

Minutes
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Tuesday, October 7, 2008, 3:30 p.m.
Millington 150

Dean Carl Strikwerda called the meeting to order at 3:36 pm

I. Minutes of the last meeting, September 2, 2008

The minutes of the May 6, 2008 meeting were approved as posted:

<http://web.wm.edu/as/dean/fas/minutes/20080902.pdf>

II. Report of Administrative Officers

Provost Geoffrey Feiss being absent, Dean Strikwerda commenced by looking ahead to the strategic planning discussion scheduled for later in this meeting. He noted that the Strategic Planning Committee had met once already, and he emphasized the importance of proceeding with the strategic planning process independently of concerns about the current budget difficulties.

On the topic of the current budget difficulties, Dean Strikwerda reported that College had been subjected to an across-the-board cut of 5% in its M&O budget, which in real terms translated into a cut of about 8% for most units. At this point, all tenure-eligible job searches are continuing, but this and other budgetary issues are subject to review pending further word from the state, which has yet to make clear how big the ultimate cuts will be and how much autonomy units like the College will have in developing strategies to conform to new fiscal limitations. The dean has argued as strongly as possible that budget cuts should not be allowed to infringe on instructional priorities in ways that decrease either the value of the education we can offer to our students or our ability to recruit good students in the future.

In less grim news, A&S is guaranteed at least 11 of the 20 Plumeri Awards which will provide grants of \$10,000 for faculty salary and research support. Two new endowed honors have been created with private funding: the Murphy Award, which will be bestowed on a rotating basis to faculty in Humanities, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences who combine research and teaching in interesting ways; and the Weingartner Professorship, funded by a \$750,000 gift from a Williamsburg couple, which will be used to fund faculty/student projects in International Studies.

When the dean invited questions and comments from the floor, Bill Cooke (Physics), speaking as a member of the University Priorities Committee, noted that the UPC would like to receive input from faculty as to how to prioritize in the face of the budget situation. Dean Strikwerda pointed out the members of the UPC from A&S: Sarah Stafford (Economics), Gene Tracy (Physics) Lu Ann Homza (History) and Colleen Kennedy (English), in addition to Prof. Cooke.

III. Report from the Retention, Promotion and Tenure Committee

<http://web.wm.edu/as/committees/rpt/annualreports/20081007.pdf>

David Armstrong (Physics), reported on the activity of the RPT committee in 2007-8. Of the 15 cases considered for tenure and promotion to associate professor, the committee passed on a positive recommendation in twelve cases and a negative recommendation in three. Of the three negative recommendations, the dean dissented in one case and passed on a positive recommendation to the provost. Additionally, the committee considered 13 cases for promotion to full professor and recommended positively in all 13 cases (although in one case the positive recommendation was decided only after additional information was obtained from the department). The committee also gave a positive recommendation for two new hires with tenure to the rank of associate professor and one to the rank of full professor.

Committee member Will Hausman (Economics) observed that the committee only disagreed with the departmental recommendation in one of the 15 cases.

IV. Reports from Faculty Affairs Committee and the Faculty Assembly

Margaret Saha (Biology) reported that the FAC had been occupied almost exclusively with the issue of strategic planning and had reached no consensus up to this point. She also put out an urgent call for volunteers from Areas I and II to serve on the Faculty Research Committee.

Gene Tracy, reporting for the Faculty Assembly (in a report postponed from the last meeting), announced that FA was also working heavily on strategic planning and would soon be publishing a survey instrument to gather input from the faculty on their strategic planning priorities. This announcement generated a number of questions and comments. Issues discussed included how the survey was composed, whether potential priorities such as "internationalization" were defined clearly enough on the survey and how the definitions for such terms were arrived at. Lisa Landino (Chemistry) responded that the survey would be based on a similar survey conducted two years ago and would be used to gauge the extent to which faculty sentiment had evolved on these issues. Dean Strikwerda noted that the FAC would be an important conduit of communication between faculty and the FA in the strategic planning process and recognized the two newest additions to the committee: Berhanu Abegaz (Economics) and Kate Slevin (Sociology).

On another issue postponed from September's meeting, the dean stated that on the unanimous advice of the Dean's Advisory Committee, he was withdrawing his proposal to set the deadline for fall semester grades at December 29 in order to facilitate the work of the Committee on Academic Status. A new deadline had not yet been decided upon, but would probably fall sometime in early January.

V. First A&S Forum on Strategic Planning

Home page for strategic planning: <http://www.wm.edu/strategicplanning>

Link to Draft of Vision Statement:

<http://www.wm.edu/about/administration/strategicplanning/documents/DraftVision.pdf>

Prof. Saha and Tom White (Business) came forward to lead an open discussion of the strategic planning process. Prof. White noted that the committee was charged with presenting a list of six grand challenges to President Reveley by Dec. 6. This early deadline was a cause of concern for some, but Prof. White emphasized that it was only the beginning of the process.

Considerable discussion was devoted to the role of internationalization in the college's strategic planning. There was further debate about the meaning of the term. Laurie Koloski (History/Reves Center) and Sylvia Tandeciarz (Modern Languages) distributed a handout with excerpts from the interim report submitted to President Reveley and Provost Feiss by the Presidential Advisory Committee on Internationalization. This document presented the committee's understanding of what internationalization means and how the College might begin to achieve it. Concern was expressed that other goals and priorities, such as civic engagement, did not have as forceful advocates on the Strategic Planning Committee as internationalization.

Several members urged that other topics be taken into consideration (in addition to civic engagement), including student research, alumni outreach, reevaluating intercollegiate athletics, planning for the greater role of private funding, shielding ourselves against the vagaries of state budget fluctuations, respecting a diversity of strategic goals among the different units of the College. Some suggested that instead of compiling a want-list, we should first identify the problems that the strategic planning is designed to address.

Many expressed dismay at the poor attendance at this meeting, and particularly at the absence of junior faculty who will be living with the consequences of this round of planning longer than any of those present. It was suggested that further discussions take place not at the faculty-wide level but among smaller constituencies that either conform to or cross over disciplinary boundaries. Others maintained that discussion could continue at multiple levels simultaneously.

Although comments on the committee's draft vision statement (link above) were generally positive, some objected to what might be perceived as parochial nationalism in the opening sentence.

The discussion continued for approximately one hour and ten minutes. No formal proposals or motions resulted.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

**William Hutton, Secretary
Department of Classical Studies**