

**Minutes of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
The College of William and Mary
May 6, 2008
Millington 150**

Dean Carl Strikwerda called the meeting to order at 3: 33 p.m.

I. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the April 1, 2008 meeting were approved as posted:

<http://web.wm.edu/as/dean/fas/minutes/20080401.pdf>

II. Report of Administrative Officer, Provost Geoff Feiss

Provost Feiss was unable to attend due to a delayed return from an out-of-town trip.

III. Remarks by Dean Carl Strikwerda

Dean Strikwerda reported that preliminary designs for the “re.web” project have been sent to faculty by and invited feedback. He also reported that Lisa Starbuck has been named to the number 2 position on the A&S development staff, that of Major Gift Officer, and said that a search would be conducted to fill the position of Assistant Director, following the resignation of Kendra Rhodes. He also reported that the A&S development team would move into the space in Blair Hall recently vacated by the central Development Office, which has relocated to New Town. Turning to budgetary issues, he said that the 3% salary increases for faculty were comparatively good by national standards, especially given the recent and ongoing budget cuts, and said that the money included in the state budget for capital projects (Small, Tucker, ISC + bonds for the School of Education) also looked good. He announced a discussion of A&S budgetary priorities to take place over the summer with Interim President Taylor Reveley.

III. Nominations and Elections Committee Report

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

<http://www.wm.edu/as/committees/nominations/reports/20080506.pdf>

A. Election to the Committee on Degrees:

3-year replacement, 2008-11, vote for one:
Denise Wade (Theatre, Speech, and Dance)
Bob Kohl (Kinesiology)

B. Election to the Faculty Committee on University Priorities:

Area III, 3-year term, 2008-11, vote for one:
Eric Bradley (Biology and Applied Science)
Bill Cooke (Physics)

C. Election of the Secretary of the Faculty:

3-year term, 2008-11, vote to decline or accept:
Bill Hutton (Classical Studies)

D. Election of the Educational Policy Committee Chair:

1-year term, 2008-09, vote to decline or accept:
J.C. Poutsma (Chemistry)

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

IV. Discussion and Vote on a Proposed Motion from the April 1, 2008 Minutes, Section VII, Communications with the Board of Visitors

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.

Suzanne Hagedorn (English) explained that her resolution would improve faculty communication with the Board through the appointment of a person with experience in higher education who could explain academic culture to the other members of the Board, many of whom have corporate backgrounds. She noted that Interim President Reveley has already made a recommendation to this effect to Governor Kaine and said that the faculty resolution would be an endorsement of that initiative. Connie Pilkington (Psychology) expressed concerns about faculty resolutions made outside normal structures of governance and suggested that such motions should be saved for when the faculty strongly disagreed with a policy or decision. The motion was submitted to a voice vote; as Chair of the meeting, Dean Strikwerda ruled that the close vote was in favor of the motion.

V. Discussion of Assessment of GER Courses, David Aday:

Background

Aday (Sociology & American Studies) attempted to address faculty concerns that proposals recently sent to SCHEV for the implementation of value-added assessment of student competency in the areas of scientific reasoning and writing effectiveness could have a major impact on the curriculum and should therefore have been approved by the faculty through the usual channels. Aday explained that the College had had very little turn-around time to put together the SCHEV-mandated proposals, which were due on March 1, 2008—a deadline just set in January 2008. Aday said that pressure from SCHEV to institute some form of value-added assessment in Virginia's state-funded institutions of higher education had been building since 2006 under SCHEV Chair Alan Wurtzel (formerly CEO of Circuit City), a strong advocate of SOL-type testing at the college level. Aday said that a special Presidential Taskforce on Assessment initially headed by former Mary Washington president William Frawley vigorously opposed the idea of value-added assessment. He noted that W&M's Gene Nichol argued that the initiative went against the spirit of restructuring. Aday said that the taskforce had largely succeeded in blunting the prescriptive language of the initiative but had been unable to remove the "value-added" terminology. He said that the College then told SCHEV that its compliance with the policy would not be allowed to alter the normal schedule of its GER assessments—the reason why the first round of value-added assessment, of scientific reasoning competency, will take place in the framework the assessment of GER 2, scheduled for 2008-09. Aday said that following consultation with the faculty and departments involved in GER 2 courses, a modest and flexible proposal was put together providing for the addition of a number of test items to be measured at two points (not freshman and senior year)—not resulting in a significant added burden on the curriculum in his view. He said that since there was more uncertainty about how to proceed in the area of writing effectiveness the proposal submitted to SCHEV, developed in consultation with the Committee on Writing, stated simply that some possible means of value-added assessment would be piloted over the next two years leading up to the scheduled assessment of the writing requirement. Aday said that the Provost had told SCHEV that the College's budgetary situation would not allow it to conduct value-added assessment in more than one competency area per year (SCHEV had suggested two). Aday wrapped up his introductory remarks by acknowledging that there were legitimate arguments against value-added assessment, but added that the proposal should be placed in the broader context of the imperatives of SACS accreditation—specifically, the five year interim report he would have to submit in 2½ years, including data on progress made across the curriculum.

Discussion

Bill Cooke (Physics) asserted that the proposals amounted to a secretive attempt to seize control of the curriculum from the faculty and offered a motion requiring that any curricular changes made to satisfy the imperatives of assessment be duly approved by the faculty according to existing procedures. Dean Strikwerda recommended that discussion of the motion be placed on hold until after Aday had had an opportunity to answer faculty questions. In response to a question about the nature and size of the samples required for value-added assessments, Aday said that the College was more interested in credible inferences than a statistical model, but added that a sample of 10% should suffice. In response to a question about the rough task of rebutting the notion of value-added assessment in the face of state pressure and public perception, Aday said that his position was always that no one knows better how

to evaluate student learning than professors and that the grades they give out therefore mean something in terms of assessment. Beyond grades, Aday said that any form of assessment must take into consideration that our curriculum is coherent and methodical, that we regularly monitor it, and that such monitoring normally includes the examination of samples of student work, which derives its meaning as a means of assessment of student learning from this overall structure. Aday also responded that specific assessment instruments such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) test might not be an adequate measure for an institution like William & Mary since CLA scores closely correlate to SAT scores, which are already so high among entering freshmen at the College that it would be unlikely to demonstrate significant improvements in later scores on the tests. He acknowledged that there were models for out-of-course testing of competency thresholds (JMU, UVa) but said that they were not devoid of problems. Aday agreed with a faculty member's assertion that it was problematic to measure how well (or poorly) faculty were doing their job—the real issue driving value-added testing—by testing our students, who may not always be motivated learners; but he added that proponents of value-added testing such as Wurtzel firmly held a consumerist view of education as a product that faculty were not likely to change. Several faculty members asked about the cost to the College of refusing to go along with value-added testing. Aday responded that the threats of reprisals made by Wurtzel and other members of SCHEV were not as serious as the implications such a refusal would have on accreditation through SACS, which he called the last buffer between us and pressure from the federal government through the Higher Education Authorization Act.

Following the general discussion Cooke reintroduced his motion:

There will be no substantial changes in the curriculum either under the guise of assessment or any other rubric without the approval of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences through the standard channels.

Cooke explained that he did not object to value-added assessment itself, just to the possibility that it might interfere with what we do in the classroom. One argument made against the motion was that faculty control over the curriculum was firmly established and required no new legislation. George Grayson (Government) moved to postpone the discussion of Cooke's motion indefinitely. The motion to postpone passed by a show of hands, 36-23.

VI. Report from the Faculty Affairs Committee, Margaret Saha

Saha (Biology) reported briefly that the FAC was a little behind on committee assignments and invited faculty members to share their ideas for FAC and FAS meetings in 2008-09 by contacting the FAC at askfac@wm.edu.

VII. Report from the Faculty Assembly, Heather Macdonald

Filling in for Gene Tracy, Macdonald (Geology) reported that the Faculty Assembly had responded to a Student Assembly request to set the start time for final exams at 10:00 AM with a counter-proposal to push back the start to 9:00 AM. She also reported on a meeting with Interim President Reveley during which the FA recommended the appointment of an academic to the Board of Visitors and discussed the 60th percentile faculty salary goal. She said the FA representatives had joined the members of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Visitors at a recent retreat and that the revisions to the Faculty Handbook had passed. She then reported on discussion of the Landscape, Energy, and Environment Committee's transformation into the Sustainability Committee—part of the institutional response to the Climate Statement, which, she noted, the Interim President would not be signing. She said that the FA had also passed a resolution from Terry Meyers urging the College to explore the history of slavery and race relations at William & Mary. Finally, Macdonald reported on the election of the FA officers for 2008-09: President—Tom White (Business), Vice President—Gene Tracy (Physics), Secretary—Mike DiPaola (Education), Academic Affairs Committee Chair—Adam Potkay (English), Faculty Affairs Committee Chair—Lisa Landino (Chemistry), Planning and Resources Committee Chair—Carl Hershner (VIMS).

VIII. Report from the Committee on Honors and Interdisciplinary Studies, Joel Schwartz

<http://www.wm.edu/as/committees/honors/documents/Annual%20Report%20-%20March%202008.pdf>

Dean Schwartz presented highlights from the Committee's Annual Report. He said that 75-80 entering freshmen per class were Monroe Scholars and that the number of Monroe Scholars from any given class eventually increased to 135 students (10% of each graduating class) following the inclusion of students selected as rising sophomores. He explained that the Admissions Office selected the "most academically distinguished students" among the incoming freshmen and that rising sophomores were invited to apply on the basis of their GPA and selected on the basis of

their summer research proposal. He also reported that 10% of William & Mary students did Honors research projects and noted that there was a little movement in favor of a simple Honors/No Honors decision.

IX. Recognition of Retiring Faculty

The following retiring faculty members were recognized by the College for their professional achievements and dedicated service to the College and its students:

Ken Petzinger (Physics)
John Drew (Mathematics)
Peter Wiggins (English)
James Axtell (History)

XI. New Business

George Greenia (Modern Languages) reported on the success of the Gateway Guardians initiative, which registered a preliminary total of \$50,000, with dollar-for-dollar matching contributions from the Board of Visitors, and urged faculty members to pledge. Dean Strikwerda thanked Greenia and the other sponsors of the initiative.

Dean Strikwerda read the text of a resolution (<http://web.wm.edu/as/dean/fas/documents/Fuchs050608.pdf>) thanking Professor Alan Fuchs (Philosophy) for his many years of distinguished service as parliamentarian of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and presented Fuchs with a new copy of *Roberts' Rules of Order*, signed by the Dean and the members of the Faculty Affairs Committee, as a token of his colleagues' gratitude.

XII. Remarks by Interim President Taylor Reveley

Interim President Reveley met with the faculty during a wine and cheese reception at the conclusion of the regular meeting. Reveley said that things were now beginning to come together and that the College was in a position to move forward. He expressed concern about the distress that minority students might feel as a result of events surrounding the departure of President Nichol but also praised them for their willingness to help the College move forward. He then touched on a number of issues in response to questions from the faculty. He said that he did not expect meaningful pressure from above for more value-added assessment beyond the filling out of forms or other serious impingements on how the College runs its affairs. He said W&M had marketing power and would respond to state funding cuts with tuition increases like the 11.8% increase to be approved by the Board of Visitors, but he also noted that the state came through for us on capital projects. He said that increased annual giving from the alumni was another key to securing the College's future. He also acknowledged that the College could do better in the area of communication. Reveley also announced a generous gift from Joe Plumeri to fund the Plumeri Faculty Achievement Awards, worth \$20,000 over two years and to be awarded to twenty faculty members annually. He said that it would be hard to get money for a new performing arts center from the state at this time but suggested that private donors might be interested in the project, adding that the College must improve on its miserable record on getting private money for new buildings. He noted that he had just received a detailed report on internationalization and said that the College needed someone in place to put all the internationalization efforts together. He also said that he understood that tuition increases were squeezing middle class families and suggested that alumni giving might be a source of relief. Reveley stayed for several minutes of informal discussion with the faculty.

Dean Strikwerda adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Addendum: Election Results

On June 9, 2008, Elizabeth Wiley, Chair of the Committee on Nominations and Elections, formally notified the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of the following election results:

Committee on Degrees, replacement

✓ Denise Wade

Faculty Committee on University Priorities, Area III

✓ Bill Cooke

Secretary of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences

✓ Bill Hutton

Educational Policy Committee Chair

✓ J.C. Poutsma

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Leruth

Associate Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures