

Student Affairs & Campus Life Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Date October 23, 2018

Present: Cedric Rucker, Juliette Landphair, Jason James, Maysoon Al-Sayed Ahmad, Patricia Orozco, Ping Yin, Jason Robins, Patrick Catullo

Next meeting: November 13, 9 a.m.

I. Introductions

Dean Cedric Rucker – Dean of Students

Juliette Landphair – Vice President of Student Affairs

Jason James – Department of Sociology & Anthropology “Committee Chair”

Maysoon Al-Sayed Ahmad – Department of Modern Languages & Literatures “Secretary”

Patricia Orozco – Department of Modern Languages & Literatures

Ping Yin – Department of Geography

Patrick Catullo- Intern Athletic Director

Jason Robinson – Department of Art & Art History

II. Chair Report

a. Meeting Agenda and Chair report

- Approved the minutes from previous meeting.
- Emphasize the overarching charge for this committee which is to support the students holistically and bring the faculty perspective on nonacademic issues and also learn about and further communicate to other faculty about these issues.

b. Student Athletes:

- Vice President Landphair invited the Interim Director of Athletics to the committee meeting to discuss the current and future state of athletics at UMW.
- She also highlighted that Mary Beth Matthews of the Department of Classics, Philosophy, and Religion has been named as the new NCAA Faculty Athletic Representative.
- The committee has been asked to provide and share ideas about ways to articulate and understand what the learning outcomes of the athletics experience at UMW. She also indicated that, the student’s affairs committee is the first faculty group to discuss the athlete’s experiences.
- Physical education: the university has moved away from the physical education requirement for numerous reasons but one of the main reasons is because many of our students are coming with athletic experience and have already participated in some form of physical activities including dance, theater and other activities that are deemed as non-essential for the academic mission.

Patrick Catullo:

Patrick talked about the athletics program and Division III missions. Mary Washington is a member of the NCAA Division III which is the largest of the 3 divisions, which means athletes do not receive scholarships. Our athletes still chose to come to Mary Washington for their academic education and to participate in sports. When the athletics department recruit the

students, they look for academically successful and diverse group to help support the mission of the university.

Mr. Catullo offered the volleyball team as an example of a UMW athletic team that has set specific goals:

- 1- To maintain a high level of academic achievement
- 2- To be competitive and to improve the academic skills
- 3- To engage and get involved with other activities on campus and in the Fredericksburg community

He added that the athletics department's mission is to build a bridge of communication between themselves and the faculty in the future to address the challenges that occur with the student's athlete's class attendance. Giving the students games schedule helps both the faculty and students to plan ahead of time.

One faculty concern is about student athletes being absent or leaving early for competitions. Dean Rucker indicated that the swim team has been the model and the coach of the team has been very diligent in terms of communicating with faculty and getting those schedules at the beginning of the semester.

The provost wants our committee to review the attendance policy and explore what other universities do in these cases. The question is whether we need to change the policy or suggest ways that the administration can do a better job at communicating with faculty and staff regarding athletes' schedules ahead of time.

c. Regalia Guidelines – Update

The committee has also been asked to discuss guidelines for regalia and what the students can wear at the commencement to include augmentations such as those that reflect their ethnic heritage, first generation student, or other aspects of their education and experience at UMW.

Dr. Orozco suggested that a broader conversation in the UFC would be advisable before specific guidelines are developed.

Vice President Landphair and Dean Rucker both emphasized that it is important to acknowledge that for students, commencement is an occasion in which it is quite meaningful for their individual achievements and identity to be communicated.

The chair researched guidelines of other Virginia colleges and universities schools. The only detailed guidelines readily available are those of Virginia Commonwealth University. These guidelines state that it is acceptable for the regalia to include additional elements based on academic honor or affiliation with approved student organizations or (see appendix), subject to approval by the VCU Dean of Students. He also highlighted a point discussed in our previous meeting, namely that the guidelines should include a provision that regalia remain in keeping with the UMW Statement of Community Values.

The existing charge of the Faculty Student Affairs and Campus Life Advisory Committee does not suggest that this is the most appropriate committee for this task. Since the commencement is an academic exercise, the committee believes it should be a wider conversation and more people should be involved in making these decisions. Dean Rucker would like for the faculty to develop guidelines and approve or disapprove student requests. He suggests that since commencement is an academic exercise, faculty should be the ones developing guidelines for regalia and responding to student requests, while his office would enforce or otherwise carry out those decisions. But a different faculty committee, such as the Academic Affairs Committee, would be more appropriate to determine and adjudicate guidelines. Vice President Landphair suggests that the Commencement Committee would be appropriate for this task, while Dr. Rucker sees that committee as focused on implementation of academic policy.

Addendum 1

Virginia Commonwealth University Guidelines for Cords, Stoles, and Pins

We hold all of our graduates in high esteem and recognize their achievements at Commencement, a ceremony at which we celebrate the unity of the body of undergraduates and honor their academic achievements. Although there is no set protocol for Commencement regalia, members of organizations, not based on academic merit, may be eligible to wear appropriate graduation stoles, honor cords, and/or pins, badges or insignias with the approval of the Dean of Students Office. If your organization is interested in wearing these accoutrements, please submit your request in writing to the Dean of Students Office at vcudean@vcu.edu.

In addition to the traditional cap and gown regalia worn at this event, students are entitled to wear honor cords and stoles to signify achievement through college organizations or association with international groups or programs. The student/organization/group is responsible for the cost of any such regalia. Graduation stoles and honor cords must be in keeping with the decorum of the event and within the following guidelines:

Graduation Stole: A stole takes the form of a cloth scarf-like garment worn over the shoulders adorned with the organization's colors and/or insignia. A student may wear only one stole at a time.

Honor Cord: An honor cord is a token consisting of twisted cords with tassels on either end. The cord signifies specific academic achievement or membership in a recognized academic honor group or society. More than one cord may be worn at the same time.

Please note: at this time, the university does not distribute or sell cords based on or related to Latin honors designation. Latin honors will be acknowledged in the Commencement booklet. For more information on Latin honors, please visit <https://rar.vcu.edu/graduation/>.

Pins/Insignia/Badges: These items are tokens specifying academic achievement or membership in a recognized academic honor group or student organization. These items are traditionally worn on the gown. More than one of these items may be worn at the same time.

All three items may be worn simultaneously as long as they do not conflict in appearance with the official stoles worn by faculty marshals or other designated members participating in the ceremony.

<https://commencement.vcu.edu/graduation-info/>

Addendum 2

Chair's Update on Discussion of Regalia Guidelines

November 9, 2018

In the interest of the University Faculty Council undertaking a discussion of regalia guidelines in a timely manner, the chair of the Student Affairs and Campus Life Advisory Committee provides the following report to be included in the minutes of the committee's October 23, 2018 meeting, to be approved at the November 13, 2018 and provided to the UFC for consideration at that body's next meeting.

The contacted UFC Chair Jackie Gallagher via email regarding which committee should developed and/or implement guidelines for student regalia. The President also included the UFC Chair-Elect Anand Rao in the discussion. The consensus in this exchange was that, while it is appropriate for the Student Affairs and Campus Life Advisory Committee to offer input here, the task is not in keeping with its charge without an approved change in that charge. A subcommittee of the Commencement Committee might be more appropriate. The full UFC should discuss the question of which committee is most appropriate for this task.