

Faculty Assembly Meeting

Minutes for October 25, 2011

Present: Todd Averett, Debbie Bebout, Tracy L. Cross, Michael Deschenes, Emmett Duffy, Nancy Gray, Susan Grover, Trotter Hardy, Will Hausman, Gina L. Hoatson, Scott McCoy, Terry Meyers, Todd Mooradian, Gul Ozyegin, J.C. Poutsma, Suzanne Raitt, Ron Rapaport

Absent: Rick Gressard, Carl Hershner, Alan Meese, Jenny Taylor

Others in Attendance: Michael Halleran, Maria Pada, Sarah Kleinknecht

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 pm by Todd Mooradian

1. Approval of the September 27, 2011 minutes

Approved as amended

2. Provost's Report:

Provost Halleran confirmed that there will be a modest salary increase for faculty this year. At the last Board of Visitors meeting, the Board endorsed the College's revised six-year plan, including salary raises for faculty, without making any recommendations about revenue. There has been no reaction from the State General Assembly to the revised plan. Provost Halleran noted that higher education was not included in the latest cost-cutting exercise, in which state agencies had to come up with proposals for cutting 2%, 4% and 6% from their budgets, but the General Assembly does anticipate seeking system-wide savings from higher education in the near future. Provost Halleran also announced that in the next few days, he will be sending round a call for proposals for "creative adaptation" initiatives – both revenue-generating and cost-saving. He then requested feedback from the Faculty Assembly on the recent report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Research Facilities and Administrative Allocations. The Committee was charged with examining alternative ways of allocating facilities and administration revenue, including finding an alternative funding stream for the Scheduled Semester Research Leave program. F&A moneys freed up by finding alternative funding for the SSRL program could potentially go to the Faculty Research Committee and to Deans and faculty. The Faculty Assembly will take up the report at its next meeting in November. Provost Halleran also noted that he would like to start a regular College-wide distinguished lecture series in the spring. He will send out a call for nominations soon.

Some faculty have expressed concern about the upcoming panel discussion on curriculum standards sponsored by the Society for the College, a W&M alumni group with affiliations to ACTA, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni. Provost Halleran explained that the Society approached the President and Provost about the ongoing curriculum review, and the College agreed to participate in the panel. The Provost noted that we are always looking for "good ideas," and if good ideas emerge out of the discussion, the curriculum review steering committee will take them into consideration. However, he emphasized that the curriculum review is controlled by the faculty and all final decisions rest with them.

The Provost also reported that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia recently recommended a 2% state-funded increase in faculty salaries over the next two years, with discretion for institutions to fund an additional 2% out of their own revenues. It is not clear yet whether this will actually happen.

3. Standing Committee Reports:

A. Faculty Affairs Committee

1. Retirement incentive program report (attached)

Debbie Bebout, Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, circulated a copy of an April 2011 interdepartmental memo from the Faculty Compensation Board to the Provost and the Faculty Assembly which addresses the issue of retirement incentives. She reported that the Faculty Affairs Committee was inclined to retain the 8%/7% salary increase that faculty currently receive in the two years before retirement until an alternative incentive is developed and can be phased in. This view generally agrees with termination concerns expressed by the FCB in April. FAC also recommended phasing the program out slowly to protect planned SSRL leaves and other similar arrangements. Discussion of phasing out the 8%/7% program began three years ago under Provost Geoff Feiss, after the State changed the way pension entitlements were calculated and eliminated the benefit the 8%/7% boost had given to those retiring under the VRS system.

Terry Meyers moved that the Faculty Assembly accept the FAC report and ask the FCB to act on the report's recommendations 2 and 3 (that is, to develop an estimate of the net benefit enjoyed by retiring faculty as a group as a result of the 8%/7% program; and to develop an alternative retirement incentive program using the net cost and benefit of the 8%/7% program as guides). (It was later pointed out that Recommendation 2 should be amended so that it does not refer to the 8%/7% program as "current," since it is being phased out). A lively discussion ensued. Various options were discussed, for example replacing the 8%/7% program with a final semester off, depending on the cost implications; phasing it out gradually and not replacing it; and phasing it out immediately. It was noted that any replacement incentive for the 8%/7% program should be fair, transparent and across-the-board to minimize inequities and ensure full take-up, though some members noted that there will be inequities and individual deals anyway. Some also felt that transparency might not always be advisable in cases where individuals were being encouraged to retire early. There was also objection to a system in which under-performing faculty might receive money on retirement as an incentive to retire early, when effective faculty were not being offered a similar package. Some members felt that once the 8%/7% program lost its impact on retirement income, it would become an insignificant incentive; others disagreed. It was noted that inversion has in some cases had a significant effect on the salaries of full professors approaching retirement: the average ratio of assistant professors' to full professors' salaries has shrunk from 1.8 in 1999 to 1.6 in 2006: it is important that the College seek to ensure that salaries at retirement are still competitive. The FAC also noted that the College of William and Mary has a less generous retirement incentive program than most of our peer institutions, and the question was raised of how those more generous programs are funded. At the College, the administration made the choice to fund retirement incentives out of the general salary pool, thereby diminishing the amount of money available for salary raises for faculty who were not approaching retirement. There was a general feeling among members of the FAC that money lost over the years to retirement incentives should be returned to those faculty whose salaries had suffered, in the form of an alternative incentive to replace the 8%/7% program. Some members asked to see an estimate of the amount of money the College has spent on the 8%/7% program over the years as a benchmark for spending on whatever alternative program the FCB devises. The Provost noted that money spent on the 8%/7% program would "probably" have gone to faculty salaries and new positions if the program had not been in place. At the end of the discussion, the Faculty Assembly voted in favor of the motion.

2. NTE policy report: Debbie Bebout reported that the NTE Task Force and the FAC continue to work on this. Continuing concerns are that all who will be involved in evaluating

NTE faculty in new positions should also be involved in establishing those positions, and it was noted that each school will be responsible for establishing its own evaluation procedures for people in NTE positions. These positions can offer considerable financial benefits to schools since they usually carry heavier teaching loads and lower salaries than TE positions. The Provost noted that the maximum length of a rolling NTE contract will be three years, and this fact will be incorporated into the report. The Task Force will meet again. The President of the Faculty Assembly commended the FAC and especially its Chair for all their hard work on this issue.

B. Academic Affairs: JC Poutsma reported that Academic Affairs will meet soon to consider a matter of business brought forward from last year involving the timing of proposals for SSRL leaves (see the minutes of the May 10, 2011 meeting).

C. COPAR: Todd Averett reported that COPAR is meeting this week to consider the baseline planning and budget requests in preparation for a meeting of the Faculty and University Priorities Committee next week. A few years ago it was decided that COPAR should populate the faculty seats on FUPC, since the two committees had similar charges but no formal channels for co-operation or means to avoid redundancy. In the wake of that decision, it makes sense that the Chair of COPAR and not the President of Faculty Assembly should co-chair FUPC. The FA by-laws do not need to be amended and the Provost agreed that the charge to FUPC can be altered to reflect the change. The Faculty Assembly voted to accept the motion that the Chair of COPAR be the Co-Chair of FUPC.

D. Executive Committee: No report.

4. Discussion of innovation/creative adaptation/productivity:

Todd Mooradian announced an upcoming meeting with Deans Pulley and McLaughlin to hear about their recent trip to the “Future of State Universities” conference sponsored by Academic Partnerships, a for-profit company that works with public universities to build, market and support online systems. The date and place of that meeting will be announced tonight [November 7th, 3.30, Miller Hall 1088]. The Executive Committee is also having dinner next week with BOV members Bob Scott and Colin Campbell to discuss innovation and the strategic plan. Terry Meyers pre-circulated a proposal to increase teaching loads for faculty who do not have research-active status, as a productivity enhancement. The Law School and the Business School already have a system of differential teaching loads. It was suggested that this issue should go to the Faculty Affairs Committee of Arts and Sciences rather than to the Faculty Assembly, and further discussion was deferred to the next meeting of Faculty Assembly. At its next meeting, the Executive Committee will start planning Faculty Assembly’s role in the College-wide discussion of productivity, and discuss actions the Assembly might take.

5. Old business: No old business.

6. New business: No new business.

7. Announcements: No announcements.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:55 pm