



WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693

Faculty Assembly Minutes, September 24, 2024

3:30 – 5 pm

Location: Chancellor's Hall Seminar Room

<https://cwm.zoom.us/j/4082245225>

Officers Present: David Feldman (Faculty Assembly President), Katherine Guthrie (Vice President), Nicholas Popper (Secretary)

Other Members Present: Chuck Bailey (zoom), Anna Chason, Chris Del Negro (zoom), Jim Dwyer (zoom), Marjy Friedrichs, Aaron Griffiths, Brennan Harris, Rex Kincaid, John Lombardini, Jessica Martin (zoom), Scott McCoy, Terry Meyers (Parliamentarian), Josh Puzey, Stephen Sheehi, Cristina Stancioiu, Scott Swan (Faculty Assembly Representative to the Board of Visitors), Betsy Talbott, Brett Wilson

Members Absent: Rob Latour

Others in Attendance: David Armstrong, Josh Burk, Pam Eddy, Adam Gershowitz

Meeting began at 3:30

- I. Approval of Minutes
- II. Handbook materials from PPC

Adam Gershowitz, from the Handbook committee, presented proposed changes. The first batch concerned integrating the New School into existing college-wide faculty to committees. The proposed changes include adding two seats to Faculty Assembly, and adding a set to PPC, PRC, and FHC. Such changes would be commensurate with existing practices.

Friedrichs asks about the naming of VIMS throughout the handbook, given its new identity as the Batten School. Gershowitz notes that the current naming reflects his understanding of the preference of the VIMS Dean, but Friedrichs says it might have shifted since they last spoke. Eddy points out that it is “VIMS” throughout the handbook. Discussion of how to choreograph procedures so that the change can be accepted without circulating back through all handbook revision committees again. Ultimately Gershowitz says we could do two votes, one change and one accepting not changed in case that’s the preference of PRC, in the interest of expediency. Motion to approve is seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Second, Gershowitz presented proposed revision for PPC and PRC. He explained that, according to those on the committee, the workload is enormous, the pace is incredibly slow, there is a lack of clarity on what they should consider, and they often receive floods of material because there is no clear understanding on campus about what these bodies are supposed to do. The proposed changes are intended to streamline and clarify what are appropriate matters for these committees. Narrowing the role and responsibility of those bodies will help them concentrate their time and energy more effectively. Feldman points out that it’s very inside baseball, but that this is necessary. Motion to accept is proposed and seconded and passes unanimously.

Third, Gershowitz explained the proposed deletion of the statement of rights and responsibilities and replacement from preamble to the handbook. He explained this is definitely of interest for faculty, but that the statement applies well beyond the faculty (and faculty handbook), that it appears in a wide variety of places on campus, and that it sits outside of the rest of the processes of articulated in the handbook. In terms of composition, this document predates the handbook and was added to it later (one sign of this is that editing it requires a difference process from editing the rest of the handbook). There will also be a link to the statement in the handbook. His view is that removing it from the handbook does not diminish its legitimacy or power, and that it lies outside the handbook’s role as a functional practical tool for faculty to understand their role and job responsibilities. Cutting it will also usefully shrink the handbook, which is too long.

Sheehi asks why would a statement on academic freedom not belong? Gershowitz says the handbook is an employment guide for the university, while the document is a value and a value statement that is not limited to faculty, and that its presence at the front of the handbook is keeping people from using to properly.

Swan points out that it would be linked within the handbook and referred to in the handbook, easily accessible. Feldman says the question is whether the hyperlink and posting on provost’s website is sufficient to communicate and support its statement of faculty rights and responsibilities. Sheehi expresses continued concern for the erosion of academic rights and responsibilities and explains that that is driving his statement of concern. Puzey asks whether FA

can confirm through the motion that there will be a hyperlink. Motion made to approve document with confirmation of hyperlink. Procedural discussion, and then seconded. Motion passes unanimously with the contingency: “approved with the understanding that the statement of rights and responsibilities will be hyperlinked.”

The final handbook matter for this meeting concerns the revision of the appointments section, the NTE section being the most significant. Gershowitz explains that many of the revisions aim to clean up a section that was very messy and disorganized. The other main element is that the administration had previously taken the position that there was a “presumption of continuation” for NTEs. This was misguided because it suggested a permanence which was not intended; the language was not intended to provide long-term security, rather it meant more that it was presumed that the contract was rolling unless there was some action to intervene. This meant that the contract could be terminated at any time as long as the dean followed the appropriate processes, so in point of fact NTEs could be fired immediately and that there was no long-term security at all. The changes are intended to increase clarity, but also to move more towards term (though often renewable) contracts rather than vaguely rolling ones. The language chosen is intended to reflect that, and that there are different needs. Gershowitz further notes that there is a footnote that grandfathered in protections for NTEs hired before this change.

Swan asks whether Rowe’s wording is integrated into the handbook revision. Gershowitz says the document, and the footnote, and a series of other changes, were produced in dialogue with the president. Eddy observes that A&S already has this in place. Most of the schools do as well. Betsy agrees as well that the schools are revising their frameworks on the basis of the A&S one. Feldman reinforces that the intention of these revisions is not to take security away but to enhance it, by codifying both lengths of tenure and by codifying duration of notification before termination.

McCoy asks whether this means that faculty on continuing one-year contracts would have to sign this or would it be individual choice. Gershowitz suggests that he thinks it will be school by school. Sheehi asks what the previous notification policy: Gershowitz notes that it is now at least a year, under the previous regime it had the possibility of being considerably less than that.

Eddy notes two recent additions from PPC made in an effort to be more precise about “Instructor of Record” and to account for the variety of roles that adjuncts, graduate students, etc. have in classes across the schools. Feldman observes that some schools may need to change their nomenclature.

Friedrichs notes that the section on joint appointments is not consistent. Gershowitz agrees but says that addressing this has been shelved, as it is viewed as not as urgent as other matters and is

going on a list of items that need to be cleaned up in a comprehensive edit of the handbook after this particular revision process has concluded.

Kincaid reports concern from some NTEs that they will have to keep track of their contract and renewal. Gershowitz says that that will be the responsibility of the administrators.

Motion to approve is seconded, and it passes unanimously.

Gershowitz summarizes work to be done and what work has been shelved: FHC and Title IX issues will be delayed past this particular revision because elements of the latter bearing on the former are currently being litigated. Upcoming matters will concern “Fitness of Duty”; some elements concerning process in negative tenure/promotion votes, and the leave of absence section.

III. Announcements and brief reports

Wilson reports on the faculty survey. It had a response rate of 60%, with roughly 50% at full professor, so that group was overrepresented. Since the last survey was conducted (in 2019), overall, TE job satisfaction (satisfied or very satisfied) dropped from 71 to 67 for job satisfaction; for NTE from 75 to 73. There were also perceptible downward trends in categories like burnout, ability to manage job-life, and wellbeing etc. The other biggest drop was in satisfaction with university governance, in 2019 amongst TEs it was 46% and amongst NTEs 47%, in 2024, 7% and 6%. Other striking notes were that 75% were dissatisfied with not having a Tuition Benefit, which is currently being explored.

Feldman asks whether there will there be a written summary. Wilson says one is being composed and it will go to the Faculty Affairs Committee. Swan suggests that some of the results will be presented to BOV and to the Faculty.

Eddy reports on the retirement and incentive rollout. The Phased Teaching plan is making its way up the flow chart, the Cash Incentive Plan is at the governor’s mansion right now. She has been told that it is taking the normal amount of time. Various parties are moving towards setting up infrastructure assuming it will be approved to ensure that info is available for faculty, that HR has identified qualifying faculty, etc. The hope is that the governor will give some more opportunity and leeway for the Cash Incentive Plan.

Wilson asks whether we have been assured that the incentive of the plan is not to reduce the size of the faculty. Eddy and Feldman reply that it is an important question and that there have been clear statements to that end.

Swan notes that, as the survey showed, there is considerable interest in a Tuition Benefit. President Rowe seems interested and there are various models and plans under development concerning how to pay for it given state limitations on using state revenue to support it.

Talbott reporting on new school implementation says that they have interviewed some faculty moving into TNS and will be interviewing some others.

Bailey says he does not have much to report regarding COPAR. Feldman reminds the room that COPAR's main task for the year, at the instigation of last year's FA, will be to work with the Faculty Compensation Board figure out how faculty salaries compare to those of peer institutions, bearing in mind the W&M Promise, an agreement made between the Faculty and Administration, to elevate faculty salaries to the 60th percentile in this pool. Feldman also notes that HR recently informed us that the university turns out to have commissioned a faculty salary study from Mercer. Guthrie notes that the current head of HR is working very hard and seems to have the unit in much improved order but that in conversation she expressed that does not have a full sense of the extent of some of the previous problems and frustrations, and that it might be useful to have some concrete examples to present.

With more handbook revisions looming on a tight schedule, discussion was had about squeezing in another meeting. The decision was made to convert the October 15 Executive Committee meeting into a full FA meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:58.