

Faculty Assembly Meeting

Minutes for March 26, 2013

Members Present: Kathleen Bragdon, Bill Cooke, Tracy Cross, Sarah Day, Michael Deschenes, David Dessler, Nancy Gray (Secretary), Rick Gressard (President), Susan Grover, Trotter Hardy, Will Hausman, Carl Hershner, Gina Hoatson, Scott McCoy, Brent Owens, Suzanne Raitt (Vice President), Jeanne Wilson.

Members Absent: Emmett Duffy, Gul Ozyegin, Lily Panoussi, Jennifer Taylor.

Others in Attendance: Michael Halleran (Provost), Sharron Gatling, Chon Glover, Brian Whitson, Kate Slevin.

The meeting was called to order at 3:35pm.

Approval of Minutes: minutes for February 26, 2013 were approved.

Report from the Office of Equal Opportunity

Sharron Gatling reminded us that the Office of Equal Opportunity and the Office of Diversity have merged, and that they place a high value on our input and our roles on campus. Among the EO Office's main tasks are: ADA compliance issues, prompt and equitable resolutions to all complaints; EO compliance with federal, state, and local laws; job recruitment practices; and educational information on sexual harassment. One of the most important roles the EO Office has is ensuring that during recruitment for all instructional and professional job openings, federal requirements are known to and understood by search committees. At present about forty instructional searches are being conducted. In the matter of sexual harassment prevention, training of members of the College community is being stepped up to ensure that everyone is knowledgeable about what constitutes sexual harassment and what to do both to avoid and to prevent it. On the national level, many of the most egregious instances of sexual harassment come out of higher education.

Suzanne Raitt asked how effective Ms. Gatling feels our own process is in both areas. Sharron Gatling answered that it's much better than when she started, especially as more people become more knowledgeable about the rules and regulations and how they match W&M needs. A recent audit brought to light some changes that need to be made in terms of effective searches, primarily in terms of making sure full and proper documentation is in order for each and every applicant. Gina Hoatson asked if it's possible to see from statistical data whether we're doing a better job now of hiring minorities and women. Sharron Gatling said yes, it's better, particularly in terms of matching hiring goals to applicant availability both in-house and nationally. Her office monitors progress and documents efforts toward it. Gina Hoatson asked who sets the goals and parameters for hiring, and how much of that is in the purview of the disciplines doing the hiring. Sharron Gatling answered that goals will more often be set by the hiring discipline this coming year. Bill Cooke asked if Faculty Assembly could get a report that illustrates some of the statistics and trends. Some discussion ensued regarding candidate pools and how they are accessed, and the need for more statistical knowledge on what pools exist for different disciplines. Sharron Gatling responded that all data is now kept online, which makes tracking and reporting much more accurate.

Report from the Office of Communications and University Relations

Brian Whitson (Associate Vice President, University Relations), Tina Coleman (Director of Creative Services), and Erin Zagursky (University News Manager) provided an informational presentation on the new electronic campus newsletter and W&M Digest. Research has indicated that people don't typically go to the College's website for information, so an electronic newsletter has been developed to provide news in a packaged form, and to inform the broader community on what the faculty is doing, which includes covering many kinds of faculty achievements and endeavors. Phase 1 was launched earlier this spring, adding news feeds to the current Digest. Phase 2 involves considering different designs and content, and will include more meetings with groups such as ours and with student leadership, as well as a simple survey that will be sent out to all members of the campus community. There is also a link on every Digest page that allows anyone to submit feedback on the new Digest format and content. Assembly members were asked for feedback at today's meeting. The questions posed to us included: Do you seek out news about events? Where do you look for it? (Digest, websites, etc.) Do you feel more informed with the new Digest format? When you have something to communicate to the campus, what tools do you use? Would you like to see classified ads in the Digest?

Initial responses included these: Bill Cooke said the new Digest format is not efficient when viewing it on a smartphone, because of space on screen, though viewing it on a computer works well. He also noted that finding a list of events is much easier and more effective on the Digest than searching for them on the College website calendar. Gina Hoatson said she would like to see the items split into "events today" and "events tomorrow" for easier identification of impending events. Trotter Hardy commented that the format is most useful when easy to skim. Scott McCoy added that it would help to include dates in the index list at the top of the Digest and not just below in the actual announcements. Several people said that when they have something to announce to the campus, they post to Events and to both the Faculty and the Student Digests. As to the question of wanting classified ads in the Digest, most Assembly members said no, unless ads could be accessed by a simple link to a separate page.

Provost's Report

Michael Halleran reported on the following items:

1. The next Tack Faculty Lecture, "The Faults in Old Virginia," will be delivered by Chuck Bailey of the Geology department on April 17, at 8pm, in the Kimball Theater. Next year's Faculty Lecture schedule includes Debbie Steinberg from VIMS, and Scott Nelson from the History department.
2. The BOV will be here next month. The Provost anticipates that they will approve a budget that allows us to begin implementation of six-year plan, as promised in last November's meeting. The plan puts serious money into the salary pool to move us toward our goal of reaching the 60th percentile in our peer group. If the original language in the State budget proposal remains after the Governor's veto session, there will be a 2% raise across the board, with the rest based on merit.
3. The Board will continue to be interested in campus "efficiency" issues. One impact is that W&M will agree to take another 150 in-state students as well as another 50 out-of-state students, with funding to accommodate them.
4. EVMS – Jen Mellor is working with her EVMS counterpart, Don Combs, to plan workshops and joint Board meetings, and to ensure that the process of exploring a WM/EVMS partnership is faculty-driven.

5. The American Affordable Care Act provides benefits only to those working more than 29 hours per week. The Governor of Virginia has mandated that all State employees work either full-time or 29 hours. This becomes an issue for universities in relation to our hiring of adjunct instructors. Currently there are approximately 5-6 W&M adjuncts working more than 29 hours. At the State level, the complication is how to categorize adjunct instructors as full or part-time when they for instance, teach one course here and two at another college or university.

Suzanne Raitt asked about the Affordable Care Act: what happens if a faculty member goes to half-time in a given year? The Provost said he's unsure, but will get back to us with fuller answer. Suzanne Raitt commented that if someone takes an unpaid leave, they can continue to draw benefits if they don't go below a 50% work load; as for those currently working 30 hours on part-time contracts, will their hours be cut to meet the 29-hour limit under the new policy? The Provost answered yes. Will Hausman asked about the College purchase of the Hospitality House, and particularly about the loss of a convenient place to house guest speakers. The Provost replied that the plan is to take possession of the Hospitality House on June 1 and begin the needed upgrades to ready it for residents. A committee will be formed to take up a range of issues as to best uses of it beyond residence.

Report on Faculty Survey

Rick Gressard reported on the draft results sent out to us last week, and asked that everyone take a look at them if they haven't been able to so far. 555 faculty members responded to the survey, including 152 specified term faculty members (whose classifications have not yet been broken down further). Some of the more salient statistics include: The highest rates of satisfaction were in regard to teaching load and the availability of personal computers. The highest rates of dissatisfaction were with salaries in general, and there was a significantly higher rate of overall dissatisfaction compared to the last survey. 64% of respondents said they have considered leaving the College permanently, a rate that is up considerably from 2009. Though reasons are not specified, they most likely are about salary. Rick Gressard will prepare a formal report to deliver at next month's BOV meeting. He asked that any members not on the Faculty Assembly Liaison Committee send suggestions they would like that Committee to consider for inclusion in the BOV presentation. The far lengthier full report on the Survey will probably be ready in May. Suzanne Raitt reported that 46% of NTE's taking the Survey said they wanted representation on Faculty Assembly; and 35% said they wanted both that representation and their own Assembly.

Discussion of Draft Report on Intellectual Property Policy

Trotter Hardy reported that the focus of his changes to the existing policy have to do with ownership rights to scholarship and teaching materials. His draft report was sent to all Assembly members. The next step would be to decide whether to send the proposal forward; if we do so, it will go to the Provost, then to the Board of Visitors. Rick Gressard said we will set aside time at our next meeting for a fuller discussion aimed at deciding whether Faculty Assembly wants to make this an official proposal and send it forward. Trotter Hardy asked for email questions and suggestions before the next meeting.

Standing Committee Reports

A. Faculty Affairs:

Tracy Cross reported on the draft of the Committee's Retirement Incentive Program proposal. He provided a handout of that proposal, which includes two parts: First, a Faculty Assembly recommendation that the College conduct a study, with input from Faculty Assembly Faculty Affairs Committee members, to predict cost savings to the College if an age-sensitive retirement incentive program were in place. Second, that the current 8/7 bump-up practice be continued but with an age limit. Continuation of the practice is desirable because of faculty expectations and the lack of recent pay increases, but would be discontinued when faculty salaries reach an agreed-upon level. The newly age-sensitive bump-up would be available only to those within a specified age range, between 60 and 70 for instance, and as is consistent with federal law, would be announced to all those approaching or over the upper age limit in sufficient time to allow them to take advantage of the practice before the limitation was imposed. Susan Grover asked for our comments on the age-sensitive recommendation. Suzanne Raitt noted that an upper age limit disadvantages those who can't afford to retire, and she favors phasing out the current program as planned, then leaving it at that. Susan Grover asked the Provost if a College policy must be in place in order for the Administration to offer a retirement incentive in any given year. The Provost provided no answer at this time. The proposal was tabled until our next meeting, at which time we will discuss it further and come to a decision.

B. Academic Affairs:

No report.

C. COPAR:

No report.

D. Executive/Liaison:

Suzanne Raitt reminded Liaison Committee members that Bob Scott will be present at the beginning of the March 28 meeting, not at the end.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20pm.