



WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693

Faculty Assembly Minutes, December 10, 2024

3:30 – 5 pm

Location: Chancellor's Hall 219

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

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

Other Members Present: Anna Chason, Jim Dwyer, Aaron Griffith (zoom), Brennan Harris, John Lombardini, Jessica Martin (zoom), Terry Meyers (Parliamentarian), Josh Puzey, Cristina Stancioiu, Scott Swan (Faculty Assembly Representative to the Board of Visitors), Betsy Talbott (zoom), Brett Wilson

Members Absent: Chuck Bailey, Chris Del Negro, Marjy Friedrichs, Rex Kincaid, Rob Latour, Scott McCoy, Stephen Sheehi,

Others in Attendance: Provost Peggy Agouris, Pamela Eddy, Margaret Saha, Evgenia Smirni (proxy), Matt Smith, Sylvia Tandeciarz, David Yalof

Meeting begins at 3:30

I. Minutes accepted

II. FA Constitution

President David Feldman reports that he has sent a note to the deans regarding amendments to the FA constitution and the proposed timeline for voting on it. Upon this consultation he recognizes that the timeline needs to be accelerated, and he hopes to have it done by January 17 for the February Board of Visitors meeting. This would allow everything to be in place for April elections. It will have to be provisionally done unless two other schools join A&S in accepting the proposed revisions before then.

III. Faculty Research Committee

Margaret Saha, chair of the FRC reports. She was surprised to become the chair this past summer, and has discovered a lack of organization, clarity of mission, and schedule. The committee has no mission statement, bylaws, or charge; there are just scattered documents on the A&S website. She is trying to instill more order. The committee is a fair amount of work (concerning issues such as research compensation and evaluating limited submission applications such as those for NEH summer research stipends). She envisions it as having a bigger role in stimulating and supporting research across domains within the university. There is also a lack of clarity as to whom they report: the consensus is FA but some have operated under the assumption that it was either the VPR or OSP.

In response to her query, there is unanimous agreement that in the future the FRC will have membership from every school, though this has not historically been the case. She proposes to have the representation on the committee parallel FA's organization. Acknowledges that at times evaluation committees will have to draw in people with appropriate expertise who are not on the committee, which FA acknowledges and endorses.

Feldman asks Parliamentarian Terry Meyers what the process is to approve changes. Meyers replies that Saha should provide proposals and it will be approved by motions.

Dwyer asks whether it is usual for a committee under FA purview to have bylaws. Meyer replies it's unusual but they often have guidelines, rules etc.

Swan asks whether the FRC distributes WM money or someone else's. Saha says sometimes it comes from outside others but they also oversee evaluation of provost's summer grants, for example. Swan replies that the administration will therefore be interested in process, with which Saha agrees. Harris asks whether the provost's disbursement of such money must go through this process or whether there are others. Swan responds that there are many pathways.

Feldman requests that Saha generate mission, charge, and structure for FA to approve in short order, and then a process for operating procedures or guidelines in the future.

IV. FA bylaws

Dwyer presents the revisions from the ad hoc Committee on Revision of Faculty Assembly Constitution and Bylaws for bylaw revisions. The first group of them is mostly to change representation to reflect The New School. The second major element concerns elections. The process codified in the bylaws has not been followed in practice and is more or less impossible (to be done in April, most notably) within the context of an End of Year meeting. In particular there are rules about balancing representation across units which could not be done in real time.

Second, there is the issue of FA committees and how to recommend people for administration-generated committees. In the bylaws, advising on appointments to university committees is delegated to the Executive Committee, but that meets only once a month. The Executive Committee, when discussing this, proposed that a Committee on Committees would be the way to go, working in collaboration with the Executive Committee.

Brett Wilson notes that Executive Committee members of the Faculty Affairs committee might be good target. Swan agrees with Wilson's proposal and observes that this creates a group of five people from Executive Committee and Faculty Affairs responsible for proposing faculty for university committees. Feldman notes that he has been doing a lot of ad hoc decision-making which cannot be the indefinite procedure, but proposes that the FA president should be an ad hoc member of the committee and will communicate results to administration. He notes that there is no need for change in bylaws right now because it's the Executive Committee making this decision, and will write guidelines once we see how it works maybe.

Concerning the problem of elections, Wilson suggests striking all the rules from the bylaws. Swan and others respond with enthusiasm. Feldman asks Dwyer whether that would be viable, Dwyer says he is amenable.

V. Committee Reports

Swan reports that the BOV is happy about the handbook revisions. Reports continued discussion of keeping a backstop of 60% tenure-eligible faculty. Communicates that the BOV's new strategy focuses on national preeminence and along with that President Rowe is emphasizing the WM's distinctive intimacy, excellence, research experience.

Feldman reports that the retirement incentive program is moving forward.

Wilson reports that he has been hard at work on the write-up of the Faculty Survey. He notes that the major shifts concern the perceptions of administration and work/life balance. He also reports that the faculty's clear budget priority is new TE hires. Feldman asks about the timeline for the official report; Wilson replies that he is rotating off FA after the fall term so would like to finish before then. Feldman asks what has been done with the survey reports in the past; Wilson replies that it will go on the FA website as per precedent.

Puzey asks whether the survey has been designed to offer longitudinal data; Wilson replies that there was a lot of change between the 2016 and 2019 surveys, but the 2019 one was designed to enable considerable more longitudinal tracking in the future.

VI. Evaluation of Part Time NTEs

Matt Smith reminds FA that we need a policy on evaluating part time NTEs (now including postdocs), which was not in the handbook before. The motion* unanimously passes.

** The W&M Faculty Assembly reviewed this policy and adopted a motion on December 10, 2024, approving of the establishment of this policy by the provost in a manner such that the policy is not a component of the W&M Faculty Handbook.*

VII. Provost's Report

Provost Peggy Agouris reports that students are feeling stressed and anxious. Her office has made a survey for feedback on blackboard which was not intended to be formal or

comprehensive, more like a means of taking the campus temperature. It received more than 1000 responses from both graduate and undergraduate students and will take a while to process. The questions were focused on academic excellence, national preeminence, and how to have a difference-making experience. The major themes that have emerged on preliminary inspection suggest viewing academic excellence as a holistic exercise involving not just grades but integrity, curiosity, creativity, and more; balancing excellence with mental health; offering more opportunities for collaborative learning which students described as especially enriching; strengthening interdisciplinarity; emphasizing practical application and integrating theory with practical use; enhancing inclusivity. Problem areas included stress; registration; a disconnect between faculty expectations and student needs; insufficient options for COLL requirements, summer programming. Agouris notes that many praised specific faculty by name.

Meeting concluded at 5:08.