

**Minutes of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
The College of William and Mary**

**November 2, 2004
Millington 150**

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m. by Dean Carl Strikwerda.

I. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the October 5, 2004 meeting were approved as posted.

II. Report of Administrative Officers

A. Provost Geoffrey Feiss announced that the university is in the early stages of the budget cycle. The state government has asked for more information about W&M's proposal to increase graduate student financial aid, which is at the same level as it was in 1994. They have also asked for more information about the proposed initiative for a W&M Research Institute. SCHEV has released a salary estimate that we would need a salary increase of 6.5% over the next three years to bring W&M faculty salaries up to the 60th percentile of peer institutions by 2008. SCHEV has recommended that level of salary increase for the next budget cycle.

The new Faculty Priorities Committee will first meet on December 1.

In the Charter University process, a draft charter has been finalized and will go to the Board of Visitors at their November meeting. This draft charter has been shared with the General Assembly.

The new Post-Tenure Review policy was approved by the Personnel Policy Committee and will go to the Board of Visitors at their November meeting.

Provost Feiss has decided to no longer send out contract letters to faculty each spring. The old procedure required faculty to sign and return these contract letters, but those steps were otiose, since faculty already had contracts. Starting in Spring 2005, there will simply be a salary letter from the Dean's office informing faculty what their salary is for the next academic year. It will not need to be signed or returned. Nothing about the new arrangement changes any conditions of employment.

Provost Feiss also announced his decision to change, on a trial basis, how first-year students register. Until this year, first-year students who had the greatest number of credit hours were given priority in registering for courses. The rationale was that students with many AP, IB, and other credits should be given their first choice of courses so that they could graduate in fewer than four years. But that rationale was faulty, because almost no W&M students attempt to graduate in fewer than four years. There was also a serious disadvantage to the practice: students with few or no transfer credits were given last choice of courses, and they are typically students from rural high schools and poorer city schools. Given last choice of courses, their

initial disadvantages were compounded. The new system will not give priority to students with more credits. Dean of Students Ed Pratt added that the new system will allow students who have not previously registered for a freshman seminar to register (for up to 8 credit hours) before students who have registered for a freshman seminar.

Provost Feiss also announced the formation of the Presidential Committee on Diversity, a campus-wide committee of about two dozen people from faculty, students, staff, and administration. This group will look into whether there are features of this campus which work to the disadvantage of minority students and make them feel unwelcome. It will also serve as a quick-response team to handle cases such as the one in Fall 2003 which offended many minority students. The committee has met twice and will soon appoint two subcommittees which will draw from the talents of people not on the main committee.

To the question why the university does not simply announce that groups whose actions offend minority students are not representative of the university, Provost Feiss said that that was not enough. In the case last year, the university quickly issued such a statement, but minority students were disturbed by the silence of the rest of the university community.

Prof. Bob Skolnick mentioned another incident showing insensitivity to minority students: this fall he was contacted by parents of prospective students whose sons and daughters had been invited to attend a Leadership Weekend, which was scheduled on Yom Kippur.

At the end of his comments, Provost Feiss said that the SACS evaluation process is continuing.

B. Dean Karl Strikwerda opened a discussion of the length of terms of department chairs. When he was Dean, Geoffrey Feiss established a policy of appointing chairs for five years rather than three years, to give new chairs more time to become effective, to create smoother working relationships with office staff, and to reduce the frequency of finding new chairs. Dean Strikwerda asked for comments on the new policy. Some faculty said that five years is a long time to reduce one's research, especially given the few research opportunities available to faculty. Several said that three years with the possibility of renewal is more palatable. One commented that five years is a long time to go between faculty evaluations of chairs. Others recommended flexibility between three and five (and four) years. One faculty member said that the job of chair amounts to a 12-month job, though the pay is only for 9 months. Others objected to the difference in stipends between chairs of large and small departments.

III. Report from the Committee on Degress. Available at:

<http://www.wm.edu/as/dean/faculty/documents/rpt/20040924.pdf>

IV. Motion by the Faculty Affairs Committee on athletic fees

Prof. Lu Ann Homza presented a motion that the Faculty of Arts and Sciences supports the policy that students and their parents should be able to easily find out the portion of General Fees that is Athletic Fees. This motion is available at:

<http://www.wm.edu/as/dean/faculty/documents/rpt/20040924.pdf>

Prof. James Axtell moved to table the motion until the Provost's task force on intercollegiate athletics had made its report. Several faculty supported the RESOLVED portion of the FAC motion but did not like the points in the WHEREAS portion. Prof. David Aday proposed that a substitute motion simply call for transparency in the breakdown of the General Fee. Prof. Terry Meyers made the following motion as such a substitute:

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences recommends to the administration that all the fees comprising the General Fee be itemized in the Catalog and on bills.

This substitute motion **passed** with one Nay.

In the absence of Old Business and New Business, Dean Strikwerda adjourned the meeting at 4:40.

Respectfully submitted,

John Morreall
Professor of Religious Studies