

Minutes
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Tuesday, November 3, 2009, 3:30 p.m.
Millington 150

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

Attendance at the start of the meeting: 36

I. Minutes of the last meeting, October 6, 2009

The minutes of the last meeting, on September 1, 2009, were approved as posted:

<http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/fas/minutes/20091006.pdf>

II. Report of Administrative Officers

In the absence of Provost Michael Halleran (who was out of town), Dean Carl Strikwerda reported the following:

- He and Provost Halleran had met with the Foundation Board and its Academics and Research Subcommittee and with the Graduate Studies Advisory Board
- Department/program chair searches were underway in Africana Studies, Anthropology, Classical Studies, and eight other departments.
- Six tenure-eligible searches had to be cancelled this year for budgetary reasons. The dean stressed that these positions were not being eliminated, and searches may be reinstated this year if the budget situation improves.
- A mid-year tuition hike is still being considered
- Improved admissions management has allowed cuts of adjunct positions, etc., to be limited to those that are least damaging to the curriculum
- Dean Strikwerda and the contact deans are near completion of the statement on program governance for the St. Andrews joint degree program. The statement will be referred back to the program committee and FAC shortly.
- The dean and the provost have been participating in strategic planning meetings, focusing particularly in recent meetings on investing in graduate student support and increasing grants and contracts

IIa. Additional Agenda Item: Report from the Nominations and Elections Committee

Dean Strikwerda requested and received unanimous consent to add to the agenda a report from the Nominations and Elections Committee.

Larry Ventis reported for the committee that Gail Bossenga (History) and Kathleen Bragdon (Anthropology) had been nominated to run for a three-year

replacement position as alternate to the Procedural Review Committee. No further nominations were forthcoming from the floor, so nominations were closed.

Prof. Ventis also reported on the results of last month's election to the Nominations and Elections committee. Deborah Bebout (Chemistry) and Bill Hutton (Classical Studies) were elected to the committee.

III. Report from the Student Assembly

The representative from the Student Assembly was not present at the meeting, so there was no report.

IV (originally VIII). FAC Discussion Topic: Size of the Undergraduate Student Body

This item was moved forward to this point by unanimous consent in order to ensure time for a substantive discussion.

Berhanu Abegaz (Economics) moderated a wide-ranging discussion on the topic of a possible enrollment increase

Some spoke out strongly against the possibility, citing among their reasons the following:

- An enrollment increase without a commensurate enhancement of infrastructure (dorms, classrooms, etc.) and faculty numbers would be foolish and threaten the College's mission.
- Adding more students would scupper the College's efforts to increase independent, interdisciplinary and research-intensive learning opportunities. Faculty are already feeling the strain of the demand for independent study, honors, one-on-one mentoring, etc., in addition to their regular courseloads.
- The state has a history of not backing up its pressure for higher enrollments with the requisite resources, so we must impress upon the state our opposition to enrollment increases particularly since the newly elected governor has promised higher enrollments in state institutions.
- Undergraduates are already concerned that their classes are too large.
- President Sullivan managed to hold undergraduate enrollment to 5500. Since his time enrollment has crept up at the rate of 50 per year; these increases seem to happen without consultation of the faculty and without discussion.
- We should emphasize to the state that on the basis of dollars per degree, W&M remains a bargain since our attrition rate is lower.

Others were less strongly opposed, expressing the following opinions:

- We should guard against excessive growth, but moderate growth will not hurt us; the figures on class sizes circulated by the FAC in advance of the meeting were misleading.
- It would be unwise to issue a flat refusal of an enrollment increase. Although the state cannot mandate such an increase, it is perfectly capable of channeling critical resources away from W&M to institutions that are more receptive to its wishes.

Prof. Abegaz stated that the FAC would be considering the possibility of drafting a resolution on the issue.

V (originally VII). EPC Report: Proposal for an Undergraduate Minor in Marine Science

By unanimous consent this item was moved forward to ensure the proposal could be considered and voted on before the end of the meeting.

Phil Kearns (Computer Science), reporting for the EPC, presented a proposal that had been approved by the committee for a new minor in Marine Science, which would combine the resources of A&S and VIMS. In response to a request from the floor Heather McDonald (Geology) described the program and explained that it was developed in response to student demand.

The proposal as posted prior to the meeting:

http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/committees/educationalpolicy/reports/marine_science_minor.pdf

In discussion concerns were expressed about how students in the program would commute between VIMS and the main campus. Prof. McDonald and John Swaddle (Biology) responded that the possible use of videoconferencing was being looked into, and that an attempt would be made to schedule courses in a way that would minimize the need for commuting.

The proposal **APPROVED** unanimously by voice vote.

VI (originally IV). Report from the Faculty Assembly

Gene Tracy (Physics/Applied Science) reported on the recent activity of the assembly:

- The Faculty Committee on University Priorities was focusing on gathering and making more accessible better data on budgets in anticipation of forthcoming gargantuan cuts
- The executive committee of the FA has met again with the rector of the Board of Visitors and had a frank discussion of the challenges the

college faces

Upcoming on the assembly's agenda:

- Consideration of a proposal from the Faculty Compensation Board regarding the traditional end-of-career salary spike.
- Consideration of the formation of a college-wide study-abroad committee.
- A visit from Gene Roche (IT) to discuss how the Technology Initiative Steering committee can best coordinate with faculty
- The Liaison committee is planning a presentation at the next meeting of the B.O.V. in which faculty members will describe to the board the deleterious effects of recent and prospective budget cuts
- Continued work on changes to the Faculty Handbook to explicitly abjure discrimination on the basis of gender expression and gender identity. These changes have been approved by the assembly, but need to be harmonized with the policy statements in other handbooks.
- Consideration of modifications to the Faculty Handbook that clarify the status of professional faculty in the Law and Business schools vis à vis those in Arts and Sciences
- Providing continued feedback and input to various groups engaged in the Strategic Planning process

VII (originally V). Report from the Committee on Degrees

Sue Peterson (Dean of Undergraduate Studies) described the functions of the committee and referred to highlights of the posted report:

http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/committees/degrees/documents/Annual_Report_2008-09.pdf

The committee considered 52 student petitions in 2008-9, approving 40 of them, and 113 requests for substitution of requirements from chairs and program heads. The vast majority of these were approved.

VIII (originally VI). Report from the Committee on Academic Status

Monica Potkay (English) described the functions of the committee and referred to highlights of the posted report:

http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/committees/academicstatus/reports/Annual_Report_2008-09.pdf

The committee considered 967 student petitions for exceptions to various requirements, and also considered the status of students on or coming off probation.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

William Hutton, Secretary
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