

Minutes
Professional Faculty Forum
College of William and Mary
June 12, 2008 11:00 a.m. University Center-Tidewater A

Mary Molineux began the meeting at 11:05 a.m. by welcoming attendees and introducing the members of the Professional Faculty Initial Executive Committee. She then focused on the purposes of the meeting: 1) to update professional faculty on the progress made towards the creation of an organization that represents Professional Faculty and acts as liaison to the senior administration of the College; 2) to learn about the new Human Resources System; 3) to encourage participation in the new organization.

Ms. Molineux reviewed the history of forming an organization: although there had been a need identified for several years, real efforts began in the spring of 2006, with called meetings of professional faculty in February and April 2007, from which a volunteer Initial Executive Committee was formed.

During the past year, that Initial Executive Committee drafted a Constitution and By-Laws for the new organization and met several times with Provost Geoff Feiss to seek his input and make subsequent revisions.

Kiersten Boyce, Coordinator of the Office of Legal Affairs, is currently reviewing these documents and making revisions in consultation with Provost Feiss, Vice President for Administration Anna Martin, and the Initial Executive Committee. After a final review by Vice President Martin, the Constitution and By-Laws will be submitted to the Attorney General's Office for review and then presented to the Board of Visitors for final approval, hopefully at its September 25, 2008, meeting. These documents will be posted on the Professional Faculty web page, www.wm.edu/proffaculty, along with updates as this process evolves in the upcoming weeks.

Next, Provost Feiss conveyed his appreciation to the Initial Executive Committee for its hard work over the past year. He also expressed his complete support for the formation on this organization and indicated that the approximately 400 Professional Faculty are the single most diverse, yet "most unheard from," group on campus. He also stated that this group of employees were indispensable to the functioning on the College, and that he viewed this new organization as an advisory body to himself, the President and senior administration.

Provost Feiss subsequently discussed his intent to support the creation of a handbook, much like the Faculty Handbook that has just been rewritten. He also mentioned that there are sections in the Faculty Handbook that apply to Professional Faculty who conduct research or teach. The Faculty Handbook is available on Provost Feiss' web page, http://www.wm.edu/provost/faculty_handbook.php.

Provost Feiss also encouraged attendees to view the current Initial Executive Committee as an unofficial advisory body to whom they could express their questions and views.

Next, Vice President Martin discussed the College's proposed new Human Resources system, one, a result of the state of Virginia's Restructuring Act that allowed the College (as well as the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech) the authority to develop certain aspects of its own Human Resources system. As of July 1, 2006, all administrative and professional faculty and hourly employees became "university employees." During a 90-day period beginning October 1, 2008, each classified employee will be able to choose whether to remain as a state employee or become a university employee. Vice President Martin emphasized that retirement and health benefits would remain the same for everyone, even after Human Resources restructuring takes effect January 1, 2009.

Vice President Martin described the purpose of the new Human Resources system: to streamline the hiring process so that it is more responsive and agile and to develop a comprehensive system that treats all employees fairly. She also explained the formation of committees and teams who served to develop the new HR system (for details, go to <http://www.wm.edu/hr/restructure/>). These committees have completed their work and taken their recommendations to the President for his approval. Final approval by the Board of Visitors is scheduled for September.

Vice President Martin explained that the new Human Resources system includes a new job classification structure and renaming the current categories of employees to Operational Employees (Classified and Hourly), Professional Employees (Professional Faculty) and Executive Employees (Administrative Faculty). She mentioned that the classification and compensation study (conducted by an outside consultant during the past year) may recommend that some jobs that are currently in one category might be moved to another (example “Operational” to “Professional,” or vice versus). Each job will be designated with a category, role, contribution level, and pay range.

She also discussed a new compensation structure based on market (national or regional) and merit (pay for performance), and indicated that the College is accountable to both internal and external equity. She provided the following example: if the median national market salary for a particular position is higher than the salary designated to that position at William & Mary, there will be a system in place to recognize the deficiency, and efforts will be made to increase that position’s salary so that over time, it gets closer to or is on par with the median national salary. At this time, however, there is no funding to execute this plan, which is therefore expected to take several years to implement.

Employees will receive communication indicating the category, role, contribution level, and pay range classification for their positions. The classification process relies on information provided by managers and employees as well as independent data. An appeals process will be established to review questions raised by managers and employees on the classification of individual positions.

Vice President Martin also indicated that the new Human Resources system will require a more formal performance evaluation process for professional faculty that will oblige supervisors to discuss performance plans and evaluations with their professional faculty employees. Unlike the current system, pay increases will be based on these performance evaluations.

She also stated that there is currently no formal grievance process for professional faculty or hourly employees, but there are plans to include such a process for each group in the new Human Resources System. Vice President Martin also discussed plans to develop a new work/life program as well as a training and development program for the College.

Vice President Martin concluded that through the creation of the new Human Resources system, the College is moving towards a more equitable and transparent process whereby we can better attract and retain people and adapt to a new generation of workers. She reiterated the fact that benefits (retirement, health insurance, disability, life insurance, etc.) will not change since the state benefits we currently enjoy are excellent.

A question and answer period followed the guest speakers’ presentations. At the end of the forum, Ms. Molineux encouraged attendees to get involved in the formation of the new organization. She also mentioned there would be a second forum in July or August to review the organization’s Constitution and By-Laws.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05PM.

Submitted by

Judy Corello, Member, Professional Faculty Initial Executive Committee, and Assistant Dean, School of Law
June 13, 2008; revised July 10, 2008