

**University Faculty Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, February 9, 2023**  
**3:00 pm via Zoom**

Attending: Caitie Finlayson (chair, at large), Lance Gentry (secretary, COB), Jenny Barry (at large), Kyle Schultz (COE), and Jessica Zeitz (at large).

Guest: Tim O'Donnell (Provost) joined at 3:00 PM and participated until 3:45 PM.

Caitie called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

**Old Business**

- Discussion with Provost Tim O'Donnell about how courses were being dropped from low enrollment. Concern about the tendency of dropping classes is increasing due to smaller enrollment. Tim said he would have to research this issue, but believed that previous working group's suggestions were not implemented because of a lack of consensus among the faculty on the working group. He also said that the Registrar's Office used to produce a report on this subject, but has not for several years. The provost then provided some background about future enrollment expectations. Based on administrative analysis, UMW expects a pool of up to 750 freshmen each year plus 250 transfer students each year. The discussion then turned to faculty equity – or the lack thereof – with teaching loads. Many CAS faculty have a 3/3 load while many others (along with COE and COB) still have 4/4 loads. Further, there is a large disparity in class sizes, where some courses have few students where courses from other departments constantly hit capacity. The provost asked the committee for suggestions on the best way to move forward to improve this given our resource constraints. Kyle suggested that some of these questions should be built into faculty morale survey. Tim also raised the concern of some faculty about a digital divide – some faculty who are constantly on campus have raised concerns that other faculty are rarely on campus. Discipline certainly makes a difference, for example many science students need physical labs whereas other students may prefer online classes.
- Equity Study Update. Firm is slowly progressing and now has some useful internal data. Their next step is to conduct a market analysis.
- Morale and Faculty Burnout Survey: UFC thought it was too long and was unclear on the overall objective. The committee discussed ways to simplify it. Committee discussed need to have basic objective such as *Our focus is on getting a sense of the community at UMW and real faculty concerns. We hope to be able to identify critical problems facing faculty and help develop ideas for solutions.* Jenny pointed out that the survey was well-considered and did not want to reduce the size. She agreed that the critique that the survey seemed CAS-focused had a point and should be addressed. Caitie said any committee member could edit the survey and add new potential questions, but needed to do so fairly soon or the survey would be left for next year's committee.

## **New Business**

- Distressed Student Response - What extent faculty should be involved in making decisions about student mental health? Concern that we have no definition of the definition of distressed student and larger concern that this may not be a faculty responsibility.

Our next meeting will be at 3:00 PM on Thursday, March 9.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 PM.

These minutes were electronically approved by the committee on February 10, 2023.

The University Faculty Affairs Committee extends our thoughts and well-wishes to our former chair, Randy Reif, and are sending him wishes for a full and speedy recovery.