

## University Faculty Council Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2024

3:30pm HCC Digital Auditorium

**Members in Attendance:** Davis Oldham (Chair), Kim Kinsley, Sayan Sarkar, Christy Irish, Jennifer Walker, Janine Davis, Kelly Swiney, April Wynn (Parliamentarian), Mindy Erchull, Melina Patterson (Vice Chair), Caitie Finlayson, Mara Scanlon, Michael Benson, Elizabeth Johnson-Young, Jonathan Levin, Patricia Orozco, Karen Anewalt (Secretary)

**Guests:** Troy Paino (University President), Tim O'Donnell (Provost), Keith Mellinger (Dean CAS), Filiz Tabak (Dean COB), Pete Kelly (Dean COE), Melissa Wells (Handbook Working Group), Miriam Liss (Faculty Affairs Committee), Leslie Martin

- I. Call to Order
- II. Previous Meeting Minutes gtom September 18th, 2024
  - a. Minutes from Sept 18, 2024 were approved (16 in favor, 1 abstain)
- III. Reports
  - a. President Troy Paino
    - i. JLARC Report: The JLARC report was released which generated some headlines in the state including the Freelance Star. We knew this was going to be released and that it would not be a great news cycle for us, but we did a lot of work in advance to minimize the impact of the story. We anticipate moving on from the story quickly. But story does raise some level of concern at the height of student recruitment season and also with donors. It's important to remember that the data in the study is a retrospective snapshot of where things were in 2022. We've made positive advances since then in stabilizing enrollment, security funds to help with facilities, and moving to a stronger position in terms of liquidity. We've built up reserves again. There are still challenges, but we're very aware of those challenges and the situation is certainly not nearly as dire as some of the headlines might suggest. I know that maybe concerns raised about it around campus so I wanted to offer an opportunity to ask questions that you may have.
      1. Questions
        - a. Davis Oldham: The report suggested the possibility of recouping some money from VEMSDEP unfunded mandate. Are we getting money from the state to help with this?
          - i. President Paino: Yes, some legislation was passed that gave us partial funding to compensate for that unfunded mandate. They also restored eligibility and funding to each institution, so we anticipate getting 1.5 million this year. This is another point that we addressed with JLARC. The funding is

really going to help us because some of our discounting is a result of that unfunded mandate which gives a tuition waiver to those who qualify for that program. We don't know what that's going to look like long term, but at least in the short term, there seems to be some willingness and recognition on the part of the General Assembly to try and compensate institutions for that. This will help our bottom line this year considerably. Reassure your colleagues that we're in a good position with our budget this fiscal year and are operating in black. We're budgeting conservatively. Our margin for error is still fairly small and enrollment is still a primary focus. Application patterns have really changed over a few years. We now expect 70% of applications to apply by Dec 1 because it's fairly easy for students to apply to all institutions early through the Common App. I appreciate all the faculty working on recruiting including the admissions event on Saturday. It makes a huge difference. Thank you.

- b. Jonathan Levin: I noticed that in the JLARC report they talk about the discount rate and conversations they had with you about backing off of the practice of discounting some way or to some degree. Are we doing that at this time? And how is that affecting our thinking about our ability to recruit?
  - i. President Paino: Yes, we have backed off some of our awards and some of our discounting. Some of the money that we're receiving from the Pell initiative will help with this. Provost O'Donnell can talk more directly about the strategies we've employed. One thing we did is to reduce our out of state scholarship, which we were giving to every out of state student, by \$4,000 while simultaneously reducing the cost for out of state students by \$4,000. There are about 100 out of state students, so this \$400,000 is no longer counted as a discounted rate. This is not helping us on the revenue side, but is helping with the discount rate.
  - ii. Provost O'Donnell: The second thing we did is to reduce a few of our top dollar awards. We were probably over-awarding to some students, and projects suggest that reducing this won't impact enrollment. A third thing that we've done, and we're still in the process of doing, is we've

identified a new firm of consultants to work with. We had been working with one firm since we began financial aid leveraging back around 2015. We think some fresh eyes and some new perspective will be important. The new firm has already given us a few ideas that may allow us to pull back some tuition dollars. The state's main concern when looking at our discount rate is how many dollars are we actually reallocating from tuition in order in order to recruit students to come here. I think we have made some progress, but it's definitely a four or five year project.

- ii. Institutional Statements: President Paino shared context about his memo regarding institutional statements. This is something I've been thinking about for multiple years. You might remember institutions releasing statements in the wake of the George Floyd murder. And I can remember the avalanche of criticism I received in circumstances since then for not saying enough, saying too much, or saying the wrong thing in the wake of a crisis or trauma, social, political, or otherwise. Since then, I've been talking with my colleagues, other presidents, the cabinet, etc. about when is it appropriate for a university to speak. When do you say something and what do you say when you do say something? There's a lot of outside influence on that and certain demands on what is said. Some of it's from the various constituents where we serve: donors, students, faculty, staff members, and political pressures. As a public institution, we should serve a wide spectrum of society who will naturally have different viewpoints. UVA established a working group on campus to look into the question and I've paid attention to that with great interest. They released the report from those conversations in August. And so in the wake of that, I thought to get the conversation started on our campus. I really do genuinely want feedback from faculty, staff, and students, and from all of our constituents on the memo and the concept of neutrality. This will be a discussion item at the upcoming BOV meetings/retreat. Other institutions have also created reports. Probably the most extreme is the Kavanaugh report from the University of Chicago which goes beyond speech and also talks about corporate action. Others are a little bit narrower and focus just on when a university should speak. Harvard recently came out with a policy emphasizing the need for neutrality on social and political matters that are not germane to the operation of the institution, and only speak on those things that do directly impact its mission or operations. It's sometimes difficult to draw the line at what directly affects an institution's mission. It's important to remember that being neutral on matters does not mean we don't have empathy for those who are suffering and should be able to express that empathy and support.

1. Questions:

- a. Melina Patterson: I was wondering about the degree to which neutrality is neutral. Choosing not to speak is saying something. As you referenced, we also speak in ways that are more than just our public statements. And so does this mean Mary Washington would never have an investment policy that reflected values? Is it political to say climate change exists and we're worried about it? What kind of things are you not going to have an opinion about?
  - i. President Paino: Well, it's not that I don't have opinions. I have a number of opinions. Everyone has a right to express their opinion. It's what I say when I'm using the institution's voice. When I'm speaking in the role as president, people assume that I'm speaking for the university. I'm really talking about sort of things that are happening in the world that are external to our operations, that are political things, things that are very compelling and things that I care deeply about, but things that individuals on our campus will and should have different views on and that there could be a chill, in fact, in our community if the university starts taking positions on those issues. Whether or not the university is engaged in a practice in terms of how it's investing in resources, that is subject to criticism. And some might demand that we act in a different way, because we're investing in something that is contrary to our understanding of climate change or any other number of issues. Certainly we can have that conversation. I'm not talking about corporate action in the same way that the University of Chicago principles extend to that. I think there needs to be some appreciation for the different types of institutions that are engaging with this issue. I don't think in any way that saying the university isn't going to take political stands is somehow insulating us from those who might be critics of actions that we might take. People who see something as political and see something as wrong-headed, whether it's students, faculty, staff, or anyone else who wants to express their views on that, certainly should have every right to do so. That doesn't mean they're always going to get what they want. And we have an independent 501c3 that manages our endowment. At the end of the day, they have their investment committee, and they might view their role in terms of how to invest those

funds very differently than others. That doesn't mean that the case can't be made to them in terms of how they invest those dollars and who they should be investing them with.

- b. Mara Scanlon: This is not speaking against the memo, although I very much agree with Marina that not taking a position is its own kind of position, but I just want to clarify a couple of different rationales for it. In speaking to the faculty in our big meetings, you've been talking about the theoretical idea of a university, what it meant to do, and our role in the Commonwealth, country, and world, and how our role may be fostering growth more than taking a political position. Second, perhaps it's not appropriate to be making these types statements given the type of institution that we are; perhaps you don't have the same kind of freedom as the president of Harvard to say things. And the third thing seems to be the issue of a chilling effect on students, which relates to some questions I have for Tim about the email he sent out today and how the university means to foster different kinds of conversation on campus. Since we keep hearing about the fact that those conversations are not happening, what are we actually going to do about it? And it's got to be a university-wide movement. It can't only be small scale. So I feel like those are three really different reasons for the memo, and I wondered if you could address them.
  - i. President Paino: There's a difference between an institutional statement and institutional action. What I am saying is that we can still act. People can either agree with or disagree with our actions and express that and try to apply pressure to try and get us to act differently. In the memo, I'm talking about specifically about when the university speaks, when do we make a statement about something? And I think that is just increasingly challenging. I think the nation is losing confidence in democratic institutions including public universities. I'm trying to be mindful about what our role is. I want to create an environment where in individual faculty members, students, or groups feel free to express themselves in the way they want on any topic they want. I see a statement that we are not going to comment on political and social matters that are external to our mission and operations as empowering. Hopefully having this type of statement will help to create an environment where

more students feel a sense of belonging and feel that they have the ability to express their views. I think our educational mission demands that.

- c. Melina Patterson: So I think we do need to have a conversation about that other piece - about freedom of speech and freedom of protest for students. I think that it is a public policy. I think you are speaking for the university when you arrest students for protesting. And I feel like that is responding to political pressures. I totally support the university being neutral if the university is going to be neutral.
  - i. President Paino: And I have a different view. I think we were being neutral in that case. The Commonwealth Attorney put together a three-page press release explaining why local law enforcement was asking us to not have an encampment with tents on campus. Yes, the students were peaceful. I'm not suggesting they weren't being peaceful. I never suggested they weren't being peaceful. I did not hear any antisemitism. It wasn't not about that. It was about what I was hearing from local law enforcement and state law enforcement about the resources they had available and that they would have to redirect. The turning point on that particular day was when the call went out inviting external members to come to campus. Law enforcement had concerns in terms of resources and our ability to manage the situation. We have 13 officers at Mary Washington and they have to monitor this campus 24/7. The Fredericksburg City police had indicated how they also had limited resources. The Commonwealth Attorney expressed concern about the limited resources available to monitor the campus. I had to step back and ask myself, given the information that is from law enforcement officials, how would I respond regardless of the content of the protest, in a content neutral way. You can imagine any number of other protesters for other causes doing this, making a call for outsiders to come to our campus. Me hearing from local law enforcement that we cannot manage it; we don't have the resources. They are concerned about counter-protesters. We're concerned about the potential disruptions. I understand those who don't believe any of that, but in my seat, that is what I am hearing. Call it political pressure if you want. To

me, it's pressure from local law enforcement about their ability to manage a situation that they felt was occurring and was evolving that could possibly get out of control on campus. So I had to ask myself, regardless of what those students are protesting, regardless of my own personal feelings about the cause that they're supporting, what would I do hearing what I was hearing from local enforcement? I would ask them to take the tents down, not to stop the protesting. It was not about the content of their protest. No matter how much people might want to challenge me on this, I can tell you I defended those students' rights all year from October 7, under tremendous political pressure to denounce them, to stop them, to pull them in. That part of the story has never been told. The politician who told me they were never going to support another dime coming to Mary Washington if I didn't act more forcefully. The donors applying pressure to me all academic year. So I can tell you that I defend those students' right to protest. For me, the reason I did that on that day with a heavy heart was because of what I was hearing from local law enforcement. So that's, that's what happened there. I viewed it as content neutral, but I understand if those who don't believe me

- d. Melina Patterson: Would it help you to defend yourself if you had a set of policies that said: these are the circumstances under which we would call the police? I just wonder if we could have policies in place. We now have policies that say you can't chalk the brick.
  - i. President Paino: I need to comment on that. It's getting harder and harder to maintain this campus. And because of budget cuts, where we have seen the big burden has fallen on those working for Facilities. We may be serving fewer students than several years ago, but we still maintain the same size campus with fewer people to do it. And whenever we have to clean the campus to get ready for an event, we have to pull Facilities workers away from duties of cutting grass or doing whatever else they have to do in order to clean those bricks, which is not easy to do. They're the ones who the burden falls on. And so to me this wasn't about the content of what was being written on bricks.

We're not alone in this. Other schools go much further, saying any chalking is considered vandalism and prohibited. We have not gone that far, but we had to reel it in. We have limited resources to maintain this campus. I don't like it, but I don't think it's an unreasonable restriction for students like not to chalk on bricks. Every time we bring prospective students on campus, we sell them the beauty of this campus. It's getting harder and harder to maintain it with the resources we have. So that was the driving force behind that policy.

- e. Davis Oldham: In the interest of time, we'll move on to the Provost's report. Thank you, President Paino for your report and I hope that we can continue these conversations.
  
- b. Provost Tim O'Donnell: One of the things President Paino didn't mention is that we had a good meeting with the new SCHEV Director, Scott Flemming, who visited our campus today, met with president, took a tour, and spent a few minutes with the cabinet. He seems to aspire for SCHEV to be more of a partner than a gatekeeper, and recognizes that in some ways SCHEV serves as a gatekeeper now when our proposal to move some departments from one college to another is six months in waiting. I think there was recognition for that. We've been told that the academic program approval process itself is going to change. There's a proposal going to the council next month to simplify it, to focus on the essence of what a partner should do in reviewing academic programs. The process of getting new programs approved should be much simpler going forward. And that's good news for us and for everyone else. Deborah and Kevin continue to do their due diligence, meeting with SCHEV staff and responding to their questions. All of the feedback thus far are issues are about form, not about substance. We hope to have news soon as the next round of revisions are submitted tomorrow. Debra, do you have anything to add?
  - i. Debra Schleef: The SCHEV staff appears to agree with us in substance. They're just a little bit of sticklers on how things are written up.
  - ii. Questions:
    - a. Mara Scanlon: I heard some feedback from faculty about your email this morning and I'm trying to represent that here on several separate issues. One thing is that they would like to see the instrument that you gave to students who chose and didn't choose Mary Washington to see exactly what they were asked and the data on those responses. The second question is what is it about Mary Wash that the students who choose not to come here are coding as "liberal" before they've ever done more than tour of the campus? If they aren't liberal, what are they perceiving here that is making them feel they wouldn't be welcome if they enrolled? The other thing was about lumping together encouraging students of different political persuasions to engage in dialog and collaborative learning. Those seem like utterly different



things. Maybe Victoria, Elizabeth can help put together some resources, some panels, whatever on collaborative learning. But collaborative learning seems to me like a very different thing than the issue of political discourse, including or especially for people who disagree with each other. I don't think we have heard any proposals to address how to bring the idea of civic debate and civic discourse on campus conceptually as well as in practice. I understand in practice is potentially in classrooms. These things seem like very different things.

- i. Provost O'Donnell: Sure. I would love for us to spend more time thinking about the latter. As someone that's committed their professional life to civic debate, I feel like we're not where we should be. I think there's a lot more to do. We can certainly share the instrument. The instrument used most recently was our first attempt at creating something similar to what an admitted student questionnaire used to be. We used to use a national instrument to survey admitted students but that company went out of business, and so Admissions worked really hard this summer to produce its first effort to do this on our own. We did borrow heavily from the questions that were on the previous instrument. The content was pretty simple. It included things like: what are Mary Washington's greatest weaknesses? What are Mary Washington's greatest strengths? Why did you choose to come here? Why did you choose a different institution? I don't have a great answer to the question of what does it mean that somebody says that we're "liberal"? What is in the mind of the prospective student when they say that? I think we need to understand that and think about it more fully. I can share a story about my great niece from last weekend. We're not super close so she kind of remembered that I worked here but also didn't. She'll be the first in her family to attend/graduate from college. And we went through the different state institutions thinking about fit and she said something like, Mary Washington's awful liberal. I just don't know that fits with who I am and where I come from in the rural part of Virginia. I said, okay, that's useful information. That's one data point. And then about the connection between civil discourse and collaborative learning. I was recently reviewing the NSSE report and I probably did squish together two things that jumped out at me. In all the questions that relate to student interactions with faculty and their advisors, we are knocking it out of the park relative to other Virginia schools, COPLAC schools, and the Carnegie class that we're in, which includes the very elite national liberal arts colleges. We're doing great there. But then interactions with others, interactions with those that are different, and interactions in collaborative learning spaces, we were quite low

in students' perceptions of those items. I hope this now turns into an invitation for Deborah, who's far more expert than I am in the NSSE, to socialize this, talk more about it, and share more of the results. Those were just a few of the points that really jumped out to me.

- b. Mara Scanlon: Thank you. I want mention another item about the “too liberal” thing. Second or third-hand, I've been hearing from other faculty members who have been in meetings where they're hearing from someone, I'm not sure where it's coming from, but this idea that we're too liberal, and we have anxiety about a perception that we're too liberal and that this is a bad thing. For example, what about our ASPIRE banners? What if that's what students are reacting to. We're not taking them down. We're not going to turn our back on our ASPIRE values.
  - i. Provost O'Donnell: So back to the story about my great niece. She's never been on our campus, right? This is the perception that she's gotten from her peers and colleagues at high school, and perhaps from advisors or teachers. I think we need to understand more fully where that's coming from. The reason why I keep sharing this is because it just keeps coming up. That when you think about us relative to our competitors, this what students that don't come here say about us. And it's also probably what some students that choose to come here would say about us. That it's the reason why they chose us. How we respond to that is the conversation for this university to take up, and so I want us all to be talking about, thinking about it, whether it's in the things that we teach, the ways that we hire, all the work that we do as a university, to be mindful of those sorts of things, because that's how we shape the future.
  - ii. President Paino: Maybe some of those conversations are my fault because I've raised this point. The campus climate survey showed only 8% of our students identify as conservative. I think that we probably don't have answers about why people have certain impressions of us. I think we all have anecdotes that we might call theories, but probably part of it is because I think if we're honest with ourselves, we're a left-leaning campus. This is a time of great political polarization. Maybe UMW is a place where people left-of-center find a sense of belonging. We don't need to beat ourselves up about what we are or aren't doing. But this is a moment for self-reflection. We do need to think about declining faith in democratic institutions. And we need to form some level of trust across the political divide. And public liberal arts institutions feel like a place where that should happen. I also think it's good for all students to challenge each other and have diverse viewpoints, and that benefits both sides. And I have a practical concern

that if we are appealing to only a narrow a student population, will we be able to sustain ourselves? I think we have to consider whether our appeal is broad enough, whether you describe that appeal politically or not. The more important question is - are there students who don't view themselves here? And why don't they? How can we create opportunities and expand the sense of belonging?

- c. College Deans
  - i. Dean Mellinger, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences: Nothing to add to the written report.
    - 1. Questions:
      - a. Davis Oldham: Are the searches going okay?
        - i. Dean Mellinger: Yes.
    - ii. Dean Tabak, Dean of the College of Business: Nothing to add to the written report.
    - iii. Dean Kelly, Dean of the College of Education: Nothing to add to the written report.
      - 1. Questions:
        - a. Davis Oldham: Is it too late for Spotsylvania Public Schools to join the Academy?
          - i. Dean Kelly: It's not too late. With the recent changes in the School Board, the conversations are continuing.
  - d. SGA Representative's Report (Will Thompson): No report
  - e. USC Representative's Report (Shanita Mitchell): No report
  - f. UFC Chair's Report (Davis Oldham): Submitted a written report and added that the UFC Executive Committee met with the BOV a few weeks ago. It was a successful conversation where we talked about faculty work in advising, which turned in to a broader conversation about all the different types of mentoring that faculty do.
  - g. UFC Vice-Chair's Report (Melina Patterson): Davis did a great job leading the discussion with the BOV.
  - h. Faculty Senate of Virginia Report (Patricia Orozco): The Faculty Senate of Virginia will be meeting Nov 2 and I will share a link when available.

#### IV. University Committees – minutes, reports, and action items

- a. Davis Oldham opened the floor for discussion about the committee minutes, starting with UFAC and their workload report first.
- b. University Faculty Affairs Committee Workload Report - Miriam Liss (UFAC Chair): I'm not really sure what happens to the report at this point, if it gets voted on at some point or if is just for informational purposes.
  - i. Davis Oldham: That's been one of the most common things that people have emailed me about. It's not an action item on the agenda and I don't see it as something for us to vote on. That doesn't mean we can't talk about contents. What do you see as the next step?

ii. Miriam Liss: I think there's a lot in this report that the university is already addressing. I don't think that there are any really dramatic recommendations made because there's a lot of uncertainty about the reorganization and the future in general. I think that the goal of this report is to share data because we never got a copy of the 2017 workload report at the time. I think Eric has shared that now and the UFAC recommendation in 2017 was that everyone should move to a 3-3 workload. There was a lot more to it. They had a lot of concerns about the global desire to reduce workload, which I think is still a goal that we share, but doesn't seem viable with our resources at this point. And we were charged with looking at some of the inequities across the departments and how some departments are not doing things or doing things differently. One idea that was floated was whether or not we want to have a weighting system for certain types of classes are counted differently in load. For example, perhaps a Writing Intensive course would be weighted as a 1.2 load rather than 1. So we spent a lot of time over the summer, and Deborah Schleef put a huge amount of work into this. I want to credit all the work that she did over the summer to gather this data. The data was very difficult to access. So our conclusion is that we can't create a system for weighting courses because this type of plan would be too rigid. So the recommendations are: The data did seem as though the data is hard to get. A lot of our conclusions came from just how difficult it was, because there were so many things that were counted differently. For example, how double sections are counted. Do they count as one course or two, especially if they are under enrolled? Different departments report this differently, which makes it difficult to compare. In another example, the College of Education shared that they do many individual studies and they weren't even accounted for in the data. So that just gave us pause because we're not sure we're even looking at an accurate representation of what different departments are doing. And then we occurred to us, that it doesn't really matter exactly who's doing what because our recommendations are broader than that. And we think our recommendations are relatively straightforward and reflect what is already happening, such as trying to provide resources to the over-strained departments, which is already happening when hiring decisions are being made. Our other recommendation is to create some boundaries about what is considered a double section and reinstating caps on Writing Intensive or Speaking Intensive courses. And we think the university should collect better data. Ultimately, we can't have a one-size-fits-all solution. If people see the report as an invitation for huge administration overreach, then I think people may be reading more into it than we intended.

1. Questions:

- a. Mindy Erchul: So just from a practical standpoint, I think one of the things that as a body, we can do is figure out what from this report is actionable by faculty and whether that's actionable by this body, or we need to report out, for

example, the Writing and Speaking Intensive recommended caps and refer those to committees, and those committees would need to discuss and make a recommendation for action. I don't believe this body has the authority to determine how to count independent studies. We may look to provide guidance on this issue, but I don't think we control that. So I think that these are part of what we need to parse with the report. And I don't know if all that can be done today, given the other things on our agenda.

- b. Davis Oldham: Is that supporting the idea of keeping this on future agendas as a new unfinished business item?
- c. Mindy Erchull: I can make a motion but I don't want to limit other discussion of the report.
- d. Jonathan Levin: I had a question about number four: the administration should distribute gen ed teaching loads like FSEMs according to average department workload. It just wasn't clear to me exactly what that means. FSEM clearly has a university-wide mandate element to it, whereas it seems to me we all manage whatever gen eds we want.
- e. Miriam Liss: I think the reason why I said "other gen eds" was to not limit the imagination if other things come up. But at this point, FSEM is the only thing that would fall into that recommendation. I think this recommendation is already in place and the administration is distributing FSEMs based on these recommendations. And I don't think the UFAC committee wants to decide how independent studies can be counted. We recommend that independent studies should be counted somehow, but that's where departmental autonomy becomes important, because every department is going to be different in how they run their independent studies and how they should be counted. And I think our concern when seeing that independent studies were differentially counted in different departments was that some departments really just don't have the resources or wiggle room to be able to give any credit for independent studies and that didn't seem fair. So we recommend getting resources to departments that aren't able to give credit for independent studies. But we don't want to be more specific on how they should be counted.
- f. Tim O'Donnell: Deborah and I have spent some time talking about this. I think there's a lot we can do to collect data and to make it more valuable. That's going to take us a little bit of time, but I think we can make some progress on that. Related to course caps, we used to be guided by guidance about what the proper enrollments would be for a Speaking Intensive or Writing Intensive course. And we've

drifted from that and lost sight of those guidelines from when these programs were originally built. So I'd like to do a bit of digging into the historical record as a starting point for some guidelines that we can use to build our next schedule, and then we can come back and have some further discussions about that. I haven't heard criticisms of what were once the guidelines so maybe we can start with those as a starting point to restore something that's a little bit more uniform, that gives you all something to react to. And then, of course, we can modulate as necessary. So we will work with the records and the Associate Deans or schedule builders and the Registrar's Office to try to put something together for the next schedule.

- g. Miriam Liss: Via email I got a question about why UFAC is only talking about Writing Intensive and Speaking Intensive. Why aren't Honors and Digital Intensive and other designations also included? We had memories that there was guidance on Writing and Speaking Intensive courses so we started there. We thought it might be in the Handbook but we couldn't find it.
- h. Provost O'Donnell: It used to go out with the schedule documents.
- i. Mara Scanlon: I just want to make a statement about number four. I think the distribution of FSEMs should or has to be about something more than average department workload. I had a long chat with April about some of this last week. The FSEMs were conceived in a way that their distribution across campus was crucial to the way we thought about that course. And if we're turning our back on that, then we need to do it intentionally, not just because somebody's decided all the Writing Intensive we teach in our department, for instance, aren't worth enough and we should be doing more FSEMs instead. I don't think that's a workload issue. I think we've heard that April is putting together a group to reconsider what will happen with the FSEMs, and that's something they'll have to decide. But I think it's a violation of what that class was supposed to be to suggest that they should be distributed based on data about workload.
- j. Provost O'Donnell: But we've drifted considerably with our thinking about the FSEM is since it was originally developed. And so I think this is the occasion for coming back to look at that and first year experience generally. That said, we also have just some constraints that we didn't have when the program was conceived in terms of some excessive demands in some departments and some

opportunities in others. And so I think it's going to be a balanced approach. But I take the point, and I think we lost some of the sense of direction of what that course meant to us when we started teaching.

k. Miriam Liss: I don't think the report was meant to say the only decision making factor in distributing FSEMs should be workload. I think it was just a way of saying, here's another thing that the administration could do if there's one department that's overly strained and one department that may have a little wiggle room. Again, I think they're already doing this.

c. Davis Oldham: Any comments on other agenda items with committee reports?

i. Karen Anewalt: Can you remind us, when committees report in minutes their recommendations based on the Handbook Group's recommendations for committee charges and organization, we aren't voting to accept their recommendations or change the Handbook. All of that is still going to a cohesive vote later, right?

1. Davis Oldham: Melissa brought up a good point in the email. One of the issues that I realized as I was starting to hear back from committees is that in some cases the Handbook Group recommended merging certain committees together or something that might impact moving responsibility from one committee to another. And the decisions are interconnected among committees. So how do we resolve it when the committee have contradictory recommendations. One solution would be for UFC to vote and make the decision. A better approach would be to lean into what was originally in the Handbook Group's recommendation in Appendix A and some of the other documents which hopefully will be able to be released soon. UFOC is the committee that is tasked with managing those sorts of things. So UFOC will know what every committee has thought about their recommendations. UFOC will take the big picture view thinking about things and making the decision. I should also mention I kind of took the recommendations for each committee and gave them that part the 45 page document. But what that led to in some cases, was committees looked at the recommendations based on whether their tasks and were similar enough to each other to merge. And that's part of the discussion. But the other part is the difficulty that we're having in staffing committees. And so it will also be important for UFOC to consider these issues. So rather than thinking of whether tasks are similar enough to each other, they'll be able to think through whether a merged committee would be able to address the separate pieces of work within a reasonable time frame.

ii. Janine Davis: There is an instance in the committee minutes where a student's name is named in association with an honor violation in the

Honors Committee minutes. And since these are a matter of public record, we might want to redact some things.

1. Davis Oldham: I'll be in touch with the chair of that committee and correct that. If we don't have any more discussion, I entertain a motion to approve items for these minutes.
- iii. Motion to I approve all committee minutes.
  1. Vote is unanimous in favor of approving.

V. New Business: University Academic Affairs Committee: September 23rd, 2024 minutes

- a. Davis Oldham: The minutes included a proposal to adjust the overlap between two majors.

University Academic Affairs Committee action item: New language proposed (deletions in strikethrough, additions in red font):

**Majors**

**Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science Major Program Requirements**

**A major program within a single discipline requires at least 30, but no more than 48, credits. All must be graded credits. Students must take at least one-half of the major program at Mary Washington, earning a grade-point average of 2.00 in the courses. Many students complete two major programs to satisfy diverse personal or career interests. The maximum overlap allowed in the case of double majors is ~~nine (9) credits~~ **three courses, up to twelve (12) credits**. Students who intend to "double major" should also read the section titled "Second Degree or PostBaccalaureate Major."**

- i. Jonathan Levin: I wonder why we are not also changing the allowed overlap for minors (8 credits rather than 2 course). We could refer the issue for minors back to committee and move ahead with this motion.
  - ii. Motion to approve the proposed change to allow 3 courses, up to 12 credits of overlap between majors.
    1. Unanimously approved.
- b. University Curriculum Committee Course Change Proposals
    - i. Move to approve the bundle of all University Curriculum Committee items in September 27th, 2024 minutes
    - ii. Unanimously approved
  - c. General Education Committee Course Change Proposals
    - i. Move to approve all General Education Committee items in September 23rd, 2024 minutes
    - ii. Unanimously approved
  - d. Distance and Blended Learning Committee Proposals
    - i. Motion to approve all Distance & Blended Learning Committee items in September 20th, 2024 minutes



- ii. Unanimously approved
- e. Honors Committee Proposals
  - i. Motion to approve all Honors Committee items in September 11th, 2024 minutes.
  - ii. Unanimously approved
- f. Writing & Speaking Intensive Committee Proposals
  - i. Motion to approve all Writing & Speaking items in Speaking Intensive Committee September 24th, 2024 minutes and Writing Intensive Committee September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024 minutes
  - ii. Unanimously approved
- g. As a reminder at the last meeting we discussed a proposal from FSEM Committee that given the unique constraints of the timeline for the FSEMs, we allow the FSEM Committee to approve FSEM sections without coming through UFC. This was tabled at the last meeting. The new proposal takes the recommendations from the previous UFC discussion and leverages the UFC Executive Committee to make the approvals in time periods when the UFC is not meeting (example: winter break).
  - i. Melina Patterson: To make this consistent with other emergency designations like Majority Online designations, I suggest that the UFC Executive Committee's approval be valid only for one semester. Before the end of the semester, the FSEM would need to be approved by the full UFC or expire.
  - ii. Mindy Erchull: I argue against that. Because that functionally means that the FSEM Committee would have to make two rounds of proposals. They make one round to the UFC Executive Committee for the emergency proposal and then a second round to the full UFC approval. And I imagine that items will slip through the cracks in the process.
  - iii. Davis Oldham: The difference between FSEM proposals and other designations is that staffing often drives the Distance & Blending Learning emergency approvals. And timing is the driver in the FSEM emergency approval process.
  - iv. Melina Patterson: I think this is the same.
  - v. Caitie Finlayson: Does this mean that the proposer would have to go through the process twice: once for the emergency approval and then a second time for the regular approval? Or does it mean that the UFC Executive Committee would do the emergency approval and then the UFC would take up those approved items at the next regular UFC meeting?
  - vi. Consensus was that the emergency approved items would automatically be considered by UFC at the next regular meeting.
  - vii. Mindy Erchull: I want us to pass something that makes it hard for the proposer to accidentally screw up. If the proposal automatically moves through for consideration at the next UFC meeting, that's a viable solution.
  - viii. Caitie Finlayson: Could this be the responsibility of the UFC Executive Committee to ensure that the item is considered at the next regular UFC meeting?

- ix. Michael Benson: This gives the UFC Executive Committee a lot of power. So I think the idea of putting a conditional approval in place for the UFC Executive Committee is wise. It moves the process forward for a semester.
- x. April Wynn: The FSEM proposals are due in October because we need to be able to review them and get them into the minutes for the November UFC meeting. What this timeline assumes is that there aren't any revisions or anything getting kicked back to the proposer for clarification. Those can't go through the approval process without there being another round. So right now, the FSEM Committee is working with a proposer in December/January after FSEM staffing plans have already been submitted. So the approval can occur in that January timeframe, but that's also behind all the timelines for getting things out and publicized on the websites. It really puts faculty in a crunch if they get the FSEM approval and then immediately need to turn in the website for the course. So the timeline is possible but not practical and not respectful of both the FSEM Committee's time or the proposers' time.
- xi. Mindy Erchull: This proposal for the approval process as I'm reading it will apply to all emergency approvals. So we're not just changing the FSEM approval process, we're changing the Distance and Blended Learning approval process as well. We need to make sure we're not creating a problem for ourselves. I don't have a problem with this proposal. I do like that when a proposal comes up in outside the normal timeline, faculty understand that this is an emergency one-time-approval for the UFC executive committee. And then at the next UFC meeting, the UFC Executive Committee automatically moves that on to the agenda. I do worry that this is a broader motion than some of us might have thought. We need to make sure that if we approve this, all curriculum committees know that they need to follow this same procedure.
- xii. Jonathan Levin: I appreciate that there is a kind of universality in the design of this motion. Do different types of designations have different level of emergencies? I think we can do this without the breadth.
- xiii. Mindy Erchull: I can imagine a faculty member going on leave unexpectedly and a department needing an emergency approval for an instructor for an WI or SI course in the major. I think this is covering that potential issue.
- xiv. Janine Davis: I argue that in emergency WI or SI situations, perhaps the best person to make the approval is the department chair or dean, who knows the faculty who would teach the course, and not the UFC Executive Committee.
- xv. April Wynn: Which brings us back to the original request, which the FSEM Committee made because FSEM exists outside the normal department structure so there's not necessarily a department chair or dean familiar with the faculty member who might be teaching the class. So the FSEM Committee is acting sort of like the Department Chair.
- xvi. Mindy Erchull: I move that we take the motion as written and just add that it's a one semester emergency approval by the UFC Executive Committee.

- xvii. April Wynn: I'm Ex Officio on FSEM and accept the friendly amendment on behalf of the FSEM committee.
- xviii. Motion: FSEM Committee motions to the UFC to consider the following change to approval procedures: Under emergency or urgent circumstances allow the executive committee of the UFC to approve curricular proposal that have first been approved by committee (DBL, SI, WI, FSEM, GenEd, etc.). This emergency or urgent process mostly for use during the summer or winter where there are long stretches between UFC meeting and will be in effect for only one semester. Emergency or urgent circumstances are defined as necessary to solve a staffing shortage that will need to be resolved before the next UFC meeting. The executive committee would review the curricular proposal and the minutes from the committee and a majority vote will be needed to approve.
  - 1. Motion approved (14 yes, 3 no)
- xix. Mindy Erchull: Davis, will you let the Distance and Blended Learning Committee know about this change?
- xx. Davis Oldham: Yes, I will.
- h. Proposal for a new faculty governing body.
  - i. Davis Oldham: The UFC Executive Committee met and discussed concerns brought up in the last meeting about the models identified by the Handbook Working Group. The concerns were broadly that the models under or overrepresented various groups. Ultimately, we weren't able to come up with a model that was better than the originally proposed option 2. We discussed how larger depts are likely to naturally split. We didn't want to mandate a particular size that corresponds to a representative and instead allowed flexibility for smaller departments to decide to share a representative if that is their preference. The next step is for UFC to approve something to go out to all faculty & that ultimately has to be approved by all 3 colleges before adopting the new model.
  - ii. Caitie Finlayson: In the new model, you included the original model and also the new model that emphasizes 1 representative for department, which is perhaps a more useful way to look at it.
  - iii. Davis Oldham: Yes, I included the original model from the Handbook Working Group because I didn't want to claim that the model was created solely from the UFC Executive Committee. But I agree that thinking of the governing body as having 1 representative per department is a more useful way of thinking about things.
  - iv. Mara Scanlon: Can you walk us through the approval process because sometimes I think I've heard the whole faculty has to approve this and sometimes I've heard that it's the governing bodies of every college?
  - v. Melissa Wells: It's the governing body of each college, according to the Faculty Handbook. Also to Caitie's question, it was never the Handbook Group's intention in putting the document together to emphasize the divisions or representation by college. That was just a product of how UFC is currently organized. So the header stating the college has no

impact in the original model and was only meant for comparison to the current model.

- vi. Mindy Erchull: So just to follow up on Caitie's point of clarification, is it up to the governing body of each college to decide if they are voting on it as a governing body or if they are taking a full vote of their faculty, correct?
- vii. Melissa Wells: Section 2.3.4 of the Handbook says changes must be approved by majority votes of the faculty governing bodies of each college through procedures to be determined by each college.
- viii. Janine Davis: I think you could probably call the question on this right now and the majority of the people here would be in favor of this model. But I can't say whether this would pass in the College of Education. We don't know what role committees will play and it feels like we're missing information that would help to inform our decision on this question. I need to know more about what this new governing body will do and whether it's different from UFC and how.
- ix. Davis Oldham: That's a good point. Melissa, did the Handbook Group wrestle with this question over the summer?
- x. Melissa Wells: It's a valid question: will the business of the group change? For example, will there be more CAS business brought forth? We didn't get into that depth of things in the Handbook Committee.
- xi. Davis Oldham: I've received feedback from CAS faculty members expressing a desire to keep the CAS-FC in the form that it exists now.
- xii. Christy Irish: If we had some type of flowchart where we could say who's reporting to who, especially when we start to look at things like a Curriculum Committee suggesting maybe we don't want this layer or that layer. It's getting harder to tell how it all fits together. And if this is really for communication to go to a Senate instead, it'd be nice to see CAS and what their plan is for even distributing some of that.
- xiii. Kim Kinsley: So we've discussed this a couple of times in the College of Business and it's actually stronger than a consensus. I don't think anyone has said anything else, but we are not ready to move forward with this yet. It's our understanding that SCHEV will has not approved the new structure with our four potential departments. We may not even see approvals until the fall of next year. So the College of Business at this juncture is not ready to move forward with this for whatever that's worth.
- xiv. Caitie Finlayson: When we think about what this new body would be, my question to Tim or others who might know, is did the charge of UFC change when we became UFC versus when we were the Faculty Senate? And to Kim's point, I still do think there's value, from what I've heard from people I represent, that giving each department a voice on this body is worthwhile regardless of what the reorganization determines about how people move around.
- xv. Mindy Erchull: I was on Faculty Senate back in the day and was there when we did the last reorg. The charge of the governing body as we transitioned from Faculty Senate to UFC didn't change. We just added a

level of extra administration where some committees split and we had college level and university level committees. And so the university level committees report to this body, the college level committees report to a college structure. So that was the one change.

- xvi. Melissa Wells: Looking at some of these departments that have smaller numbers, around four to six, you all are representatives for people in those divisions. What feedback have you received from those units?
- xvii. Michael Benson: Speaking for Theatre, we don't care. Being in a small department, there's an expectation that you will wear a lot of hats. I haven't heard from ART or MUSC.
- xxviii. Melissa Wells: It's troubling that we're not hearing from those smaller departments.
- xix. Janine Davis: There was a point in our last meeting where Melina was talking about discussions about university business that used to happen in department meetings and that those conversations don't happen anymore. I can see that there's no pace on the calendar to deliberate as a group outside the department. How does this get addressed?
- xx. Davis Oldham: The agenda would be available in advance of department meetings. Then the departments could have discussions and the department representative would take that information to the Senate as a recommendation for a particular vote.
- xxi. Melina Patterson: This doesn't happen now because we don't necessarily have a UFC representative in our department meetings now. So we can discuss items but there's no one at the department meeting who is going to be at the UFC meeting (unless your department has a UFC member). It's hard to find time to meet with people from other departments that you represent. They may not share your space/building. If we don't hear from the people we represent, we assume they don't have opinions. But that's not really true. They do have opinions but there's no time/place for us to meet for those conversations. I think the calendar has gotten really extended trying to find some way of making the space, but it does not create more opportunities to talk. So I think the reason that this model is appealing to CAS is because we're too big to deliberate as a body. We need to deliberate as departments and as a whole community.
- xxii. Davis Oldham: At the UFC executive committee we talked about how we have a lot of departments that have a lot of diverse opinions. We should want that more than we should want the CAS opinion (if that exists). Each department should have its own opinion and identity.
- xxiii. Melissa Wells: The timeline online says that UFC agendas are released and then departments meet. Is that happening?
- xxiv. Melina Patterson: Yes, that's happening. It's just that I just meet with my department. I don't meet with the other departments that I represent. So I don't know what they think and I don't know how they think differently.
- xxv. Melissa Wells: So the missing loop is after the departmental meetings?

- xxvi. Caitie Finlayson: Yes. I think that we all kind of deliberate as departments and then as this community. And it sounds like that's what the COB and COE are doing now.
- xxvii. Mara Scanlon: The issues is that CAS-FC doesn't matter unless you also have one representative from every department on it.
- xxviii. Kim Kinsley: So what do we do to resolve this next time we meet? During the reorg, we all got together, we had town hall meetings. We definitely need to get the word out to all of these departments about potential changes with UFC before we should be thinking of moving forward.
- xxix. Davis Oldham: If the UFC body voted to move forward with this, then COB, CAS, and COE could choose at that point to have that discussion, and then it would kind of be built into that process.
- xxx. Mellissa Wells: I think traction has also been difficult, because when we made this timeline, I don't think we anticipated being at this spot without answers from SCHEV. We've been hearing that we'll know something next week for many months now. So that makes it difficult, because without knowing how units will shift, I think we're very understandably reluctant to make a commitment. If we're still hoping to do this in August, though, we're running short on time.
- xxxi. Davis Oldham: But to echo Caitie's point here, that we could still make this governance change, SCHEV could say no to the reorg, and we could still wind up with an improved faculty governance model.
- xxxii. Mindy Erchull: I argue that this model of department representation works regardless of college structure. It is making this not about college structure anymore. It is making it about the department structure. It also makes it a very adaptive model in that if departments merge or divide down the road, we just change the reps because we're not saying there will be 42 reps or 13 reps or whatever number we pick, we're saying there will be one rep per department. So if the existing departments change, the number of reps changes. And so this model would respond regardless of college structure.
- xxxiii. Motion: That we distribute this plan to the three college faculty governing bodies to have them vote on it.

1. Majority approved

VI. Announcements

- a. The next meeting will take place at 3:30 pm in Jepson 100.
- b. The next BOV meeting is November 15th. If you have anything you would like to highlight to the Board, please contact Davis.

VII. The meeting adjourned at 5:38.