

COS Faculty Meeting Minutes

April 28, 2023, 12 pm - 1pm

EXPL 3301 and Zoom Meeting

Meeting recording information distributed via email.

Attendees listed in **Appendix A**

1. Call to order – Rebecca Jones, Chair of the Faculty: 12:02 PM
2. Approval of minutes of meeting from March 24, 2023 – Motion by Konrad Wessel and Second by Jess Callus. Approved by show of hands and thumbs up on Zoom, 12:05 pm
3. Announcements
 - 3.1. Congratulations to 2023 Presidential Faculty Excellence Award Winners from COS. A round of applause was shared.
 - 3.1.1. Wendy Lewis, Neuroscience: The John Toups Presidential Medal for Faculty Excellence in Teaching
 - 3.1.2. R. Christian Jones, ESP: Earle C. Williams Presidential Medal for Faculty Excellence in Social Impact
 - 3.1.3. Giorgio A. Ascoli, BENG and Neuroscience: Beck Family Presidential Medal for Faculty Excellence in Research
 - 3.1.4. Please visit the website if you want to know more: <https://president.gmu.edu/faculty-awards/recipient>
 - 3.2. Final Faculty Senate meeting for 2022-23 Academic year - April 26, 2023; 3 pm Merten Hall 1203 and on Zoom.
 - 3.3. Chemistry Club and INOVA sponsored blood drive - April 29, 2023; 10 am to 3 pm Dewberry Hall.
 - 3.4. Northern VA Science and Engineering Fair competition hosted by the College of Science and to be held at George Mason University (SciTech campus) - April 29, 2023.
 - 3.4.1. More details on the NVSEFair: <https://www.nvsefair.com/>
 - 3.5. 12th Annual College of Science Undergraduate Research Colloquium (<https://science.gmu.edu/events/12th-annual-cos-undergraduate-research-colloquium>) will be held virtually on Wednesday May 3, 2023, from 1:30-3:30pm.
 - 3.5.1. It is 100% virtual
 - 3.5.2. An email from Rebecca Jones on Monday will detail on how to access the colloquium virtually
 - 3.5.3. Thank you to all the judges who volunteered
 - 3.6. Spring Mason Commencement will take place on May 18, 2023, at 10 am at Eagle Bank Arena <https://www.gmu.edu/graduation>
 - 3.6.1. Will require prior registration to attend. Lots of changes in the commencement this year.
 - 3.6.2. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/faculty-rsvp-commencement-spring-2023-tickets-576317871267>

- 3.7. College of Science Graduation – May 19, 2023 <https://www.gmu.edu/graduation/degree-celebrations>
4. Remarks from the Dean – Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm
 - 4.1. A big thank you to all of you for all that you have done
 - 4.2. Several aspects that are promising for the college – Strong enrolment; growth seen; projected growth of 2%; these lead to a better financial position
 - 4.3. Budget: We should have finished the budget by now, but several changes in the state university level, and hence maybe delayed to July which means a 3-month delay. This is slightly concerning
 - 4.4. Excited about the new year.
 - 4.5. Compensation adjustment at the end of Spring or Summer; 5% to 7% . This is state mandated; therefore, will happen. Do not know if this will be market driven or merit driven
 - 4.6. Rankings of some of our departments (Math and Physics) have gone up. This is a reason to celebrate because this increases enrolment, and faculty are encouraged to apply for positions. Other COS departments are also doing well. So, a big thank you to everyone
 - 4.7. A big thank you to Rebecca Jones for being the leader of the faculty and keeping us on our toes. She shares a genuine concern for faculty. Rebecca served the COS for 6 years, and we thank her for her contribution and service
 - 4.8. Rebecca was presented with a token of appreciation from the Dean, Chair Pro Tem and Secretary of COS
5. Update on development of COS Intranet – Tracy Mason (Presentation slides attached in the **(Appendix B)**)
 - 5.1. If you have science stories that you want to share, or share success stories about your students, any course or yourself, please connect with Tracy. A recent example: <https://science.gmu.edu/news/new-course-gives-tasty-spin-chemistry-education>
 - 5.2. Mason Intranet is being set up to improve our internal communication – transparent, real time and accessible.
 - 5.3. Intranet – will be used to share townhall meeting PowerPoint and videos, faculty appreciation, success stories, minutes of meetings for several COS committees, daily announcements, key initiatives, community outreach, COS social updates etc.
 - 5.4. Intranet contents benchmarked with other universities in the state of VA and other states.
 - 5.5. Phased approach for release of the intranet.
 - 5.6. Platform – Microsoft SharePoint. Will need training for Mason. Rollout and plan out training for point of contact. They will be responsible for updating information and training other people.
 - 5.7. The first roll out will include AJEDI initiatives, Finance and Business operations, HR etc.
 - 5.8. Intranet will be the guide to the College of Science,
 - 5.9. Roll out in parts, collect feedback from all, and utilize the feedback
 - 5.10. Summer 2023 – training and partial roll out for only a few people. Actual Roll out Fall 2023
 - 5.11. Survey: What all do you want to see or not see on the intranet: https://gmua1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8kw3z5WWw5B78I6:

5.12. Question from Rebecca: When is it going to go live?

5.12.1. Ans: Mid to late May 2023 for first launch. Final to all COS - Fall 2023

6. Update on Instructional Faculty Workload Policy – Konrad Wessel and Cody Edwards (Slides posted in **Appendix C**)

6.1. Started as a review of workload for research faculty which said that 2:2 was a burden for exceptionally active research faculty. This requirement also demoralizes new faculty to apply to GMU, if focused on research.

6.2. Dean asked to form a committee to review the workload policy.

6.3. More flexibility for workload allocation provided to LAU and to research focused faculty

6.4. Also, for term faculty can be reduced from 4:4 based on exceptional contribution to service or administrative or research components

6.5. The revised workload policy has been sent to all faculty via email from Teri Fede on behalf of the Dean on 21st April 2023, with a link to a survey. The last date to provide feedback is 5th May 2023. https://gmu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2skrbyZJWTBncqi

6.6. Please note that all the changes/additions to the previous policy have been shown in blue.

6.7. Question from Joel Schnur: How is this coupled with buy-out if we have sufficient funding?

A: It stays the same. If you have project funding that supports buy-out, you can definitely go for that. However, if someone has funding that does not specifically support buy-out, they can also get a teaching release, if they meet the other criteria.

Question from Natalie Burls: Base line minimum is 1:1 teaching load, so how is 1:0 possible?

A: Though not highly likely to get 1:0 but with exceptional research it may be possible

Question from Rebecca: In the document, there was a text (in blue) that said that teaching load could be increased to compensate for insufficient service for all faculty. Would that mean that the teaching load for a term faculty could go up to 5:5 or 5:6. That would be against their contracts. I think we should not give chairs so much power.

A: That is a mistake. That was already there (in the previous policy) and not an addition from our end.

Rebecca: I will put my remarks in the survey.

7. Remarks from COS Faculty Senators –David Wong and Alexandra Masterson

7.1. Update from David Wong on the work done by Faculty Senate (**Appendix D**)

7.1.1. The Senate worked on Task Force on Reimagining Faculty Roles and Rewards. Goals were endorsed in November meeting

7.1.2. Faculty Handbook revision

7.1.3. Faculty Annual Evaluation timetable changes (Spring vs fall)

7.1.4. Conflict of commitment Policy draft (a few days ago)

7.1.5. New Mason Core – Streamlining the synthesis and capstone courses

7.1.6. LMS update

7.1.7. Employee dependent tuition benefit

7.2. Update from Alexandra Masterson (**Appendix E**)

7.2.1. Adjustment to the formula of the 1st day of Fall semester.

7.2.2. Addition of Juneteenth as a holiday

7.2.3. Professors will now be designated as “Distinguished University Professor”

7.2.4. COACHE data discussion (please see attached slides)

8. Call for nominations for at-large from the floor for COS Leadership and Committees – Nominations Committee: Natalie Burls

8.1. Names of the nominees and their bio will be distributed to all by Monday (5/1)

8.2. Elections are to be held in early May.

8.3. Presently no nominations for Chair Pro tempore position

8.4. Konrad gave three nominations for Nominations committee

8.5. Please nominate others and yourselves for the various position

Position	Open positions	Term
Chair	1 at-large position	1 yr.
Chair pro tempore	1 at-large position	1 yr.
Secretary	1 at-large position	1 yr.
Nominations	2 at-large positions	2 yrs.
P&T committee	2 at-large positions	3 yrs.
Faculty Senate	2 at-large positions	3 yrs
Grievance committee	1 at-large position (cannot be from Systems Biology, AOES, Physics or SSB)	3 yrs.
Executive Council	1 at-large positions	3 yrs
Undergraduate	1 at-large position	2 yrs.
Graduate Council	1 at-large position	3 yrs

8.6. Current committee memberships can be viewed here: <https://science.gmu.edu/faculty-and-staff-resources/faculty-governance/officers-and-committees>

9. New Business: Jason Kinser

9.1. Beginning Fall 2024, Capstone and Synthesis courses will be merged into a new category — Mason Apex.

9.2. Post pandemic – Different modalities to teach classes – Online, Hybrid, 50% each, in-person, synchronous, asynchronous and others. If your class does not fall under any of the usual modalities, please contact Jason

9.3. Test drive new Patriot Web.... For summer. If you are teaching in the summer, and are willing to participate, please contact Jason.

10. Agreement to having a year-end semester faculty get-together. Details will be sent later.

11. Adjournment – 1:05 pm

Appendix A

Attendees (in-person, EXPL 3301)

Konrad Wessels
Alexandra Masterson
Jessica Callus
Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm
Natalie Burls
Ferah Munshi
Jason Kinser
Peter Plavchan
Sarah Ward
Tracy Mason
Megan Erb
Pritha Roy
Mosissa Fayissa
Lee Andrew Solomon
Patrali Banerjee
Rebecca Jones

Zoom attendees

Aarthi Narayanan
Aman Ullah
Amanda O'Connor
beiming tang
Bill Kennedy
Catherine Sausville
Chi Yang
Chris Lockhart
Cody W. Edwards
Cristiana Stan
Dale Scott Rothman
David Wong
Dmitri Klimov
Elisabeth Epstein
eoughton
Ernest Barreto
Estela Blaisten
Gabriele Belle
Hamdi Kavak
Hoda Bidkhori
Iosif Vaisman
Jie Zhang_2
Joel Schnur
Kelly Knight
Kenneth W Foreman

Kerin Balkissoon (She/Ela/Ella)
Lance Liotta
Larry Rockwood
Liping Di
Meghan St. George
Michael Summers
Mikell Paige
Monique van Hoek
Myisha Washington
Patrali Banerjee
Patrick Gillevet
Paul A Dirmeyer
Paul So
Peter Plavchan
Rachel Kirsch (she/her/hers)
Rebecca M Jones
Sharmin Abdullah
Taylor Anderson
Tim Leslie
Tina Bell
Tracy C Mason
Valerie Olmo
Wendy Lewis
Xiaoyan Tan

Mason Science Intranet Project

- ▲ **Need: improve internal communications effectiveness**
 - Connect and align employees, remove silos to access information on key college priorities, initiative metrics and progress
 - Provide timely, transparent updates, encourage feedback
 - Meaningfully recognize and celebrate successes
 - Outcomes: increased engagement/productivity, create efficiencies
- ▲ **Scope and structure: phased approach**
 - Augment Microsoft Teams with dynamic content in Sharepoint
 - Marcomm set up/training with unit level ongoing collaboration
 - HR, Finance, Research admin, and AJEDI first wave, will test for all
- ▲ **Content focus/audiences**
 - Crowdsourcing content - internal messages, processes, resources
 - LEVEL 1: primarily administrative staff and faculty use
 - LEVEL 2: for departments to communicate in their own 'domain'
 - LEVEL 3: for programs to communicate with students

Mason Science Intranet Project

Ph1

Ph2

Ph3

Ph4

Project Scoping July '22 to Jan '23

Confirm platform (Sharepoint), audience (staff and faculty), integration options, collect best practices, review web content for shifting to internal intranet, build shell

Content Collection Jan '23 to Mar '23

Meet with admin content owners to prioritize build elements, determine content display preferences and ongoing update responsibilities

Part 1 Build and Train Feb '23 to Jun '23

Create Home page, AJEDI and CBO area pages. Maximize system integrations, train content owners with proposed update process

Launch and test Spring '23

Launch intranet in first level of information sharing, collect feedback as new content is incorporated by admin teams

Follow #MasonScience on social media



Mason Science Marcomm Update

- ▲ **Communications / Marketing / Science Communications**
- ▲ **5-Ps:** People, Programs, Places, Partnerships, Pathways
- ▲ **Focus areas:** Strategy, Processes and Planning, Events, Media Relations, Branding (Print, Signage, and Promotional items), Digital communications, ROI/analytic measurement, Administration, and Mason-wide committees
- ▲ **Digital Communications**
 - Website (content creation, training, evaluation)
 - Annual Report (storytelling and list mgmt.)
 - Newsletter(s) 1-weekly+ 3 Institutes, The George, Momentum
 - Email marketing (enrollment, events, community)
 - Dean's Blog 1-weekly
 - Social media channels 7 college and 29 college-wide
 - Storytelling (video/Q&A) x 12

COS Workload Guidelines: 2023 Updates Beyond R1!



**R1
RESEARCH
INSTITUTION**
with one of the fastest
growing portfolios
in the nation

#1

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Department of
Geography and
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Science

Background:

COS Faculty Meeting Minutes 4-28-23



Workload Guidelines - July 2016

[HOME](#) / [FACULTY & STAFF](#) / [FACULTY GOVERNANCE](#) / [WORKLOAD GUIDELINES - JULY 2016](#)



- Dec 2021 COS Associate Chairs for Research (ACR) meeting with Dean FMW
- Identified priority - to reduce the 2:2 teaching load of exceptional research-active faculty to attract and retain talent and allow more time for research
- The 2:2 teaching load is an anomaly within R1 and comparable VA universities
- COS Dean requested that ACRs investigate and suggest updates to COS 2016 Workload documents.

<https://science.gmu.edu/faculty-and-staff-resources/faculty-governance/workload-guidelines-july-2016>

<https://science.gmu.edu/sites/default/files/2019-10/COS-Workload-Guidelines-July-2016.pdf>



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Objectives of Updates:

COS Faculty Meeting Minutes 4-28-23



Workload Guidelines - July 2016

HOME / FACULTY & STAFF / FACULTY GOVERNANCE / WORKLOAD GUIDELINES - JULY 2016



Objective of updates to Workload Guidelines:

1. To provide more **flexibility** in workload allocation within LAU to promote research productivity of our existing faculty, and improve our ability to recruit new faculty.
2. Provide **broad guidelines** than need to be implemented at the LAU Chair's discretion according to the specific department's circumstances and teaching needs. (allocations needs to be recorded and reported)
3. Provide **more flexibility** with regards to **term-faculty** workload allocation.
4. Allow **adjustments in teaching load** based on exceptional research productivity or service for both TT and Term faculty, based on criteria **specified in each department**.
5. Better link workload allocation directly to the **annual performance review** process.

<https://science.gmu.edu/faculty-and-staff-resources/faculty-governance/workload-guidelines-july-2016>

<https://science.gmu.edu/sites/default/files/2019-10/COS-Workload-Guidelines-July-2016.pdf>



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Background:



Workload Guidelines - July 2016

HOME / FACULTY & STAFF / FACULTY GOVERNANCE / WORKLOAD GUIDELINES - JULY 2016

- 2016 Guidelines listed **reductions of teaching load** for (i) start-up teaching (new Assistant Profs), (ii) Administration (chairs) (iii) Service, (iv) Buy-outs,
- 2016 Guidelines **listed no option for reduction teaching load based on research productivity**
- New Updates aligned with Faculty Handbook (Office of the Provost Teaching Load Policy, August 25,2021)

Deviations from Base Workloads

Reduction in Base Workload

Partial Appointments

Research Buyouts for Tenure-Track/Tenured Positions

Administration

Start-up Teaching

Extraordinary Service with College-wide Impact

Increases in Base Workload

Responsibility for Workload Assignments

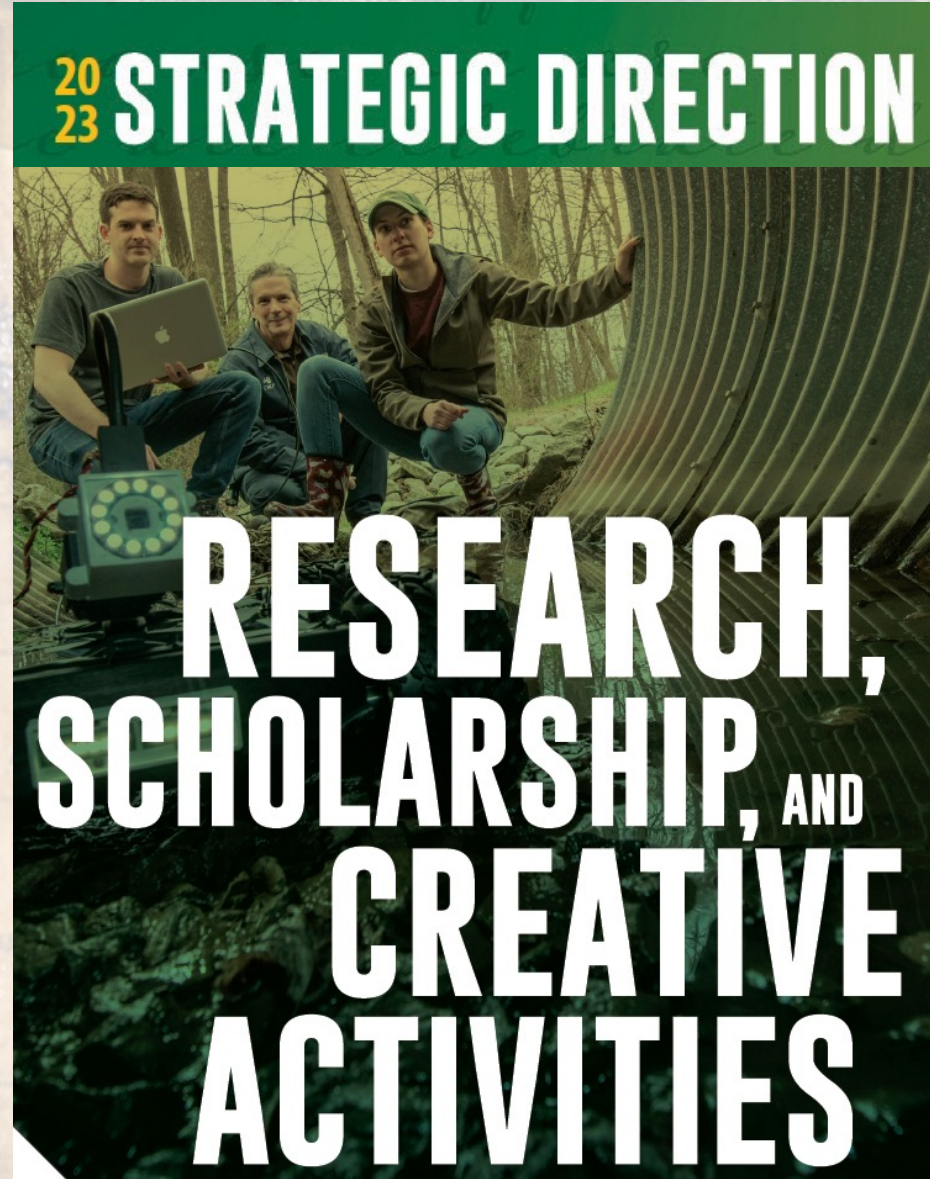
Mason Strategic priority concerning Research:

The outcomes we aim to achieve through this priority are:

- **A 50 percent growth in funding** for research, scholarship, and creative activities
- **Increased research productivity**

2. Provide the support structures needed to fuel growth.

Strategic Priority 2.3 “Assess and realign course loads to enable faculty to grow research portfolios”



Process / time-line so far:

1. 9 Dec 2021: COS Dean meet with ACR's and request that ARC's investigate updated to 2016 COS Workload Guidelines document
2. Nov 2022: ACR's, Cody Edwards and Ali Andalibi complete **initial draft of updates** to the COS Workload Guidelines document
3. Dec 2022: Document **circulated via ACR's to Chairs** of departments (LAU's) and in some cases, with faculty, for comment
4. Feb 2023: **ACR's submit feedback and edits** which are summarized and discussed in ACR meeting. Document updated.
5. 9 March 2023: **Meeting with COS Dean, Associate Deans**, to review proposed changes to document with minor edits. The proposed changes were positively received and the next steps in process discussed.
6. 21 March 2023: **Meet Dean and COS Chairs** who provided another round of edits to COS Workload Guidelines.
7. 28 March 2023: COS Faculty representatives engagement to decide on best strategy to introduce proposed updates and gather broad faculty input.
8. 21 April 2023: Draft Workload Guidelines shared with faculty from Dean for comment via Survey.
9. 28 April 2023: COS Faculty meeting – Today.

Proposed addition:

Reductions in Teaching workload based on research productivity of Tenure-Track/Tenured Positions

The 2:2 teaching load can be decreased by the department chair based on research productivity as indicated by a combination of (i) external funding, (ii) high-impact publications (iii) supervision of productive graduate students and (iii) leadership of large research projects. **Parameters** of research productivity and excellence in research are **discipline-specific** and shall thus be determined at department level. Assessment of research productivity will be based on information contained in the faculty member's **annual performance review**. The review should also be used to set the **expectations** for research activities in the **following year**. Research productivity and appropriate teaching workload adjustments will be documented, using the “**Teaching responsibility Worksheet**” (link to example doc) that may be adapted by each department.

Proposed addition:

Start-Up Teaching

Teaching load of tenure track faculty can be reduced to one course per semester (1:1) during the **first one to three years** of their employment at Mason.

(This addition is specifically aimed at attracting new faculty and help them establish a research portfolio)

Proposed addition: (newly added 27 March)

Reductions in Teaching workload for Term Faculty

Teaching load may be reduced below the 4:4 baseline by the Chair due to exceptional service, research, student mentoring, administrative, or other obligations that require significant time, in line with the Term Faculty Workload Policy guidelines (2021). (<https://provost.gmu.edu/faculty/term-faculty-information>)

COS Representatives to Faculty Senate 2022-2023

Karen Akerlof, ESP

Alexandra Masterson, Biology

Catherine A. Sausville, Math

Cristiana Stan, AOES

Anne Verhoeven, Biology

David Wong, GGS

Jie Zhang, Physics and Astronomy

+

Dean (ex-officio)

Faculty Senate Major Issues 2022-23 (1)

- Report from The Task Force on Reimagining Faculty Roles and Rewards (TFRFRR): endorsed the goals (Nov 16)
- The Faculty Senate charges the Organization and Operations Committee with creating a charge to convert the current Task Force on Reimagining Faculty Roles and Rewards into a University Standing Committee (Dec 7)
- Formation of grading process task force

Faculty Senate Major Issues 2022-2023 (2)

- Faculty Handbook revision
- Faculty Annual Evaluation (workgroup):
time-table (spring vs. fall)
 - Must be conducted, with different levels of outcome
- Conflict of Commitment (COC) Policy (draft of policy 4021)
- New Mason Core adoption
- Learning Management System upgrade

Faculty Senate Major Issues 2022-2023 (3)

- the announcement of dependent tuition benefit that started in Spring 2023
- VP financial updates
- COACHE survey & Data (Alexandra Masterson)

Faculty Senate Highlights for 2022-2023

Alexandra Masterson

April 28, 2023

Academic Policy Committee

- ▶ **Modifications to AP 1.5:** Clarification to focus on Undergraduate students only.
- ▶ **Academic Calendar Change:**
 - ▶ Adjustment to formula for the first day of semester.
 - ▶ Correction to address June 13th holiday.

Faculty Matters Committee

- ▶ Faculty evaluation of Administrators, i.e., President Washington and Provost Ginsberg
- ▶ Administered by Gallup

Faculty Handbook Committee

- ▶ Currently **DRAFT** for the following revisions:
 - ▶ Adds language about University Policy 4021.
 - ▶ Replaces *University Professor* title with *Distinguished University Professor* title.
 - ▶ Implements Faculty Annual Evaluation recommendations.
 - ▶ Streamlines the Term Faculty reappointment processes.

COACHE 2022 **(The Collaborate on Academic Careers in Higher Education)**

Areas of Strength

- ▶ **Shared governance**
 - ▶ Senior administration and faculty leadership work well together.
- ▶ **Leadership**
 - ▶ Departmental and Senior administration.

Areas of Concern

- ▶ **Mentoring**
 - ▶ Framework and support for mentoring.
- ▶ **Tenure**
 - ▶ Clarity of expectations and policies.

Best and Worst Aspects of Working at Mason

▶ Best Aspects:

- ▶ Geographic Location (34%)
- ▶ Quality Colleagues (31%)
- ▶ Supportive Colleagues (21%)
- ▶ Academic Freedom (16%)
- ▶ Diversity (14%)

Best and Worst Aspects of Working at Mason

▶ Worst Aspects:

- ▶ Compensation (35%)
- ▶ Cost of Living (25%)
- ▶ Teaching Load (19%)
- ▶ Service Expectations (13%)
- ▶ Research Support (12%)

COACHE 2022 **(The Collaborate on Academic Careers in Higher Education)**

- ▶ **Response Rate:**
 - ▶ University 58%
 - ▶ COS 60%
- ▶ **+20** percentage points compared to our selected peer's response rates.

Plan

- ▶ Use these data to inform our institution efforts and goals.
- ▶ Strategic planning.
- ▶ DEI efforts.
- ▶ Support faculty's professional success and well-being.