

UFC Chair's Report, Andrew Dolby

UFC Meeting - October 21, 2020

Since the September 23 UFC meeting, I have continued to regularly participate in weekly Academic Affairs Council meetings with Ken Machande (UFC Vice-Chair) and Anand Rao (UFC Past-Chair). Topics of discussion have included, but have not been limited to: COVID-19 mitigation and management updates, immediate curriculum delivery and scheduling needs, and longer-term institutional challenges.

I attended two Faculty Senate of Virginia (FSVA) meetings held on September 26, also attended by Anand Rao and Marcel Rotter (UFC Parliamentarian and FSVA Treasurer), and on October 17. The purpose of these meetings was primarily to organize and establish priorities in preparation for January's Virginia Higher Education Advocacy Day. Priorities agreed upon by FSVA representatives include health insurance coverage for adjunct faculty, workload inequities for VCCS nursing faculty, and broadband internet access for both students and faculty across the state. Additionally, FSVA is keeping a close eye on the state budget as it emerges from the Virginia General Assembly.

The UFC Executive Committee met with the Board of Visitors' Executive Committee on October 14. We discussed both immediate issues and long-term priorities for the university as it emerges from the COVID crisis. The current challenges of curriculum delivery and the general welfare of faculty, staff, and students were the primary focus of our conversation on immediate priorities. Among the long-term priorities we discussed were restoring resources for high-impact learning programs for students and reinstating sabbaticals, fellowships, professional development funding, and other faculty programs lost as a result of the COVID crisis. We also talked about the challenges that may lie ahead in meeting the needs of new students whose high school experiences are currently being severely disrupted. Finally, we shared some of the faculty's teaching innovation and student outreach success stories so far this year and ways in which instructional delivery may change permanently in the wake of our sudden shift to remote teaching and interaction outside the classroom.

The UFC also approved credit changes for five courses (from fixed to variable credit), effective January 2021, via an electronic vote on October 15. This out-of-order approval process was authorized by the UFC during its August 19 to help departments meet pressing curriculum needs specific to this year's unique circumstances. All other approval processes will return to regular order going forward.

The courses for which credit changes are approved and will take effect in January 2021:

CLAS 351 – Special Studies in Classical Civilization

CPRD 100 – Topics in Classics, Philosophy, and Religion

MDFL 201 – World Literature in Cultural Context

RELG 231 – Special Studies in Religion
SOCG 371 – Selected Topics in Sociology

Finally, at this important midpoint in the fall semester, I would like to extend gratitude to our UMW student body for their conscientiousness and determination in adhering to COVID-19 safety protocols. The level of personal responsibility that each of you are showing to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 is both noticed and appreciated by the faculty. Your support for each other and the sacrifices that you all are making to keep each other and the broader UMW community safe have been critical to the success of this semester so far. Thank you!

Thank you also to all the staff and administrative faculty who are on the front lines of managing COVID-19 risk mitigation/containment and who have been part of months-long planning and preparation work. Your partnership with instructional faculty and responsiveness to our needs and concerns (and those of our students) under these difficult circumstances is much appreciated.

Respectfully,

Andrew Dolby