GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING
April 26, 2023, 3:00-4:15 p.m.
Merten 1201 and Online

Number of attendees: 114 (List of names)

I. Call to Order: Senate President Melissa Broeckelman-Post (MBP) called the meeting to order at 3:02pm.

II. Approval of the Minutes of April 12, 2023: Approved as posted.

III. Opening Remarks

• We are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Senate today – one year after the university was founded.
• We have several former Presidents here: Don Boileau, Suzanne Slayden, June Tangney, Charlene Douglas, Keith Renshaw
• We have done a lot of work this year. Thank you to all for your service.

IV. Special Orders- Election of the Faculty Senate President 2023-2024

• MBP turned the meeting over to Charlotte Gill, President Pro Tem, to preside over the Faculty Senate President election.
• Lisa Billingham nominated MBP, with several seconds
• MBP unanimously approved by acclamation for a second term.

V. Committee Reports

Senate Standing Committees

• Executive Committee
  o Solon Simmons has agreed to serve as President Pro Tem beginning this summer.
  o Please submit annual reports for committees if you have not yet done so. These will be shared on the Senate website.
• Academic Policies
  o We are working with the Graduate Council to look at the academic load, in terms of maximum credits allowed per semester. The idea is to remove the need to fill out an approval form if students are required to
exceed the load as part of their program. We will also be looking at this at the undergraduate level.

- *Budget and Resources* – no report.

- *Faculty Matters*
  - A lot of turnover on the committee, with 4 co-chairs over the course of the year.
  - The Faculty Evaluation of Administrators survey was released and concluded on Monday. We got a 37% response rate, up from 33% last time. This is great, and we think we can do better next year when we team up with the faculty/staff satisfaction survey.
    - 7-point agenda this year:
      - For more information, see detail report.
      - Faculty workload issues, especially those that affect term faculty. Desire to be partners. Most of the progress here came in the form of debate rather than specific actions.
      - Collaboration between faculty and administration: Faculty Evaluation of Administrators was developed and administered by Gallup.
      - Participation in Faculty Annual Evaluation Workgroup and Term Faculty Committee.
      - Sustainability – working towards zero emissions.
      - Advocating for academic freedom. This is a core value of the committee.

- *Nominations*
  - Keep an eye out for ballots that will be coming out soon for the university standing committees.

- *Organization and Operations*
  - *Revisions to the Mason Core Committee Charge*
    - Laura Poms for the committee:
      - Our goal is to consolidate some activities between Mason Core and the Writing Across the Curriculum committee in terms of responsibility for writing intensive (WI) courses. The exploration level of Mason Core is changing, and the integration level includes the WI courses. The first language change to the charge reflects these changes.
      - Some of the changes are just editorial. Others, e.g., student representatives, are things we have been doing for a while and wanted to codify.
        - One student elected from the student senate.
• We are also aiming to get better representation across the university and reflect the (non-voting) roles of ex-officio members such as Mason Core Director and WAC Committee director.
• Trying to consolidate into one place to review.
• Staggered three year terms
  o Revisions to the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee Charge
    ▪ Seth Hudson for the committee:
      • One of the committee’s tasks this year was to look at whether our charge accurately reflects our work and gearing up for assessment cycle. We wanted to reconsider and clarify our role considering other changes that are happening.
      • We want to make it clear that our role is to support and celebrate faculty who are teaching writing, rather than simply gatekeepers for the WI courses.
      • We also changed the composition of the committee, including reflecting work of ex-officio members, faculty involvement and representation.
        o Looked at faculty involvement in terms of who needs to be involved at this particular level, is interested, and is available. We want faculty from across disciplines but not as placeholders. Everyone is welcome, as opposed to everyone is required to be there.
    ▪ Questions
      o The composition of the committee seems undefined in this draft. How many people will be on the committee? “At least” could denote many different committee sizes. It is also not clear what the balance will be between the elected and appointed members. This is not in line with other committee charges.
        ▪ Agree with the suggestion – not sure if we can change it now? Could go back and clarify.
      o Not clear on what problem this is trying to solve – taking review of WI classes out of WAC and situating with Mason Core?
• Laura Poms: Conscious effort to consolidate review processes into one committee as part of Mason Core enhancements and allowing the WAC committee to focus on providing support to WI faculty.

• Seth Hudson: It makes sense for WAC because Mason Core is already in the business of the machinery of the approval processes. Our group’s goals are to support the mission of supporting writing across the university, which also supports Mason Core’s mission, and not simply focusing on the approval processes.

  o It seems like this could go back to the committee, unless it needs to be approved urgently now.

  o It may be an issue to approve the Mason Core charge now and not the WAC charge, because then the two would be in conflict. Also, it is frustrating that there is a lot of focus on the requirements and assessment without support for actually doing the work. This would break these out into two different committees. Propose a motion to simply strike “at least” from the number of faculty and ex-officio members on the committee to solve the issue of vague numbers.

    ▪ Motion seconded.

    ▪ Discussion on the motion

      • Still concerned that there is not a majority of faculty members on the committee as clearly stated in the Mason Core charge. Depending on how this is chosen, the faculty members could be outnumbered. Propose that we go ahead with the changes to the charge but not the composition, and fix that later.

      • MBP: We need to vote on the motion on the floor first about striking the language.
Motion carries (not unanimous).

Move that we strike the entire change to the composition, return to the original composition, and refer it back to the committee with the instruction to come back with language that ensures the elected faculty members have the voting majority.

- We can do this since the charge came via O&O.
- Motion carries (unanimous).

I’m still hearing two different reasons for the change – WAC wants to get out of the business of approving WI syllabi, but also getting out of assessment – does this mean whether the courses are meeting their learning goals? Is it just that WAC doesn’t want to deal with assessing these anymore?

- Seth Hudson: It is about making a more efficient assessment process, because WI is part of the Mason Core. We will still be a resource for any WI course that is looking to meet the Mason Core criteria and help faculty directly who need assistance.
  - Follow-up: WI course approval also includes non-Mason Core courses, correct?
    - No, all WI courses are part of the Mason Core.

Vote on charges individually

- Mason Core: approved by acclamation (unanimous).
- WAC: approved by acclamation (unanimous).

Other Committees/Faculty Representatives

- Faculty Handbook Committee
  - Proposed Changes to the Faculty Handbook
Faculty Handbook revision is something we do every year and involves hundreds of hours of work by many people that is not always seen.

We are going to go section by section, discuss and vote on each section individually.

Remember that we do not have the final say on this – we are making recommendations to the BOV.

Section 2.10.7 (conflict of interest/commitment)

- The previous document shared was not clear. We are removing existing language, mostly normative/extraneous justification language, rather than procedural/operational, and including new operational language regarding the new conflict of commitment (COC) policy.
- Discussion
  - COC policy development committee has discussed how this will be reflected in the Handbook. Given the significant broad changes that are being made in the policy, we don't think that removing the existing language from the handbook is a good idea at this time. The COC policy is getting broader and likely to sweep in many kinds of activities that we do value professors being engaged in. We think that because the policy is so strict, we should keep the language that indicates that these are viewed favorably.
  - MBP: Reminder that we cannot amend on the floor because this is not coming from a Senate committee. We can only approve the change or send it back to committee.
  - Chris DiTeresi: clarification: we did not take a vote on this in our committee. It was a contentious discussion but we did not come to agreement. The compromise we came to was to suggest language to the FH committee in the event that this was contentious. It was not a recommendation or an insistence of this committee to change what the FH committee proposed.
There are a number of university policies we are all subject to that aren’t necessarily referenced in the FH so it may not be an issue to not have it in the handbook. If we vote this down today it could still be brought back for discussion later.

To reiterate concern, in tandem with the introduction of the COC policy, the removal of this value language could signal that the university no longer values these activities.

Vote by acclamation was inconclusive and went to an electronic ballot.

- 19 yes, 20 no. Motion does not carry.

- Section 2.2.5: Change of language from University Professor to Distinguished University Professor.
  - Is it retroactive?
    - Yes

- Section 2.6.1: Annual review of faculty. Going paragraph by paragraph but will vote on the whole section.
  - The first paragraph removes the language about specifically when the timing of the annual evaluations will be.
    - No discussion.
  - Next paragraph states that bylaws need to be created and how performance evaluations will be conducted.
    - Question: I thought the intent was for self-assessment to be an option and not mandatory. This language does not reflect that. It sounds as though self-assessment will be part of the process.
      - Reply: Originally there was a vote by the committee to include the voluntary and further discussion with the Provost’s office. We decided and voted to remove, the idea of the self-assessment is to empower the faculty member, not to introduce two tracks: Those who go through a self-assessment of those who don’t, maybe complicating decisions at a higher level. The idea is not is not to impose anything you want on the faculty, but to allow the faculty member to make the case for themselves.
Of course, it's always voluntary, I suppose. I mean you don't have to do it, but that's your ability to make your case to your chair, and that's the reason why we need to remove it.

- Question: Another argument for keeping the language as proposed allows a faculty member who wants a self-assessment to get one even if the unit doesn't want to give one. By making this voluntary it could take away the freedom of faculty members to benefit from a self-assessment.
- Comment - disagree: nothing here stops anyone from writing a self-assessment, but it takes away the flexibility from units who don't want to incorporate one and creates a new bureaucratic obligation.
- Clarification: the term “basic standard” conflicts with just “standard” above. Not established what the basic standard is.

- Next paragraph introduces the word “assigned workload” to be inclusive of term faculty whose contracts include different types of work from the usual R1 tenured faculty model, and to ensure these faculty are not only evaluated on their research. People should be rewarded for what they've done and what they were assigned to do.
  - Want to point out that in our college we do have a workload policy that applies to all faculty, so this captures everybody.
- Next paragraph distinguishes performance evaluation process from the tenure process.
- Next paragraph removes language about tenure/tenure-track faculty to ensure this applies to all faculty.
- Next paragraph aligns timing language for the PDP with the first paragraph about the review performance period.
- Vote
  - Carries by acclamation (not unanimous)

- Section 2.7.1 relates to term faculty contract renewal and alignment with LAU bylaws. Also requires that the Dean needs to give a reason for not renewing a term faculty who has previously been on a multi-year contract.
• Discussion
  o Is there a reason why we are still using the
    language “term faculty” rather than “instructional”?
    ▪ Kim Eby: We have term clinical and research
      faculty. We have dropped the term “term”
      from people’s job titles on websites and
      business cards, etc., but as an HR class this
      is still the easiest language to use to
      distinguish these groups, although we
      recognize that the term is not ideal.

• Vote
  o Carries by acclamation (unanimous)

• Effective Teaching Committee
  o Resolution on Implemented Evaluative Modalities of Faculty Instruction
    ▪ Thank you to committee members who have been on the
      ground talking to faculty about trifecta of SET changes,
      pandemic, and move of a number of courses to online. Our
      proposal is intended to empower faculty and aligns well with
      what we just discussed regarding the self-evaluation in the
      Faculty Handbook.
    ▪ Response rates are improving – now around 40%, highest in
      face-to-face classes, lowest online.
      ▪ Mason Korea and INTO both have response rates in the
        60-70% range, suggesting a cultural difference.
    ▪ We need to consider different ways to evaluate faculty teaching.
      Our proposal empowers faculty to use different forms of
      evidence of teaching effectiveness, such as self-assessment, peer
      review, pedagogical self-reflection etc. There are other
      instruments, e.g., one from NSF, that provides much more
      information on whether students are meeting their learning
      outcomes.
    ▪ Asking LAUs that conduct teaching evaluations to share
      information with the committee on what methods they are
      using, find out what’s going on and share practices.
    ▪ We have also consulted with the Student Senate and they are
      very supportive, looking for credible information about how
      they can select courses.
    ▪ Motion: Endorse the resolution to ask LAUs to get this
      information to the Effective Teaching Committee by December
15, 2023 (note: this is a statement of values, not a policy change).

- Discussion
  - If this is a value statement, why is there a deadline date?
    - It’s a statement and a request for information.
  - Appreciate that we are looking for ways to move away from student evaluations but need to speak on behalf of colleagues who have expressed concerns. Concerned about loss of autonomy, duplication with RPT efforts (e.g., peer observations), and frequency of reviews. My understanding is that Penn State has between 1 and 5 years between full reviews to reduce the burden, but this language sounds like it would be more frequent.
    - Not our intention. The only thing that is standard here is the SET, which we’ve always had. Everything else is based on the LAUs and their different pedagogies. We’re not trying to do a standardized comparison across units, just empowering individual faculty to have the tools they need for better teaching and professional development.
    - There was some concern about using the term “metric” and we removed it. There will not be an outside metric coming in to evaluate what you’re doing in your class.
  - Echo this – the resolution is really an information gathering resolution to provide support for LAUs and provide clear, transparent, and reasonable procedures. To provide support and guidance and improve faculty experience, we need to know what units are already doing. There are some units where faculty don’t know how they’re being evaluated, or it’s only based on Q15 and 16 of the old SET. This resolution is not about changing anyone’s procedures right now.
Agree – the language sounds like you are asking for information from units and also creating a lot of work for yourselves. This may be where some of the fears are coming from.
  - Appreciate this – we have been doing a lot of this work haphazardly and this will make it easier for us.

I don’t see this as controversial. It seems like simply information gathering. The only issue is that it tells the LAUs to give information on how they’re evaluating us, it is not a resolution for us. Are we suggesting with this language that if a unit is not conducting evaluations, that they wouldn’t be expected to in the future? Can we strike “that conducts teaching evaluations” language to clarify this?

Vote to endorse the resolution
  - Carries by acclamation (unanimous)

- Annual reports for all committees are being posted on the Faculty Senate website as they are received
- Additional committee reports
  - Mason Core Committee

VI. New Business: None.

VII. Announcements

- Provost Ginsberg - unavailable
- EVP Dickenson – unavailable
- Announcement from Roger Graham: there will be a test group involving faculty to preview forthcoming changes to Patriot Web.
- Faculty Senate 50th Anniversary Celebration to immediately follow this meeting

VIII. Remarks for the Good of the General Faculty – none.

IX. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 4:22pm.
Revisions to the Mason Core Committee Charge

Mason Core Committee

(Charge as revised and approved by the Faculty Senate – April 1, 2009, composition of membership amended September 7, 2011. Revisions including new name: Mason Core Committee approved by the Faculty Senate Dec. 4, 2013. Revisions approved by the Faculty Senate February 3, 2021)

Charge
The Committee will work in cooperation with the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education on all matters concerning the Mason Core (formerly general education). For all foundation, exploration, and integration Mason Core requirements, the Committee will approve courses to fulfill these requirements.

(The) Committee will develop procedures for assessing, reviewing, and recertifying courses that carry a Mason Core attribute. Utilizing Mason Core assessment data, the committee will review and revise, as necessary, the overall structure and outcomes of the Mason Core. The Committee will review and approve procedures used to substitute or waive Mason Core requirements. The Committee will confer with the Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Policies when changes to Mason Core requirements impact the entire university and/or would be a substantive change to the university catalog. The Committee will provide an annual report to the Faculty Senate. The report shall include a) The courses approved for inclusion in or removed from the Mason Core, and b) Changes in the criteria for the Mason Core. More frequent reports to the Faculty Senate might take place as adjustments to the Mason Core program may warrant.

Composition: The membership of the Committee comprises 14 voting members:
A. Eight faculty elected by the Faculty Senate for staggered three-year terms ensuring that at least 6 academic units are represented, at least one should be a senator;
B. Four faculty appointed by the Provost;
C. The Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education;
D. One student elected by the Student Senate.

Ex-officio members are invited to provide input into the work of the committee and consist of the following:
A. The Mason Core Director
B. A representative from the Stearns Center
C. A representative from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning and
D. One representative from the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee

Meetings: Meetings will be held monthly during the academic year.
Mason Core Committee

(Charge as revised and approved by the Faculty Senate – April 1, 2009, composition of membership amended September 7, 2011. Revisions including new name: Mason Core Committee approved by the Faculty Senate Dec. 4, 2013. Revisions approved by the Faculty Senate February 3, 2021)

**Charge**

The Committee will work in cooperation with the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education on all matters concerning the Mason Core (formerly general education).

For all foundation, exploration, and synthesis and/or capstone experiences, Mason Core requirements, the Committee will approve courses to fulfill these requirements. The Committee will develop procedures for assessing, reviewing, and certifying courses that carry a Mason Core attribute. Utilizing Mason Core assessment data, the committee will review and revise, as necessary, the overall structure and outcomes of the Mason Core. The Committee will review and approve procedures used to substitute or waive Mason Core requirements. The Committee will confer with the Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Policies when changes to Mason Core requirements impact the entire university and/or would be a substantive change to the university catalog. The Committee will provide an annual report to the Faculty Senate. The report shall include a) The courses approved for inclusion in or removed from the Mason Core, and b) Changes in the criteria for the Mason Core. More frequent reports to the Faculty Senate might take place as adjustments to the Mason Core program may warrant.

**Composition:** The membership of the Committee comprises 14 voting members:

A. Eight faculty elected by the Faculty Senate for staggered three-year terms ensuring that each academic unit is represented, with at least one should be a senator;
B. Four faculty appointed by the Provost;
C. The Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education; and
D. One student elected by the Student Senate.

Ex-officio members are invited to provide input into the work of the committee and customarily consist of the following:

A. The Mason Core Director
B. A representative from the Stearns Center (ex-officio)
C. A representative from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (ex-officio)
D. One student elected by the Student Senate
E. One representative from the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee

**Meetings:** Meetings will be held monthly during the academic year.

---

**Commented:**[LWP1]: Incorporates WI courses as well as ENGL 102, which had not been explicitly stated before.

**Commented:**[DE2]: I agree w/ the at least six option here

**Commented:**[DE3]: at least one (this is a bit weak, grammatically)

**Commented:**[LWP4]: The student member has always been able to vote and should have been listed here.

**Commented:**[LWP5]: Added because of the migration of WI courses to MC. In actuality, someone from WAC has always attended.
Revisions to the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee Charge

Rationale:
The proposed changes are meant to reflect more accurately the role of the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee (WAC-C) at Mason, providing a clearer view of the committee’s responsibilities and goals. A copy of the original charge with tracked changes is below, followed by the revised charge and original charge for reference.

After a year under consideration, these changes represent a collaboration thoroughly vetted by the committee. The proposed changes are timely and meant to clarify both WAC-C’s role in assessment and as a resource to Mason faculty. Specifically, the new charge articulates the committee’s focus on supporting faculty who teach with writing and commitment to WAC principles of advocacy for equitable practices and intentional integration of writing-enriched learning across disciplines. The new charge also reflects a change in the WAC-C’s role regarding Writing Intensive (WI) course compliance, coordinating with and advising Mason Core on outcomes while continuing to support faculty teaching WI courses. The WAC Committee has been in regular conversation with the Mason Core regarding this shifting relationship with the WI.

Writing Across the Curriculum Committee (Tracked Changes)

Charge: To advise and collaborate with administrative and academic units to support faculty who teach with writing across all academic disciplines. Specifically, the WAC Committee (WAC-C):

A. Provides guidance related to writing courses and writing instruction for faculty, academic units, university leaders, other committees, and the full Senate.
B. Works with the Mason Core Committee on the overall structure and outcomes of general education writing, including Writing-intensive courses;
C. Collaborates with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning and other units on the assessment of writing and writing-enriched learning;
D. Identifies the needs of Mason’s student writers and faculty who teach with writing;
E. Supports the intentional integration of writing and writing instruction into courses across the curriculum at Mason, including Writing-intensive courses;
F. Acknowledges and celebrates the accomplishments of Mason faculty who teach with writing in order to recognize best practices specific to their discipline;
G. Advocates for equitable practices and conditions that foster meaningful teaching and learning with writing across the curriculum.

Composition: The committee will be composed of at least six faculty representatives elected by the Faculty Senate (including one faculty senator), from at least five separate colleges/schools; elected representatives will serve staggered three-year terms. Elected representatives can serve a maximum of two consecutive three-year terms; subsequent non-consecutive terms are permitted. In addition, there will be at least one representative from each of the following areas: Writing Across the Curriculum, University Writing Center, Composition, INTO Mason, and Student Senate. Members from the University Libraries, Mason Core Committee, Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, and Graduate Education will serve in ex-officio capacities.

Revised WAC Committee Charge (v.03.30.23 FINAL)

Charge: To advise and collaborate with administrative and academic units to support faculty who teach with writing across all academic disciplines. Specifically, the WAC Committee (WAC-C):

Seth A Hudson
Deleted: A. Articulate and refine the requirements for the WI designated course designated to fulfill the WI requirement in every undergraduate degree program assessed by the university with the purpose of establishing homogeneous WI criteria.
B. Assist colleges, schools and institutes in the identification of existing or new courses that degree programs propose to meet the WI requirement in their curricula;
C. Review regularly the courses WI syllabi to determine compliance with the WI requirement; D. Suggest ways to meet the WI requirement to faculty teaching the WI designated courses; and E. Assist with activities and events related to writing across the curriculum.

Seth A Hudson
Deleted: One elected representative from each of the academic units offering undergraduate degrees, the Director of the WAC Program who is an ex-officio member with no vote or possibility to chair the Committee.
A. Provides guidance related to writing courses and writing instruction for faculty, academic units, university leaders, other committees, and the full Senate;

B. Works with the Mason Core Committee on the overall structure and outcomes of general education writing, including Writing-intensive courses;

C. Collaborates with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning and other units on the assessment of writing and writing-enriched learning;

D. Identifies the needs of Mason’s student writers and faculty who teach with writing;

E. Supports the intentional integration of writing and writing instruction into courses across the curriculum at Mason, including Writing-intensive courses;

F. Acknowledges and celebrates the accomplishments of Mason faculty who teach with writing in order to recognize best practices specific to their discipline;

G. Advocates for equitable practices and conditions that foster meaningful teaching and learning with writing across the curriculum.

Composition: The committee will be composed of at least six faculty representatives elected by the Faculty Senate (including one faculty senator), from at least five separate colleges/schools; elected representatives will serve staggered three-year terms. Elected representatives can serve a maximum of two consecutive three-year terms; subsequent non-consecutive terms are permitted. In addition, there will be at least one representative from each of the following areas: Writing Across the Curriculum, University Writing Center, Composition, INTO Mason, and Student Senate. Members from the University Libraries, Mason Core Committee, Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, and Graduate Education will serve in ex-officio capacities.
Composition: One elected representative from each of the academic units offering undergraduate degrees, the Director of the WAC Program who is an ex-officio member with no vote or possibility to chair the Committee.

Charge: To advise and work closely with the University Coordinator on Writing Across the Curriculum on current and projected activities and events and to assist departments in the identification and definition of writing-intensive courses in their curricula. To:

A. Articulate and refine the requirements for the WI designated course designated to fulfill the WI requirement in every undergraduate degree across the university with the purpose of establishing homogeneous WI criteria;

B. Assist colleges, schools and institutes in the identification of existing or new courses that degree programs propose to meet the WI requirement in their curricula;

C. Review regularly the courses WI-syllabi to determine compliance with the WI requirement; D. Suggest ways to meet the WI requirement to faculty teaching the WI designated courses; and E. Assist with activities and events related to writing across the curriculum.

---

1 https://resources.gmu.edu/facstaff/senate/UNIVERSITY_STANDIING_COMMITTEE_CHARGES.pdf
## APPENDIX B

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE FACULTY HANDBOOK 2022/2023**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Faculty Handbook 2022</th>
<th>Proposed Revisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.10.7 Outside Professional Activities and/or Financial Interests</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.10.7 Outside Professional Activities and/or Financial Interests</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University encourages faculty members to keep abreast of developments in their disciplines and to gain practical experience in their fields. In many instances, consulting work affords excellent opportunities for faculty to improve themselves professionally and to bring added prestige to them and to the University. The University looks favorably on appropriate consulting work by faculty members insofar as it does not interfere with full, proper, and effective performance of faculty duties and responsibilities.</td>
<td>The University encourages faculty members to keep abreast of developments in their disciplines and to gain practical experience in their fields. In many instances, consulting work affords excellent opportunities for faculty to improve themselves professionally and to bring added prestige to them and to the University. The University looks favorably on appropriate consulting work by faculty members insofar as it does not interfere with full, proper, and effective performance of faculty duties and responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside employment and paid consulting cannot exceed the equivalent of one day per work week without written authorization from the collegiate Dean. Faculty may be required to document outside employment to ensure compliance with these requirements.</td>
<td>Outside employment and paid consulting cannot exceed the equivalent of one day per work week without written authorization from the collegiate Dean. Faculty may be required to document outside employment to ensure compliance with these requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although faculty members are state employees, they consult as private individuals, and the University is not responsible for their work outside the University. When consulting, faculty members should take care to preserve the distinction between projects undertaken through individual initiatives and projects sponsored or officially sanctioned by the University. Outside business interests must not violate the Commonwealth's conflict of interests laws at https: or the University's Conflict of Interests policy 4001.</td>
<td>Although faculty members are state employees, they consult as private individuals, and the University is not responsible for their work outside the University. When consulting, faculty members should take care to preserve the distinction between projects undertaken through individual initiatives and projects sponsored or officially sanctioned by the University. Outside business interests must not violate the Commonwealth's conflict of interests laws at https: or the University's Conflict of Interests policy 4001.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty members may use university facilities, equipment, supplies or computer time in their consulting only after obtaining the approval of the collegiate Dean. Faculty must also secure approval of the collegiate Dean before using university resources to</td>
<td>Faculty members may use university facilities, equipment, supplies or computer time in their consulting only after obtaining the approval of the collegiate Dean. Faculty must also secure approval of the collegiate Dean before using university resources to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support the activities of professional organizations.</td>
<td>support the activities of professional organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Policy: 4021 Conflict of Commitment and University Policy 4001: Conflict of Interest govern faculty members’ outside professional activities and financial interests.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty members anticipating engagement in outside professional activities, or with related financial interests, must review these policies and, where required, report and receive prior approval in advance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A faculty member’s primary professional commitment is to their teaching, research, service, and administrative responsibilities at the university. Outside professional activities that interfere with a faculty member’s professional obligations to the University represent a conflict of commitment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A faculty member having a financial interest in a contract with Mason other than their employment contract, or a financial interest related to their sponsored research, represents a conflict of interest.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Faculty Handbook 2022</td>
<td>Proposed Revisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.2.5 University Professor</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.2.5 Distinguished University Professor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From time to time the University will encounter opportunities to recognize current members of the faculty or appoint to its faculty women and men of great national or international reputation. The rank of University Professor is reserved for such eminent individuals. University Professors are appointed by the President and the Board of Visitors with the advice and consent of a standing committee appointed by the Provost. University Professor appointments are normally reserved for full professors. The criteria for such appointments include substantial research or scholarship or arts credentials, as appropriate to the discipline.</td>
<td>From time to time the University will encounter opportunities to recognize current members of the faculty or appoint to its faculty people of great national or international reputation. The rank of Distinguished University Professor is reserved for such eminent individuals. Distinguished University Professors are appointed by the President and the Board of Visitors with the advice and consent of a standing committee appointed by the Provost. Distinguished University Professor appointments are normally reserved for full professors. The criteria for such appointments include substantial research or scholarship or arts credentials, as appropriate to the discipline.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Faculty Handbook 2022</th>
<th>Proposed Revisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.6.1 Annual Review of Faculty</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.6.1 Annual Review of Faculty</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All faculty are evaluated annually in their local academic units (LAU). The evaluation is based upon the contributions of the preceding academic year and, where applicable, the following summer. Normally, evaluations are completed by the LAU during the Fall semester.</td>
<td>All faculty are evaluated annually in their local academic units (LAUs). The evaluation is based upon the contributions of the preceding academic year, and where applicable, the following summer to include summer, if applicable. Normally, evaluations are completed by the LAU during the Fall semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.1 Annual Review of Faculty</td>
<td>2.6.1 Annual Review of Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The bylaws or standing rules of each local academic unit (LAU) will include:</td>
<td>All LAUs are expected to review their applicable bylaws or standing rules on a regular basis. LAUs are also expected to communicate annually to the faculty in the LAU the bylaws or standing rules that pertain to faculty annual evaluations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The method by which faculty will be evaluated (e.g., by a faculty committee recommendation to the local unit administrator, or directly by the local unit administrator);</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The requirements for the evaluation materials submitted by faculty; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A statement of standards for overall “satisfactory” and “unsatisfactory” annual performance. Satisfactory performance means performance that meets the standards of the unit. Unsatisfactory performance means performance that fails to meet the standards of the unit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The method process, to include the timing, by which faculty will be evaluated (e.g., by a faculty committee recommendation to the local unit administrator, or directly by the local unit administrator);</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The criteria by which faculty will be evaluated;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The requirements for the evaluation materials submitted by faculty to include a self-assessment; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A statement of standards or criteria that differentiates for at least three levels of annual performance developed in consultation with the LAU faculty (e.g. “Exceeds Expectations,” “Satisfactory,” “Unsatisfactory”). LAUs are expected to be able to distinguish annual performance that is “satisfactory” from annual performance that exceeds that standard. One of these levels must be reserved for “unsatisfactory” performance. For overall “satisfactory” and “unsatisfactory” annual performance, Satisfactory performance means performance that meets the standards of the unit. Unsatisfactory performance means performance that fails to meet the basic standards as defined by the unit. An unsatisfactory performance evaluation triggers the requirement to establish a Performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Development Plan by the LAU administrator and employee as described below. For tenured faculty members, a second unsatisfactory performance evaluation within four years triggers post-tenure review as described in Section 2.6.2.
2.6.1 Annual Review of Faculty
The criteria for the annual faculty review are the same as those listed Section 2.4. Faculty are evaluated on the quality of their performance over the entire scope of their contributions during the year and in the context of their goals, assignments, and other responsibilities. Performance expectations should recognize differences in faculty assignments within the same LAU. The local unit administrator has a specific responsibility to review annually the research and scholarly activities of tenure-track faculty and to discuss both the strengths and weaknesses with them on an individual basis. The local unit administrator also has the specific responsibility to advise term faculty individually regarding their progress toward achieving reappointment or promotion.

2.6.1 Annual Review of Faculty
The criteria for the annual faculty review are the same as those listed Section 2.4. Faculty are evaluated on the quality of their performance over the entire scope of their contributions during the year and in the context of their goals, assigned workload, assignments, and other responsibilities. Performance expectations should recognize differences in faculty assignments within the same LAU. The local unit administrator has a specific responsibility to ensure the annual review includes annually all job components that are part of a faculty member’s assigned workload during the evaluation period, the research and scholarly activities of tenure-track faculty and to discuss both the strengths and weaknesses with them on an individual basis. The local unit administrator also has the specific responsibility to advise term faculty on any type of contract individually regarding their progress toward achieving reappointment, renewal, tenure, or promotion.
### 2.6.1 Annual Review of Faculty

New language proposed to be added to the bottom of 2.6.1

### 2.6.1 Annual Review of Faculty

**Annual Evaluations and the RPT Process Have Distinct Functions.**

Although The Renewal, Promotion and Tenure (RPT) and faculty annual evaluations processes focus on the same general criteria (teaching; research, scholarship, creative activity; and service) and should, in general, be aligned, nevertheless, they have distinct functions.

Because faculty annual evaluations and RPT evaluations are distinct, it is important not to assume that faculty annual evaluation results will predict RPT outcomes at the level of an individual case.
### 2.6.1 Annual Review of Faculty

The LAU administrator will meet within two weeks with any tenured or tenure-track faculty member who receives an overall unsatisfactory rating for the annual review. The purpose of the meeting is to establish a written Performance Development Plan (PDP) to restore the faculty member’s overall performance to a satisfactory level according to the standards of the local academic unit.
2.6.1 Annual Review of Faculty

The PDP should be finalized within 30 days of the faculty member receiving an unsatisfactory evaluation and no later than the end of the Fall semester. One copy of the PDP will be retained by the faculty member; one copy will be placed in the faculty member’s personnel file in the office of the LAU administrator; and one copy will be submitted to the Dean. The Proxmist will be notified by the Dean that the faculty member was given an unsatisfactory evaluation and that a PDP was developed. If the faculty member declines to participate in formulating a PDP, the LAU administrator will write one and give it to the faculty member and the Dean.

If the faculty member has made inadequate progress on the PDP or has demonstrated additional unsatisfactory performance by the end of the summer following the unsatisfactory evaluation, this will be incorporated in the performance evaluation for the year. If progress has been achieved according to the provisions of the PDP, an unsatisfactory evaluation for the academic year cannot be given.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Faculty Handbook 2022</th>
<th>Proposed Revisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.7.1 Procedures for Reappointment</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.7.1 Procedures for Reappointment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term faculty on a single-year contract will be evaluated annually for reappointment by either the local unit administrator or a local academic unit faculty committee. Term faculty who are being considered for reappointment to a multi-year contract will be evaluated by a local academic unit faculty committee. Evaluation of a faculty member on a multi-year contract</td>
<td>Term faculty will be evaluated for reappointment following the procedures defined by the local academic unit bylaws or standing rules, which should be consistent with the procedures defined in the Faculty Handbook. Term faculty on single-year contracts will be evaluated annually and term faculty on multi-year contracts will be</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MEMORANDUM
FROM: Effective Teaching Committee, George Mason University
TO: Mark Ginsberg, Provost, George Mason University
DATE: April 13, 2023
SUBJECT: Implemented Evaluative Modalities of Faculty Instruction

Introduction:
The evaluation of instruction within the institution is of paramount importance for an R1 University. As the University emerges from the pandemic into a new academic climate, now is the moment to ensure that instruction across the university is evaluated in an equitable, consistent, and professional manner. This evaluation is crucial to the reputation of an R1 university, as instruction has an impact on assignments, rewards, inclusivity, and diversity. Yet, many LAU’s are struggling with evaluating faculty in a cogent way. Given the evolution in instructional modes, it is perhaps more necessary than ever that we are intentional about these evaluation efforts, both for annual evaluations and in RPT processes.

As a committee, we see multiple challenges related to the evaluation of instruction. For each, below we detail the challenge, relevant context, and provide a recommendation for addressing that challenge.

**Issue #1:** The university and LAUs do not have clear guidance about implementation of the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET), and the result is that response rates are dismal and the collection of valid/reliable data to inform instructors has been diminished.

**History/Context:** In the pre-pandemic context of paper SETs, there was clear University-wide guidance on how to administer the surveys. Response rates improved by the one-shot nature of administration and clear expectation to faculty that the surveys had to be administered. A separate set of online SETs were administered to courses that were 100% online (with differences in response rates). As of the Spring 2023 semester, there is widespread uncertainty regarding how to customize, implement, and utilize the results of the new, fully online SET. While OIEP and some colleges have outlined useful strategies, there has yet to be a determination or communication of a uniform set of procedures.

**Recommendation:** A clear, consistent, University-wide set of administration procedures should be provided to all LAUs outlining the process of customizing the SET, best practices for implementation of the SET, and how to utilize the resulting data in a holistic and formative manner. Response rate expectations should be standardized (and relaxed) so units do not pressure faculty to achieve unreasonable (in some cases, 100% is the college’s goal) submission rates.

**Issue #2:** The University and LAUs do not have a standardized approach in the evaluation of instructors. Incorporation of peer evaluations in addition to student assessments of instruction and evaluation from a supervisor would greatly benefit assessment of instructors.

**History/Context:** In the past the evaluation of instruction was often based on data collected from the SETs, and specifically a particular question regarding the student’s overall assessment of the class. This two-question focus, while easy to execute and consistent across LAU, was inherently flawed due to the systemic biases associated with the earlier version of the SET. Even after improving the SET instrument, it does not provide a sufficient evaluative window to serve as the basis of an instructor’s teaching or student learning outcomes.

**Recommendation:** Adoption of rigorous peer evaluations across the university, with a set of clear and consistent assessment procedures that reflect the university’s mission, while providing the flexibility to allow LAUs to customize a portion of the assessment based on the specific goals of the unit. Workload guidelines should be clear as to how evaluation is to be accounted for within assigned instructional time so that it is not simply an addition to existing workloads.
A potentially useful example of an institution-wide peer review system can be found at Penn State, which mandates peer reviews of teaching RPT purposes and provides extensive guidance in their execution. (An example can be found [here](#).)

**Issue #3:** There are multiple alternative methods to evaluate instruction. Currently, these are either not used, or used on an ad hoc basis by various LAUs. These methods have the potential to deepen faculty understanding of their own teaching style and lead to improvements in the execution of their instruction.

**History/Context:** As the evaluation of instruction has been focused on the analysis of SET data, there has been no consistent effort to explore alternative methods of evaluation, nor has there been encouragement that the LAUs invest time/energy on this matter.

**Recommendation:** The University should promote the use of appropriate evaluation methods to supplement the data generated by the SET and peer evaluations. The set of methods utilized can be selected by the LAUs, and might vary across campus, based on what best fits with their specific needs. A particularly useful form of evaluation is a rigorous instructor self-evaluation process. Additional forms of evaluation that can be explored include structured group-interviews, teaching dossier/course portfolios.

**Issue #4:** Course evaluations should matter for instructors, but their recent function has not been consistent in purpose or usage.

**History/Context:** While many have reasonably criticized the pre-pandemic SET implementation structures and the evaluation items, the clear expectations that SETs would be administered provided not only for the collection of data to inform instruction, but also for the consideration of that data for developmental and evaluation purposes. While the data itself may have been problematic, all instructors at least had the common ground of data sets to which they could respond. Additionally, whether evaluations are formative, as well as their intended weighting in annual and promotion considerations, has been uneven.

**Recommendation:** Build a robust, reliable, and consistent context for each SET question.

In closing, we understand that good evaluation requires time, training, and intentionality. To identify effective teaching, we conclude that it is the obligation of the institution to ensure that faculty have their instruction evaluated through at least three of the following:

- Peer Evaluation
- Self-Evaluation
- Learning Outcome Metrics
- SETs within a structure of clear guidance and goals

Units which are not undertaking this level and breadth of evaluation should be charged with doing so in an expedient manner, which we believe to be no later than the 2024 annual evaluation. The Effective Teaching Committee is eager to collaborate with relevant University offices to provide LAUs the support in generating and refining the processes necessary.
Effective Teaching Review and Revision Resolution

In parallel with our rise as an R1 institution, Mason has made an important commitment to teaching as noted by the development of the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning, increased support for faculty development and more equitable evaluation of teaching throughout the University. We strive to continually support faculty and students in our pursuit of teaching excellence.

To improve identification of effective teaching and equitably support faculty in their teaching roles, we conclude that it is the obligation of the institution to provide support of the following evaluation metrics:

Required use of the online SET instrument:
- Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) should be conducted within a structure of clear guidance for faculty and students to establish habits that improve response rates.

Suggested metrics for all Local Administrative Units (LAUs) evaluating teaching:
- routine peer-evaluation of instructors of record
- instructor self-evaluation
- use of measured student learning outcome

To this end, we propose the following resolution:

Each Local Administrative Unit that conducts teaching evaluations will report their current teaching evaluation procedures with proposed revisions to the Effective Teaching Committee (ETC) by December 15, 2023. The report will specifically consider approaches used for the standard online Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) and additional evaluation factors including: use of peer review; instructor of record self-evaluation; and metrics of student learning outcomes.

One component of each LAU report will specifically address administration of the SET and plans for increasing student compliance. Evaluation plans will be reviewed by the ETC and representatives of the provost’s office from the Stearns Center and the Office of Instructional Effectiveness and Planning. Reports will be returned to the LAUs with comments and suggestions during the Spring of 2024.

In support of the review process, a general rubric will be provided. Effective Teaching Committee members, the Stearns Center and OIEP will be available to provide support and consultation throughout the process.

APPENDIX D

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mason Core Committee

Submitted by Debra Stroiney, March 6, 2023

March 2023 meeting

In Attendance:

Laura Poms –Mason Core Director, Deb Stroiney –Mason Core co-chair, Bethany Usher, Abena Aidoo, Lauren Cattaneo, Jason Kinser, Liz White, Shun Ye, Courtney Wooten, Shelley Reid (ex officio), Gina
Polychronopoulos (ex officio), Nishok Chitvel (student rep), Krista Shires (recording secretary), Tricia Wilson (recording secretary)

Guests: Liz Bartles, Tom Polk, Laina Lockett, Jesse Guessford, John Cantiello, Kim Redelsheimer, Wayne Adams

Approved courses:

- MUSI 489 – Music Technology Capstone

Other Business:

- Faculty senate approved the revisions to the Capstone/Synthesis Catebory
- Edits to the committee charge were voted on and approved by the Mason Core committee to be sent on to the faculty senate O & O committee for approval.
April 26, 2023
LIST OF ATTENDEES

108 Total Listed Attendees (46 Senators and 62 Visitors)
6 Additional Visitors attended who chose not to be listed

46 Senators present: Alan Abramson, Karen Akerlof, Jatin Ambegaonkar, Dominique Banville, Alok Berry, Lisa Billingham, Michelle Boardman, Melissa Broeckelman_Post, Meagan Call-Cummings, Jamie Clark, Richard Craig, Tim Curby, Delton Daigle, Douglas Eyman, Daniel Garrison, Edward Gero, Tim Gibson, Charlotte Gill, Victoria Grady, Liling Huang, Bijan Jabbari, Eugene Kontorovich, Kerri LaCharite, Lisa Lister, Tamara Maddox, Alexandra Masterson, Kumar Mehta, Laurie Miller, Anna Pollack, Marvin Powell, Keith Renshaw, Greg Robinson, Pierre Rodgers, Esperanza Roman Mendoza, Catherine Sausville, Zachary Schrag, Gene Shuman, Solon Simmons, Cristiana Stan, Benjamin Steger, Kun Sun, Matt Theeke, Mohan Venigalla, David Wong, Tom Woodley, Jie Zhang

6 Senators absent: Virginia Blair, Kathleen Roberts, Jessica Scarlata, Rebecca Sutter, Anne Verhoeven, Theresa Wills