

Faculty of Arts & Sciences
Nov. 14th , 2023, 3:30 – 5:00 pm
Tucker 127 and Zoom

I. Approval of minutes from meeting on Oct. 3, 2023

Minutes approved by unanimous consent.

II. Report from the Dean (Suzanne Raitt)

A. The Board of Visitors meets this week.

1. All meetings are in Blow Hall BOV Room and open to the public except if the BOV goes into a closed session.
2. Suzanne encourages FAS to attend the Academic Affairs Committee Meeting on Thursday from 4:45 – 6 PM. The full schedule is on the BOV webpage. The Academic Affairs Committee meeting is most relevant as it includes discussion of the new school.

B. New landing page for A&S

1. Director of Communications & Special Projects Abbie Scheaffer and Communications & Web Specialist Nick Saunders are working on a landing page.
2. It will align visually with other WM pages.

C. Student reactions to violence in the Middle East

1. Suzanne asks FAS to inform her office regarding student expressions of feeling unsafe, high levels of stress, or conflicts in or out of class related to the violence in the Middle East.
2. Suzanne, Teresa Longo and Rani Mullin are working on a forum to host a conversation on the crisis in the middle east.

D. Faculty Success software

1. This software will capture data on faculty research productivity.
2. The Provost has requested faculty research productivity data from the past 10 years. Data from current FAS will be entered for FAS by grad students. FAS will review data annually to make records are current.
3. New faculty will enter their own data going forward.

E. Requests for Visiting Teaching Professors are due this week.

F. Chairs and Directors should have had their course schedules into their administrators by November 10.

1. A&S has quick turnaround this time for the new software.
2. December 8 is when schedule needs to be uploaded.

G. Planning budget requests (PBR)

1. We load money onto the software based on the previous year and can request more money for our base budget. Last year there wasn't more money available, but we can ask.
2. Guidance from the state included raises for adjuncts and grad students effective next semester.

H. University Marketing Dept is working on branding for the university.

1. Shared information about the process with deans to make sure A&S is aligned with the branding.

I. Many searches are underway in A&S, including the Vice Dean in Humanities and Sr Administrative replacement for Sherri Powers

J. Trey Mayo accepted the position of Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies.

K. Suzanne is asked for updates from Teaching Faculty Committee

1. Suzanne met recently with the TF Committee to discuss merit, promotion and renewal processes. Jay Watkins, David Armstrong, and Jack Martin, who are on the TF Committee are also on the Faculty Handbook revision committee.
2. It's been determined that some parts of the TF framework can't be implemented.
 - a. If a teaching faculty member has one set of low performance scores, the framework currently requires them to go on a one-year performance plan. However, this conflicts with notification by 12/15 of renewal, so they wouldn't have finished the performance plan before the contracts are renewed. This applies to faculty on shorter and longer contracts.
 - b. The committee is working on this and will be bringing their ideas for a vote soon.

III. The SACSCOC decennial review (Matt Smith)

Matt was not available today and will present at a future FAS meeting.

IV. Retention, Promotion, and Tenure (Lily Panoussi)

1. Lily thanks Rex Kincaid for compiling the report and reminds FAS that RPT requires dossiers to include a table of teaching evaluation scores which should be easy for RPT members to find. The scores should be in a separate document and not placed in the candidate's narrative.
2. Rex and Lily have revised Jeff Nelson's list of common dossier errors and helpful tips for candidate dossiers. This list will be posted on the website.

V. COGS report (Chris Carone)

1. Annual report – FAS are invited to refer to the report for details.
3. COGS approved a motion that the GRE shall be at the discretion of each school.
 - a. This policy doesn't require BOV and the Provost and President agreed. Therefore, the GRE is no longer required but is optional in all graduate programs.

- b. Three online questions are uniform across graduate school applications.
- 4. COGS changed the rules for graduate student to permit additional employment besides their graduate assistance-ships. Additional jobs need not be related to their degrees. Students may request a number of hours that doesn't interfere with their graduate obligations.
- 5. The grad research & Honors students symposium led by Elizabeth Harbron and Sarah Glossen was successful.
- 6. Sarah Glossen requested that the Graduate Center be relocated to the previous Music Library space in Ewell.
- 7. A PBR (planning budget request) will cover 75% of health insurance paid for by OGS. That PBR was denied in part because of the delay in approval of the state budget.
- 8. CGHS noted that more parking is needed for grad students, so proposed graduate students can use faculty spots when they have teaching assignments. Parking Services declined that request.

VI. FAC Report (Marc Sher)

- 1. FAC Bylaws were modified regarding RPT and interim reviews.

The new language encodes what FAC has already been doing for 10-12 years. The language is changed from "The RPT committee shall review all recommendations made by departments in Arts & Sciences concerning the retention, promotion, or tenure of members of these departments" to "The RPT committee shall review all recommendations made by departments in Arts & Sciences concerning the promotion or tenure of members of these departments. The RPT committee may also review specific retention (interim review) cases at the request of the Dean".

The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

- 2. Merit review policy
 - a. Many depts adopted the merit guidelines and sent them to PPC who considered if they match the *Handbook*. Three quarters of depts already adhere to *Handbook*.
 - b. Depts will only learn their own averages, which vary between departments.
 - c. Dean recognizes the variability and the absolute highest score of 15 is reserved for exceptional performance.
 - d. Leave merit policy will be considered next semester to have a uniform leave policy.
 - e. Lily asks if there is a place for a Chair to tell faculty members their score. Suzanne suggests this be added to the document as an amendment.

3. **Motion to amend:** Add to bullet 3: Every faculty member will have access to their own merit scores.
 - a. There was no discussion of the amendment.
 - b. The amendment was approved by unanimous consent.
4. Saskia comments that those who are minorities in STEM have no mechanism except to appeal to learn if there is bias in the merit system and would like to have something in the system to avoid continued suppression of minority. JC says that this would be the job of the over-arching guidelines to address generally and the next step that each dept must adopt own policies. Saskia notes this puts a burden on each dept.
5. Suzanne says the protection against bias is addressed in #2 of the merit plan which says multiple faculty are responsible for merit in each department, but she sees this may not protect against all bias. The Dean's office is able to see patterns and protect against bias. Suzanne asks for suggestions for an amendment to avoid bias. Saskia doesn't have current suggestions, but we can ask Wanjuru to get better process. Marc says we have time to change the merit document and then pass such changes in the near future.
6. Wanjuru says she provided specific guidance to the FAC, but we can't act on specific concerns without the finalized document.
7. Wanjuru asks about point #5 – who is involved in timely process? Suzanne says dept, then goes to PPC, then to PRC for approval. Suzanne says each unit needs to make sure they are adopting these policies and make them align with their dept policies.
8. Marc notes FAC got a lot of info from Wanjuru and thought we would make those changes in next round.
9. Marc says go to pollev.com/mtsher to vote on merit document as it stands. We have enough people for a quorum. 76% approve the amended version, 21% vote no on the amended version, and 3% abstain (29 votes)

VII. Faculty Assembly report (Josh Burk)

A. Worked on 3 things:

1. Handbook – focused on revising and working with the President according to policies.
2. Key performance indicators including student success/fac input.
3. How Assembly will provide input to the new school

B. Marc says Nominations and Elections Committee is working on what happens when there's a new school?

1. EPC will be affected, FAC will not be affected because Area 3 members are not moving. RPT could be affected.
2. Suzanne says the new school depts remain in A&S until there's actually a new school.

VIII. New Business

There was no new business.

IX. The meeting was adjourned without dissent.