



FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

Thursday, December 7, 2023 (meeting held via Zoom)

In attendance: Speaker: Ott Walter; Communications Director: McDonnell; Accounting: Briggs; Art, Design, and Art History: Brooks; Biology: May; Chemistry: Kokhan; Comm. Sci. and Disorders: Clinard; Comm. Studies: Nelson; Comp. Inf. Sys. & Bus. Analytics: Wang; Computer Science: El-Kadi Rizvi; Economics: Elwood; Edu. Found. & Exception: Brown; English: Lo; Finance & Bus. Law: Parker; Foreign Languages: Lang-Rigal; Geol. & Environ. Science: McGary; Grad. Psych.: LeBlanc; Hart School of HSRM: Hallmon; Health Professions: Harrison; Health Sciences: Lassiter; History: McCleary; IDLS: Schmitt-Harsh; Integrated Sciences: York; Justice Studies: Castle; Kinesiology: McKay; Learning Tech. & LE: Wiley; Libraries: Price; Management: Pattie; Math & Stats: C. Lubert; Media Arts. & Design: Mitchell; Mid, Second, & Math: Shoffner; Music: Suggs; Nursing: Lewis; Phil. & Rel.: van Leeuwen; Physics: Butner; Political Science: H. Lubert; Psychology: Melchiori (and Zinn, proxy); Social Work: Yeom; Soc. & Anth.: Trouille; Strategic Leadership Studies: Vanhove; Theatre & Dance: De Sanctis; Writing Rhetoric & Tech Comm: Hickman; Part-time Faculty Reps: Harlacker, Janow, Trocchia; Guests—Coltman, Oldmixon, Shackelford, SGA Rep. Le, Smith, Heishman, Stebbins, Major, Orem, and others.

- I. **Call to Order**—3:55 p.m.
- II. The minutes from November were approved.
- III. **Provost's Report**—Dr. Heather Coltman
 - The provost expressed her appreciation for faculty's forbearance as JMU welcomed GameDay to town and celebrated our student-athletes' success.
 - A new COACHE team is being launched. The survey is done every four years. Members from across campus will participate, serving for at least a year and a half, beginning next summer.
 - Academic Affairs was well represented at the BOV meeting. Three faculty-student pairs presented their research. Board members enjoy hearing about student research. Six pairs then presented two-minute lightning talks at dinner. One of the most compelling talks came from faculty senator Sam Suggs and his student Tina Battaglia. These presentations are a wonderful way to showcase student talent.
 - The Inclusive Community Series—an effort to address concerns raised in the Climate Study—has hosted excellent speakers such as Maggie Siddiqi and Wendy Borlabi, followed by growth circles the next week to connect with Climate Study issues. There will be one more event in February.
- IV. **Speaker's Report**—Dr. Katherine Ott Walter

- The speaker is taking nominations to sit on the COACHE task force. Send names of interested faculty to ottwalmk@jmu.edu. There will be compensation for summer work.
- She and BOV member Lara Major have been having conversations about ways for the Faculty Senate and the BOV to collaborate.
- Continue to seek feedback in your departments about what it takes to be successful at JMU.
- The speaker is seeking clarity about what constitutes “personnel matters.” What is out of bounds for PACs?
- The ombudsperson used to deliver a report to the Senate. Do we want to reinstate this report?
- The speaker attended the AAUP VA meeting, which focused on the following:
 - Bills are being introduced around the country aiming to dismantle tenure and shared governance.
 - Many new legislators are joining the VA General Assembly in January.
 - A bill called the Education Act is being introduced to require campuses to rewrite their civics curriculum and create a new school for General Education, raising concerns about faculty who teach GenEd within their departments being dismissed.
 - Peter Blake, director of SCHEV, is stepping down. An interim director will be appointed.
 - Tuition remission has been discussed multiple times, but the budget implications would be huge.
 - Transparency for donor oversight is needed.
 - There’s a lack of consistency in how faculty representatives are appointed to BOVs around the state.
 - January 11 is Higher Ed Day in Richmond. More information to come.
- Guests Cover Heishman and Lindsay Stebbins from OSARP shared the following information about OSARP’s work:
 - OSARP educates students (often through cases or reports from faculty or staff). OSARP’s work is achieved through two main processes: Accountability—exploring policy issues that come out of the student handbook—and Restorative Practices—not focused on alleged policy violations but on impacts and harms experienced by those involved and the obligation of the person who caused the harm to make things right.
 - OSARP welcomes contact with their office to request more information or to begin a process. Faculty can share information with students and, if interested in learning more, can request a class presentation.
 - Faculty are encouraged to consult policy #12, which is about disruption of class.
 - The Counseling Center has great resources about distressed students.
 - If faculty feel endangered, call JMU Police, or for sexual harms, call Title IX.
 - In response to a question about FIRE campus free speech rankings and survey results that showed a large number of students thought it

appropriate to block a controversial speaker, Heishman emphasized that there are policies on free speech and assembly.

- Sheila Smith from University Advancement and Chris Orem from Planning, Analytics, and Institutional Research presented on JMU's call for Big Ideas.
 - They aim to attract Big Ideas from every corner of the university. Some ideas may influence the strategic plan or fundraising priorities. Useful information and the submission form can be found on the [Big Ideas website](#). Also available is a proposal template and the scoring rubric. All ideas will be shared with division heads.
 - In November, a couple of drop-in workshops were held, where potential submitters could receive feedback. Two more workshops (in Sonner Hall 2005) are scheduled, one from 3 to 5 on Wednesday, 1/31, and one from 8:30 to 10:30 on Wednesday, 2/7. Register [here](#). Reach out if these times don't work for you.
- Speaker Ott Walter reiterated her hope that academic big ideas will come forward.

V. Treasurer's Report

- Treasurer Cathy McKay reported a total of \$5,369.97 in the senate's combined accounts. A deposit of \$385 will be made early next week.
- Two bereavement forms were processed since the last meeting, for a total of twenty-two this year academic year, which started in May.
- Two departments still owe dues: Management and Strategic Leadership Studies

VI. Committee reports

- A. Faculty Concerns—Chair Kristen McCleary reported on conversations about hiring (timeline of approval, size of candidate pools). The committee continues to work on a statement about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, recognizing the complexity of the issue. The committee aims to develop a new process for appeals of annual evaluations. Next week, the committee is holding an optional meeting with the Academic Policies Committee to discuss Academic Affairs policy #2 (about the chair model for the AUH position).
- B. Academic Policies—no report
- C. Adjunct Affairs—Chair Leslie Harlacker noted that the committee is focusing on the best ways to communicate with adjuncts.
- D. Student Relations—no report
- E. Budget & Compensation and Government Relations—no report
- F. Faculty Appeals—no report

- G. Nominations and Elections—Chair Melanie Shoffner announced the [new committee structures](#), which will begin in January. Because there is now an additional committee—Shared Governance, chaired by Sasha Kokhan—there has been some slight reshuffling to ensure representation across colleges. The Faculty Appeals Committee members have been assigned to a secondary committee since they meet only when/if appeals arise.

The current Nominations and Elections Committee met and reviewed the applications for mini-grants. They awarded twelve grants. Because there is a small amount of money left over, the marshal sent out a [second call for proposals](#), due January 31. The review of proposals will happen quickly since funds must be disbursed by June 30. Next semester, Marshal Shoffner will be joining meetings from London, where she will be FMIR.

- H. Other Committee Reports—Kristen McCleary reported on the Shared Governance Implementation Team, chaired by Sasha Kokhan. The team met three times this semester and will meet bi-weekly next semester. They set ground rules and laid out fourteen recommendations for the spring (unit shared governance, interim AUH, rotating chairs, AAUH policy, shared governance statement, protecting academic freedom, staying accountable for progress, communication accountability, slow down, including all faculty, access to information, handbook revision, conflict of interest, evaluation of administrators). More detail available [here](#). Four working groups are devising plans for their assigned items. They plan to issue a report once a month through the provost’s website.

Jennifer Lang-Rigal reported that the Faculty Handbook Committee is finishing the first review of proposals submitted this year. Next week starts the public review period, which runs through February 5. Keep an eye out for an email.

VII. Open Discussion

- Note that spring Faculty Senate meetings are held on the last Thursday of the month.
- Senate meeting time, day, location, and mode need to be decided. Some departments are already asking for schedule requests for next year (AY 2024-2025). The following issues were raised: The meeting needs to fall within a class time (e.g., 75 minutes on a Tuesday or Thursday). One suggestion was made that meetings end by the close of the typical 5:00 workday. For greater accessibility and inclusion, a hybrid approach was suggested. Another suggestion was to alternate between two meeting locations, recognizing that faculty come from both sides of campus. If we are effective online, what’s the compelling reason to return to in-person meetings?

VIII. Adjournment: 5:08 p.m.