

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING
October 26, 2022
Hybrid In-Person (Merten Hall 1201)/Electronic Meeting, 3:00-4:15 p.m.

Number of Attendees: 135 ([List of names](#))

- I. **Call to Order:** Chair Melissa Broeckelman-Post (MBP) called the meeting to order at 3:03pm.
- II. **Approval of the Minutes of September 28, 2022:** Approved as submitted.
- III. **Opening Remarks**
 - Senate and University committee chairs and Faculty Senate representatives to committees will receive an email from Senate Clerk John Rose (facsen@gmu.edu) two weeks before each meeting with a request to share reports on committee activities for the next Faculty Senate meeting agenda.
 - Introduction of Vin Lacovara (VL), Associate Vice President for Institutional Compliance and Ethics.
 - VL: Joined Mason two years ago to build institutional compliance and ethics program
 - Information and program messaging will be coming soon – more information on how to work with us and what we provide for you.
 - Provide coaching and assistance with legal issues.
- IV. **Special Orders**
 - President Washington addressed the Faculty Senate
 - Yesterday met with Governor and held academic unit meeting. Shows that the institution is doing extraordinarily well and improving (including pre/post pandemic) on almost every meaningful metric of success.
 - 5.2% increase in undergraduate enrollments and 6% increase in graduate enrollments.
 - Graduation rates have been declining across the state; ours are only down 0.8%.
 - 15% increase in research activity.
 - Online enrollments are up. Pre-pandemic many faculty were against online teaching, but now we have 45% of classes online/hybrid, 25% fully online, and a cohort of faculty who only want to teach online.
 - Student debt is down significantly.
 - We are doing well and the community is recognizing us for that. A number of programs are ranked in the top 10, we have our first top 15 national-level program (ASLS), and a number of smaller programs ranked top 10 in their fields.
 - There are also some real challenges.
 - Significant competition for students in the region – growth in enrollment in VA is happening in Northern Virginia. Outside of UVA and William & Mary, most growth/enrollment is regional. This is true also for Mason. Other regions like Tidewater, Richmond are shrinking so

these programs are coming to Northern Virginia where the population is stable/growing.

- We can't keep our heads in the sand about this – we need to keep engaging and keep our enrollments up.
- This is important because (1) we've been hiring significant faculty to reduce faculty-student ratio, and (2) we've been increasing faculty salaries including over and above what the state is giving. Our ability to pay mainly comes from tuition and fees as well as state subsidies. If this source decreases we will not be able to maintain staffing levels, which also puts pressure on term faculty.
- We are sitting on 500+ unfilled positions – necessary positions – that we have been trying to fill for over a year. We need to pay well to be competitive. There will be strain if we don't hire these positions. However, we need to ask what positions we really need and what we can do without – can we shift resources from unfilled positions to other faculty and staff?
- The reality is that the base salary for this community is high – look at salaries for bus drivers, Panda Express. We are requiring higher education and experience for much lower salaries.
- It doesn't make sense to go out and offer individuals higher salaries to come here and work. We need to raise the salaries for the people who are already here. Need to address salary compression, get base salaries up. Going to take time to get there but we have to do it. This was the primary reason behind our tuition increase over the past year. If we don't get revenue from other sources like the state, that's the only place we can get it from. If we don't fix the problem there may not be enough university left to provide the quality education we want to provide to our students. This is one of the biggest challenges we face.
- Another challenge – people are questioning the value of a degree, what we do and produce. The average institution is down 9% in enrollment. The country is down 4 million students over 10 years – 1 million in past year. Students are telling us that they don't know whether they should value a degree when there's not a job guarantee on the back end – even when there is, some believe that they don't need a degree for success.
- Bachelor degree holders are half as likely to be unemployed as those with a high school diploma, will make 1.2 million more over lifetime than those without a degree. This is the reality and the national discourse is pushing students into a place where they are not going to be able to live the same quality of life as we do. This is troubling.
- We have a dual mandate. We are a higher education institution, but as the largest, most diverse, most successful access program in the state we also are an institution of higher purpose. We have to be both. Our purpose revolves around the success of students – both young people and people who want to get to a better point in their lives. We have to face this responsibility alongside solving the grand challenges of the day, developing new research and methodologies etc. We have to keep this piece in mind – that is the part that helps us achieve everything else. If we can continue to do this part well, people will make room for

us. I believe in a meritocracy – it will pay for performance at some point and we are continuing to perform.

○ Questions

- To address the problem of low base salaries, could we do progressive salary increases that are not merit-based, so that the lowest paid get the biggest increases?
 - Answer: The reality is that we have a bigger problem at the lower end, so this would help. My hesitancy is that we also live in a competitive environment. Not every institution thinks about the higher purpose. My vision is that we have a base and nobody earns less than that; from there you distribute based on merit. Keep in mind we don't have infinite resources. Technically we don't have the resources to do this – we are doing some creative things to find it – but we need to do it, not the time to mess with things.
- In 2021 the VA legislature passed a law requiring projects over a certain amount to pay a prevailing wage to construction workers etc. Arlington County has a similar law. There is a loophole allowing 5 universities to opt out. Mason is allowed to circumvent this. Others like NOVA, JMU are not. William & Mary pays the prevailing wage even though the loophole applies to them. This is an important gut check regarding construction projects on the Arlington campus – what kind of community member do we want to be? Will you ask your private partners to pay the prevailing wage?
 - Answer: These are public-private partnerships, they don't fall under Mason per se. I am learning there are some rules we have to follow and others we do not. Up to now we have allowed private partners to pay the wages that they pay, we don't tell them what they should pay. Those contracts were processed/in process before I got here. I don't know if I could go back and change the contracts. For the people who are employed by Mason directly on this campus they will have a living wage - I don't know what the prevailing wage is and I think it does scale, but that's the commitment I can make at this time.
- Since you have arrived you've been a tremendous advocate for faculty and our salaries – appreciate your efforts. Looking at the second problem of obtaining funding and understanding we're not in the position of UVA, William & Mary, etc, the feedback from students that they get a quality education is something that has been important for us. Paying people properly and giving reward structures for providing a quality education could be important. Maintaining that quality as we grow and become an R1 university with competition between teaching and research is really important. We also have NOVA – great meeting last week, great relationship over the years, need to continue leveraging it. What opinions do you have about making NOVA a more robust source of enrollment?
 - Answer: We are expanding this partnership and replicating the model throughout the Commonwealth. We are already

expanding to Germanna Community College and there is a plan in place to expand to 5-6 others. We don't have the bandwidth for a relationship with all 23 but can strategically choose partners with geographic and leadership advantages. This is one of the strategies we have in place to buffer against the onslaught of other universities coming into this region to recruit.

- We have to do things the Mason way. You've heard we're "scrappy" – some would say that's a euphemism for poor. But I wouldn't have it any other way. What it has fostered in this institution is a cohort of people who have figured out how to make things work efficiently – there's something to be said for this. That's the leverage I used to get us back the \$22M catch-up money that was taken away during the pandemic. And I do believe we'll get more. At Mason money is put to good use, not wasted. That's the message we're giving and we have the track record and data to back it up, more than any other institution.
- Candor is appreciated and I understand the funding squeeze. I fear adjuncts can be forgotten and want to raise the issue of adjunct pay. They are falling significantly behind bus drivers – the lowest paid are getting around \$20/hour. I hope we can keep them in mind as we think about how to spread out additional funding.
 - Answer: The reality is we are looking at all of it. We do have to prioritize areas of highest need, but as we get the resources the goal is a rising tide to raise all boats. That includes adjuncts.

V. Committee Reports

Senate Standing Committees

- Executive Committee – no updates
- Academic Policies
 - No updates, but plan to bring issues to the Senate floor in later meetings
- Budget and Resources – no updates
- Faculty Matters
 - Lost two members who will be replaced in an election (see Nominations below)
 - Raised opposition to the Virginia Department of Education's 2022 "Model Policies on the Privacy, Dignity, and Respect for All Students in Virginia's Public Schools."
 - The state has solicited public commentary on these model policies and the portal for comments closes tonight at 11:59pm.
 - The Faculty Matters committee presents a motion to pass a statement of opposition to the proposals and, if passed, post it on the Senate website before the portal closes (see *Mason Faculty Senate Comments in Opposition to proposed 2022 "Model Policies on the Privacy, Dignity, and Respect for All Students in Virginia's Public Schools"*, [Appendix A](#)).
 - Summary of the issues
 - According to the policies schools would be required to categorize students by biological sex and students are barred

from adopting new names/pronouns without parental permission.

- We believe Mason is part of Virginia’s public education system, so policies that affect part of that system affect the system at large, and these students will eventually come through our doors, so this issue is relevant to the purview of the Senate.
- The motion to vote in support of the statement was made and seconded.
- Discussion
 - Comment: surprised to see this come to the Senate because it is a proposal of model policies, not actual policies. The guidelines don’t do anything, they are just guidelines for school boards to use. Believe it is outside the scope of the Senate’s charter: we are not a school board or part of a system of primary education. This is an issue of social and public concern, but that is not part of our charter. We don’t know of other state universities taking a position on this. Assuming most people here have not fully read the guidelines or the case law they cite, we would be opining on an issue we haven’t studied. The guidelines do seem consistent with existing constitutional law: the Supreme Court has affirmed non-discrimination based on gender identity, and the guidelines also seem written to reflect real constitutional restraints on governmental actors. I don’t think they say that students can’t be referred to by their gender identity, they say it has to be consistent with what the parents enter into the record. This is consistent with existing laws and cases that give power to parents versus schools in terms of raising children, which has deep historical roots in case law. We would be foolish to make a statement without a full legal analysis, which we don’t have time to do. My views are based on the policies on their face, not the social issue underlying the policies.
 - Rebuttal: We have professors here who work directly with primary and secondary education systems, the charge of the Senate and Faculty Matters committee concerns civil rights, and we believe this is a civil rights matter. The university should speak out on this because President Washington just talked about being a university of purpose – our greatest purpose is upholding civil rights. These policies are dangerous to trans children. When we talk about the rights of parents, the state does intervene when children are in danger in their homes, and not all homes are safe. We are a public institution, part of the whole education system of Virginia, we can and should provide a safe place for students. The Department of Education has offered this public portal and this is an opportunity for us to speak out and stand up against what I believe to be an egregious assault on human rights and civil rights.
 - Comment: I echo this and strongly support adopting the resolution. I think it is in our charter and remit for the same

reasons. We have faculty who are teaching the teachers, we are doing research on how best to support and protect transgender students. We would be neglecting our duty not to address this issue on behalf of these programs. This is also a labor issue. Safe learning spaces for transgender and non-conforming students doesn't include having the institution deny their identity and putting them in actual danger.

- Comment: I am struggling between my different roles as faculty, citizen, parent, and senator. There are lots of views to represent. Does this fit within my role as a senator? It doesn't mean I don't care about the issue, but I have other roles where I can speak about this differently. I'm not sure if this is something I want to talk about in this role. I am concerned about setting a precedent of stepping outside of our bounds – there are so many issues around the world that we could be speaking about, will this push us too far out of bounds?
- Comment: I support the sentiment behind this issue 100%, no doubt, and I will want to go to the portal and comment and let other people know to submit comments. But I am concerned about adopting the resolution on behalf of the Senate. We are an academic body and it gives me pause to adopt something that we haven't had time to review for its academic soundness. As Parliamentarian, and reviewing our charter, it is clearly outside our purview. Faculty Matters does represent civil rights, but it is very clearly in terms of university-wide standards and policies; civil rights with regard to the faculty. I can't stress enough how much I endorse the spirit of this as an individual citizen, but I can't endorse it as a Senator given the rushed fashion.
- Comment: We hit this issue with the Governor's previous order about critical race theory. We are deeply tied to K-12 schools. We are training teachers in a number of programs, we have a Governor's School on the Prince William campus, and we draw students from Virginia public schools. We don't want to be a model United Nations, but I can't separate this kind of challenge from the work we do every day. We see this in other states where governors try to impose these rules in K-12 schools and then turn to university policies the next week. We have to be careful – this is on the edge of our lane but still within it.
- Comment: We need a clear conception of where we are weighing in as a body versus as individuals. People on the faculty who are engaged in these issues should definitely comment. We should approach the issue with a principled, prior understanding of our roles. We really need to think about what our role is as an entire body versus our role as individuals and experts in certain areas.
- Comment: I totally hear how faculty who are directly involved in education issues would weigh in on this. The Senate charter is

about the university as a whole. The College of Education could weigh in as a body. But weighing in simply because some people on this body do research in this area could get dangerous – the law school could weigh in on pretty much anything. Should our overseas programs get involved in international affairs? Also, once we start making statements, the non-making of statements becomes an issue. Are other universities who don't make statements engaging in bigotry or are they staying in their lane?

- Comment: In the College of Education we would need to make changes to our syllabus, curriculum, and messaging to follow these policies, so I do see this as an entire university issue.
- Comment: I sympathize with the College of Education, and also the point about going beyond just some schools. This could be relevant for any student who goes on to teach in any state that is moving toward similar policies.
- Comment: Trans students are more than 7 times more likely to die by suicide. We talked about the enrollment cliff earlier and we want our Virginia public school students to stay alive.
- Vote: 18 supported the motion, 19 did not support the motion, 5 abstained. The motion was declined. We recommend that people comment at the portal as individual citizens and experts, but we will not be doing so as a body.
- Nominations
 - Two nominees are needed for Faculty Matters openings, one for a full term to replace Tim Gibson who is stepping down from the Committee, and one for the Fall semester to replace Lisa Lister, who is on leave this semester. CHSS has not yet named a temporary replacement for Lisa Lister, so we can't put that person forward for the position.
 - The Nominations Committee puts forward Mohan Venigalla (MV) for the full term position and proposes to hold the second nomination until the CHSS replacement has been announced.
 - MBP opened the floor for additional nominations – none received.
 - MBP recommended approval by acclamation – approved.
 - Now also need a replacement on Organization & Operations to replace MV
 - The Nominations Committee puts forward Doug Eyman.
 - MBP opened the floor for additional nominations – none received.
 - MBP recommended approval by acclamation – approved.
- *[Note: at this time a vote was held to extend the meeting by five minutes to finalize the committee reports, which was approved.]*
- Organization & Operations
 - Still working on revisions to bylaws and plan to look at standing rules in the spring.

- An issue was raised about whether we still need to keep paper minutes of Senate meetings in the Clerk’s Office per the standing rules. We are planning to bring this to the floor next time.
- We will likely have a lot of work to do around creating new committees after the recommendations of the Task Force for Reimagining Faculty Roles and Rewards are presented in the next meeting.

Other Committees/Faculty Representatives: No reports

VI. Announcements

Provost Ginsberg

- On Monday SCHEV unanimously approved our new College of Public Health – the first in Virginia.

Graduate Council Agendas and Minutes ([Appendix B](#))

Mason Lunch Club Discussions ([Appendix B](#))

Office of Government and Community Relations ([Appendix B](#))

VII. Remarks for the Good of the General Faculty

- Question about the use of Microsoft Teams for voting: it is awkward being signed in to both Zoom and Teams, want to make sure this is a viable system.
 - Comment: ultimately we would be better off using a single platform to reduce confusion.
 - MBP: I would also ask us to think about continuing the hybrid meeting format or moving fully to Zoom/another platform. There are 14 senators in the room today, the most we have had all year, and 120 people online. Meetings will be on Zoom anyway for the rest of the year.

VIII. Adjournment: MBP noted that the spillover meeting time reserved on November 9 will not be needed. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will take place on November 16. The meeting was adjourned at 4:23pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlotte Gill
Faculty Senate Secretary

APPENDIX A

MASON FACULTY SENATE COMMENTS IN OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED 2022 “MODEL POLICIES ON THE PRIVACY, DIGNITY, AND RESPECT FOR ALL STUDENTS IN VIRGINIA’S PUBLIC SCHOOLS”

The George Mason Faculty Senate vigorously disagrees with the Virginia Department of Education’s proposed 2022 [“Model Policies on the Privacy, Dignity and Respect for All Students and Parents in Virginia’s Public Schools.”](#) These proposed changes are discriminatory and violate fundamental human rights regarding the health and self-determination of students and parents. Furthermore, these proposed changes endanger the lives, health, and well-being of transgender, non-gender conforming, gender non-binary and gender fluid students in the Commonwealth of Virginia by threatening students’ identities and humanity, effectively ostracizing them, and denying them the same opportunities and rights of cisgender students. These proposed policies are not evidence-based and disregard the multi-disciplinary consensus around educational policies and practices that ensure LGBTQIA+ students have equal access to education in a manner free from discrimination, fear, intimidation, and bullying. The George Mason Faculty Senate, as representatives of the Mason Faculty at large, believe that public education is a fundamental right and that every child deserves a safe, inclusive environment, where diversity is respected, in which to learn. As faculty, we view it as our essential responsibility to foster each student’s success to the best of our ability. This includes efforts to ensure that every student that we welcome through our doors has not faced discriminatory and harmful public policies in the primary and secondary educational institutions of Virginia. As such, we strongly condemn the proposed 2022 “Model Policies on the Privacy, Dignity and Respect for All Students and Parents in Virginia’s Public Schools” as harmful, discriminatory, and dangerous and enjoin the Virginia Department of Education to rescind them.

APPENDIX B ANNOUNCEMENTS

Graduate Council

The link for Graduate Council meeting agendas can be found online at <https://graduate.gmu.edu/faculty-staff-resources/graduate-council>. The upcoming meeting agenda is available at https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/bbcswebdav/xid-263791551_1, and the minutes for the last meeting can be found online at https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/bbcswebdav/xid-262302035_1

Mason Club Lunch Discussions: Creating a Faculty-Staff Community at GMU

Steve Pearlstein, Joe Scimecca, & Rutledge Dennis

Please join some of our university leaders for lunch and informal conversation at the Mason Club at noon on the following dates:

October 12 (Wednesday): Ken Walsh, Chief of Staff

November 8 (Tuesday): President Washington

November 16 (Wednesday): Provost Ginsberg

3 Ways Mason Employees and Students can Collaborate with GCR to Engage Government and the Community



The Office of Government and Community Relations (GCR) paves the path to successful interactions with federal, state, and local governments, as well as community groups.

Connecting with Government Officials



GCR facilitates engagement with government officials to advance Mason's public policy positions, provides insight on appropriate protocols for interacting with government officials, and collaborates with faculty/staff to invite elected leaders to campus.

Community Outreach



GCR shares information about ongoing Mason services and resources via Discover Mason guides, activities/events impacting our neighbors, and more. Faculty/staff can also share their expertise via the Mason Speakers bureau.

Chamber of Commerce Engagement



GCR manages the university's Chamber of Commerce memberships and assists faculty/staff to connect with chamber activities.

Contact Us

Paul Liberty, Vice President, Government and Community Relations | 703-993-8860 | pliberty@gmu.edu

Kerry Bolognese, Federal Government Relations | 703-993-7710 | kbologne@gmu.edu

Mark Smith, State Government Relations | 804-786-2216 | mesmith@gmu.edu

Lauren Posey, State Government Relations | 804-786-2217 | lposey@gmu.edu

Community and Local Government Relations:

Traci Kendall, Fairfax City, Fairfax County, and Loudoun County | 703-993-8846 | tkendal2@gmu.edu

Toni Andrews, Alexandria and Arlington | 703-993-9817 | tandrew7@gmu.edu

Molly Grove, Manassas City, Manassas Park, and Prince William County | 703-993-8376 | mgrove1@gmu.edu



October 26, 2022

LIST OF ATTENDEES

132 Total Listed Attendees (47 Senators and 85 Visitors)

3 Additional Visitors attended who chose not to be listed

47 Senators present: Alan Abramson, Karen Akerlof, Dominique Banville, Alok Berry, Lisa Billingham, Virginia Blair, Michelle Boardman, Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Jaime Clark, Richard Craig, Tim Curby, Delton Daigle, Douglas Eyman, Daniel Garrison, Tim Gibson, Charlotte Gill, Victoria Grady, Lilling Huang, Bijan Jabbari, Eugene Kontorovich, Kerri LaCharite, Tamara Maddox, Alexandra Masterson, Kumar Mehta, Laurie Miller, Anna Pollack, Marvin Powell, Keith Renshaw, Pierre Rogers, Kathleen Roberts, Esperanza Roman-Mendoza, Catherine Sausville, Jessica Scarlata, Zachary Schrag, Gene Shuman, Solon Simmons, Christiana Stan, Benjamin Steger, Rebecca Sutter, Kun Sun, Matthew Theeke, Mohan Venigalla, Anne Verhoeven, Teresa Willis, David Wong, Tom Wood, Jie Zhang.

5 Senators absent: Jatin Ambegaonkar, Peter Cho, Edward Gero, Lisa Lister, Gregory Robinson.

85 Visitors present: Marie Alice Arnold, LaShonda Anthony, Ann Ardis, Heidi Blackburn, Meline Bopp, Kevin Borek, Laurence Bray, Lisa Breglia, Alecia Bryan, Andrew Bunting, Tom Butler, Margaret Caniano, Shannon Davis, Vicki Dominick, Ellen Drogin Rodgers, Kim Eby, Kim Edwards, Teresa Finn, Cynthia Fuchs, Saiid Ganjalizadeh, Mark Ginsburg (Provost), Marcy Glover, Roger Graham, Ingrid Guerra Lopez, Janet Ha Poirot, Virginia Hoy, Ronda Hetterson, Seth Hudson, Erin Iacangelo Rogers, Emily Ihara, Rawa Jassem, Devon Johnson, Toshia Johnson, Lauren Kaplan, Kaithlyn Kayer, Marci Kinas Jerome, Laura Kosoglu, Misty Krell, Jason Kinser, Vin Lacovara, Andrew Lane, Amanda Madden, Karen Manley, Jenna McGwin, Doug McKenna, Jason McKnight, William McPheat, Jennifer Messier, Janette Muir, Eric Neitzke, Jneva Norfleet, Whitney Owen, Graziella Pagliarulo McCarron, Jianli Pan, Cindy Parker, Sarah Parnell, Rashimi Pershad, Mariia Petryk, Thomas Polk, Pallavi Rai Gullo, Shelley Reid, Lauren Reuscher, Marguerite Rippy, David Rosenblum, Jessica Rosera, ChangGyo Ryu, Julie Shedd, Pamela Shepherd, Cliff Shore, Amira Stine, Frank Strike, Fadi Tahan, Mona Tisler, Amanda Torres, Girum Urgessa, Bethany Usher, Lauren Wagner, Gregory Washington (President), Eleanor Weis, Laura Wheeler Poms, Michelle Williams, Preston Williams, Elizabeth Woodley, Andrea Zach, John Zenelis.