**UFC Meeting**

**Wednesday, September 23, 2020**

**Online (via Zoom), 4 PM**

**Members in Attendance:** Janine Davis (COE, UFC Secretary), Teresa Coffman (COE), Jennifer Walker (COE), Kenneth G. Machande (COB, UFC Vice Chair), Rachel Graefe-Anderson (COB), Kashef Majid (COB), Andrew Delaney (CAS, Health, PE, & STEM)*,* Margaret Ray (CAS, Social Sciences), Suzanne Sumner (CAS – Health, PE, & STEM), Miriam Liss (CAS, Social Sciences), Laura Mentore (CAS, Social Sciences), Larry Lehman (CAS, Health, PE, & STEM), Anand Rao (CAS, At-Large, UFC Past Chair), Andrew Dolby (CAS, At-Large, UFC Chair), Kate Haffey (CAS – Arts & Humanities), Kristin Marsh (CAS, At-Large), Gregg Stull (CAS – Arts & Humanities), Marcel Rotter (CAS, Arts & Humanities, UFC Parliamentarian)

**Proxies:** (after 5:50)Laura Mentore for Kristin Marsh; Ken Machande for Kashef Majid

**Guests:** There were approximately 39 people logged into the meeting. Included within this number were: UMW Provost Nina Mikhalevsky (Ex-Officio), Peter Kelly (Dean COE), Lynne Richardson (Dean COB), Keith Mellinger (Dean CAS), Troy Paino (Ex-Officio), and Jeff McClurken (Chief-of-Staff)

This meeting can be viewed [here](https://ufc.umw.edu/recordings/oct-27-2020-ufc-special-meeting/) (UMW log-in required).

**Notes:** The meeting was held via Zoom with both UFC members and outside members. UFC members were encouraged to indicate that they would like to speak by initiating the request via the chat function.

1. **Call to Order**

Andrew Dolby called the meeting to order at 4:01 P.M.

1. **Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the September meeting were approved with no edits.

**III. Reports**

1. **President Paino:** The president shared three items: a legislative update, the recent executive order, and the provost replacement. The budget will move on to the governor soon and initial signs suggest that results should be positive. If signed, this would include tuition moderation funds ($3.3 million), health insurance holiday ($400,000), and bonuses for some staff and adjuncts. UMW’s administrative offices are working to fully understand the executive order and its possible impacts. Initial impressions suggest that this order would only impact mandatory trainings, and more information should follow in the future. He indicated that we will lean on the Attorney General’s office for advice moving forward.

**Question:** how are other institutions responding? Is there any collective effort to bring a lawsuit forward to combat this executive order?

**Answer:** There hasn’t been action so far and we do not know of lawsuits at this time.

**Question:** Have we identified the extent of our federal funding that could be at stake, e.g. Pell grants etc?

**Answer:** These funds could be put at risk, but we will wait and see how enforcement goes.

**Question:** Does this executive order make moot any state-level training requirements for commonwealth employees?

**Answer:** Yes, we think it could, but we are waiting to see what happens with it in the future.

Finally, the president reported that he has met with many stakeholders recently, including cabinet, UFC executive committee, and the provost’s direct reports. He noted that during this unusual time he is determining whether an interim appointment or a full search would be advisable. He plans to process his notes before making a recommendation, but also offered the UFC the change to provide input. There were no additional comments about the process during the meeting, but he concluded by offering that people may contact him with input for the future.

**Question:** What was the UFC executive committee’s position?

**Answer:** The president reported that his takeaway from this meeting was that an external national search should happen, but perhaps not right now during the pandemic and while faculty are as busy as they are. The cost of a national search would also be problematic during a time when there have been budget cuts in other areas. There was also interest in attracting diverse applicants.

**Answer**: The UFC as a body has not offered a position, so this meeting reflected the positions of the executive committee more individually—we are open to holding additional meetings to more fully capture the input of all of the UFC members.

**Comment**: In the CAS chairs’ meeting it emerged that the idea of reorganization would be considered for the future, and so this is a complicated position to step into.

**Response**: The president added that he would welcome the chance to hear from the UFC.

**Comment**: What about rebranding?

**Response:** We went back to Mindpower to see if they could come up with some other options.

**Comment:** (on the topic of the provost search) This is a chance to identify who we are and who we would like to be as an institution. There was support for another UFC meeting to identify the preferences and needs of the faculty for the search.

1. **Provost Mikhalevsky**

The Provost reported that there have been issues with Canvas, and if faculty have trouble they can reach out to the Help Desk, Jerry Slezak, or Victoria Russell. There have also been some concerns about academic dishonesty in the online environment; she encouraged faculty who are concerned about these issues that they can reach out to the Teaching Center and David Rettinger about this. There have been some complaints from students and families about students’ workload—she asked the faculty to consider this in the context of our courses. Because this is a challenging time for productivity, she suggested that faculty reach out to the students and hear their concerns about this issue. She is looking into re-awarding Jepsons and Waples for next year; more information is forthcoming. Sabbaticals would be a different issue due to funding. We have cancelled all UMW study abroad for the spring. Summer study abroad is to be determined. Some students are exploring outside providers, but UMW scholarships could not be used for this. The spring and J-term course schedule is in development. Evaluating the J-term will happen, but if faculty have specific ideas about what they would like to know, they should get in touch with Nina and Debra. She encouraged the faculty to be on campus and interact with students whenever possible. The schedule will go live on Oct. 29. She thanked the registrar’s office for their work in these complicated times.

**Question:** What are the permanent cuts to the sabbatical budget? Will that change based on the positive news from Troy?

**Answer:** Yes, this could change. The budget was cut in half, but we would love to restore. The ’22 budget will be done in February and March, so that’s when we will know more about sabbaticals.

**3. College Deans**

Dean Pete Kelly (COE): no report

Dean Keith Mellinger (CAS): no report

Dean Lynne Richardson (CoB): no report. The College of Business Executive Advisory Board is meeting Friday, 10/23 via Zoom.

1. **SGA Representative’s Report (Kyree Ford):** Their main focus for today was the alternative grading, so he offered thanks to the faculty and staff at this time.
2. **SAC Representative’s Report (Michelle Pickham):** [SAC Representative’s Report](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/10.21.2020-SAC-Report-to-UFC.pdf).
3. **UFC Chair’s Report (Andrew Dolby):** [UFC Chair’s Report](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/UFC-Chairs-Report-10-21-20-Meeting.pdf). He added thanks to the students for their diligence in following safety guidelines and the staff for their work during this time.
4. **UFC Vice Chair’s Report (Ken Machande):** no report
5. **Faculty Senate of Virginia (Marcel Rotter):** The last meeting was postponed, but there was a special meeting instead. Andrew attended and noted that more information is forthcoming; he was optimistic about initial work with Edd Houck about legislative actions.

**9. University Committees – minutes, reports, and action items (linked below)**

–[University Academic Affairs Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/university-academic-affairs-committee/): *no report*
–[University Budget Advisory Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/university-budget-advisory-committee/): *no report*
–[University Curriculum Committee](https://academics.umw.edu/curriculumcommittee/)
.      [Meeting minutes October 19](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/UCC_Oct19_Minutes.pdf)
–[University Faculty Affairs Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/university-faculty-affairs-committee/)
.         [Meeting minutes October 8](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/Minutes-10-8-20.pdf)
–[University Faculty Organization Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/university-faculty-organization-committee/): *no report*
–[University General Education Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/university-general-education-committee/)
.         [Action Items October 5 2020](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/General-Education-Committee-Action-Items-October-5-2020.docx)
–[University Sabbaticals, Fellowships & Faculty Awards Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/university-sabbaticals-fellowships-faculty-awards-committee/)
*.* [Meeting minutes September 7](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/09/SFFA-Minutes-7Sept2020.pdf)
–[University Student Affairs & Campus Life Advisory Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/university-student-affairs-campus-life-advisory-committee/)
*.*[Meeting minutes October 12](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/SACL-Minutes-10_12_2020_approved.pdf)–[Bachelor of Liberal Studies (BLS) Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/other-university-advisory-and-special-interest-committees/bachelor-liberal-studies-bls-committee/)
.         [Meeting minutes September 22](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/BLS-meeting-minutes-Sept-22.pdf)
–[Distance and Blended Learning Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/other-university-advisory-and-special-interest-committees/distance-and-blended-learning-committee/)
.         [Meeting minutes October 2](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/DBLC-Minutes-October-2-2020.docx)
–[First Year Seminar Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/other-university-advisory-and-special-interest-committees/first-year-seminar-committee/)
.         [Meeting minutes from October 2](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/FSEM-Committee-Meeting-Minutes-10-2-2020.pdf)
–[Honors Program Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/other-university-advisory-and-special-interest-committees/honors-program-committee/)
.         [Action Items October](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/HNActionItem_Oct.2020.pdf)
–[James Farmer Multicultural Center Advisory Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/other-university-advisory-and-special-interest-committees/james-farmer-multicultural-center-advisory-committee/)
.         [Meeting minutes October 8](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/JFMC-FAC-Minutes-100820.pdf)
.         [Programming Report, October 2020](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/JFMC-FAC-Pgm-Rpt100920.pdf)
–[Journalism Advisory Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/other-university-advisory-and-special-interest-committees/journalism-advisory-committee/): *no report*
–[Speaking Intensive Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/other-university-advisory-and-special-interest-committees/speaking-intensive-committee/)
.         [Action Items October 14](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/SI-committee-action-items-Oct-14-2020.pdf)
–[Teaching Center Advisory Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/other-university-advisory-and-special-interest-committees/teaching-center-advisory-committee/): *no report*
–[Writing Intensive Committee](https://ufc.umw.edu/committees/other-university-advisory-and-special-interest-committees/writing-intensive-committee/)
.         [Meeting minutes October 5](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/WI-Committee-Minutes-2020-10-05-1.docx)
.         [Action Items from October 5](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/WI-action-items-2020-10-05-1.docx)

The UFC members approved the minutes as a group.

**IV. Unfinished Business**

1. J-Term assessment

The Office of Institutional Analysis and Effectiveness will conduct these course evaluations. Andrew also suggested conducting a faculty survey about experiences of teaching these courses. He asked for input from the UFC about what might else be on these evaluations. There were no additional comments.

**V. New Business**

**1.**[**Digital Intensive Committee (ad hoc) Action Item**](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/DI-Action-10_20.pdf)

**2.**[**University General Education Committee Action Items**](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/General-Education-Committee-Action-Items-October-5-2020.docx)

**3.**[**Honors Committee Action Items**](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/HNActionItem_Oct.2020.pdf)

**4.**[**Speaking Intensive Committee Action Items**](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/SI-committee-action-items-Oct-14-2020.pdf)

**5.**[**Writing Intensive Committee Action Items**](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/WI-action-items-2020-10-05-1.docx)

Anand made a motion to consider the above five items as a group.

The UFC voted to approve these items.

**6. UFC approval and committee reporting processes for curriculum change approvals via CIM.**

Action items would be submitted as usual, and the UFC would act on them during the next meeting after the initial vote.

**Comment**: The UCC aims to review college-level decisions before the UFC, so the timing of the meetings a week before the UFC may be a challenge. Curricular changes would have to go through faculty governance before the end of the fall semester.

**Response**: We will work to plan ahead for future years so that the timing works.

**7.**[**Test Choice COVID Policy for Fall 2021**](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/Test-Choice-COVID-Policy-for-Fall-2021.docx)

This policy is from the Office of Admissions. There was a motion to adopt the policy and there was no discussion

**8.** [**CASFC motion to the UFC on instituting alternative grading for Fall 2020**](https://ufc.umw.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/3211/files/2020/10/CASFC-Motion-to-the-UFC-10-15-20.docx)

Kyree reported on the students’ perspective, based on their responses (900) to a survey asking for their input. Many students have struggled in the current situation. Laura added more support for the rationale

Some faculty comments mentioned that some students are struggling, but also there has not been much response to office hours or additional faculty availability. There has been concern about the heavy workload that some students are taking on, in addition to their course loads. Some faculty are concerned that this option is being offered late in the semester and that their work thus far has been with the idea that we would have a traditional grading scale. The midterm deficiency reports are not conclusive about whether students are having more trouble academically this semester. Alternate grading may have an effect on financial aid and academic standing issues. Changing to alternative grades several weeks after the semester would be problematic from the perspective of the registrar’s office. There were comments that supported the financial challenges that students and their families are facing at this time. The discussion continued with supporting points on all sides.

We agreed to vote, but to remove some of the language that may need to be changed by the registrar. The amended motion appears in Appendix A.

The UFC voted to approve the motion, with two no votes.

Andrew noted that department chairs and Associate Deans should reach out to faculty to help them advise students of this decision.

The registrar’s office will deal with communication about the decision and the specifics that students will need.

1. **Staff Advisory Council representation in university shared governance structure**

Andrew shared that there are some committees that could benefit from staff representation and votes. There was no additional discussion, so Andrew plans to take this to those committees for this year.

1. **Creation of standing Digital Intensive Committee**

Comment: This would be an advisory committee instead of a standing committee.

**VI. Announcements**

Faculty are reminded that all classes, except for laboratories and classes that meet on Tuesdays only, are canceled on Election Day, November 3. Students are encouraged to participate in [Day On Democracy](https://www.umwdayondemocracy.org/) activities in lieu of class.

The next regularly scheduled UFC meeting is on December 2, 2020 at 4:00 P.M. There will also be a special meeting to discuss the

**VII. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 P.M.

Submitted by Janine Davis

**Appendix A**

**Amended Motion: Alternative Grading**

**(language about delayed timing has been removed)**

**Motion to provide UMW students the option of an alternative grading system for Fall 2020:**

UMW students will have the option of an alternative grading system of “CR/P-20/NC” in addition to the option of the regular grading system for the Fall 2020 semester. All students will first receive letter grades, in accordance with the regular UMW grading system and the regular timeline for final grade submissions by faculty and their entrance into the system by the Registrar’s office. After letter grades have been submitted, students will have the option of retaining the letter grade or switching to the alternative grading system for each course. Their overall GPA will then be adjusted accordingly, with a grade of CR, P-20, or NC not affecting the GPA. An exact deadline be determined by the UFC in consultation with the relevant academic and administrative offices.

**Rationale:**

1. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to create conditions of major uncertainty and risk with respect to human health and the overall quality of life in the state of Virginia, nationally, and globally. These conditions remain far removed from normalcy.
2. These conditions are presently impacting the lives of college students and their families in myriad ways.
3. The available research and advice from public health and infectious disease experts suggests that these conditions are likely to persist for the immanent and foreseeable future.
4. In acknowledgement of these conditions, other Virginia colleges and universities have elected to reinstate alternative grading systems for the Fall 2020 semester.
5. The implementation of the UMW alternative grading system of “CR/P-19/NC” in the Spring 2020 semester was necessarily rushed. As a consequence, created confusion and disruption for many students and placed undue burden on students, faculty, and multiple academic and administrative offices.
6. Allowing students to opt-in to an alternative grading system in the middle of this semester could be disruptive and further impede their focus on their coursework, and/or potentially negatively impact their level of motivation or effort.
7. The student decision-making process regarding a change from the letter grade system to an alternative grading system is multi-faceted and can have long-term consequences for the student. It can potentially impact their fulfillment of program and major requirements, the transferability of their credits earned at UMW, and their eligibility for various academic and professional pursuits after they graduate. Every student should have ample time to weigh this decision after seeing their letter grade earned, and in consultation with their academic advisor, the instructional faculty member, and other relevant parties.