

Minutes
Faculty of Arts & Sciences
May 4, 2021, 3:30 to 5 p.m.
Via Zoom Teleconference

Dean Maria Donoghue Velleca called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. with 77 faculty present; later in the meeting, 138 faculty members were present.

I. Approval of Minutes from April 13 Faculty Meeting

<https://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/fas/minutes/20210413.pdf>

David Armstrong (Physics) moved the approval of the April minutes; Marc Sher (Physics) seconded. The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

II. Report of the Provost

Provost Peggy Agouris reported that the most recent Board of Visitors meeting had gone well and had highlighted accomplishments during a difficult academic year. The BOV approved tuition increases for the Law and Business schools. She expressed her hope that faculty would participate in the six in-person commencement ceremonies that would be held later in the month. She noted that strategic planning would be starting up again. She asked for questions.

Suzanne Hagedorn (English) thanked the Provost for meeting with the English Department to discuss concerns about mental health and expanding Pass/Fail options for students. She noted that a son of one of her college classmates had taken his own life the previous week and said that W&M needs to continue to think about mental health issues even if expanded pass/fail options were now off the table. Provost Agouris noted that student mental health issues had been exacerbated by the pandemic and that the administration is looking at reexamining Pass/Fail options in conjunction with the Student Assembly. She said that Dean Janice Zeman and Kelly Crace of the Wellness Center had been working on this issue.

Francis Tanglao-Aguas (Asian and Pacific Islander Studies and Theatre, Speech and Dance) said that minority communities had experienced a disproportionate impact in terms of mental health. Provost Agouris agreed and said she had been discussing these issues with Student Assembly. She added that W&M could grant exceptions to Pass/Fail policies and that Dean Janice Zeman and the Committee on Degrees were working with students who needed them.

Josh Erlich (Physics) said that the EPC had a conversation about the pass/fail issue and had suggested the formation of a pass/fail task force that would begin work this summer.

Sasha Prokhorov (Modern Languages) asked about using incompletes to help alleviate student stress. Provost Agouris replied that she and Ginger Ambler had explained various options to students. She added that some faculty had raised concerns about additional workload over the summer caused by students taking incomplete grades.

Dean Donoghue Velleca said that Arthur Knight (English) had expressed concerns in the meeting chat window about the workload issue, especially with respect to NTE faculty.

III. Celebration of Retirements (Maria Donoghue Velleca)

Dean Donoghue Velleca read citations celebrating the accomplishments and retirements of the following faculty members:

Carey Bagdassarian (Interdisciplinary Studies)
Donald Campbell (Economics)
Maureen Fitzgerald (Religious Studies)
Grey Gundaker (Anthropology, American Studies)
Tomoko Hamada (Anthropology)
Gregory Hancock (Geology)
Gina Hoatson (Physics)
Michael Kelly (Applied Sciences)
Ray McCoy (Kinesiology and Health Sciences)
Christopher Owens (Theatre, Speech, and Dance)
Edwin Pease (Art History and Architecture)
Elizabeth Radcliffe (Philosophy)
Elizabeth Wiley (Theatre, Speech, and Dance)

The faculty recognized their retiring colleagues with a round of applause.

IV. Report from the Dean (Maria Donoghue Velleca)

Dean Donoghue Velleca commented on the difficulties of the past academic year. She commended Dan Cristol (Biology, Charles Center) for his work on Undergraduate Research Month. She mentioned that she had served on the VIMS Dean search and appreciated this chance to learn more about the faculty. She noted that there were a very small number of faculty searches, largely based on dedicated state money; many of these searches had been successful. A few faculty members had received outside offers, but W&M had been able to retain them. She said that at the invitation of the American Council of Learned Societies, she was leading a group from W&M focused on valuing the humanities; W&M, along with six other public and private universities had been invited to participate, and participants included tenured, tenure-eligible, and NTE faculty as well as graduate students. She had also enjoyed watching the men's tennis team compete.

Dean Donoghue Velleca noted that early in the pandemic, it was unclear what losses W&M would have; at this point, it appears that the confirmed deficit is \$38 million; the cost of dealing with the pandemic (testing, case management, etc.) has been about \$10 million. She expressed her appreciation of working with Sherri Powers on budgetary matters. A&S does not have a deficit this fiscal year but projects a deficit of \$400,000 for the next fiscal year and is continuing to work on budget reductions. She noted that due to budgetary uncertainty, NTE faculty who had been told their contracts were uncertain in December were still on hold. All non-payroll budgets had been cut by a third this past year, though these cuts were not felt because of the lack of travel and events. These cuts will continue next year; departments and programs will feel the reduction in resources. She said that A&S would have a faculty fund for research and faculty development with set deadlines and transparent processes.

Dean Donoghue Velleca recognized the contact deans she had worked with this year: Virginia Torczon, Teresa Longo, Janice Zeman, and John Donahue. Dean Torczon will be staying on in the Dean's office but the others have completed their terms. She looked forward to a future celebration of their accomplishments. She said that three Vice-Dean positions were still in the process of being recruited and that former Provost Michael Halleran (Classical Studies) was chairing the search; she noted that new deans may not be serving areas in which they came up through the faculty ranks and emphasized the need to bring fresh ideas and innovative

approaches to these areas. She said that Lu Ann Homza (History) and Sue Peterson (History) were co-chairing the search for a new Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education.

Dean Donoghue Velleca said that the search for a new Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion had been halted, as announced in her e-mail the previous Friday. She observed that she had participated in many searches in her thirty years in academia, and that they were unique processes. At the beginning of the search process, there is usually a lot of faculty, student, and staff involvement, but once the process passes to the hiring official, it enters a second confidential phase that may feel like a black box to outsiders, as references are checked and candidates engage in conversations about compensation; in this phase, there can be unexpected twists and turns. She expressed her regret that the search had not ended successfully.

Dean Donoghue Velleca said that Dean Janice Zeman would be meeting with chairs and program directors regarding planning for the fall. She said that they would need to speak with faculty to come up with a list of 20% of courses that could be taught remotely, in case some students, especially international students from China, were unable to travel to campus in the fall.

Dean Donoghue Velleca said that new policies regarding travel would be coming from Chief Operating Officer Amy Sebring's office, and that there would be more travel permitted in cases where meetings were not being held virtually. She said that Travel Review Committee would review both international and domestic travel and include representatives from Arts & Sciences. There would also be an expansion of the on-campus visitor policy that currently did not permit outside visitors.

Dean Donoghue Velleca noted that her son was graduating from Davidson College and that she hoped that faculty would participate in the in-person commencements at William & Mary. In closing, she related a personal anecdote, concluding that though she is a research scientist trained in observation, she had missed some cues this past year and had much to learn. She asked for questions.

Hannah Rosen (History) was recognized and said that she would yield the floor to Leisa Meyer (History, American Studies). Prof. Meyer noted her long service to W&M during the past 27 years and substantial service in various university governance committees. She praised the A&S Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee as well as the search committee for the new Dean of DEI and its goals to transform the institution. She noted that the committee chair had been intentionally chosen as a White man so that the labor involved in the committee would go to the member with the most privileged member of the group, in terms of subject position. She said that it was wrenching, as a White woman, to hear stories of colleagues being dismissed and discriminated against on this campus.

Prof. Meyer expressed her frustration at being informed by Dean Donoghue Velleca's message to the DEI committee that the search had "failed" after the committee had invested so much work in evaluating candidates and coming up with a list of finalists. She noted that, as chair of the search committee, she had made mistakes and had acknowledged them, apologized for them, and worked through them. She said the events that had led to the resignation of four members of the A&S DEI committee had occurred in a meeting between Dean Donoghue Velleca and both the A&S DEI committee and the search committee for the new DEI dean. She said that she found Dean Donoghue Velleca's behavior toward and treatment of one of the faculty members at that meeting deeply problematic and that others who were present at the meeting shared this view. Prof. Meyer said that a member of the committee resigned at the meeting and that she herself had resigned shortly after to protest behavior on the part of Dean

Donoghue Velleca that she characterized as “egregious.” She raised the issue of implicit bias in thinking about candidates and said that in her view the search was a success in terms of the candidates that committee had presented to the dean. Prof. Meyer commented that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work can be uncomfortable, and asked Dean Donoghue Velleca to reflect on and take responsibility for how her actions had created problems. Prof. Meyer emphasized the importance of calling out administrators to take responsibility and apologize for their mistakes.

Prof. Rosen said that this has been the second time in two years that that a search for a position like the Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has been unsuccessful. Since many other searches for administrators have resulted in hires, Prof. Rosen asked whether there were plans for an evaluation of what went wrong in these searches for a DEI dean.

Dean Donoghue Velleca noted that many of the successful searches for W&M administrators had used outside search firms, which was not done in this case. She said that the committee had successfully completed its job in giving her an unranked list of candidates. She noted that the specifics of the search process were confidential, but that she understood that Prof. Rosen was asking whether there was a systemic problem that had led to no hires in these searches. She said that she would be looking into this issue and reporting back on it in the fall.

V. Report from the Student Assembly Data Literacy Task Force (Mary Kardos, Raman Khanna, Laura Mills, Sam Rofman, Loni Wright)

On behalf of the Student Assembly Data Literacy Task Force, Mary Kardos, a junior English major and Judaic Studies minor presented PowerPoint slides relating to data literacy and W&M’s curriculum. She noted the importance of combining liberal arts education with technology and said that 87% of institutions in W&M’s peer group have a data literacy requirement or have a data course fulfill a science and technology requirement. The task force had considered various options for how such a requirement would fit into W&M’s curriculum and suggested that a data course might replace the current major computing literacy requirement. She said that 84% of majors currently offer courses that would fulfill a major analytics requirement. She noted that her senior seminar in English had focused on data-focused approaches for literary analysis. She said that the task force was conscious about overburdening faculty and depleting resources that were already strained. Finally, she said the task force would look forward to working with and meeting with departments about this project in the coming year. She asked for questions.

Prof. Hagedorn said that she was undergraduate program director for English and noted that two courses that were listed on one of the slides as potentially fulfilling the data science requirement (ENGL 250 and ENGL 475, the gateway and capstone courses for the major) could potentially fulfill that requirement depending on the particular topic a faculty member chose to teach, but that imposing this requirement on all faculty teaching these courses regardless of their research interests and areas of expertise might be problematic. She added that she would like to speak to the committee about the decision to place these courses on its list. Ms. Kardos noted that the task force had based its list on course descriptions that mentioned using databases; she said that she would be happy to have further conversations with departments about a proposed data literacy requirement.

VI. Report on Diversity Plans from the Committee on DEI (Gene Tracy & Dana Lashley)

<https://www.wm.edu/as/facultyresources/committees/diversity-equity-inclusion/reports/20210218-review-diversity-plans.pdf>

Gene Tracy (Physics) presented the report of this new committee, formed to promote efforts to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community in Arts & Sciences. He echoed Prof. Meyer's comments on the difficulty of doing this work but noted that members of the committee had said that they felt it was some of the most meaningful they had done at the college and that they were beginning to make lasting, positive change. The committee met weekly and looked at diversity plans of departments and programs according to its original charge; Dean Donoghue Velleca also asked the committee to be the core group for the search for the new Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

The committee reviewed 130 diversity plans, most of which were most extensive for 2017, the first year they were submitted; they became more compact after that. He noted that the reports were of uneven quality and that they seldom mentioned COLL 350. He highlighted suggested innovations, best practices, and calls for future action.

Dana Lashley (Chemistry) the representative of NTE faculty on the committee, elaborated on the uneven quality of the diversity plans submitted: some departments essentially submitted the same report year after year. Others focused on gender diversity but did not mention other forms of under-representation. Some departments had carried out surveys or held focus groups to assess the climate in their departments but many had not. Very few departments or programs had held any sort of diversity training or workshop.

Prof. Tracy noted that diversity plans need to explicitly address the department or program's role in contributing to COLL 350. Prof. Lashley noted various innovative approaches: some departments and programs had funded faculty and students to attend conferences related to diversity, equity, and inclusion; others had run reading groups or invited visiting speakers; some had done exit interview or surveys regarding the climate of a department or program. Prof. Tracy said that the best plans were living documents showing involvement of faculty, staff, and students that articulated problems and suggested concrete steps to solve them. He cited Modern Languages in Area I and Biology in Area III as having well-written plans.

Prof. Lashley said that the committee had reached three main conclusions: 1. It would be helpful for the CDEI to provide a template for departmental/program diversity plans. 2. Given the amount of time that goes into these plans, they should be submitted every three years rather than every year, with annual forms to update progress. 3. New faculty and staff should take implicit bias training, and a percentage of continuing faculty and staff should have training annually.

Prof. Lashley said that current diversity plans seem process rather than outcome driven and stressed the need for a new dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to review them and hold departments and programs accountable for their quality. She noted that Prof. Tracy would be rotating off the committee, but that she would be continuing and hoped that Erica Schipper '22, the student member, would be continuing on the committee. She said the committee members who chose to remain stood in solidarity with the members who had resigned but would continue with the committee's work. She noted that the committee would be drafting a new template for diversity plans over the summer and hoped that a call for updated diversity plans would go out in the fall. In closing, she welcomed feedback on the committee's work and provided an e-mail address for comments and suggestions: as-cdei@wm.edu.

VII. Nominations and Elections (Rani Mullen & Thomas Payne)

Due to a lack of meeting time, the committee posted the results of the April Elections in the meeting chat. They were as follows:

April Elections:

Committee on Degrees (4 year term) - Any Area: Regina Root (Hispanic Studies)

Faculty Compensation Board (4 year term) - Area II: Philip Roessler (Government)

Faculty Hearing Committee (3 year term + 3 year backup) - Area III: Chris Abelt (Chemistry)

The committee then announced the following candidates for election to committee positions open in the 2021-2022 academic year and called for nominations from the floor:

Committee on Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Area I:

Laurie Wolf (Theatre, Speech and Dance)

Gayle Murchison (Music)

Alicia Andrzejewski (English)

Faraz Sheikh (Religious Studies)

Area II:

Berhanu Abegaz (Economics)

Ayfer Karakaya-Stump (History)

Area III:

Christopher Monahan (Physics)

Liz Allison, Professor (Biology)

Seeing no further nominations, the committee closed the ballot and announced it would be distributed to faculty after the meeting.

Dean Donoghue Velleca noted that the meeting had reached its time limit and would end without the reports from the Faculty Affairs Committee and the Council of Chairs and Program Directors listed on the agenda. She called for a motion to adjourn.

X. Adjourn

Christopher Carone (Physics) moved to adjourn. Prof. Armstrong seconded. Dean Donoghue Velleca called for unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting, which concluded at 5:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Hagedorn, Secretary to the Faculty of Arts & Sciences