**University Faculty Council Chair’s Report for the Board of Visitors**

**January 2021**

The faculty have continued to focus on adapting their teaching and meeting students’ needs amidst the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The UFC tabled two motions to extend alternative grading to the spring 2021 semester to allow the University Academic Affairs Committee (UAAC) and UFC to consider data on its deployment by students during the fall 2020 semester. Its impacts on students’ academic progress and standing and implications for financial aid are among the factors being evaluated. The UFC will take up the issue again during its February 3 meeting.

The faculty have now delivered the institution’s first January term, made possible by COVID-related adjustments to the spring 2021 academic calendar. Data from course evaluations, student and faculty satisfaction surveys, and revenue reports have been generated. The UFC will work with the UAAC to use these data to evaluate the 2021 January term’s success and to assess the feasibility, costs and benefits, and sustainability of offering a permanent January term. Among the most important factors the faculty will consider is the permanent adjustment to the academic calendar that a January term would necessitate. Thus, the UFC will, again in consultation with the UAAC, establish a process to ensure that potential impacts of such a calendar change are thoroughly studied and input from all affected stakeholders is considered. The final product of all deliberations will be a January term proposal that can be put to a full faculty vote before the end of the spring 2021 semester.

Additionally, I participated in two meetings as part of the Faculty Senate of Virginia’s Higher Education Advocacy Day. I had a phone conversation with Delegate Bobby Orrock, 54th District, and participated in a teleconference with Professor Marcel Rotter and three staff members from the office of Senator Bryce Reeves, 17th District. Among the items of discussion were: 1) the importance of UMW and Germanna Community College in meeting the needs of the Fredericksburg Area’s citizenry, developing our area’s work force, and otherwise supporting the local economy, 2) challenges of the COVID crisis for UMW and other Virginia higher education institutions (including fiscal challenges), 3) faculty compensation and its importance to recruitment and retention of faculty, and 4) extension of health insurance benefits to adjunct faculty who teach full time. Both offices were provided with copies of the Faculty Senate of Virginia’s legislative position paper. A copy can be found in the [UFC’s February 3 meeting agenda](https://ufc.umw.edu/2021/01/14/ufc-agenda-february-3-2021/) under Dr. Marcel Rotter’s Faculty Senate of Virginia’s report.

In partnership with President Paino, the UFC and UFOC created an elected Interim Provost search committee, consisting of both faculty and staff. The members of the committee are:

Angela Pitts (Chair), CAS, CPR Justin Wilkes, Dir., Student Transition Program
Marcel Rotter, CAS, MLL Courtney Clayton, COE, Associate Dean
Andrew Dolby, CAS, Biology Kim Gower, COB, Asst. Prof.
Charles Tate, Dir. Transfer Advising Jennifer Barry, CAS, CPR

The committee is projected to complete its work during the month of February.

Finally, the following items below are consequential actions and endorsements taken by the UFC on December 2, 2020. I have omitted reports and minor, routine committee action items from this summary, but full meeting minutes, meeting videos, and summary of approved motions and other action items can be accessed from the [2020-21 UFC Membership and Meeting Materials web page](https://ufc.umw.edu/2020/05/15/2020-2021-ufc-membership-and-meeting-materials/).

1. Approved new Graduate Academic Catalog policy language for non-degree seeking students taking College of Education courses.

2. Approved formation of a permanent Digital Intensive Advisory Committee to support the General Education curriculum.

3. Approved the addition of three staff members as non-voting members to the University Budget Advisory Committee. Adding more staff members will bring greater diversity of expertise and viewpoints to the committee’s work and help empower the staff in advising the administration on budget-related matters.

4. Approved a new policy on recording and distribution of course materials to strengthen student and faculty privacy and security and to better protect the intellectual property of faculty.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Dolby
Professor, Department of Biological Sciences
University Faculty Council Chair