

Faculty of Arts & Sciences
March 7, 2023, 3:30 – 5:00 pm, Zoom teleconference
Minutes

- I. Approval of minutes from the FAS meeting on February 7, 2023
 - Minutes approved by unanimous consent

- II. Report from Acting Dean Suzanne Raitt
 - Suzanne reminds faculty to turn in midterm grading by Sunday, 3/27
 - The Dean’s Friday 3/3/23 message announces the return of May Seminars in 2023
 - Please propose May Seminars by using the A&S website by 4/03/23. Please be judicious on the request to cover one meal per day to follow rules of General Assembly.
 - Suzanne thanks faculty for cooperating on preventing a last minute enrollment scramble. Course capacities are being adjusted before the fall 2023 schedule goes live.
 - The Dean Team developed a new process to collate enrollments, and historical and major data. Enrollment information in courses is now available over the last three years. The university has published the number of fall and spring admitted students. Arts & Sciences is, therefore, in a good position having made targeted requests to specific departments to enlarge some courses. Suzanne thanks CCPD for raising course maximums as needed. Ten units were not asked to change anything as they had already addressed larger enrollments.
 - Assistant Dean Ben Boone reviewed data on 150s and other courses to see where it’s possible to add more sections. Some course capacities were also lowered in some cases to make things fair to units. Suzanne thanks Ben for his sustained work on this.
 - Leisa Meyer asks if pedagogical aims were considered when reviewing core sizes of classes. For instance, seminars vs. lectures have different goals, and 20-25 people might be suited to discussion, but 35 is not. She asks if the Dean’s Office able to take into account pedagogical intent for class size.
 - Suzanne affirms Ben sent suggestions to CCPD on changes to class size, and faculty were encouraged to respond if the change in size wouldn’t work well.
 - Ben says we now know better how things flow in each unit. A larger sized course make sense in terms in pedagogy or material for some, but not all, courses. Suzanne says they will reach out to CCPD soon to provide feedback on this process.

- Arthur Knight appreciates the process, but suggests, as possible, to allow more lead time to provide non-Chair colleagues information. Ben confirms the schedule will be constructed to get this done earlier.
 - A&S still needs a few more COLL 150s for fall.
 - David Feldman says some departmental decisions to adjust course sizes were made a long time ago. These courses are now constrained and not able to be enlarged. Suzanne acknowledges this.
- Regarding pre-major advising, feedback from CCPD ExCo, and the FAC suggested the Dean's office recommend (but not mandate) a minimum number of 5 advisees per faculty member.
 - Data available on each faculty member's pre- and major advisees shows there is a wide range of service. Going forward, the Dean's office will share that data with Chairs and Program Directors when the call is sent out for pre-major advisees so to more evenly distribute advisees.
 - Leisa Meyer asks if graduate mentorship and PhD programs are taken into account. Suzanne says the focus is on undergrads, but Chairs and Directors should take that information into account.
- Many people have noted that it's difficult to park, walk, get to class in Boswell Hall due to construction.
 - Eric Bradley and Adam Wikowski will be walking the path and placing signs to make Boswell more accessible.
 - When the Art and Music buildings are complete, some but not all, parking spaces will be back online.
- As ISC 4 comes online, some faculty will need to shuffle around to make room for new hires, pending the relocation of data, computer, and applied sciences into ISC 4.
- External reviews in Psychological Sciences, Linguistics and English have been completed, and Suzanne thanks everyone for their work.
- Only faculty with documented health issues should be teaching remotely this semester.
 - Remote teaching requires explicit authorization from HR. Students expect an in-person experience.
 - Faculty members with COVID should obviously be remote.
 - If one is traveling and has a good reason to teach remotely rather than cancel a class, that is fine.
 - Mike Jabbur asks whether remote teaching continue to be available this summer.
 - Ben says they are making decisions on that.
 - This summer, remote asynchronous classes are for those with training in asynchronous.

- A faculty appointment form and the surveys will allow faculty to change to remote teaching.
- EPC is currently exploring delinking credit hours and instruction
 - SACCOC, our accrediting organization, is interested in knowing how W&M teaches delinked labs, studio classes, internships, etc.
 - CCPD should file delinking plans with Ewell by 3/24. This is a response to a mandate for national accreditation by SACCOC, who is scheduled for a 5-year review of the university in a couple of years.
 - Three hours in the classroom per week is standard for 3 credits.
 - Bob Pike asks if CHEM lab hours have already approved as delinked, does the department need to show proof.
 - Ben responds that A&S needs to show SACCOC we have policies in place (including for labs) that show we have documented procedures.
- Regarding the Teaching or Research Faculty Framework, 95% of voting A&S faculty voted to adopt it in the 2/14/23 special meeting which included both TTE and NTE voters. The next day, the Personnel Policies Committee (PPC) voted to adopt it, with some small amendments.
 - Because the PPC is an advisory group to the Provost and the President, Provost Agouris thought it best to run it by Katherine before enacting, but Katherine has been out of the country for three weeks. A meeting will occur soon, and Suzanne will report to the faculty on the outcome.
- Regarding the Computing and Data Science initiative, Suzanne assures faculty that there is no prescribed plan currently adopted by the steering committee.
 - While the Provost doesn't have a plan either, she wants to see some kind of unit that's more autonomous.
 - The administration is open to suggestions as to what that should look like. Suzanne encourages faculty to engage with the steering committee via the web page, online feedback form, or meeting with the steering committee directly.
 - Suzanne is aware of an eagerness from students, faculty, and staff to make sure that any entity remains porous to the rest of Arts & Sciences.
 - She is also hearing about the importance of interdisciplinary and collaborative options. She notes that everything will make its way into a report on faculty feedback.
- Finally, Suzanne discusses her conversation with Chris Hein and Derek Aday from VIMS about an undergraduate marine science major.
 - Adding a marine science major in addition to the already existing marine science minor will afford students more access to the extraordinary research and opportunities available at VIMS.

III. Nominations & Elections (Pieter Peers)

- Committee on Academic Status (CAS) - Area I
 - Alexander Angelov, Religious Studies
 - Brian Kreydatus, Art & Art History

- Education Policy Committee (EPC) – Area I
 - Matthew Allar, TSD
 - Michael Gaynes, Art & Art History

- Retention, Promotion and Tenure (RPT) – Area I
 - Laura Ekstrom, Philosophy
 - Michael Daise, Religious Studies

- Education Policy Committee (EPC) – Area II (two positions)
 - Ayfer Stump, History
 - Christy Porter, Psychological Sciences
 - Jason Finch, Military Science

- Education Policy Committee (EPC) – Area III
 - Eric Swartz, Mathematics
 - Myriam Cotton, Applied Science

- Retention, Promotion and Tenure (RPT) – Area III
 - Chris Abelt, Chemistry
 - Mark Hinders, Applied Science

- Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CDEI)- Any Area (ToR faculty)
 - Dana Lashley, Chemistry
 - Jay Watkins, History

IV. Report from the Council of Chairs and Program Directors (Sarah Stafford)

- CCPD met twice since the February A&S meeting.
- In the first meeting, they welcomed David Yalof, Peggy, and Pam Eddy at the request of the Provost. Peggy spoke on two new wellness initiatives for faculty and staff on life/work balance.
 - Faculty and staff (along with students) have access to Timely Care, a mental health app in April. This app is already available to students now.
 - The Q&A at the meeting was wide-ranging and concerned staff support and better staff funding.
- The second CCPD meeting on 3/2 was a regularly scheduled meeting.
 - Shelly Laurenzo provided information on the new premajor advising plan.

- Sherri Powers spoke to bringing “floater” professional staff to departments trained to fill a staff position if there an opening. If there is a good fit, they could be immediately hired, as it can take a long time to hire in an open staff position. This would act as an admin temp pool.
- Suzanne then discussed the ToRFF and Marine Science major with CCPD.
- Silvia Mendorfer from the Reves Center discussed numbers of study abroad, which are essentially back where they were pre-pandemic.
 - Silvia also talked about new initiatives taking place this winter.
 - Many students took advantage of the longer winter break with more focused study abroad experiences that better fit into their schedule.
- Finally, Abbie Schaefer discussed best practices in departments when developing communication strategies.
 - CCPD asked Abbie for assistance with departments in developing some templates
 - Abbie is developing an internship program for students to work with her in communications.

V. Report from Faculty Assembly and Faculty Affairs Committee (Peter McHenry)

- Faculty Assembly met with various stakeholders about the APSC, CS and Data Science initiative.
- They also heard a report from Scott Swan, VP of Assembly, on the possibility of tuition remission benefit. That report will be circulated to anyone who is interested in it.
- At the most recent FAC meeting, Shelly Laurenzo presented information on how pre-major advisees are matched with faculty. Ben presented on the early and proactive changes to predict class sizes.
- As mentioned earlier, the ToRFF was voted on again by FAS on 2/14 and Peter is hopeful about information from the President about its implementation.
- FAC met with Dana Lashley, Chair of the Committee on DEI, to get updates on campus efforts.
- FAC deliberated issues related to the Computing and Data Science (CDSAS) entity.
- Peter appreciates A&S faculty attending on Zoom today and asks if there are any questions.
 - Hybrid meetings are planned in April and May.
- Suzanne Hagedorn asks Peter what sort of input or vote is planned for FA and FAC on the potential models for the Computer and Data Science entity?
 - Peter responds that FAC has considered this and faculty roles with respect to the CDSAS. FAC will endeavor to make the process open and transparent.

- Although happy with the progress being made currently, as he understands it, Faculty Assembly would not have any sort of role in a vote about whether to have a school, as this is a Provost-level, not an FAS, decision.
- FAS can certainly collect information, however, and write reports, and speak to administrators about their preferences, but setting up a school isn't what the Faculty Assembly is empowered to do.
- Suzanne Raitt adds that after spring break, her office will disseminate a survey to FAS regarding different possible models for A&S to include the CDSAS.
 - She hopes to have a discussion at the next A&S meeting to hear a range of perspectives, views, and experiences.
- Peter responds to Emily Wilcox's question in the chat that the Dean of A&S search progresses with Dean of the Law School, Ben Spencer as Chair. Although there is not specific timeline he can share, he is confident the search is on track to have a permanent Dean in place in the fall.

VI. Discussion of Department Merit Guidelines (Peter McHenry)

- Peter introduces the document on Arts & Sciences merit guidelines distributed along with today's agenda.
 - Currently, the *Faculty Handbook* specifies each department and program produce annual merit evaluations and reports. These procedures vary across units which determine individual scores, evaluation processes, whether there's an appeal process, and what materials are considered.
 - Some departments and programs have committees to determine scores and some have a single person determine all scores.
 - In the past year, FAC, the previous Dean, and now Suzanne, have discussed making these processes more standardized. All departments and programs were asked to adapt merit procedures to align with best practices for evaluation of employee performance.
 - Many departments made changes and sent them to the Procedural Review Committee (PRC). The PRC had best practices from the previous Dean; but with no standard procedures written into policy, they were unsure of how to proceed.
 - Today's discussion is to consider FAS perspectives on the proposed guidelines circulated with the agenda.
- There is no vote today on these proposed guidelines. FAC requests faculty discussion of the following tenets of a potential annual merit review process.
 - Peter Piers asks if the proposed guidelines would be suggestions or binding. Peter replies that they would be binding in departments.
 - There was no discussion on Item 1 of the guidelines:
 1. *Evaluation criteria that reflect the contracted professional expectations for,*

and lived experiences of, all TTE and ToR faculty within the unit that are related to the duties; laid out in faculty contracts and appointment

- 2. *Participation in a rotating or elected faculty committee*
 - JC Poutsma suggests adding language like, “participation of a rotating committee acting in consultation with the Chair...” to ensure that it's clear that the Chair and Director in those situations are actually in charge of merit. Silvia Tandeciarz echoes JC's thoughts, saying participation of a rotating committee is merely advisory to the Chair or Program Director, to comply with the *Faculty Handbook*.
 - Christopher Del Negro adds some units on campus are too small to have a rotating or elected faculty committee for this purpose. Peter makes note of this for future discussion.
 - Pieter Peers submits this is a troubling requirement for him because it feels a little bit like micromanaging the departments.
 - He would be more in favor if departments could decide whether they want the standardized merit procedures. Furthermore, it can be difficult to find volunteers for a committee like this. He suggests guidelines should be flexible to support the diversity present in the faculty.
 - Suzanne Raitt also recognizes some departments don't have many faculty and may feel that more than one person should be responsible for advising the Chair on merit. This would avoid effects of that person's personal histories and/or biases.
 - Matthew Haug notes his department unanimously does not favor a rotating or elected committee. However, he agrees with Suzanne there should more than a single person responsible for merit decisions.
 - David Feldman feels this is a fundamental fairness and transparency issue. In his department there is a rotating committee of two, plus the chair and associate chair. This needn't be a model for every department, especially if small. His department works this way to avoid potential biases and making errors.
- 3. *Regular and substantial reporting out to the entire faculty on evaluation results*
 - Andrea Wright says faculty ranking and reporting on colleagues where half fall below average is a suboptimal system. There must be better ways to evaluate and support faculty; the merit process can feel like a punitive system. She suggests instead of revising these procedures we rethink the whole process of faculty evaluation.
 - Suzanne responds that the rules have always been tinkered with, sometimes at the departmental level and sometimes at the level of A&S and will be open to feedback.

- Bob Pike asks if the annual scores would have to be reported. Suzanne says a department could report the standard deviation or average or a range to provide some sense of the department scores.
- Phil Daileader asks why we would want the lower 50% of faculty to know they are below the average.
 - Peter says it could be important to knowing what one's number means and for transparency.
- Pam Hunt notes we are often compared to each other. It's standard.
- In the chat, Leisa Meyer says faculty with joint appts may need to see numbers from their departments or have some sense of how they scored in their program before reconciliation. Faculty have a right to know what their scores are before the final scores go to the Dean's Office.
- Thomas Payne asks in chat, "Would this mean everyone's numbers would be published to everyone else?" Suzanne clarifies that just a department average, or a range - whatever the department/program decides – would be made available.
- Peter will make this more explicit in the guidelines
- Joanna Schug offers this is a bad incentive for bringing in strong faculty and for helping each other because helping others can bring down one's own score
- In chat, Leslie Cochrane asks if departments will have to have different policies for NTE and TTE. Would an average include both? If not — in order to not compare two different processes — then faculty size (3ish NTE faculty) would make an average less anonymous. Peter says maybe policies could harmonize.
- Mike Jabbur says in chat that reporting to the faculty could mean sharing the 100-word blurbs that go to the D/O. It should be clear that it's scores that should be shared, if that's the intent. Sharing the blurbs would be productive if the point was to share research/teaching/service activity.
- Arthur Knight, in chat says, "merit has one official purpose performance "review." It would be great to give it a second purpose— formative comment for colleagues. But that seems like something that depts/programs need to decide for themselves (and is in important ways useful to disarticulate from merit "scoring," which is mandated)."
- Thomas Payne offers that anonymous evaluations can be disruptive or inconsistent and comments in chat to ask, "Would these suggestions forbid evaluation of all members by all other members, which some departments do? I.E., committee of the whole."

- *4. Mechanisms for feedback to faculty on evaluations and avenues for improvement*
 - Bob Pike says requiring a timeline means a personnel committee and Chair couldn't turn in the scores the day before they are due; faculty feedback would be required. Peter notes this would be up to the department.
 - Regina Root says, in chat, "It seems important to give faculty the ability to comment on the effectiveness with which some aspects of merit are assessed. Some departments vote on what types of research receives more merit, so there can be winners and losers. To avoid that, it seems important to elevate all the kinds of research folks do and reassess regularly what merit points can mean. It's important to give faculty the ability to comment on the effectiveness which some aspects of merit are assessed."
- In the interest of time, Peter skips to the last item in the proposed guidelines
 - *8. A distribution of the distribution of scores on the 0-15 scale that reflects faculty accomplishment. The entire range need not be used...*
 - Annie Blazer suggests that just as good pedagogy helps students get to a threshold for a certain grade, it's more fair to have thresholds and clear communication to faculty about how scores are assigned. She asks why there needs to be a distribution within a department. Perhaps everyone could succeed.
 - Bob Pike – Dean Maria determined we should use the whole score distribution, but Bob thinks we can reserve the lower part of the scale for few people. This way there is both a distribution and no particular limit of people in the upper register
 - Gexin Yu (geh-shin you) in chat offers, "Even more so, if everyone is successful in one department and gets the same score, everyone will be punished in the college in terms of raise."
 - Peter agrees that balancing these points is key. It's fine if no one gets low scores but standards also sound good. We will keep working on this.
- VII. Adjourn 5:01