**University Academic Affairs Committee**

**MINUTES** Mar. 11, 2021 meeting, 3:30 p.m.

Members: (2020-2021) (*Present*)

Paul D. Fallon, Associate Professor, English & Linguistics, CAS. At large. *Chair*

Shumona Dasgupta, Associate Professor, English & Linguistics, CAS. *Secretary*

Michael Benson, Assistant Professor, Theater, CAS. At large.

Kim Gower, Assistant Professor, COB

Jane Huffman, Associate Professor, COE

*Ex officio* members (or their designees):

Provost (Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, currently filled by Timothy O'Donnell)

Vice President for Enrollment Management (Kimberley Buster-Williams)

Registrar (Rita Dunston)

Associate Provost for Academic Engagement and Student Success (Timothy O’Donnell).

Denise Naughton (student member)

1. Call to Order: 3:30pm
2. Meeting Minutes (February minutes approved by email)
3. Old Business
   1. Alternative Grading update

(sent via email 3/3/21).

Update on the UFC meeting- the UFC has modified the Covid policy recommended by the UAAC. The new policy will allow students to request withdrawal from a class up to three weeks after the end of the semester, regardless of the grade received, documentation will be optional.

Kim Grower discussed responding to the student who emailed the UAAC.

The need to improve channels of communication with students was also discussed.

* 1. J-Term
     1. Development of questionnaire

These were some of the preliminary questions proposed by Chair Fallon as the UAAC started the process of developing a questionnaire for gauging faculty interest in continuing with a J- term in the future:

Would you as a faculty member wish to teach during J-term?

See also the calendar issue below

Should students be limited to one 3-credit course?

Jane Huffman- what kinds of classes are faculty more likely to propose- more Gen Ed, electives or major classes?

Paul Fallon- At the UFC meeting there was a lot of support for 2 specific kinds of classes- study abroad (for about 2 weeks) and internships. 3 credit classes were more of a mixed bag- esp. 3 credit classes in the major. However, students are not restricted from taking 3- credit classes in their major during the summer session.

Kim Grower talks about the experience of having taught J-term courses at VCU, both electives and pre requisite courses. The courses started Jan 02, met 5 days a week, for 5 hours. These classes ran for 11 days.

Would faculty rather see something super condensed (11 days or so using the VCU model) or something more leisurely (even longer than 3 weeks)?

Would faculty be interested in doing variable credit electives?

According to Rita Dunston, other COPLAC schools exclude courses with a high drop/ W rate from being offered during the J- term

Do faculty want to offer online/f2f classes? Synchronous vs. asynchronous classes or a combination of the two?

Michael Benson offers the suggestion of a Maymester (with the term beginning in May and ending before the summer term)- he will share specifics about how that would impact the summer calendar with the committee soon.

Kim Grower offers the example of Coastal Carolina University which offers a Maymester, especially for study abroad programs

* + 1. The discussion then moved to the investigation of J-terms at other institutions

The results will be compiled in a standard spreadsheet. Paul Fallon will try and create a general template.

[COPLAC](http://coplac.org/members/) (southeastern region, 8 members)- Jane Huffman will research

[UMW list of COPLAC Peers](https://academics.umw.edu/iae/institutional-research-2/umw-peer-institutions/coplac-peers/)- Paul Fallon will research

[UMW Aspirational Peers](https://academics.umw.edu/iae/institutional-research-2/umw-peer-institutions/aspiration-peers/)- Shumona Dasgupta will research

[Virginia Public Institutions](https://schev.edu/index/students-and-parents/explore/virginia-institutions) (VA Four-Year Public Institutions) Kim Grower will research

[Virginia Privates](https://schev.edu/index/students-and-parents/explore/virginia-institutions)- Kim Grower will research

Other liberal arts universities- Michael Benson will research.

(Please include information like Name, j term/m term/how long/ what kinds of classes/ scale/ interesting restrictions, using calendar 2019/2020 as a model)

* + 1. J-Term and the Academic Calendar

A robust discussion ensued. The Committee discussed the following points:

Can the J-term be integrated into the typical academic calendar without affecting Spring Break and summer sessions?

Postponing the Spring semester to accommodate a J- term will bring contractual issues into play.

Staff on leave will further complicate the academic calendar- staff are generally on vacation from 20th Dec to 1 or 2nd Jan. This would impact the availability of support staff including the library, academic tutoring, Writing Center, Speaking Center, housing, food, athletics etc. during the J- term.

Tim O’ Donnell- will share alternative models with J- terms beginning in December Vs. January and their impact on the academic calendar.

Faculty will be polled regarding their preference for starting before Dec 25/Jan 1/Jan 2.

Rita Dunston will find out about available support and resources for the J- term.

Denise Naughton was asked about what student athletes and debate teams do and the resources they have available over break

Rita Dunston talked about other COPLAC schools

1. New Business
   1. Snow Day Teaching Policy (initial discussion):

What should we recommend to UFC regarding the holding of classes during inclement weather? Should faculty conduct synchronous learning over Zoom during regular class times? What if their own children are at home because of lack of K-12 or daycare? Should this be optional? Some faculty may welcome the chance to teach and stick to schedule, while others may need to shovel their driveways. Should faculty prepare an asynchronous unit for use during such days?

The consensus was around greater flexibility and faculty discretion- the mode of instruction would have to be dependent on the nature of the cancellation, the type of inclement weather and attendant technical challenges.

1. Announcements
   1. The next tentative meeting scheduled at 4/13/21 at 3:30pm.
2. Adjournment: 4:31pm