

**Committee on Academic External Relations (CEAR) 2022 Annual Report to the Faculty Senate**  
**George Mason University**  
**Faculty Senate Chair, Melissa Broeckelman-Post**

## **Introduction**

This report summarizes CEAR's work during 2021-2022 Academic Year (AY) at George Mason University. In particular, it highlights specific accomplishments of the committee while pointing out opportunities for improvements that the next team can use as point of reference. While limited by the Covid-19 pandemic, the committee did what it could under such circumstances to carry out its charge. The committee's charge and composition as revised and approved by the Faculty Senate - November 18, 2009, is provided below.

## **Composition**

Six members who are elected for two-year terms. Three members of the Committee should be senators, two others are elected from the faculty at-large, and one ex-officio member is the Provost's designee. At the beginning of each academic year the Committee must meet to select the representatives to the Virginia Faculty Senate from among its members, excluding the ex-officio member. At least one of these representatives must be a senator. In case of vacancies, the Nominations Committee nominates the new members, and the Committee internally evaluates and possibly reallocates the assigned responsibilities.

## **Charge**

- A. Represent GMU faculty at Virginia higher education faculty governance organizations, including the Faculty Senate of Virginia. The seats allocated to GMU at the Faculty Senate of Virginia are to be filled by members of CEAR.
- B. Report to the GMU faculty senate on the proceedings of the Virginia Faculty Senate and voice back to this organization issues of relevance to GMU.
- C. Gather information on key matters about higher education in state legislation, state committees, and local venues, and report back to the GMU Senate.
- D. Provide forums and avenues for the exchange of ideas with representatives of SCHEV, state legislators representing Northern Virginia, and community groups related to higher education in Northern Virginia.

## **AY2021-2022 Committee Meetings**

**9/24/2021** – The CEAR committee members attended this organizational meeting to meet and greet while setting the agenda for the year. Consistent with the charge, the members agreed on the agenda items with special emphasis on legislations, particularly those affecting faculty at institutions of higher learning in Virginia. Also, volunteers to serve as chair were sought, and

Isaac Gang and Chaowei (Phil) Yang volunteered and were confirmed as Co-Chairs on 9/27/2021.

Furthermore, and after this meeting, it came to the committee's attention via the Faculty Senate that three representatives from CEAR are needed to serve on the Faculty Senate of Virginia (FSVA). With the Representative (current GMU Senate Chair, Melissa Broeckelman-post) and a senator (Rebecca Sutter) already serving on FSVA as per its bylaws, representing GMU, three additional representatives were needed in order to meet GMU's quota within this body. It should be noted, as per FSVA bylaws, that any institution with over 1000 faculty members earns three additional representatives, in addition to the Chair and Senator, and Isaac Gang, Jatin Ambegaonkar, and Phil Yang, volunteered to serve and were confirmed on 9/29/2022.

**11/3/2021** – The CEAR committee members on Wednesday November 3, 2021, met with Mark Smith, Mason's Executive Director of State Government Relations who shared more about how the Office of Government and Community Relations (<https://relations.gmu.edu/>) represents the university administration's positions in Richmond during the General Assembly and throughout the year with key stakeholders in the legislative branch, and how our group might support this work.

**4/6/2022** – The CEAR committee members on Wednesday April 6, 2022, met and assessed the committee's progress and what it should prioritize within the committee's remaining tenure. The committee identified several opportunities that included research initiatives that Mason might be able to benefit from and tracking several legislative proposals which may have impacted Mason either directly or indirectly.

## Reports

During the AY2021-2021, CEAR committee members wrote several reports and the Co-Chairs made several presentations on these reports to the faculty senate. In total, there were two reports/presentations which are summarized below:

### *Report 1:*

- On Wednesday November 3, 2021, members of CEAR met with Mark Smith, Mason's Executive Director of State Government Relations who shared more about how the Office of Government and Community Relations (<https://relations.gmu.edu/>) represents the university administration's positions in Richmond during the General Assembly and throughout the year with key stakeholders in the legislative branch, and how our group might support this work.
- In this meeting, CEAR shared with Mr. Smith (GMU Office of Government and Community Relations) potential areas of collaboration

- On Saturday October 23, 2021, CEAR leadership attended Faculty Senate of Virginia (FSVA) Fall meeting that discussed this year's agenda. In this meeting, several items of interest came up:
  - o Identification of Post-election agenda including the issue of tuition waiver for employee dependents
  - o FSVA proposed a subcommittee to work on legislative agenda (Mason is represented by 2 or 3 volunteers)
  - o FSVA resolved to increase its visibility by reaching more faculty members (this can be done by "harvesting" faculty emails and improving the current FSVA database)
  - o FSVA resolved to advocate for high-speed Internet access in Virginia.
  - o FSVA shared how our respective Senate leaders interact with and are/aren't represented on our institution's BOV (or equivalent body)

*Report 2/Presentation 1:*

## **Committee on External Academic Relations (CEAR) Report**

### **GMU Faculty Senate Meeting 2/9/2022**

Isaac K. Gang & Chaowei "Phil" Yang  
CO-Chairs

#### **Agenda**

- GMU Faculty Advocacy Opportunities
  - 2022 Session of the General Assembly
  - Executive Orders/Legislative Initiatives
    - Support GMU's Office of Government & Community Relations
    - BillTracker50
- CEAR Proposed Priorities
  - Support Bills of Interest
  - Oppose Bills of Concern

CEAR Recommended Actions to Take

#### **Faculty Advocacy Opportunities**

- 2022 Session of the General Assembly
  - The 2022 session of the General Assembly began on January 12.
  - Main task is to approve the Commonwealth's biennial budget for fiscal years 2023 and 2024 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2024).
  - Former Governor Northam submitted his administration's budget proposals in December, but Governor Youngkin has submitted his own budget amendments.

- The Republicans have a majority in the House of Delegates, while the Democrats retain the majority in the Senate. The General Assembly will adjourn on March 12.
- Executive Orders/Legislative Initiatives
  - Governor Youngkin’s Executive Order #1 orders the end of use of “inherently divisive concepts,” including Critical Race Theory, in public K-12 education.
  - The definition provided is clearly in reference the teaching that addresses the issue of race in Virginia and the United States
  - The order has a legislative companion in HB 781: “A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 22.1-208.03, relating to public elementary and secondary schools; student citizenship skills; certain instructional policies prohibited; parental rights; disclosures; penalties; other remedies.”
  - Do not include higher education but could indirectly make things difficult in the college classroom in the near future
- Support GMU’s Office of Government & Community Relations
  - Consider becoming an Issue Advisor
  - Use BillTrack50 to support bills of GMU’s priorities (BillTrack50.com)
    - You can leave comment under any bill of interest
  - Provide the office with insights
  - <http://relations.gmu.edu/government-affairs/state-relations/bill-tracking/>
  - Mason 2022 Legislative priorities (Mark Smith):
    - Financial Aid: Provide Affordable Access for All Students
    - Faculty and Staff Compensation and Benefits
    - Disparity Funding
    - Capital Outlay
      - Student Innovation Factory Building
      - Improve Telecommunications Infrastructure (Phase 3)
      - Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering Building

## **CEAR Proposed Priorities**

### **Bills of interest (support)**

- BIENNIAL BUDGET (HB 30 and SB 30) We support 5% salary increases in each year of the biennium, and support the budget amendments to fund 100% of the cost of salary increases from the General Fund
- Governor Northam’s budget proposals include a 5% salary increase for state employees, including faculty, in both FY2023 and FY2024. However, one-half of the increases for faculty are to come from non-general fund sources, meaning from the institutions
- Senator McClellan (D) and Delegate Morefield (R) have filed budget amendments to add \$94 million in FY2023 and \$194 million in FY 2024 to fund 100% of the cost of the salary and benefits increases proposed in the budget in order to limit the need to increase tuition.

- **Bills of concern (oppose)**
- HB 1226 Delegate Davis (R). This bill reads, “Each tenured professor employed at a public institution of higher education shall personally teach students enrolled at the institution for at least 12 hours per week during any fall, winter, or spring semester, quarter, or other academic term and in a live, in-person format.” Note: Delegate Davis is now the chair of the House Education Committee, which has jurisdiction over this bill.

### **CEAR Recommended Actions to Take**

- Support the GMU Office of Government and Community Relations
- Constituents of Senator McClellan (D-Richmond) and Delegate Morefield (R-Tazewell) are encouraged to email notes of thanks for their budget amendments that would preserve faculty salary increases without requiring increased tuition.
- Contact your Delegate, especially if they serve on the House Education Committee, and explain how dangerous HB 1226 is to our institutional mission and our institutionally determined workloads.
- The members of the House Education Committee are Davis (Chair), Wampler, Greenhalgh, McQuinn, Sewell, Avoli (Vice Chair), Freitas, Tata, Subramanyam, Maldonado, LaRock, Coyner, Bourne, Guzman, McGuire, Cherry, VanValkenburg, Filler-Corn, Batten, Durant, Rasoul, Simonds.

### **References and Individuals to thank**

- Mark Smith, GMU Office of Government and Community Relations (GMU)
- Carmen Rodriguez, Chair of Faculty Senate of Virginia (VCU)
- Brian Turner, AAUP/FSVA (Randolph-Macon College)
- <http://relations.gmu.edu/government-affairs/state-relations/bill-tracking/>
- BillTrack50.com

**Thank you!**

### **Questions**

Isaac Gang & Chaowei (Pill) Yang, Co-Chairs  
Committee on External Academic Relations (CEAR)

### **Conclusion**

The CEAR committee members have embarked on a mission to improve Mason’s interaction with outside entities, particularly those responsible for making laws at the state and national level. Though our work mostly focused on the VA General Assembly, we really wanted to expand to include the US congress and engage CHEV AND BOV more. Since Covid-19 made

things difficult, and the last few goals were not met, it is our hope that the next group picks up here and continue on this small progress that we have made.

We would like to thank GMU Faculty Senate President, Melissa Broeckelman-Post for all her support during our tenure.

Signed:

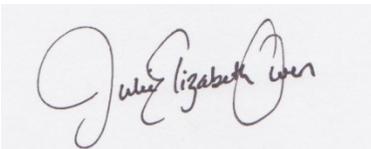
CEAR Committee Members



Isaac K. Gang, Co-Chair, CEC



Choawei Yang, Co-Chair, COS



Julie Owen, CHSS



Rebecca Sutter, CHHS



Maria Nykyforovych, School of Business



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