

**Minutes of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
The College of William and Mary
April 1, 2008
Millington 150**

Dean Carl Strikwerda called the meeting to order at 3: 40 p.m.

I. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the March 11, 2008, were approved as posted:

<http://www.wm.edu/as/dean/faculty/documents/minutes/20080311.pdf>

II. Remarks by Dean Carl Strikwerda

Dean Strikwerda noted that Provost Feiss would be unable to attend the present meeting. He then previewed a series of upcoming meetings with Interim President Taylor Reveley—Dean’s Advisory Council on April 3, Faculty Affairs Committee on April 10, and Faculty of Arts and Sciences on May 6—at which the faculty would have opportunities to discuss its priorities with the Interim President: e.g., diversity, Gateway, faculty and student research, and civic engagement. The Dean then reported that he was finished with the full professor promotion files but added that some late files might not be finalized until September. He also said that there were six searches still pending out of the 24 conducted in 2007-08 (16 have already been successfully concluded, 2 unsuccessfully so). He then addressed several topics related to the issue of funding. He said that he was working on a much needed structural solution to the question of start-up cost funding in the sciences including private funding. He reported on a pending \$750,000 gift for faculty-student research in international studies and said that work was underway on the matching funding stipulated in a \$1.5 million Mellon Foundation grant for the Geographic Information System. He also reported on the W&M Foundation Board meeting in New York, which he attended alongside Provost Feiss and Interim President Reveley. He wrapped up his remarks by noting that planning for the upcoming year was complicated by the fact that the projected budget cuts involved base dollars.

Dean Strikwerda then answered questions from the floor. On the issue of budget cuts, he observed that private institutions would soon have to absorb a dip in the proceeds from their investments; he also said that the current budgetary situation at some other state schools looked much worse than our own (e.g., Florida)—in his estimation, W&M was in the middle of the pack with its cuts in the vicinity of 1-2%. The big question, Strikwerda reiterated, was the extent to which the cuts could be offset by higher tuition increases. He also said that he had no news on money for building renovations in the state budget but noted that there was a good chance that funding for Tucker Hall would be included. He also noted that approximately 40% of undergraduates were on financial aid and that any proposed tuition increases would have to be calculated on the basis of students paying full tuition.

III. Nominations and Elections Committee Report

Elizabeth Wiley (Theatre, Speech, and Dance) presented the slate of candidates for the April elections:

<http://www.wm.edu/as/dean/faculty/documents/nominationelection/20080311.pdf>

A. Election to the Educational Policy Committee:

Area II, 3-year term, 2008-11, vote for one:
Jennifer Stevens (Psychology)
Lisa Anderson (Economics)

B. Election to the Committee on Degrees:

Area III, 4-year term, 2008-12, vote for one:
Greg Capelli (Biology)
Rob Hinkle (Chemistry)

C. Election to the Faculty Hearing Committee:

4-year term: 2 active + 2 alternate, 2008-12, vote for one:

John McGlennon (Government)

Barbara King (Anthropology)

D. Election to the Faculty Assembly:

Area III, 1-year replacement, 2008-09, vote for one:

Marc Sher (Physics)

George Rublein (Mathematics)

There were no nominations from the floor; nominations were closed.

IV. Faculty Research Committee Report, Bill Cooke:

Cooke (Physics) presented the highlights from the Committee's report, posted on the web:

<http://www.wm.edu/as/dean/faculty/documents/facultyresearchcommittee/Annual%20Report-2007-08.pdf>

He reported on the switch to an online submissions process for research grants—largely successful but with a few bugs needing to be worked out. He said that 41 Summer Research Grants were approved for funding out of a total of 52 very good proposals submitted. He then noted that 5 of the funded proposal would be designated as Suzann Matthews Summer Grants, 4 as Dominion Summer Grants, and 1 as a Wren Summer Grant.

V. Discussion and Vote on a Proposed GER 3 Criteria Change, J.C. Poutsma

EPC Chair Poutsma (Chemistry) presented a proposal, originally made by the GER 3 Assessment Working Group, to strike expectation 3 from the current wording of the GER 3 criteria: "Where appropriate, they also explain the implications of social science findings for public policy."

<http://www.wm.edu/dean/faculty/documents/epcdocuments/GER3assessment.pdf>

Poutsma explained that the Working Group reported that it was hard to assess whether or not this expectation had been met in courses because not all specifically addressed issues with public policy implications and because some of those that did discuss implications did not test students on them. During the debate on the proposal, some argued that the expectation should be maintained because the GERs were part of the public face of W&M and because this particular expectation was indicative of the College's mission to prepare good citizens. Others suggested that it was not necessary given that the criteria already mentioned the "important findings of social science research" and countered that one should not maintain this specific expectation for the social sciences without adding to the criteria for the science GER (2A-B). Dean Kim Phillips proposed a friendly amendment that would add the words "and applications" after "findings" but Poutsma said that he did not want to entertain any amendments with only 35 people in attendance. The proposed criteria change, unammended, passed by voice vote.

VI. Reports from the Faculty Affairs Committee, Margaret Saha

Saha (Biology) reported that the FAC was making better communication with the BOV a top priority and urged the faculty to send it comments and suggestions about this and other issues at askfac@wm.edu. She then said that the FAC and the Faculty Assembly were holding discussions to clarify their respective roles. She went on to say that the BOV appreciated the gesture of our having invited them to attend a faculty meeting and added that there would be advanced notice (through Michael Fox) before any planned appearance in order to ensure good attendance at the designated meeting. She reported that the BOV had issued a strong statement saying that the presidential search would not start before the fall. She also offered an update on discussions of David Aday's proposal to SCHEV for value-added assessment of the GERs (starting with GER 2 in fall 2008). She acknowledged a number of concerns raised by the proposal, including the number of class periods that would be lost to testing. She said that Aday would come to an upcoming faculty meeting (May or September) to discuss the proposal.

VII. Discussion of Ways to Improve Communication with the Board of Visitors

The discussion began with a characterization of the intermittent nature of faculty communication with the BOV and the need for more faculty feedback on matters of policy. Suzanne Hagedorn (English) then introduced a resolution urging Governor Kaine to appoint “an individual with considerable professional experience in higher education” to fill the vacancy on the Board created by the resignation of Robert A. Blair. She argued that communication between the faculty and the BOV would improve greatly if the BOV had a member with significant experience in educational administration and a deep understanding of academic culture. She noted that the idea appeared to be welcomed by members of the current administration at a forum held the previous week. She noted that the resolution applied only to the current vacancy and that the person appointed should not be construed as the faculty’s representative.

After it was pointed out that someone with experience in academic administration did not necessarily mean an academic, Hagedorn accepted a friendly amendment from the floor to substitute “a distinguished academic” for “an individual with considerable professional experience in higher education.” As amended, the text of the amendment read as follows:

Be it resolved that the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the College of William and Mary respectfully recommends to Governor Kaine that he appoint a distinguished academic to fill the vacant seat on the College’s Board of Visitors.

In the ensuing discussion, some questioned the wisdom of making such a resolution on our own, without the support of the other schools, and suggested that the Faculty Assembly ought to consider such a measure. Others said that it would be better to discuss the measure at a meeting with more people in attendance. Sarah Stafford (Economics) made a motion to postpone discussion of Hagedorn’s resolution, as amended, until the May meeting. This motion passed by voice vote.

George Greenia (Modern Languages and Literatures) reported on the Gateway Guardians initiative, a grass-roots movement of faculty, staff, administration, and students to raise an endowment for the Gateway program. Greenia said that the initiative had already received pledges totaling \$50,000 and had a goal of \$120,000 before going public. He said that the BOV was delighted with the idea, which he described as a good opportunity to renew dialog with the Board and for the Board to show support for faculty leadership on important priorities.

Other points of the discussion included an upcoming evening engagement with the BOV on April 17 (characterized as a congenial affair that could pay good dividends for faculty-Board interaction), concerns about long delays in the presidential search (possibly resulting in the Board-appointed Interim President’s staying on indefinitely), praise for Taylor Reveley (a close second in the previous presidential search and highly praised by Princeton University President Shirley Tilghman), the absence of a formal Board response to our resolution in reaction to the change in presidential leadership (a gracious personal response came from Board Secretary Suzann Matthews), an upcoming retreat of the Academic Affairs Committee of the BOV (to be attended by Rector Powell and representatives of the administration and the faculty), a clarification of the BOV’s intentions regarding the presidential search (no definite timetable but not the immediate search first hinted at by Powell), and the need for a constructive dialog with the BOV using existing institutions (e.g., attendance at BOV meetings).

VII. Report from the Faculty Assembly, Heather Macdonald

Filling in for Gene Tracy, Macdonald (Geology) reported that FAC Hair Margaret Saha had attended the last meeting of the FA to discuss FA-FAC roles and collaboration. She also said that the FA had worked hard on a statement, approved unanimously, that it would present to the Academic Affairs Committee of the BOV in April:

The Faculty Assembly of the College of William and Mary in Virginia expresses its gratitude to Gene Nichol for his leadership and vision. President Nichol’s engagement of the broad College community (e.g., recognizing the contributions of the schools, being attentive to staff concerns, and participating in the intellectual and cultural life of the university) has been a great, invigorating, and strengthening force. We express our hope and expectation that such engagement will continue. The Faculty Assembly strongly endorses the Board’s expressed support for diversity and inclusiveness. However, the Faculty Assembly is dismayed at the perception that the College is susceptible to ideological and political pressure. We call on the Board, the College administration, and other members of the College community to take further action that will dissipate that perception. The Faculty Assembly looks forward to significant representation of the faculty of the College in the search for the next President and in the development of evaluation procedures for the next President.

V. Discussion of an Anticipated Request by the Faculty Assembly for the Provost to Facilitate a History of Slavery and Race Relations at the College, Terry Meyers

Meyers (English) explained that his own recent research into some of the “largely hidden corners of William and Mary’s history” had led him to the conclusion that a professional historian should continue the work that he had begun, especially in the light of some published calls for William and Mary to investigate its history of involvement with slavery. He added that further research into the subject by a professional was now even more desirable and necessary given a common perception that the College is under the influence of right wing ideologues. He said that he had come to speak to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in response to some concerns that the FAC had expressed about the way he was proceeding to ask the FA for a resolution urging the Provost to facilitate a study of slavery and race relations at the College. He said that he hoped that the faculty present would vote—a formal vote or a straw vote—on a measure of support for his initiative following his presentation and questions.

Meyers then offered some of the highlights of his own research on the subject. He talked about his discovery of a forgotten 18th-century building on the campus—later moved to Prince George Street and now used by ROTC—that formerly housed a school for black children, to which the College sent two slave children that it owned. He also mentioned the College bought a plantation and 17 slaves to grow tobacco to support scholarships for the sons of gentry (recent major histories of the College mentioned the scholarship but not the source of their funding). Meyers also reminded the faculty that one of its presidents, Thomas Dew (1836-1846), had been a leading intellectual apologist of slavery, and the College had been a sort of pro-slavery “think tank” during the 1830s, 40s, and 50s—a fact that made it an “evil institution” in the eyes of at least one faculty member. The draft of a forthcoming article by Meyers in *William and Mary Bill of Rights Journal* was made available to faculty online prior to the meeting.

<http://www.wm.edu/as/dean/faculty/documents/other/A%20First%20Look%20at%20the%20Worst.pdf>

Meyers was quick to add that there were some bright spots in the College’s history of race relations—e.g., early sympathies with abolishing slavery, resistance to Dew, Benjamin Ewell’s encouragement of black education and voting, resistance to the KKK’s gift of a flag pole—but reiterated that his sobering findings underscored the need for a more sustained and focused investigation by a professional historian. Meyers acknowledged that the subject was controversial but argued that this was no a reason to hold back, adding that it might be healthy to encourage the examination of just such a controversial subject if only to assert academic freedom. He also noted that he was not seeking a formal apology (even though both the University of Virginia and the Commonwealth have issued statements of regret for their part in slavery). He said that if the College’s new commitment to diversity made it important for it to deal honestly with its own historical baggage and that institutional support for this one particular area of research was justified because it was an institutional and moral issue of such great importance. Meyers then shared with the faculty the draft of a resolution he hoped to bring before the Faculty Assembly:

The Faculty Assembly requests that the Provost facilitate a history of slavery and race relations at the College. The Assembly makes this request cognizant of the contemporary interest in such studies at universities and other institutions and in light of the intersection at the College of historical and geographic factors that make the subject of particular institutional significance.

In the ensuing discussion, several people concurred with the idea that the College’s selective history was in need of correction. It was also noted that its history regarding Native Americans has been explored more extensively. At the close of the discussion, an informal straw poll was taken indicating support for Meyers’ initiative.

Dean Strikwerda adjourned the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

Addendum: Election Results

On March 19, 2008, Elizabeth Wiley, Chair of the Committee on Nominations and Elections, formally notified the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of the following election results:

Educational Policy Committee, Area II

✓ Jennifer Stevens

Committee on Degrees, Area III

✓ Greg Capelli

Faculty Hearing Committee

✓ John McGlennon

Faculty Assembly, Area III

✓ Marc Sher

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Leruth

Associate Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures