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

**March 2021**

Since January, faculty governance has continued its productivity. The UFC approved dozens of curriculum improvements and updates proposed by all three colleges, many departments within the College of Arts and Sciences, and various other university programs. These changes continue the faculty’s ongoing mission to offer a curriculum that meets the needs of current students, maintains the standards of an innovative contemporary liberal arts university, and offers programs attractive to today’s prospective students. Among significant new program offerings is a minor in African American Studies, which will immeasurably enrich our offerings in a way consistent with values we strive to achieve as an institution.

The UFC also approved some important changes to the Faculty Handbook, including addition of a non-voting staff member to the James Farmer Multicultural Center Advisory Committee. This new appointment continues our partnership with the University Staff Council to increase involvement of staff in governance and allow the faculty to benefit more from staff’s knowledge and expertise. Additionally, the UFC approved a new Faculty Handbook section on faculty special assignments. This important section codifies the terms and conditions, procedures, and other policies governing special assignments to ensure that they are staffed, evaluated, and monitored fairly and consistently. Moreover, this section will help ensure that the broader interests of faculty who accept special assignments are protected and that the needs of existing departments and programs are maintained when faculty are needed to fill special assignments.

Finally, the UFC approved a modified retroactive non-academic course withdrawal policy for the spring and summer 2021 terms to provide an additional option for students who may find themselves in COVD-related duress late in the semester after the normal course withdrawal deadline has passed. The approved policy was an amended version of a motion advanced by the University Academic Affairs Committee.

In my role as UFC Chair, I have continued to attend weekly Academic Affairs Council meetings upon invitation by Provost Mikhalevsky. These meetings are also attended by Vice-chair, Ken Machande and Past-chair, Anand Rao. In February, I organized and led an open faculty forum to discuss outcomes from the 2021 January term and prospects for future January terms and other possible calendar innovations. I also attended a Faculty Senate of Virginia (FSVA’s) meeting on March 27, along with Marcel Rotter. Among topics of discussion were: 1) potential future strategies to more effectively engage with the Virginia General Assembly (while acknowledging this year’s successes), 2) ways to increase awareness among Virginia’s higher education faculty about FSVA’s activities and benefits of higher rates of involvement, and 3) importance of expressing support for colleagues of Asian descent. I feel I can safely affirm on behalf of all UFC members that we unequivocally stand by UMW’s students, staff, and faculty of Asian descent during this especially painful and disconcerting time.

A summary of all University Faculty Council actions can be found on the [2020-2021 Meetings and Materials page](https://ufc.umw.edu/2020/05/15/2020-2021-ufc-membership-and-meeting-materials/) of the UFC’s website.

Respectfully submitted,

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