

Faculty Assembly Meeting
March 24, 2009

Present: Alan Fuchs, Katherine Kulick, Lisa Landino, John Lee, Rip McAdams, Alan Meese, Leisa Meyer, Marc Sher, Carol Sheriff, Kate Slevin, Greg Smith, Gene Tracy, Tom White, Laurie Wolf.

Absent: Bruce Campbell, Mike DiPaola, Larry Evans, Carl Hershner, Steve Kuehl, Todd Mooradian, Adam Potkay, Barbette Spaeth

Others in Attendance: Provost Feiss

The meeting was called to order at 15:36 by President White

1. A motion to approve the minutes of February 24 was approved unanimously.
2. Provost Feiss reported that as a result of the federal stimulus action, the budget shortfall over the next biennium is significantly less than originally anticipated. He noted that it could have been much worse; however, without the development of new sources of revenue, we will face a serious financial crisis once again in 2012, which may necessitate a serious tuition increase. The budget is nearing completion for presentation to the Board of Visitors on April 16th. Additional financial concerns for the future include bills under consideration in the State Assembly to limit out-of-state student enrollment, needs for significant resources to open two new buildings, and record level student financial aid requests.
3. President White reminded that Assembly members of a reception honoring the retirement of Provost Feiss on Thursday, April 17th in the Wren Building Great Hall. Attendance at the reception will be limited to Faculty Assembly members, Deans, and selected alumni and guests.
4. The next Triennial Faculty Survey will be conducted in fall of 2010. Katherine Kulick provided a brief history of the Faculty Survey and distributed a listing of topics covered in previous Surveys along with a proposed timeline for developing and implementing the upcoming one. She noted on the timeline that the Survey process will begin earlier this year due to new survey software that requires a longer lead-in time. In accordance with the timeline, the Assembly began a preliminary discussion of which survey topics would be particularly beneficial for faculty input through survey questions. They were as follows: (a) questions regarding the degree to which faculty find W&M to be "family friendly," (b) questions regarding the degree to which faculty recognize the needs and opportunities for participation in faculty governance, (c) questions regarding effectiveness of the current election process for faculty governance positions and whether they promote or inhibit broad faculty representation, (d) questions related to student funding given the Provost's potentially discouraging budget outlook for the near future, and (e) questions related to serving a growing population of veterans with and without disabilities. Additional topic ideas for the Survey from Assembly members should be forwarded directly to Katherine. In addition, President White will be sending an email request to all faculty members for their input regarding 2009 Survey topics. He also expressed gratitude to the Provost's Office for its assistance in implementing the accelerated Survey development process this year. Assembly

members stressed the importance of coordinating the Triennial Faculty Survey with any future surveys that might be called for in the new Strategic Plan.

5. President White distributed a final draft of the new Strategic Plan as developed by the University-wide Strategic Planning Committee. The draft will go to the University President tomorrow and to the Board of Visitors by early next week. Tom noted that the Strategic Plan calls for the creation of several new and permanent University-wide committees (including a Committee on Continuous Improvement and a College Planning Council), and that the Faculty Assembly will need to carefully evaluate its relationship to these new governing structures. Provost Feiss suggested that this is the appropriate time to do this. Concerns were voiced among Assembly members that the Faculty Assembly seems to have been left out of key aspects of the strategic planning process. For example, the Assembly was not asked for input until after the Grand Challenges had been determined. President White reported that although the faculty has had extensive involvement in the strategic planning process, that involvement has not occurred through the Faculty Assembly. He noted that “Faculty Assembly representation” had, in fact, been stricken from the original wording of Grand Challenge 4.2.3 as being too narrow in focus and replaced with “faculty representation.” It was agreed that now is the appropriate time for the Faculty Assembly to reassert its place in the governance process, since implementation of the Strategic Plan in its initial stages.
6. The FA-FAC distributed a summary of recommendations for revising the Faculty Handbook language on discrimination so as to make more inclusive of sexual orientation and gender (including gender expression and identity), along with two possible courses of action for implementing the recommended revisions (Attachment B). Also distributed was a summary of background research supporting the recommended revisions (Attachment C). Options include: (a) revising the language of the Faculty Handbook to include the recommended language and (b) asking the President for an interpretation of the “Statement of Rights and Responsibilities” that would interpret sexual orientation and gender (including gender expression and identity) as included in the intent of or covered by the current Handbook language. ACTION RECOMMENDED: (a) that the proposed revisions to the Faculty Handbook be forwarded to the Personnel Policies Committee for consideration and (b) that the Executive Committee of the Faculty Assembly pursue the option of an interpretation with the President.
7. Old Business – None

A motion to adjourn was approved at 16:50

Respectfully submitted,

Rip McAdams for Mike DiPaola,
Secretary, Faculty Assembly