21/01)

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

I. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the September 5, 2000 meeting were approved as posted.

II. Report of the Nominations and Elections Committee

One-year term on Retention, Promotion, and Tenure, to replace John Oakley (Classical Studies).

Tom Finn (Religion)

X Ron St.-Onge (Modern Languages)

Faculty Hearing Committee. 4-year term, 2 as active, 2 as alternate.

Edgar Williams (Music)

X Jim Baron (Classical Studies)

Nomination for the position of Chair of the Educational Policy Committee.

X Barbara Watkinson

II. Report of Administrative Officers

Provost Cell made introductory comments about the recently released report entitled William and Mary 2010. Outlining the process of advance consultation that produced the document, she noted that its origins lay partly in preliminary consideration of

whether/when the College should launch a new capital campaign: the administration put out questions to various constituencies, including external ones, and the suggestions received went into this report. Alumni in particular stressed their desire to preserve what they consider William and Mary's traditional strengths, such as its small size, but also showed strong interest in addressing new needs (e.g. technology). The current document for faculty contains items that might become objectives in a new capital campaign, though this is not its primary purpose. The Faculty Assembly has already seen a previous version of this document, which will not be revised further, although notes will be kept recording feedback at this meeting and others this semester. Written comments are welcome.

While noting that they had indeed commented on earlier drafts, Arts and Sciences representatives to the Assembly—pointing out the variety of other constituencies consulted in 2010—urged that faculty should continue to be involved in key decisions where appropriate. The Provost agreed. Assembly members further urged that the faculty's top priorities should remain prominent in any report to external constituents and in a case statement for a future capital campaign. Provost Cell stressed that the faculty's top two aims—restoring salaries to the 75th percentile of the peer group and increasing student financial aid—would indeed remain top priorities.

One faculty member inquired about the 2010 document's language (Finding 8) on encouraging diversity without falling prey to political correctness. The Provost noted that these planks like many were a result of the kind of process pursued in formulating this report.

In reply to a question about possible contingency plans and the ranking of priorities, she said that much will depend on any initial capital campaign plans and on how much the College believes can be raised: the Development Office is encouraging aiming high, but given other objectives not in this report, total fundraising goals could ultimately end up exceeding resources raised.

In reply to a question, the Provost noted that alumni and other external constituencies who provided input into the current document would ultimately see a final report.

Another line of questioning centered on the observation that, while some items such as technology can be easily worked into a planning document, the same might not be true of things that the College pledges to continue doing well—developing writing skills, the seminar experience, etc. William and Mary's current strengths should not suffer in any tradeoffs with new aims. A similar point was made about the need to make sure that additional funds continue to be sought not just for new programs, but also for supporting/expanding these strong points.

Another related observation was that any new aims should not sacrifice the College's intimate size and student access to faculty. Provost Cell noted that the faculty has grown in net terms by 20 new positions in the past eight years, and that close working relationships will continue to be a chief feature of the academic experience here. One

faculty member noted that one-on-one mentoring relationships now so common in the laboratory sciences need to be expanded in/to the humanities, which have not had the necessary resources, though it was agreed that integrating students into faculty research in that area is inherently more challenging.

Other faculty cautioned that the document implies growing demands on finite student time by encouraging greater involvement in outreach to the community, international experience, etc. and warned that the College should not come across as pushing students away from campus. The Provost noted that 70% of students are already engaged in some form of community service.

In reply to a question, the Provost noted that alumni are aware of the College's ranking in surveys, but that few have expressed strong interest in reaching a specific level in that sense.

Responding to the observation that this 2010 document presents a view of the College that should be attractive to new faculty, the Provost noted that—like the 1993 Strategic Plan—it is premised on not damaging the status quo: now like then the emphasis remains on maintaining a small size as well as good working relationships between faculty and students.

III. Report of the Faculty Affairs Committee

Professor Hausman reported FAC's intention, after one year of experience, to review the recently approved arrangement by which the Undergraduate Dean will serve as chair of EPC.

He noted that FAC is also reviewing existing committees with an eye to eliminating those which do not meet. He also noted that the Board of Visitors received the recent survey of faculty opinions positively: the survey has been distributed in hard copy and is on the web.

IV. Report of the Committee on Retention, Promotion and Tenure

Professor Sher reported that RPT in 1999-2000 had made no retention recommendations. It supported all 4 recommendations it received for promotion to Full Professor; the Dean endorsed all four. The Committee passed on 14 positive and 2 negative tenure recommendations: the Dean endorsed all of the former and one of the latter. Finally, the RPT recommended in favor of one hire with tenure. Of its 19 recommendations, 16 were unanimous. In reply to a question, he reported that the Board endorsed all tenure/promotion recommendations that it received.

Professor Sher also made two procedural observations. First, RPT's tenure recommendations are made between early October and Thanksgiving, but the exact calendar is strictly a function of its members' schedules, time commitments, conference travel, etc.: thus no conclusions should be drawn from the point at which review of one case as opposed to that of another is completed. Second, RPT assumes that the curriculum vita submitted as part of tenure/promotion dossiers is the standard form expected by and available through the Office of the Provost.

In reply to questions, Dean Feiss noted that roughly 70% of the faculty is currently tenured, and 10% have signed retirement agreements. An additional query centered on the policy of notifying potential outside evaluators that candidates would have access to their letters. Professor Sher agreed that this could deter some from writing such endorsements or result in diluted ones. However, given that State law permits all employees access to their personnel files, it would be dishonest to imply that tenure/promotion dossiers remain totally confidential. In reply to a follow-up question, Dean Feiss observed that open letters are common in those states (like Virginia) that classify all public employees together, and less common at private institutions.

Finally, in reply to a question, Professor Sher said the fact that in three years RPT has issued only three negative tenure recommendations in 36 cases reflects the high quality of the junior faculty.

V. Dean of Undergraduate Studies

Dean Watkinson thanked those who have provided assistance in her first year, along with faculty who worked on undergraduate research and summer school: changes in the latter that made it successful in 2000 will be continued and there is interest in having a permanent director.

She noted that over \$10,000 has been distributed from the Dean's Co-Curricular Fund: only student groups linked to departments/programs are eligible to apply (it supplements Student Association monies). Some such projects have been quite ambitious, such as the participation in an Asian Conference, a student film series, and a bird watching program. The Parents' Association has provided an additional 20% to the Fund.

Dean Watkinson noted progress in areas mentioned in her report last year, including the effort to facilitate re-enrollment of students who have spent time away, such as those on junior year abroad. The latter now no longer need to disenroll. They also attend a meeting and receive a booklet of relevant information. The major test remains pre-registration for those not on campus. She noted that the Reves Center has streamlined the process of approving transfer credit through a data base that indicates which courses taken elsewhere have been given credit here in the past.

On faculty concern about plagiarism, Dean Watkinson reported that meetings have been held with the Honor Council and the Flat Hat (the latter in connection with advertisements for term paper services that appeared as newspaper inserts). The College has a subscription to the online service plagiarism.org, but few faculty have taken advantage of it to date. She encouraged faculty who have any concerns or suspicions to bring cases to the Honor Council: it might be time-consuming, but acting on one's own can be as well.

Finally, she mentioned the need to address inconsistent application of current College policy denying academic credit for paid internships: she is seeking input on this issue.

There being no old or new business, the meeting adjourned at 4:50.

Respectfully submitted,

Clay Clemens

Professor of Government

Secretary's Note: Pressing business will require the Secretary to miss November's Arts and Sciences meeting, his first absence since inheriting this position. Fortunately a more than able predecessor has volunteered to step in, supported by the ever-reliable tape recorder, so our minutes will as always accurately capture the full human drama of faculty governance at work.