



FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

Thursday, October 3, 2024 (meeting held via Zoom)

In attendance: Speaker: Ott Walter; Communications Director: McDonnell; Accounting: Briggs; Art, Design, and Art History: Brooks; Biology: L. Doyle; Chemistry: Kokhan; Comm. Sci. and Disorders: Harbick; Comm. Studies: Nelson; Computer Inf. Sys. & Bus. Analytics: Wang; Computer Science: El-Khadi Rizvi; Early ELED & Reading: Mathur; Economics: J. Doyle; Edu. Found. & Exception: Wiley; Engineering: Harper; English: Gerber; Finance & Bus. Law: Parker; Foreign Languages: Galarreta; Geol. & Environ. Science: Pyle; Hart School of HSRM: Hallmon; Health Professions: Harrison; Health Sciences: Lassiter; History: McCleary; IDLS: Schmitt-Harsh; Integrated Sciences: York; Justice Studies: Castle; Kinesiology: Wigglesworth; Learning, Tech. & LE: Jin; Libraries: Price; Management: Pattie; Marketing: Snyder; Math & Stats: C. Lubert; Media Arts. & Design: Mitchell; Mid, Second, & Math: Shoffner; Military Science: Eshelman; Music: Suggs; Nursing: Lewis; Phil. & Rel.: van Leeuwen; Physics: Butner; Political Science: H. Lubert; Psychology: Zinn; Social Work: Miller; Soc. & Anth.: Trouille; Strategic Leadership Studies: Selznick; Theatre & Dance: Zazzali; Writing Rhetoric & Tech Comm: Hickman; Part-time Faculty Reps: Harlacker; Janow; Guests—O’Fallon, Oldmixon, Clevenger, Wood, May, Lonett, and others.

- I. **Call to Order**—3:55 p.m. (by the Speaker Pro Tempore)
- II. The minutes from September were approved.
- III. **Provost’s Report**—Dr. Elizabeth Oldmixon
 - The Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Curriculum announced the following:
 - Remind colleagues that several key shared governance processes are occurring (e.g., core curriculum renewal, faculty handbook revision) and that these processes cannot be successful without faculty engagement.
 - Advice is being sought about academic freedom/free speech from the William & Mary provost about best practices and guidelines. Discourse as a citizen is unrestrained by the university; however, as a public employee, note explicitly when accounts are personal and clarify that you’re not speaking on behalf of the university. How can the provost’s office help faculty (e.g., hold a forum)?
 - The following questions were addressed:
 - Will you share the William & Mary document? Yes.
 - Has there been feedback from the W&M faculty? She hasn’t heard but will check with the provost.
 - Is there an update on the hiring guidelines? Yes, the [hiring guidelines](#) are ready.

IV. **Speaker's Report—Dr. Katherine Ott Walter**

- The dates for the monthly meeting with the president and the chief of staff have been set.
- The speaker clarified that the faculty senate represents instructional faculty and librarians. Others with concerns can go to the provost. Including others would require bylaws changes and even changes to the faculty senate constitution.
- The conversation about equitable workload continues.
- The following questions were raised:
 - Q: The workload issue was not on the list of priorities, but it remains a top priority for faculty. The slow pace of the hiring process is another concern. A: Hiring rightly belongs with the dean, which should help to accelerate the process.
 - Q: Historically, other senators have been invited to the speaker's meetings with the president and the provost. A: Anyone is invited to come.
 - Q: Search committees are concerned about JMU's reputation for low salaries. The fear is that this reputation limits the search pool and thus inhibits successful searches. The cost of living here keeps rising. Can data be collected to understand some of the confidential information about why candidates turn down job offers from JMU. A: It's important to know why people are turning down JMU.
 - Q: Candidates are also being lost because the search process is so drawn out. People are taking offers elsewhere in the meantime. How much of the lengthy process is state driven versus JMU driven? A: It would be good to talk to legal counsel about this.
 - Q: Staff salaries are abysmal. Staff are so poorly paid that they barely make a livable wage. To what extent is this problem a state issue versus a JMU issue? A: Towana Moore has been addressing the ALICE population. It's a gradual process.
- A volunteer for the Honorary Degree Committee is still needed.

V. **Treasurer's Report—Dr. Talé Mitchell**

- The senate has \$3,149 in the combined bank accounts.
- Dues are due October 15. Collect \$5 from each full-time faculty member (in whatever way you prefer—e.g., Venmo, cash). You can send the money via Venmo to @talemitchphd, hand an envelope to the treasurer in Harrison 0236, or send one check through campus mail (payable to JMU Faculty Senate).
- The Faculty Senate Computer Lottery winners have been notified.

VI. **Committee Reports**

- Faculty Concerns—Chair Kristen McCleary shared the committee's [GoogleDoc](#). Erica Lewis from the A&P Hiring Task Force came to the meeting to discuss processes for grievances. The committee will work with the Policies Committee to create a policy

about grievances. The committee will work on asynchronous tasks rather than meeting because of the football game and fall break. One action item is the committee's work to get new faculty paid in a timelier way, especially when they are asked to begin working before the contract date. This is the chair's third and thus final year chairing the committee because of term limits.

- Policies—Chair Smita Mathur announced that the committee plans to continue to work on Policy #2 about AUHs. The feedback period should be soon. They are also working to revise Policy 00, which guides how policies are managed. The committee is working with Faculty Concerns and will meet at the end of October.
- Adjunct Affairs—Chair Leslie Harlacker announced that the first meeting of the committee is being scheduled. The committee will provide support to the adjunct representative on the handbook committee. The committee aims to ensure smooth communication (e.g., letters about raises for adjuncts).
- Teaching and Student Relations—According to Chair Anne van Leeuwen, the SGA representative to the Faculty Senate is Caroline Spurling.
- Budget & Compensation and Government Relations—Chair Harold Butner announced that the committee will hold an email discussion because of the evening football game.
- Faculty Appeals—no report.
- Research and Scholarship—Chair Melanie Shoffner reminded faculty about the October 3 deadline for the mini-grants. Fifty thousand dollars are available for the grants. At the time, there were twenty-five submissions. The committee will work to turn them around as quickly as possible. The committee is set to meet with Anthony Tongen of REDI in October (email shoffnme@jmu.edu).
 - Q: Faculty are having trouble being paid, which is related to REDI. As an R2 institution, we might want to be, for example, hosting a dinner, which is not a problem at other institutions. Is it true that JMU is using incorrect software and thus paying 15% in taxes that other institutions don't? A: JMU needs to examine what the university is doing in response to requirements from the state—e.g., how JMU's interpretation of the guidelines creates challenges for faculty. The conversation with REDI will aim to start to address these issues so that management of funds is clearer and easier. One suggestion is to look at best practices at other state institutions.
 - Q: Faculty are not eligible for certain grants while we have an interim president or for the first year of a new presidency. This issue reinforces the need for faculty involvement in the presidential search.
- Shared Governance—Chair Sasha Kokhan announced that the committee held an organizational meeting two weeks ago. They discussed priorities. One focus is workload.

- **Other Committee Reports**

- Sasha Kokhan, who serves on the IT Advisory Council, reported that Robin Bryant announced the possibility of creating an account before HR onboarding of new faculty. This change will happen around spring break and will allow new faculty to access Canvas and other systems in a timely manner.
- Christine May delivered a report on the Core Curriculum Committee. The committee is entering its third year. The message from the Provost's Office is that core curriculum renewal is one of the top priorities for this year. A listening tour and guest speakers have been part of the process. The committee is now soliciting ideas. Proposals are due December 16. The first phase will ask for a brief summary of the idea (the idea does not have to be fully fleshed out). Stipends will be awarded to develop selected ideas. The new program will be implemented in 27–28. Encourage your faculty to participate. This is a great opportunity for faculty to have a voice.
- Sarah Brooks, who co-chairs the Handbook Revision Committee, provided the following updates: The 18-member committee, with all present, met for the first time on September 27. The revision process is expected to take two years. In April of 2026, the completed work will be handed over to the regular faculty handbook committee for a vote; subsequently, the speaker, president, and provost will review the revised handbook. The committee will carefully review all comments received by the September 30 deadline.
- Nicole Wood, BOV member, reported on the work of the presidential search committee. The committee held multiple listening sessions across the commonwealth with alumni, parents, students, faculty, and local leaders. The committee selected Russell Reynolds to help with the search. Recently, the firm worked with Catholic University, Fairfield, Gonzaga, Penn State, etc., on their searches. No dates for the phases of the search were provided. The following questions were asked:
 - Q: With respect to the confidentiality of the process, can the candidates be asked to supply a one-page philosophy statement? A: There's an NDA, so this question would require a vote of the committee.
 - Q: Can you share the prospectus? A: She'll ask.
 - Q: Will you respond to the request for a larger committee? A: There has been no discussion of adding members.

VII. No New Business

VIII. Unfinished Business

- The Resolution on Inclusion of Professional Faculty in Shared Governance was withdrawn.

IX. Open Discussion

- Since Covid, students are more engaged but demonstrate less skill and knowledge.
- The suggestion was made that perhaps it's too easy to apply to JMU since no essay is required and SAT scores are optional. Ivy League institutions are reinstating the SAT. Perhaps JMU should also reconsider.
- The branding of JMU needs to emphasize education more than the experience. The message is that we're not a serious academic institution.
- The point was made that the world has changed, and students are thus responding to different forces.
- There's concern about the new policies being enforced around campus, especially the mixed message that as an R2 institution, faculty should have more of a public profile; however, if things go south in the public sphere, the administration will not support faculty.

X. **Adjournment:** 5:23 p.m.