



WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693

Faculty Assembly Minutes, November 28, 2023

3:30 – 5 pm

Location: Board Of Visitors Room, Blow Hall

Zoom: <https://cwm.zoom.us/j/91047315062>

Officers Present: K. Scott Swan (Faculty Assembly President), David Feldman (Vice President), Nicholas Popper (Secretary)

Other Members Present: David Armstrong (Faculty Assembly Representative to the Board of Visitors), Mark Brush, Josh Burk, Christopher Del Negro, Jim Dwyer, Marjy Friedrichs (zoom), John Gilmour, Aaron Griffith (zoom), Katherine Guthrie (zoom), Erin Hendrickson, Jessica Martin (zoom), Terry Meyers (Parliamentarian), Randi Rashkover (zoom); Marc Sher, Evgenia Smirni (zoom), Cristina Stancioiu, Betsy Talbott (Zoom)

Members Absent: Chuck Bailey, Brett Wilson

Others in Attendance: Peggy Agouris (Provost), Pam Eddy, David Kranbuehl, Carrie Nee, David Yaloff (on zoom: Chris Carone, Melanie Dawson, Antonella Di Marzio, Artisia Green, Elizabeth Harbron, Jack Martin, Pieter Peers, Christy Porter, Abbie Schafer, William Stauffer Rachel Stephens, Amy Alyson Teller, Sarah Thomas, Chris Wlosinski, Ted Maris Wolf).

The meeting was called to order at 3:34.

- I. Approval of minutes
- II. Provost's report

Provost Peggy Agouris reports that the process of preparing the application for the New School to SCHEV has begun. As the Dean of the school has not yet been hired, for now the imperative is to assemble a group to work towards implementation. David Yaloff will coordinate.

David Feldman asks what SCHEV's timeline is and how the application will distinguish the school from a school of engineering. Agouris replies that the provisional timeline anticipates a submission in March. She also notes that she has been advised that from accreditation perspective this constitutes a restructuring of existing units, so it might not even be considered a major change.

John Gilmour asks how quickly SCHEV can act. Agouris replies that she doesn't know, but that WM will be starting search for a dean in spring. Vice President David Feldman asks why so quickly, since searching before approval might weaken the pool. Agouris responds that the accreditation process should be far enough along that it should not be a problem, but if there is pushback, they will course correct.

President Scott Swan emphasizes need for faculty input during the SCHEV process. Christopher Del Negro asks whether the process will have any role for department chairs. Agouris says that it will, but that it will be a select rather than large group.

Provost Agouris explains that because of changes in Carnegie assessments, WM qualifies as an R1 institution (though it will not apply until 2025). She notes that this has benefits, but that WM are fairly unique for a R1, so she will be concerning a group to prepare for the issues that might result from this.

III. University Counsel Carrie Nee on the Handbook revision process.

Carrie Nee explains that from the university counsel perspective, much of the case law and provisions have changed since the most recent handbook revision. There are procedural issues and processes that have not been used recently. She also envisions streamlining. She states the importance of the handbook: it articulates the primary conditions of employment for instructional research faculty, so it needs to be clear. The goal of this process is to create a document that will be useful for another couple decades.

Christopher Del Negro observes that there are many issues in terms of DEI with the handbook. Nee replies that the law is clear in that the moment of hiring is the most significant moment of legal risk, but there are DEI opportunities at recruitment and retention, and the process will entail looking at how the handbook has impact on all of these. Del Negro remarks that he would like to see robust framework that could accommodate changes of policies. Nee agrees.

Swan asks where there might be opportunities for collaboration. Nee replies that she sees virtue in collaboration but that depending on the process, there may be areas where the legal risk outweighs value of collaboration. Swan and Feldman ask for an update on where process is now. DF asks whether the Working Group has been identified; David Armstrong reports that there is a draft list circulating, with Nee on it. Nee then notes that another opportunity for collaboration is that faculty can volunteer ideas and policies for the handbook.

Gilmour points out that the handbook is a personnel policy document, but there are others, and some of them seem in conflict, and asks whether there is a good way to lay out personnel policy in a way that will create a single authoritative document. Nee agrees that that would be a great goal for this process. Armstrong notes that President Katherine Rowe had suggested some elements of the handbook might be HR policies that don't belong in it. Gilmour notes that if it's just HR policy than the faculty has no say. Mark Brush observes that looking at the handbook in the last few years has revealed some conflicts between HR requirements and faculty provisions. Nee suggests that the goal should be to set guidelines for decision making rather than fixing outcomes, coming up with standards and guidelines that deal with gray areas and are flexible.

IV. Pam Eddy and the retirement incentives program

Pam Eddy reports that a voluntary framework for retirement was introduced in the spring. This first version did not draw many people in. Over the summer it was re-worked with faculty input. Various potential versions are being mooted; some would need approval from president, others from the governor, especially if there are payouts. She hopes that plan will roll out in the spring, especially since some faculty don't want to make moves until they know what the plan is. They are also considering something like an emeriti faculty association.

Feldman observes that emeriti faculty in the sciences will likely still be interested in doing research and/or tracking grants.

Marc Sher asks why emeriti faculty have to wait to teach for six months after you retire; Eddy explains that it is state law and Nee volunteers that this is a product of Obamacare.

Provost Agouris asks whether this is an outgrowth of the BOV effort from a couple of years ago. Eddy says yes.

V. New Business

President Swan reports that the faculty survey is developing and is drawing administration interest. It needs to happen early in the spring, so FA needs to move fairly quickly. Prior surveys had some good questions that can carry over to get longitudinal analysis. There have been no faculty surveys completed since before covid, so there will be things that have changed. Feldman notes that SACS-COC has some questions they will ask, the committee should coordinate with the accreditation people to make sure relevant questions don't get dropped.

Swan asks to gauge interest in a potential statement of resolution about free speech on campus in the wake of the Israel-Hamas conflict. He notes that the Executive Committee was generally positive about the idea, and that he will write some drafts with the goal of developing a short strong statement. Gilmour asks whether there have been incidents; Swan replies that there have been a few, not widely reported, but not at the scale of many other universities which have had more conflict. Del Negro emphasizes that the statement should vehemently reject violence.

Meeting adjourned at 4:37.