

**UFC Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 9, 2022**  
**Online (via Zoom)**

**UFC Members Present:** Gregg Stull (CAS, Arts & Humanities), Ben LaBreche (CAS, Arts & Humanities), Marcel Rotter (CAS, Arts & Humanities, UFC Parliamentarian), Miriam Liss (CAS, Social Sciences), Margaret Ray (CAS, Social Sciences), Suzanne Sumner (CAS, Health, PE, & STEM), Larry Lehman (CAS, Health, PE, & STEM), Ian Finlayson (CAS, Health, PE, & STEM, UFC Secretary), Alex Dunn (COB), John Marsh (COB), Rachel Graefe-Anderson (COB, UFC Vice-Chair), Janine Davis (COE), Teresa Coffman (COE), Melissa Wells (COE), Andrew Dolby (CAS, At-Large, UFC Past-Chair), Chris Ryder (CAS, At-Large), Kristin Marsh (CAS, At-Large, UFC Chair).

**Guests:** There were approximately 35 people logged into the meeting including Troy Paino (UMW President), Keith Mellinger (Dean CAS), Ken Machande (Dean COB), and Pete Kelly (Dean COE).

A recording of this meeting can be viewed at <https://ufc.umw.edu/recordings/> (UMW login-required).

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:02 PM.
2. The [minutes from the last UFC meeting on February 2, 2022](#) were approved with 17 yes votes and one abstention.
3. **Reports:**
  - a. President Troy Paino
    - i. We're in the midst of the yield season. March 1 is when we send acceptances to regular applications. We have sent acceptances to most of the Fall first-year class, though some more will trickle out. Over the next couple of months we are waiting to hear back from students. Last year we took a hit at this point. President Paino thanks us for what we do to connect with prospective students and asks us to continue in this effort.
    - ii. Work is being done on Ball circle to bring more engagement back to campus. We are scheduling a spring homecoming, the multi-cultural fair, devil-goat day and other events. Early next week sod will be laid. We will keep people off as it takes root until April 4, then it will be opened up.

- iii. The VA senate and house budgets have been released. They are supposed to put together a joint budget tomorrow. At this point we do not know where it will land. We are cautiously optimistic, but will wait and see. This and enrollment are the biggest factors for next year's budget.
- iv. The board of visitors endorsed the recommendations of the campus environment committee to permanently conceal the murals in Monroe Hall. The mural in George Washington Hall will be partially restored and concealed, with a focus on contextualizing it. George Washington Hall will also be removing the presidential portraits, and relocating them around campus. We will replace them with photos and biographies of UMW alumni to better showcase our diversity and also highlight the success of some of our graduates.
- v. We have plenty of COVID tests on campus, which we will be making available to the campus community. If the positivity rate from this week's testing remains low, a message will be sent out re-affirming the plan to lift the indoor mask mandate (with the exception of classrooms and labs). The CDC designates our area as having a low rate of transmission. We go into the Spring with cautious optimism regarding the pandemic.
- vi. Kristin asks whether we anticipate lifting the mask mandate for classrooms and labs. President Paino responds that we need to continue monitoring transmission rates before making that decision. We are optimistic but are still in a pandemic.
- vii. Kristin asks whether the new performing arts center is part of the state's proposed budget. Though governor Northam did not include it in his budget, it is part of the budgets of both the house and senate. President Paino believes it is unlikely to be cut at this point. We are also making the case that we need investment to improve the accessibility of our campus. That was included in one budget and not the other.
- viii. Kristin asks about the early retirement proposal. President Paino responds that it needs to be approved by the state. We are hoping to hear back on it so that faculty can consider whether to pursue it. Because it is similar to the policy of other institutions, we are hopeful it will be approved. Should it be approved, we will host a forum on the program where faculty can get more information.

- b. Provost Tim O'Donnell submitted a [written report](#).
- c. College Deans
  - i. Dean Pete Kelly, CoE, has no report.
  - ii. Dean Keith Mellinger, CAS
    - 1. We are in the final stages of the last two ongoing faculty searches in CAS: one in painting and drawing, and one in Asian religions.
    - 2. If a faculty member wishes to extend their pre-tenure period by a year, they must write that they intend to do so. The letters asking for this were sent by past provost Nina Mikhalevsky in May 2020. The deadlines vary by the number of years remaining during the pre-tenure period. If nothing is received, the standard tenure timeline will be assumed. Department chairs will be reminded of this as well.
  - iii. Dean Ken Machande, CoB, has no report.
- d. SGA Representative's Report (Brianna Reeves) is not present.
- e. USC Representative's Report (Justin Wilkes) is not present.
- f. UFC Chair's Report (Kristin Marsh)
  - i. [Kristin shared her written report to the BOV](#)
  - ii. Debra Schleef asks us to share with our students (especially seniors and first-year students) that the NSSE survey is going out to them. The survey goes to first-year and senior students and covers student engagement.
  - iii. Kim Gower of the Academic affairs committee congratulates Rita Dunston and Wes Hillyard who both graduated in Spring 2021 with doctorate degrees in education. They have both done so much to maintain our mission, and deserve our congratulations on this achievement.
  - iv. Suzanne shares that our resolution in support of Bridgewater college was well-received. Dr. Bushman, the president of Bridgewater, [wrote a response thanking us](#).
- g. UFC Vice Chair (Rachel Graefe-Anderson) has no report.
- h. Parliamentarian and FSVA Representative (Marcel Rotter) has no report.
- i. University Committees
  - i. University Budget Advisory Committee ([minutes 1/31/22](#), [minutes 2/7/22](#))
  - ii. University Faculty Affairs Committee ([minutes 2/3/22](#))

- iii. University General Education Committee ([minutes 2/23/22](#))
- iv. University Student Affairs & Campus Life Advisory Committee ([minutes 2/23/22](#))
- v. Distance and Blended Learning Committee ([minutes February 2022](#))
- vi. Honors Program Committee ([minutes February 2022](#))
- vii. Speaking Intensive Committee ([minutes 2/7/22](#))
- viii. Writing Intensive Committee ([minutes 2/11/22](#), [action items 2/11/22](#))
- j. Some meeting minutes and action items from committees may not be listed above. We will move the approval of those to our next meeting, unless they are especially pressing in which case we will handle them over email.
- k. The minutes and action items linked above are approved with 15 yes votes and 3 abstentions.

#### **4. Committee Action Items for UFC Approval (Curricular Approvals)**

- a. We will vote on the curricular action items electronically.

#### **5. Unfinished Business**

- a. Open Discussion on Faculty Workload and Morale.
  - i. Should we consider structural changes to our faculty governance to streamline approvals and reduce redundancies in our workload? Can each college look internally at service load redundancies?
  - ii. To what extent is poor morale related to continued strain of the long-pandemic?
  - iii. Caitie Finlayson (Associate professor of Geography) writes that faculty morale was already low when she was with the Center for Teaching, before the pandemic. She writes that many of the morale issues we face are systemic, and not temporary.
  - iv. Gregg argues that our faculty governance structure was built on the assumption of a growing faculty and student body. Now we are reckoning with a shrinking student body and the work it takes to maintain our current faculty structure. He proposes we consider returning to a faculty senate with equal representation (though keeping P&T processes separate).
  - v. Suzanne agrees with Gregg. When each department had a senator, communication between the departments and the governance body was easier and more streamlined.
  - vi. Margaret says that we should make sure about external requirements for our governance structure. Marcel says he believes there are no such requirements. Keith says the faculty handbook

enumerates the responsibilities of the faculty and that we must show that our governance provides the structures to do that. So it would allow us to pursue alternative models, so long as we could justify them.

- vii. Miriam agrees with the benefits of the Senate model. She says that the two smaller colleges have been more apprehensive of such a model in the past.
- viii. Jenny Barry (Associate Professor of Religious Studies) relates that the faculty affairs committee has been discussing issues of the increased service loads of the smaller colleges. She also argues that many of the issues about morale come down to funding issues. Jenny points out that the budgetary priorities the administration shares with us are mostly capital projects while faculty support, such as internal grants and sabbaticals, are left out. She argues that our leadership should address these funding issues as well.
- ix. Janine says she is familiar with the high service loads in COE. She argues that they are mostly happy with those loads because they want to contribute to the school. She argues that the committees themselves are manageable, but the working groups and other ad-hoc service requirements we have contribute to the high service loads.
- x. Rachel argues that returning to a faculty senate would not reduce service loads, since we would need 21 CAS senators as opposed to 9 CAS representatives to UFC.
- xi. Gregg shares that we hear about service burdens from COB and COE faculty more than those from CAS. He also addresses the budgetary issues. He argues that the capital improvements do contribute to faculty morale, for those faculty who benefit from them.
- xii. Keith also addresses the budgetary question. He says that the administrators do discuss faculty support, but the president's reports are more oriented towards the legislative requests, which are bigger. Keith hopes to be able to address some of these supports.
- xiii. Miriam argues that we need to do some analysis on the service loads. While we would have more senators in CAS than representatives, we would save having duplicative committees in curriculum and a separate CAS FC. She also argues that our teaching load plays into morale as well and asks for clarification from the administration on

what our teaching load should be in the face of our smaller enrollments.

- xiv. Kristin adds that we have different constraints across departments, so equity will come into play in that discussion.
- xv. Andrew suggests that we could address the higher service load in the smaller colleges more simply by evaluating whether certain committees that specify COE and COB members need to continue doing so.
- xvi. Melissa responds to say that COE is already thinking through which committees their representation is important on. They are moving towards only serving on committees where the handbook specifies their representation.
- xvii. John adds that COB also believes there are committees they do not necessarily need representation on.
- xviii. Kristin asks whether UFOC can consider this and give us recommendations on the matter. Melissa (UFOC chair) responds that she will bring it to the committee, but would need more information on the charge.

## **6. New Business**

- a. Clarifying Policy on Distance and Blended Learning and offering a diverse range of modalities.
  - i. We had set up a process for proposing online courses prior to the pandemic. Now we are in a very different place. The issue of the online teaching process has come up in various ways. Some faculty are concerned about coming back to campus without masks in Fall.
  - ii. Jenny Barry tells us that she's teaching online this Spring. Two of her classes were initially listed as being face-to-face which was a mistake. She saw that the enrollment doubled after the classes were fixed to be online. She believes that our students are perhaps more interested in online classes than we may think.
  - iii. Rachel argues that the intention of the DBLC approval process was not to move a faculty member's schedule online.
  - iv. Melissa also notes that she has seen many students preferring online courses. She also asks for clarity regarding whether faculty should allow students to attend in-person classes virtually.
  - v. Ben argues that our competitive advantage as an institution does not lie in offering online courses.

- vi. John tells us that COB has been working with Germanna Community College on joint programs. GCC has a “college everywhere” program which is fully online. They have found that very few of the students in this program are fully online. Most like the option and take the majority of their courses online, with a smaller number in-person. So these students would not choose to attend a fully online institution. He tells us that these students want to be able to make in-person connections and also take advantage of the convenience of online classes.
- vii. Kristin relates a question from the BOV. Brianna Reeves had told the BOV that students are looking for the in-person experience, but want to have the option to attend online or in-person day-to-day. The BOV asks us to consider the feasibility of this. Kristin argues that this does not work for discussion-based courses.
- viii. Rachel agrees that there is not a way to provide this for all courses.
- ix. Dean Kelly says that faculty and students have an interest in flexibility, but that our business model is contingent on having residential students.
- x. Andrew says that student morale has been increasing with the more personal contact they have with their faculty members. He also agrees with President Paino that we need to bring the campus back to life and engage students. He also argues we have responsibilities in professional development and cannot necessarily spend all our time arranging our classes to meet student needs.
- xi. Janine says that there is a balance, and points out that having our committee meetings online has been more convenient for us.
- xii. Miriam argues that something is lost when we are just on Zoom. Since we also do not have the lawn parties and other informal meetings, or a nice faculty/staff dining room, our morale is lower.
- xiii. Rachel tells us that the conversation from the student side reminds her of the conversation about alternative grades from the year before. It would be ideal for students to have the choice of coming in-person or online, but it’s not feasible for us to offer that.
- xiv. Ben points out that there seems to be consensus around this issue. He asks if we should do something to signal to untenured faculty that offering multiple modalities is not an expectation.

- xv. Offering multiple modalities does not currently seem to be widespread. So this is less of an expectation among students and more of a wish. Andrew reports that he has been offering this, but plans to stop.
  - xvi. Melissa adds that many in COE are offering multiple modalities, but have found it difficult especially in group work. She reports that there is student interest in this, but notes the downsides.
  - xvii. Surupa Gupta tells us that many students like the flexibility of online courses, while others do not. She says that throughout Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, many of her colleagues have found students requesting to attend in-person classes online. She sent out a survey to the 45 WGST faculty related to this, which had a strong response. She asks us whether a similar survey should be sent to all UMW faculty.
  - xviii. Jenny agrees with the idea of a survey sent to faculty which addresses faculty morale. She also says that the Faculty Affairs committee would be willing to administer the survey.
- b. Claiming our Place in Higher Education.
    - i. This discussion is tabled until a future meeting.

## **7. Announcements**

- a. The next regularly scheduled UFC meeting is Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. (via Zoom).

The meeting adjourned at 6:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Ian Finlayson.