GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MTG.
January 31, 2022
ELECTRONIC MEETING
3:30 – 5:00 pm

Present: Melissa Broeckelman-Post (chair), Lisa Billingham, Richard Craig, Kim Eby (Vice Provost), Mark Ginsberg (Provost), Carol Kissal (Senior VP), Kumar Mehta, Keith Renshaw, Solon Simmons, Suzanne Slayden.

I. Approval of Minutes (none noted on January 31st agenda)

II. Announcements
   • Provost Ginsberg made a series of announcements:
     o Enrollment data for Spring 22 is at 100% of Spring 21 in credit hours, and over 100% in headcount. Our overall out-of-state headcount Spring 22 is 23% (undergraduate is 16%, graduate is higher) – might be highest out-of-state proportion in his 12 years here.
     o Communication just came out from the President about changes to our COVID policies that were driven by directives from both Governor and Attorney General. Vaccination requirements have now transitioned to be strong encouragement for faculty, staff and students. There was a lot of conversation with colleagues and presidents at other universities. We are still requiring testing of a number of communities (athletes, residential students, and faculty/staff/students in high-contact positions and areas). For others we are strongly encouraging testing. We tested over 20,000 folks in January (mostly the last 2 weeks of January). Diagnostic testing center remains open daily, but only testing around 6-15 per day. It is a very important service for those who are symptomatic, and the good news is that the numbers continue to trend downward. Our positivity rate continues to go down precipitously, and our campus positivity rates (around 1-2%) are far less than the region. If this continues, we will begin to reconsider our masking requirements, but not before March. As you know, the governor did mandate that there be a removal of mask requirements in K-12 schools, but not in universities.
   • Sr. VP Carol Kissal noted that her team is preparing for the discussion on Tier III that was requested (Feb 9 meeting or spillover meeting on Feb 23). We are also getting previews of the Strategic Plan – let me know if you want to have that presented to EXC, and/or Senate.
     o Chair Broeckelman-Post noted that she and Senator Renshaw are on the Steering Committee and have not yet seen anything, but that when it was ready, it would be really helpful to provide information to EXC.
   • Chair Broeckelman-Post announced that Kent Zimmerman replaced Hyun Young Cho as Chair of the Mason Korea Faculty Assembly (ex-officio Faculty Senator).

III. Progress reports, business, and agenda items from Senate Standing Committees
A. Academic Policies – Suzanne Slayden

- Some of the work from this semester has finally come to fruition. Related to the policy that an IN counts as an F for undergraduates and academic warning for graduates. The committee evaluated other institutions in VA and elsewhere, and this is not the policy at other institutions – there was no objection from the Policy Management Group to changing it, so they will present a motion at the Feb 9 FS meeting.

- Committee is also working on the “never attended” policy. Currently, an “NA” changes to an F on the transcript, and often students who receive one receive several in the same semester – major consequences, and these are often students in distress. The Committee wants to change this so that an NA simply provides no “quality points.” Mason will need to start identifying those earlier in the semester, though. Many other universities do that (part of the compliance for financial federal aid). It will require some work by faculty in the first week or so – figuring that part out is slowing the committee’s progress down, but anticipate presenting at the March meeting.

B. Budget and Resources – Kumar Mehta

- Salary data has been received – committee is organizing it and scanning for potential errors before publicizing. B&R will consider making two requests for salary data this year, due to two rounds of raises.

- First meeting of the Internal Review Subcommittee will be in first week of February. The committee will hear proposed IT projects and help decide priorities.

- B&R is working to deepen engagement with “Ways and Means Committee”

- Chair Broeckelman-Post noted that merit raises went into Patriot Web on Friday, and asked SVP Kissal if these were merit raises only, or merit and market adjustment.

  - SVP Kissal noted it could be both. The market adjustment is a longer-term benchmark – will not be done in one fell swoop. So some units may have used the 2% merit pool to begin working toward the market adjustment, as well. There was the 5% raise in summer, 2% raise this winter, and they anticipate the market adjustment in July, as part of a 2-step approach. Currently, the focus is on the state budget, and the work being done to try to have the state fund 100% of the upcoming summer raises (typically, the state funds 50%, and asks universities to fund the other 50%).

  - Chair Broeckelman-Post asked if she could discuss this at the next FS meeting, to help clear up confusion that may exist. SVP Kissal agreed.

  - Provost Ginsberg noted that they are working to develop relationships with new administration in Virginia, and trying to proceed cautiously.

  - VP Eby noted that there are disparate communications internally, with confusion about the 2% merit vs. market adjustment. SVP Kissal noted that they are working to develop very clear communication, and that she is hopeful it will be ready in advance of the next FS meeting, so happy to talk about it then.
C. Faculty Matters – Solon Simmons

- Committee will have the Faculty Evaluation of Administrators report, with qualitative and quantitative data, ready soon.
- Faculty Matters Committee was concerned about the news about Brian Walther, given how helpful he had been to work with on a variety of issues. The working relationship with Brian had been a “selling point” with regard to advantages of working closely with administration on issues. Also, we have said that term faculty do not need tenure to protect academic freedom – but Brian was an at-will employee who was summarily let go, which is chilling. It will likely play a role in future discussion about differences between evergreen contracts and tenure contracts.
- Provost Ginsberg indicated that no one at the university had any inkling that his firing was coming. It is unusual, but is the purview of the Attorney General, as head University Counsel reports to the Attorney General.
- A question was raised about whether other issues, such as progress on dependent tuition, might be impacted by the new administration. The response was that it was not anticipated that the Governor or Attorney General would become too heavily involved in that issue. It was also noted that the Governor did not campaign strongly on issues related to higher education, so there was not an anticipation of major initiatives.

D. Nominations – Richard Craig

- Working on filling a vacancy on the Research Advisory Committee (required to have five colleges/schools represented).
- To send email to deans of the colleges/schools to find nominees for the Grading Process Task Force (to look at grading process during pre and post pandemic).
- Chair Broeckelman-Post noted that a term faculty member of the Task Force on Reimagining Faculty Roles and Rewards resigned from the university, and asked for input on whether they should replace that person with the next person who got the next most votes, or leave the slot vacant, given that much work is already completed.
  - Clear consensus was to fill the position if possible.
  - Nominations Committee will check to see who had the next highest number of votes among the term faculty members who were nominated.

E. Organization and Operations – Lisa Billingham

- Trying to expedite proposed revisions to Faculty Handbook Committee charge.
- Working to find time for ‘open house’ to introduce faculty to new Ombuds, Kimberly Davidson.

IV. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives

- No reports.

V. New Business, Updates, and Discussion
A. Task Force on Reimagining Faculty Roles and Rewards – Kim Eby and Melissa Broeckelman-Post, co-chairs

- Chair Broeckelman-Post reported that the TF met on Friday – made updates and added some commentary about challenges and opportunities associated with each model. She and VP Eby reviewed the work using the slide deck shown in Appendix A.
- Vice Provost Eby: We have two different proposals: (1) be more flexible with movement between roles that would happen through workload adjustments; (2) more radical, which is not to distinguish between tenure line and term faculty anymore. Additional notes:
  o It is rare for tenure line faculty to move into term roles – would only be for faculty who have really demonstrated themselves to be excellent teachers. This possibility is not meant to do anything to interrupt tenure. Very rarely, people who are pre-tenure have asked to be considered to be moved to a term line, so tried to capture that.
  o The bigger question is process for term faculty to move into tenure lines (if we keep distinctions between tenure line and term faculty)
  o TF tried to generate benefits/opportunities and drawbacks/concerns for each proposal
  o This work requires articulation of shared values and principles. Then, need to operationalize the aspirational idea, put together a timeline and a project management plan for the institution to make the change manageable at all levels.
  o There have been many conversations, not all of which are represented in the proposal. For instance, at the recent American Association of Colleges and Universities meeting, Pullias Center for Education (USC) presented a Delphi award to Worcester Polytechnic Institute for their work creating a pathway for tenure for some teaching faculty.
- Chair Broeckelman-Post and VP Eby asked for input from EXC on presentation, particularly additional questions, interest areas, potential strengths, opportunities that might be missing.
- There was some discussion of Proposal 2 (tenure for all) was feasible, and if not, should it even be included.
  o Other institutions have tried to do this, and they have ended up relying more on adjuncts and, eventually recreating some version of the term line.
  o WPI is an exception, but they are not making all term faculty tenured. They created 15 tenure-track roles each year for three years, so they will have 45 tenure-line instructional faculty without research responsibilities, not their whole faculty.
  o Part of the problem is that we have a process to evaluate genuine excellence in research, scholarship, and creative work – we rely on a professional community of peers nationally and internationally. There is no parallel community for the evaluation of teaching, learning, and mentoring. Despite updated guidelines for genuine excellence in teaching, the creation of criteria for high competence in teaching, and the development of resources for documenting and assessing teaching and learning at Mason, assessing excellence in teaching is still a work in progress.
  o A question was raised about the lack of national searches for term faculty, but it was noted that some units do national searches, and more could be encouraged.
What WPI did is somewhere between Proposal #1 (more flexibility) and Proposal #2 (everyone is tenured) – they identified a subset of term faculty lines to be eligible for tenure. However, creating a pathway for a portion of term faculty would not resolve the issues, and would in some ways lead to a three-tier system instead of a two-tier system. A teaching track for tenure would not be a panacea, although it would address some concerns for a subset of term faculty.

A point of much discussion within the TF was what it means to be an R1. The TF was very intentional in Proposal #1 to say that the distinction between tenure-line and term faculty needs to be clearly defined. Tenure-track faculty have to do all three of teaching, research and service, at least in the early stages, and probably all the way through. Term faculty might be doing two of the three. So even for tenure-line faculty who are more teaching-centered, there still has to be research (does not matter if it is scholarship of teaching and learning versus other kinds of research). Proposal #1 does not have tenure for those doing activity in only 2 domains (e.g., teaching and service only), whereas Proposal #2 does.

Having tenure across the board for every member of the faculty, regardless of their assignment, background, or expertise is likely untenable for administration and BOV – so presenting it as a viable option runs the risk of setting unrealistic expectations that cause greater problems down the road.

One of the many conversations that led to this task force was a request to genuinely consider what is represented in Proposal #2.

The TF was developed as a FS Task Force, and this TF generated the proposal, so it likely needs to be included. However, the wording should possible be “option” or “model” rather than “proposal,” as the TF is simply presenting models for consideration, rather than full-blown proposals. Several agreed that might be a good idea and more in line with the current status of the Task Force work.

It was noted that it is important to engage in robust discussion of these issues, so that all voices can be heard – most times, when issues like this have been fully debated (with full discussion of all pros/cons), the majority of faculty come down on the side of realistic solutions.

Chair Broeckelman-Post noted that there are really three options: (1) do nothing, (2) Proposal #1 – more moderate, expand how we count things and align workload/evaluation in ways that give more flexibility for tenure-line and term faculty, and some pathways to move between, and (3) Proposal #2 – make everybody tenured. There are challenges with each.

As next steps, the TF will make a brief presentation and solicit feedback at the Feb 9 FS meeting, after which will be a virtual town hall on Feb 18 for the full Mason community. The town hall will be recorded, and a Qualtrics survey for broader feedback will be distributed. After receiving community feedback, the TF will focus on next steps for implementation. They hope to present recommendations to FS in April, which could include a proposal for another task force, or a set of recommendations to various existing committees (e.g., Effective Teaching Committee, Academic Policies Committee).
• Senator Renshaw suggested including direct messaging to deans, as well as template slides or information for Chairs & Directors to review with their faculty, to encourage representative engagement of all units.

B. Faculty Senate Motion to Support President Washington in COVID-19 Mitigation Advocacy – submitted by Tim Leslie
• General discussion suggested that Dr. Leslie's intent was to support the President in his interactions with the new administration. However, calling greater attention to discord might do the opposite. Thus, the Executive Committee concurred not to include the motion in the agenda, and instead, to seek another way to communicate faculty support to the President and others (e.g., comments to the Rector in the upcoming FS meeting).

VI. Agenda for FS Meeting – February 9, 2022
• Call to order
• Approval of FS Minutes – December 1 and December 8, 2021
• Opening Remarks – Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Chair
• Rector Jimmy Hazel
• Committee Reports:
  A. Faculty Senate Standing Committees
     Executive Committee
     o Senate Coffee Chat (on Zoom) Friday, February 11, 9:30am
       https://gmu.zoom.us/j/95897890149?pwd=Q0tIR3ZKTGpiTURTenNBMIb2S08xQT09
     Academic Policies
     Budget and Resources
     Faculty Matters
     Nominations
     Organization and Operations

  B. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives
     Task Force on Reimagining Faculty Roles and Rewards*
     Mason Core Committee*
     Report requests sent 1/21, due 2/1 - those received so far listed below
     Gift Acceptance Committee- confirmed that report is coming
     Grievance Committee
     Research Advisory Committee
     Mason Club- announcement coming

• New Business

  Carol Kissal- presentation on budget updates and changes to retirement benefits (403(b))
• Announcements
  o Provost Ginsberg
  o SVP Kissal

• Remarks for the Good of the Faculty

• Adjournment

VII. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Keith Renshaw
Secretary
Appendix A
Task Force for Reimagining Faculty Roles and Rewards

What we considered

Proposal 1
- Keep distinction between tenure-line and term with options for more flexible movement between roles

Proposal 2
- Eliminate distinction between tenure-line and term

Tenure-Line Proposal:
All tenured faculty are hired with significant research expectations as part of their role; after tenure (and in some cases before), workload percentages could be adjusted to do more teaching or more leadership/administrative roles.

These are not formal pathways but rather acknowledged workload adjustments to more research, teaching, or leadership/administrative roles at later career stages.

Evaluations, annual and RPT, would be modified to reflect workload adjustments in contributions for these areas. Thresholds for excellence in each category would be aligned with workload percentage so that quality is expected but that quantity would shift accordingly.

Tenure would demand contributions in teaching, research, and service. Quality of contributions, across areas, would be essential, but quantity would reflect workload adjustments.
**Example Tenure-Track & Tenured Workloads**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research (40%)</th>
<th>Teaching (40%)</th>
<th>Service (20%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research (20%)</td>
<td>Teaching (60%)</td>
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<td>Teaching (20%)</td>
<td>Administration (20%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research (10%)</td>
<td>Teaching (10%)</td>
<td>Administration (80%)</td>
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**Typical Tenure-line Faculty Work**
- **Teaching & Learning Centered**
- **High Research & Scholarship Centered**
- **Leadership & Administrative Role Centered**
  - v.1 (e.g., department chair, grad director)
  - v.2 (e.g., tenured A/P faculty)

**Evaluation:**

\[ TW^*TX + RW^*RX + SW^*SX + AW^*AX = \text{total evaluation score} \]

- \( W = \text{workload \%} \)
- \( X = \text{evaluation} \)

Expect high quality in each area, quantity determined by proportion of workload.

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**Updated Term Faculty Proposal:**

Term faculty are hired with an emphasis on a primary role; after initial promotion (?), workload percentages could be adjusted to engage in different types of work. For example, instructional faculty could get a course release to be involved in some research, scholarship, or creative work; research faculty could teach a course and have reduced expectations for research/scholarly output; certain leadership/admin roles would change workload.

Model afforded in faculty handbook, used in some units (e.g., CEC).

Evaluations, annual and for reappointment and promotion, would be modified to reflect workload adjustments in contributions for these areas. Thresholds for excellence in each category would be aligned with workload percentage so that quality is expected but that quantity would shift accordingly.
### Example Term Faculty Workloads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching (80%)</th>
<th>Service (20%)</th>
<th>Typical instructional faculty load</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research (100%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Typical research faculty load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research (80%)</td>
<td>Teaching (10%)</td>
<td>Service (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching (70%)</td>
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**Evaluation:** TW*TX + RW*RX + SW*SX + AW*AX = total evaluation score  
W=workload %, X = evaluation  
Expect high quality in each area, quantity determined by proportion of workload

### Proposal #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Considerations</th>
<th>Benefits &amp; Opportunities</th>
<th>Drawbacks &amp; Concerns</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Need to have a clear and equitable ways to account for quality, versus quantity, given the potential workload adjustments.  
No one should get tenure without teaching well, doing service, and publishing quality research.  
Requires us to get rid of excellence in teaching/research divide in Faculty Handbook and instead have clear quality expectations & standards for faculty serving in all types of roles.  
Need clear distinction between administrative work versus expected leadership/service.  
We must not reward overwork.  
We would need to align annual review criteria with the reappointment, renewal, promotion, and tenure criteria. | Allows us to hire tenured faculty who will teach more where that is helpful.  
Makes teaching and service a required, valued part of promotion for all levels.  
Allows us to change proportion of workload for teaching and research after tenure based on strengths & excellent contributions (not failure to do enough research).  
Provides some flexibility in terms of the types of work term faculty do and how they fit into a program/Mason’s evolution over time.  
Offers programs/Mason flexibility in potentially adjusting work to support short-term needs.  
This model doesn’t preclude us creating ‘Evergreen Contracts’ for term faculty who are funded by Mason. | Need to identify clear baseline criteria for excellence in teaching and service alongside research.  
Still need to figure out how to continue to evaluate quality in annual evaluations and ensure continued performance (not just at P&T processes)- tools for evaluating and rewarding faculty posttenure as well.  
How do we answer “why not tenure” for all full-time faculty? This model denies term faculty tenure even if they have been teaching at Mason for extended periods of time.  
How to prevent or manage tenure -line and term faculty sometimes ending up with the same/similar workloads? How do those differences justify inequitable salaries, institutional support, academic freedom, etc.? |
Proposal #1 (cont’d)

<table>
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<th>Drawbacks &amp; Concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Need to determine in what instances faculty would receive workload adjustments and how faculty and the LAUs would work together on this. We need to avoid faculty doing work that is not being accounted for.</td>
<td>• Current Faculty Handbook language of ‘primary’ allows for additional responsibilities.</td>
<td>• Doesn’t account for the need to potentially hire teaching-focused tenure-line faculty in particular programs that need more teaching support along with the stability (and perhaps service/leadership) of tenure-line faculty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need to make sure there was some standardization across Mason while still allowing for flexibility. Otherwise, this could end up looking very different in different places (which could be an equity issue).</td>
<td>• Preserves an opportunity for Mason to lead the way as a higher education institution in offering all full-time faculty equitable career pathways, salaries, workloads, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Need to develop clear ways of evaluating administrative work and differentiating from service/leadership within the LAU and professional communities.</td>
<td>• Acknowledges the different roles faculty may be hired into and how these can shift depending on faculty preferences and program needs.</td>
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Proposal #2: Eliminate Tenure Faculty as a category.

Hire all faculty into tenure-line space and create more robust temporary appointments with visiting and postdoc positions.

Additionally, create more flexible pathways for balance of teaching, research and scholarship, and leadership/administrative roles. Faculty are clearly hired into a defined role but would have options to work with their LAUs on workload adjustments over time.
**Example Faculty Workloads**

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**Evaluation:** TW*TX + RW*RX + SW*SX + AW*AX = total evaluation score

W = workload %, X = evaluation

Expect high quality in each area, quantity determined by proportion of workload.

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**Proposal #2**

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<td>• We need to be careful that an entire new category of faculty isn’t created that is even more contingent and precarious (such as limited term appointments).</td>
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<td>• Demonstrates the institution’s valuing of all full time faculty work, particularly more equal valuing of research alongside teaching and service/leadership.</td>
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<td>• Less flexible workforce—difficult to predict what program and institutional needs will exist in 2040 years (potential length of someone’s tenure at Mason).</td>
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<td>• Risk to the institution to end up in a position where TT faculty need to be let go due to evolution within the institution (but not due to the institution as a whole failing).</td>
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<td>• Potential unintended consequences of needing to expand our adjunct faculty population to accommodate demand.</td>
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<td>• Need to be careful about creating categories of hierarchy within the tenure system.</td>
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Questions to be addressed in implementation planning

For both proposals, we would need to articulate shared values and principles up front.

Proposal #1
• Under what conditions could faculty and/or the LAU initiate a request for significant workload adjustments?
• In what situations would it be desirable to have reduced research and scholarly workload pre-tenure?
• Do we want to create a teaching centered pre-tenure workload category adjustment?
• What are the parameters for a policy for term faculty to earn evergreen contracts after reaching a certain level or number of years of service?
• What policies and procedures should we develop to engage in direct hires of term faculty into tenuretrack roles when there is institutional need & a record of excellence? How can we ensure equity in this space?
• What policy and/or procedure should be developed for tenureline faculty to convert to term faculty lines, if desirable? How can we ensure equity in this space?

Proposal #2
• Under what conditions could faculty and/or the LAU initiate a request for significant workload adjustments?
• What factors need to be taken into consideration to ensure that we have a sufficient workforce to meet temporary LAU needs as we experience fluctuations in enrollment, degree/program specializations, etc.?