

Minutes
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Tuesday, May 4, 2010
3:30 p.m.
McGlothlin-Street 20

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

I. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on April 6, 2010, were approved as posted:

<http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/fas/minutes/20100406.pdf>

II. Report of Administrative Officers

Provost Michael Halleran thanked faculty for participating in strategic planning over the last year, and made remarks on the following issues:

- Statistically speaking, the upcoming freshman class is academically stronger and more diverse than previous classes. The target of 1400 new freshmen has been maintained for the current class.
- At a recent ceremony 20 faculty were awarded Plumeri Awards, 13 from A&S. There will be eight more years of Plumeri awards, and Mr. Plumeri is to be commended for his generous endowment of this honor for faculty excellence.
- On the VRS/salary bump issue: for faculty who have signed retirement agreements for this year, next year and the following year, the administration hopes that VRS may show some leniency, but is granting faculty the option to rescind their agreements if they wish. The provost has been meeting individually with those affected. VRS has no quarrel with the salary increase *per se*, but does not want to recognize that increase in calculating pensions. Currently the administration is continuing the practice of giving an end-of-career raise, but with a clear admonition that this has no necessary effect on VRS levels. The provost has asked Bob Archibald (Economics) as head of FCB to revisit current policy next year.

Before responding to questions on this issue, the provost requested a motion to close the meeting. A motion was made, seconded and **passed** unanimously by voice vote. The rest of the meeting was therefore closed.

In response to a question as to whether the administration was going ahead with plans to appeal the VRS decision, the provost responded that no final decision had been made yet and he believes at this stage our best bet is not litigation but persuasion.

In response to the question of whether VRS had given any thought to the impact of rescinding planned retirements when replacement faculty in some cases had already been hired, the provost noted that the decision to allow rescinding was a local one, not VRS's. The provost is working with the dean and with retiring faculty to minimize the impact of that decision. Barbara Watkinson (Art and Art History), speaking on behalf of herself and about 12 other A&S faculty who are affected by the decision, expressed dismay that in the press and among the general public the faculty was seen as greedy and petulant as a result of this issue and asked that the following statement be read into the minutes:

“The Faculty of Arts and Sciences who are enrolled in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) are dismayed by the VRS preliminary understanding that salary increases granted by The College during the last two years of employment do not comply with regulations;

Further, current Faculty in the VRS have signed, in good faith, agreements involving salary increases with The College, understanding the salary increase would be part of the VRS calculation of the Average Final Compensation (AFC), and that this practice was legal and customary;

Further, Faculty have assumed that The College has carried out continuing due diligence in determining the legality of this practice;

Further, The College, by not performing adequate due diligence to determine the legality of this practice, has harmed the Faculty in the VRS and all other VRS contributors;

Finally, Faculty, having signed these agreements in good faith, believe The College has the moral responsibility to live up to its agreements.”

There followed some discussion amongst the faculty as to whether the College had in fact exercised due diligence on the issue.

The provost finally addressed another question: whether VRS will be returning the money that was put into their system under terms it is now declaring invalid. The provost responded that he had not thought about that yet, and is hopeful that the point will become moot.

Dean Carl Strikwerda reported on the following issues:

- All but one of this year's tenure-track searches have been filled

- Changes are coming in the dean's office in the wake of Betty Sandy's retirement. Margaret Fonner will have a new title: Director of Administration and Finance, and a new person will be hired as Associate Director of Administration and Finance. Margaret will focus on the budget and the new hire will focus on personnel issues. Pat Lawrence will be devoted more fully to supporting Academic Advising.
- The College has received a generous endowment for a fellowship in honor of W&M alumnus and Jamestown archaeologist Bill Kelso: the William Kelso Graduate Fellowship in Early American Studies.
- Fundraising is going well for a Mellon post-doc in Environmental Sciences.
- A new development officer has been hired: Steve Mount will focus particularly on the Arts.
- Communications director Steve Otto has been working to foster on-line giving, and this has produced some positive results.
- Work continues with FAC and DAC on revising the RPT memo. A final report is expected late August or early September.

In response to a question, the dean said that the new RPT memo would have to be vetted by the Procedural Review Committee. If the new memo conflicts with existing department guidelines, the dean expects that the department will have to conform to the new memo.

III. Report from the Faculty Affairs Committee

In his last report as chair of FAC, Berhanu Abegaz (Economics) recognized the contributions of outgoing FAC members Gene Tracy (Physics/Applied Science), Barbette Spaeth (Classical Studies), and welcomed new members Eric Jensen (Economics/Public Policy) and J.C. Poutsma (Chemistry). Sophia Serghi (Music) will be the new chair. Prof. Abegaz also thanked Dean Strikwerda for his flexibility in working with the committee and for letting faculty drive the agenda. He also expressed gratitude to Provost Halleran for his visits to the committee.

Prof. Abegaz noted the following accomplishments of the FAC in the past year:

- The committee started a new tradition of going to the DAC at the beginning of the year to solicit advice on what issues needed to be tackled.
- The committee continues to invite input from the faculty through askfac@wm.edu and other means.
- The committee has started a tradition of limiting committee reports to 5 minutes.
- In response to the faculty's resolution in opposition to any increase in size of student body, an ad hoc committee has been appointed to study the issue.

- Another ad hoc committee, including David Kranbuehl (Chemistry) Terry Meyers (English) and Bill Cooke (Physics), has done a marvelous job of collecting student and faculty data and making it accessible.
- Yet another ad hoc committee has been looking at the governance of A&S study-abroad programs. As a result of their efforts another ad hoc committee has been formed to formulate by-laws for the new structure. The second committee's work will be reported in the fall.
- FAC sponsored a forum involving faculty and BOV members to discuss the reappointment of President Reveley. The process yielded some results: an invitation to the president to address the faculty on his vision for the future of the College (which the president has accepted), and the suggestion that a formal evaluation process for the president should be instituted. Exploration of that idea is beginning.

IV. Report from the Faculty Assembly

Gene Tracy (Physics/Applied Sciences) reported on the following activities of the assembly:

- At its last meeting the assembly received a report from the Faculty Compensation Board that shows us falling behind even other colleges in Virginia in faculty compensation.
- The process to merge FUPC and CoPaR continues (no word yet on what the acronym of the combined entity might be).
- Kate Slevin presented to the Board of Visitors a condensed and very effective exposition of the results of the recent faculty survey.
- The assembly has continued working on the proposal to add a new category of clinical faculty. This originated as an initiative of the Law School, but other units became involved. No consensus was reached, and the discussion will continue next year.
- The assembly has elicited from the rector of the BOV an acknowledgement that it would be good to explore a process for getting faculty involved formally in the evaluation of the president.

Prof. Tracy then encouraged faculty to attend President Reveley's address to the all-college faculty meeting in the fall and to participate in Q&A with the president. Finally, he apologized for the assembly's decision to post material relating to the deliberation of the VRS issue on the FA's public website. This led to the issue getting picked up by the press and created a toxic atmosphere off-campus. In hindsight, Prof. Tracy said that it would have been better to proceed more cautiously before making this material public, but the assembly was only trying to conform to the faculty's tradition of openness in its deliberations.

V. Report from the Committee on Nominations and Elections

Before hearing from the committee, Dean Strikwerda called for a motion to suspend the rules so that the committee's report could be brought forward. Due to delays in finalizing the slate of candidates, the committee's report was only ready a couple of days before the meeting.

A motion to suspend the rules to allow the report was made and seconded and **passed** unanimously by voice vote.

Larry Ventis (Psychology), in his last report as committee chair, announced that Debbie Bebout (Chemistry) had agreed to serve as chair next year, but that she would have to be voted on by the newly formulated committee in the fall.

He then presented the posted slate of candidates for a one-year replacement from Area 1 for the FAC (with membership in the FA), and a one-year replacement on the Committee on Academic Status from Area 2 (two other replacement positions on this committee had been filled by re-appointment of previous members).

The posted slate of candidates:

<http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/committees/nominations/documents/20100504.pdf>

As no additional nominations were received from the floor, the nominations were closed, and Prof. Ventis announced that on-line voting would commence soon and be open for one week.

VI. Report from the Committee on Honors and Interdisciplinary Studies

Dean of Honors and Interdisciplinary Studies Joel Schwartz summarized the posted report of the committee and commented on the following issues:

- The committee deliberated over a new interdisciplinary major in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, which is close to being approved.
- The Monroe Scholar program has been very successful, with relatively little cost, in attracting high quality students and boosting them on to further achievements. The College's last Rhodes scholar and Marshall scholar were Monroe fellows.
- The committee has been discussing departmental honors in two areas: whether the GPA threshold for eligibility should be raised and whether multiple levels of honors should be retained. No decision was made on these issues and discussion will continue next year.

In response to a question as to whether there was any discussion about expanding the Monroe program, given its outstanding success, Dean Schwartz said that to his knowledge there was not.

Deborah Morse (English) noted that high or highest honors, as opposed to plain honors, was very important for getting into graduate schools in some disciplines.

VII. Report from the Educational Policy Committee

Phil Kearns (Computer Science) noted that upcoming curricular reform does not seem to have slowed the rate of proposals submitted to the committee. Over the past year the committee has met 15 times and approved 40 new course proposals, 73 course changes, 15 new program proposals and 24 GER proposals. A final committee report will be posted in a few days.

VIII. Report from the Study Abroad Committee

Dean Strikwerda announced that since committee chair Arnab Basu (Economics) could not be present, the committee's report would be postponed until the next meeting in the fall.

The dean took this opportunity to thank all faculty members who have worked on A&S committees over the past year.

IX. Recognition of Retiring Faculty

The following people spoke in honor of retiring faculty:

- From Chemistry, Chris Abelt spoke in honor of Steve Knudson and Bob Orwoll.
- From Modern Languages, Francie Cate-Arries spoke in honor of Ron St. Onge.
- From Psychology, Connie Pilkington spoke in honor of Joe Galano.
- Terry Meyers (English) read the remarks of Paul Davies (Philosophy) in honor of George Harris (Philosophy)

The meeting was adjourned at 4:47 pm, and the faculty retired to Ewell Hall for an end-of-year reception.

Respectfully Submitted,

William Hutton, Secretary
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