

Minutes
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Tuesday, December 7, 2010
3:30 p.m.
Tidewater Room A, Sadler Center

Standing in for Dean Carl Strikwerda, Dean Joel Schwartz called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm.

Attendance at the start of the meeting: 37

I. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on October 5, 2010, were approved as posted:
<http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/fas/minutes/20101102.pdf>

II. Report of Administrative Officers

Standing in for Provost Michael Halleran, Vice Provost Kate Slevin remarked on the following issues:

- She thanked faculty for their hard work on contributing PIE materials for the upcoming SACS review. The Assessment steering committee is now reviewing that work, and aims to give feedback before the winter break.
- The provost's office now offers a dual-career webpage (accessible from the provost's home page, or directly from this address: <http://www.wm.edu/sites/dualcareers/>). Here spouses and partners of faculty can find information about employment opportunities.
- During fall semester the provost's office offered a workshop for junior faculty on developing new research agendas. In spring, a similar workshop for mid-career faculty will focus on promotion.

III. Report from the Dean of Arts and Sciences

In the interests of time, Dean Schwartz decided to forgo the dean's report.

IV. Report from the Faculty Assembly

Will Hausman (Economics) reported on the recent activities of the assembly:

- The assembly passed an amendment to the bylaws stating unequivocally that the assembly's Committee on Planning and Resources (CoPaR) will be responsible for monitoring and participating in any discussion with the administration and the BOV in any discussion about student body size.

- Discussed proposed amendments to faculty handbook about the 5-year rule for non-tenure-eligible faculty. The assembly decided to bring it before the Dean's Advisory Council and will refer it to the A&S faculty. Each unit will be encouraged to formulate its own policies on the issue, within certain guidelines.

V. Report from the Faculty Affairs Committee

Leisa Meyer (History) reported on the following issues:

- The FAC arranged a forum for faculty to meet with President Revely and discuss his productivity memo.
- FAC has been drafting a memo laying out suggestions to how the faculty can respond to the challenge of curriculum review. There will be a special A&S faculty meeting on on the topic on January 25.

VI. Report from the Nominations and Elections Committee

Debbie Bebout (Chemistry), presented the slate of candidates for this month's election for two spots on Faculty Affairs Committee:

<http://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/committees/nominations/documents/20101207.pdf>

There were no further nominations from the floor, so nominations were closed. Prof. Bebout announced that electronic balloting would commence soon after the meeting.

VII. Report from the Committee on Academic Status

Rachel DiNitto (Modern Languages) referred to the committee's posted report (URL below), and called particular attention to the increased number of late adds that the committee has had to deal with this year. She asked faculty to be mindful of making sure that students in their courses are officially registered for those courses.

www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/committees/academicstatus/reports/2009_10Report.pdf

VIII. Discussion of the President's Productivity Memo

As a follow-up to the recent forum on the topic, Leisa Meyer (History) and other members of the Faculty Affairs Committee entertained questions and comments about President Reveley's press release on productivity. Here are some of the issues that were raised:

- A number of faculty members expressed concern and disappointment that president has not disavowed more forcefully the implications of the memo that the faculty find troubling, and that any adjustment or clarification of the terms of that memo will not be disseminated in as public a manner as the memo itself.
- There was also concern expressed that the president and the provost do not fully appreciate the productivity improvements that the faculty have already achieved and how the measures proposed in the memo threaten the character of the College.
- Some, including some members of the FAC, responded that while the faculty must continue in their efforts to communicate their views and concerns with him, the president has made it clear that the pursuit of productivity must not jeopardize the character of the College. He is, moreover, open to a frank discussion of how best to proceed on these issues. The president is facing pressure both from the legislature and from SCHEV. Rather than resisting change absolutely, the faculty should take the opportunity to own the change and be the drivers of it.
- As an example of how we can drive change, W&M's graduation rates were recently ranked #2 in the country for research universities. We should be promoting the value of this and arguing that any changes should not be of the sort that would threaten the qualities that produce such rankings.
- We should keep in mind as we demand that the focus of productivity efforts to be shifted from the academic to the non-academic side of things, that changes in the non-academic sphere can have a profound effect on the academic sphere.
- It would be better if the discussion were conducted with more financial transparency. Economies that Arts & Sciences is asked to make should be evaluated in the context of how much revenue A&S programs generate for the College.

IX. Suicide Education Conversation

Patricia Volp (Dean of Students), Warrenetta Mann (Director of the Counseling Center) and Virginia Ambler (Vice President of Student Affairs) joined the faculty to discuss issues related to suicide prevention and to inform faculty of procedures and resources for dealing with students who are at risk. Amongst the things they noted were the following:

- Mental health problems, including depression and suicide, are on the rise in society as a whole.
- As a result of new treatments, medications, and attitudes, we have many students with mental health issues in our classrooms who would not have had the opportunity to attend college in previous generations.
- Despite its reputation, W&M is actually below the national average for suicide.

- Many serious mental illnesses tend to manifest themselves for the first time at college-age.
- Faculty should inform the Dean of Students' office if they have concerns about a student; in many cases the Dean's office will have more information on which to base their judgments.

In discussion, some faculty raised concerns arising from their interactions with students suffering mental or emotional difficulties. For instance, some students do not want to take their problems to the Dean of Students or the Counseling Center because they believe they will be sent home, and a dysfunctional home environment may be more detrimental for some students than staying at William & Mary would be. Dr. Mann noted that only a very small percentage of students who come to the Counseling Center are sent home, but acknowledged that this perception did prevent some students from seeking and getting the help they need.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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