

UFAC Meeting Minutes April 14, 2022

Meeting Participants: Randy Reif (at-large, Chair), Eric Bonds (CAS, Secretary), Caitie Finlayson (at-large), Lance Gentry (COB), Jennifer Barry (at-large), and Kyle Schultz (COE) Miriam Liss (member elect), Jessica Zeitz (member elect)

Guests: Kristin Marsh, Surupa Gupta

Faculty Morale Survey

Dr. Gupta spoke to the committee about concerns she was hearing last year from faculty about the challenges and emotional labor in teaching during the pandemic. She followed up by sending out a survey to WGS faculty to learn more last fall. The survey had a good response, with 27 out of 45 completing the questionnaire. Responses came back quickly, suggesting that faculty in WGS wanted to share their experiences and give feedback. Responses indicate that workload has increased and work/life balance has declined, taking an emotional and psychological toll on faculty. Much of this may be due to increasing student needs for additional support along with loss of faculty support.

The committee discussed and determined that a survey should be done in a more representative way to include all faculty.

Dr. Liss noted that that a faculty morale survey was done in 2015. It would be a good idea to use it as a model. She also hoped that the survey would be solution-focused.

Dr. Barry stated that this previous survey was done a year after Dr. Paino's arrival and after his strategic planning efforts to address financial problems at UMW. A new survey would present an opportunity to see what's changed and what hasn't. In this sense, the survey would be more than just about the impacts of the pandemic. Dr. Barry also hoped that the conversation regarding the survey would link faculty wellbeing with student experience.

Dr. Liss stated that the committee can work with Debra Schleef to run the survey, based on the 2015 survey with additional questions from the UFAC.

Dr. Schultz added that part of the conversation should be about faculty needing to focus more on teaching and service at the cost of research. This is frequently experienced by faculty as a loss of professional identity.

Dr. Gupta will send along the survey to the UFAC. Dr. Bonds made the point that thought the committee will work with Dr. Schleef to produce and run the survey, the UFAC should have the final say about what's included.

New Positions

Caitie Finlayson was elected as chair of the UFAC for the 2022-2023 academic year. Lance Gentry was elected as secretary.

Visas

Dr. Barry explained that she followed up with Provost O'Donnell about difficulties UMW faculty are experiencing in working with the school to maintain Visa eligibility. It will be important for the UFAC to continue following up on this and advocate for faculty.

Faculty dealing with Visa concerns will compile a list of their challenges regarding these issues to share with the UFAC.

We already put out a memorandum of concern about this issue, but these concerns remain largely unaddressed.

We'll communicate with Provost O'Donnell again, referencing the memorandum and asking how the administration has (or hasn't) worked to address the concerns it raised.

Faculty Pay and Equity Study

This study has been contracted out and is now underway.

Dr. Liss stated that, in the past, the UFAC has recommended giving across the board raises, rather than raises as a percentage of salary. The administration did give raises in such a way on those occasions. The UFAC could make a similar recommendation again.

AAUP Faculty Pay Survey

Dr. Finlayson shared that the latest AAUP faculty pay survey numbers are out. Faculty pay at UMW is lower than that of many other Virginia Colleges and Universities, including places that have much lower costs of living.