

COS Faculty Meeting
Minutes
October 7th, 2020, 3-4pm

Meeting Recording:

https://gmu.zoom.us/rec/share/1qkR1Ij9ITNMsJ7dAn27XhQ6kojHNUqOIlPHDLZ9F9v9e0MjQL8wRpoMrIsrEG0o.mFKaDPtpX6zBt_Tx

Passcode: \$odium11

1. Call to order – 3:01 pm
 - 1.1. Rebecca - Review of agenda for today
 - 1.2. List of Attendees (Appendix A)
2. Approval of minutes from Sept 10, 2020
 - 2.1. Rebecca: Any changes?
 - 2.2. Dann Sklarew – motion to approve
 - 2.3. Anthony – 2nd
 - 2.4. Minutes approved
3. Dean’s update - Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm (Appendix B)
 - 3.1. Kicking off the Strategic Planning Process
 - 3.1.1. Self-study (soul searching and telling your story): provides baseline information (qualitative and quantitative) that rationalizes a proposal for strategies from each unit -> by March 2021
 - 3.1.2. External Review (getting some feedback): provides validation by external peers as well as additional elements to ground each units strategies -> by May 2021
 - 3.1.3. Immediate Inputs needed by Oct 31:
 - 3.1.3.1. Areas of Expertise of proposed reviewers
 - 3.1.3.2. List of possible external reviewers
 - 3.1.4. Already circulated to chairs
 - 3.1.5. Encourage everyone to engage and be involved, bubble up the process. This is your plan to move towards formulating a college-wide plan. Fernando wants this to be owned by the units.
 - 3.2. Budget update:
 - 3.2.1. Not quite out of the woodwork just yet.

- 3.2.2. FY21 \$53.7M FY21 expenditure authority (permanent budget). 6% permanent cut: \$3.2M. 2.5M offset with defunding positions and reduced DE (inc lab fee budgets). 0.7M temp shortage in permanent funds.
 - 3.2.2.1. \$2.5M E&G permanent funds FY20 growth year end
 - 3.2.2.2. 0.5% return announced at BOV on 6% cut.
 - 3.2.2.3. Permanent fund shortage net: \$0.4M
 - 3.2.2.4. ~ \$4M FY21 projected growth to offset shortage and support strategic investments
 - 3.2.2.5. Enrollment has grown in FY21, so we expect some growth, and we are anticipating \$4M+ growth number.
 - 3.2.2.6. Potentially we could have a net positive added to our budget to navigate this shortage and support some permanent investment. Allow long-term commitments to faculty hires, etc.
 - 3.2.2.7. Optimistically cautious. Don't know how late fall early winter will go, early spring semester. If we navigate the covid situation in good shape, we'll end FY21 in good shape and starting FY22 in good shape.
- 3.2.3. Onetime funds update (equipment, faculty startups): \$18M FY20 fund balance. \$1.8M 10% cut. \$16.2M FY20 carryforward.
 - 3.2.3.1. Counting against
 - 3.2.3.1.1. \$0.8M.- Interdisciplinary program neuroscience
 - 3.2.3.1.2. \$4.3M – lab fee carry forward
 - 3.2.3.1.3. \$4.5M faculty startup
 - 3.2.3.1.4. \$1.5M faculty seed and bridge
 - 3.2.3.1.5. \$0.8 Sci Tech rent
 - 3.2.3.1.6. \$0.3M infrastructure commitments
 - 3.2.3.2. \$4M net remaining available 1x funds for FY21+
- 3.2.4. Discussion
 - 3.2.4.1. Fernando: Holding off on more permanent investments to be on the safer side – e.g. no new tenure line hires for the time being.
 - 3.2.4.2. Greta Q: do new term faculty hires count as permanent investments?
 - 3.2.4.3. Fernando: Yes. We want to be fair to our faculty and be committed to them long-term financially.
 - 3.2.4.4. Q: Will the current budget (austerity) affect contract renewal for long-term faculty?

- 3.2.4.5. Fernando: No. Not anticipating faculty layoffs of any nature. Faculty at UMD are taking a 10% salary cut because of COVID. In a relative sense, we are in pretty good shape.
- 3.3. Q in chat from Ron Mahabir: Will the 57% grant indirect be changed since most faculty are using their own equipment from home during the pandemic?
- 3.3.1. A: Ute from chat: No. The overhead covers the facilities and administrative expenses that cannot be reflected as a direct cost to the award.
- 4. Suzanne Slayden – Faculty Senate changes to academic calendar**
- 4.1. Central administration decided it is not in the best interest to have a spring break, and have asked the faculty to eliminate it. Do we start one week earlier, or one week later?
- 4.2. Asking our college colleagues for input before a vote.
- 4.3. A lot of people have chimed in with a lot of opinions.
- 4.4. Q: Peter Plavchan – There was a patriot day option with days off spread out?
- 4.5. A: Suzanne – It was roundly discouraged by the faculty senate due to labs and sections that need to be coordinated (only 1 or 2 faculty supported it). It would impact strict schedules, and would cause confusion. So, it is not being presented to all faculty; only the two options.
- 5. Master Plan - David Wong (Appendix C)**
- 5.1. Scenarios presented:
- 5.1.1. Scenario 1: SciTech becomes Engineering and Health Sciences (engineering CS and IT has significant presence in Arlington)
- 5.1.2. Scenario 2: consolidate engineering and MBA at Arlington and Health Sciences at SciTech
- 5.1.3. Scenario 3A – Rejuvenate Fairfax and locate research centers at SciTech (CS/IT Engineering at Arlington)
- 5.1.4. Scenario 3B: Rejuvenate Fairfax and create bold new partnership with NOVA at SciTech (CS/IT at Arlington)
- 5.1.5. Scenario X: beyond the existing 4...
- 5.1.6. Town Hall: Oct 8: Demography analysis; Dec: scenarios
- 5.1.7. Send responses/feedback to David Wong (dwong2@gmu.edu) by Oct 15 or ASAP
- 6. Academic Integrity - Andreas Zufle – member of honor committee (Appendix D)**
- 6.1. Faculty procedures for suspect honor code violations
- 6.2. In the past, you would walk around the hall, talk to colleagues, and ask them what to do. Now we miss the hallway conversations.

- 6.3. Main message: don't sanction students without going through the office of academic integrity. You can refer the case to OAI through their portal with all materials – assignments, documents suspect, and so on, and recommended sanctions (there is a form for that), and for 1st, 2nd and 3rd offenses, etc. You will never know which case it is (1st 2nd or 3rd). Which is why you need to provide sanctions.
- 6.4. Proposed defaults for COS classes: 1st offense: 0 pts on assignment; 2nd offense: F in course; 3rd dismissal from Mason
- 6.5. What not to do: avoid involving the OAI. The GMU honor code dictates “all suspected violations must be reported to OAI within a reasonable time period of discovery of the misconduct”
- 6.6. This document was sent out to faculty previously. With added reminder: honor code violations are FERPA protected. Do not share specific student violations with anyone that does not have an educational need to know (as determined by the FERPA officer). An employer cannot know.
- 6.7. LaShonda Anthony (lanthon2@gmu.edu) from OAI here on zoom to answer Qs
- 6.7.1. Some courses in CS do recommend failure in the course for first offense.
- 6.7.2. School of Business has a matrix for offenses, and for the most part recommend course failure for first offense, and some suspension (not approved by Provost unless the case is truly egregious). It has to be a pretty egregious.
- 6.7.3. Q: Benoit van Aken in chat: Is there a place where 'cheating' is formally defined? For instance a student taking 2 hours to complete a test instead of the 1 hour allowed is considered cheating?
- 6.7.3.1. A: LaShonda: The OAI website
- 6.7.3.2. Dann Sklarew in chat: <https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/what-is-cheating>
- 6.7.4. Q: Dale Scott Rothman: New to Mason. Has an offense. Going to report to OAI. Should he tell the student if they're wondering why?
- 6.7.4.1. A: Lashonda: Individual decision for the faculty to make.
- 6.7.5. LaShonda: If you go to grade an assignment, and you don't see a student in blackboard, let OAI know. Students can't drop class until OAI decision issues. Students can't get out of that. Students try to do that so there's no record of cheating, but that is not allowed. OAI will re-enroll student. Need G#, student ID...
- 6.7.6. Q Rebecca Jones: Timeline to respond to OAI submission?
- 6.7.6.1. A: Used to be 2-3 weeks pre-pandemic for student to meet with them. Cases are significantly higher now, and she is down a person – her and 2 part-time people. 4-6 weeks for resolution, unless student meets with them and accept responsibility (then it is ~1 week).

6.7.7. Q in chat: Ron Mahabir: What resources is COS providing to assist with Cheating. For example, student assistance with searching for questions online, subscriptions to online platforms such as chegg since we can see the answer unless we subscribe?

6.7.7.1. A: Four pages of sites that they find doing some research. Most sites will taken down material if you request them to. Not every site will cooperate with an investigation. Chegg shares IP address and email of people who upload material. Coursehero and bartleby will not; they will take it down due to copyright, but not reveal submitter info. Many sites have an “honor code” statement.

6.7.7.2. Gerald: Chemistry has a subscription

6.7.7.3. Rob Mahabir: 500 links almost every day in CDS posted to CHEGG. Chegg seems to be primarily “dealer”, relatively fast. For large classes, it is trialing to keep searching chegg every day. CDS 150 for example with 500 students and 14 sections, which will go up to 18 sections and 600 students next semester. We need assistance.

7. (Alternative) Assessment in online classes – Shelley Reid (ereid1@gmu.edu), Charlie Kreitzer (ckreitze@gmu.edu) and Faisal Mahmoud (fmahmud5@gmu.edu), Stearns Center (Appendix E)

7.1. Rebecca: let’s hear about assessments less conducive to cheating

7.2. Charles Kreitzer: we have been thinking about helping faculty think about assessment in different ways given these academic integrity immediate challenges.

7.2.1. In an age where the internet isn’t going away, there aren’t a lot of ways we can fight the chegg’s of the world. How can the Stearn’s center and Provost’s office help in thinking of effective ways to help faculty to assess students?

7.3. Shelley Reid: we are looking at a paradigm shift in what kind of information students have access to, and how we evaluate what level of mastery they have.

7.3.1. There is a “largeness” to this conversation, not being able to solve this problem. Chasing down students online is not proactive. If we continue to chase, we will lose that race. Use this as a wake-up call. What do we most want our students to be learning and how to we assess that? What kinds of institutional structures can we start to build or modify to do that?

7.4. Discussion

7.4.1. LaShonda in chat: Charles and Shelley are right-we can't keep up with everything that is out there.

7.4.2. Q in chat (Padhu): Lashonda, Charlie and Shelly: Do you see a few colleges doing more reporting of cases? And if so are other colleges using special strategies such as administering formative assessments during class time (for example) etc. that is reducing the number of cases?

- 7.4.3. A in chat (LaShonda): Currently VSE and COS are for 2019/2020 the highest referring agents-COS saw a sharp spike when we moved online. Some faculty are engaging with alternative assessment methods
- 7.4.4. Shelley: small changes in November that may help with control of assessment, and make it a little less likely we are chasing down exam cheating info. Begin to encourage you to hopefully discuss in breakout rooms of the root question: What do you most want students to learn by the end of the course, by the time they step into the profession? How would you assess that, and then working backwards. Would like new pilot assessment strategies coming in this fall, so we can start this conversation.
- 7.4.5. Comment in chat: Faisal Mahmud: 1. Setting aside the question of how/why students cheat, consider what are the top 2-3 things you most want students who leave your course (or move into the profession) to be able to know/do? 2. If you had no resource constraints, how would you like to assess that learning? (If time permits: What kind of resource would be most helpful to you in implementing it?)
- 7.4.5.1. Faisal: There is no optimal quick solution.
- 7.4.5.2. Padhu in chat: So perhaps one thing to (re)think about is to enhance the way we create effective assessments, especially formative! Give the question and the answer. Ask them to fill the gap. It has worked for me :)
- 7.4.5.3. Shelley Reid in chat: Padhu, yes you're not alone in the challenge: the shift to more remote instruction has sped up (but is not the root cause) of concerns about students accessing information illicitly. But also you're not alone: We haven't seen anyone with a complete solution. When you lower the fear and lower the stakes (shorter, lower-weight exams), students are less likely to go through elaborate steps to cheat. More formative assessments, using fewer questions selected from a greater variety of possible questions, can support learning with somewhat less pressure toward academic dishonesty.
- 7.4.6. Rebecca: <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu>
- 7.4.7. Example from Faisal "think out of the box" -> Ditch multiple choice exams. Concept based questions; action based questions, solution based question, scenario based questions, rather than Q&A.
- 7.4.8. Question weight: give higher weight to action, solution, scenario-based questions than concept-based.
- 7.4.9. Quiz settings: given students practice tests with several attempts (usually 3)
- 7.4.10. Combine tests with online discussions (challenging task, adopting gradually).
- 7.5. Takeaways Faisal: working on documentation for you at Stearns Center, hopefully with your feedback and provide options to consider for this semester or spring semester, or next 1-2 years based upon time and research constraints. There is no one-size fits all model. Try to combine options. Faculty have found these discussions among colleagues productive to be open minded and borrow ideas from colleagues. Tweak models that work elsewhere to fit in with your course requirements. Consider short, medium and long-term changes. Continue to talk about online assessment for now,

but hopefully next fall we will return to the classroom, and take lessons learned to those in person interactions. Last point: listen to your students. At the end of the semester ask students if the semester were effective at all. 1-2 students come forward and bring suggestions. Faculty can be fair enough to grade the class effectively. It can be fruitful to ask students how to improve assessment and course engagement. Students have lots of ideas.

7.6. Charles – Look over Shelley’s point in chat: sometimes cheating is not necessarily about your exam questions, but about the social pressures that come along with your assessments. I challenge you to think about this as a complex issue. Monitoring chegg and changing exam questions takes a lot of little things. Please reach out to Shelley and Faisal. Can invite us to department meetings and smaller group level to talk about challenges specific to your department.

8. Adjournment

8.1. Peter: Move to adjourn

8.2. Gerald: second

8.3. Dale: seconded as well

Appendix A

List of Attendees at
3:41pm:

Rebecca Jones
Andreas Zufle
Peter Plavchan
LaShonda Anthony
Ali Andalibi
Amy Macrina
AN
Andrea Cobb
Anthony Falsetti
Assas Khan
Ben Dreyfus
Benoit Van Aken
Catherine Sausville
Chao Luo
Charles R Kreitzer
Chi Yang
Cristiana Stan
Dale Pokorski
Dale Scott Rothman

Dan Taggart
Dann Sklarew
David Walnut
David Wong
Diego Calderrama
Eduardo Lopez
Edward Oughton
Erdal Yigit
Faisal Mahmud
Fernando R Miralles
Gerald Weatherspoon
Geraldine Grant
Greta Ann Herin
Gwendolyn Lewis
Hamdi Kavak
Igor I Mazin
Jason Kinser
Jennifer
Jessica Rosenberg
Jie Zhang
John Lyver
John Qu

Lance Liotta
Liping
Mariaelena Pierobon
Mary E O'toole
Matt Rice
Mikell Paige
Naatalie J Burls
Paul A Dirmeyer
Pau so
Pritha Roy
Ruixin Yang
Shelley Reid
Shrek
Suzanne Slayden
Taylor Anderson
Thomas Lovejoy
Tim L
Tracy C Mason
Ute Shaw
Padhu Seshaiyer
Xiaoyan Tan
Yan

Dean's Updates

7 October 2020

1

Kicking off the Strategic Planning Process

- Self-Study (soul searching and telling your story): provides baseline information (qualitative and quantitative) that rationalizes a proposal for strategies from each unit -> by March 2021
- External Review (getting some feedback): provides validation by external peers as well as additional elements to ground each unit's strategies -> by May 2021

Immediate inputs needed (by October 31):

- Areas of expertise of proposed reviewers
- List of possible external reviewers

2

Budget Update

FY20 Year End - E&G Permanent Funds	
\$2.5M	FY20 Growth (after Central 20% share) - added to the FY21 Permanent Funds
FY21 E&G Permanent Funds	
\$53.7M	FY21 Expenditure Authority (Permanent Budget)
<\$3.2M>	6% Permanent Cut
\$2.5M	Offset with defunding positions and reduced DE (including Lab Fee Budgets)
<\$0.7M>	Temporary shortage in permanent funds
\$0.3M	0.5% Return (announced at BOV)
<\$0.4M>	Permanent Fund Shortage
ca. \$4M	FY21 Projected Growth to offset shortage and support strategic investments

4

Budget Update (cont)

FY21 E&G One-Time Funds	
\$18.0M	FY20 Fund Balance
<\$1.8M>	10% Cut (not passed on to departments)
16.2M	FY20 Carryforward
<\$0.8M>	IPN (Interdisciplinary Program Neuroscience)
<\$4.3M>	Lab Fee Carryforwards
<\$4.5M>	Faculty Startup
<\$1.5M>	Faculty Seed and Bridge
<\$0.8M>	Sci Tech Rent
<\$0.3M>	Infrastructure Commitments
\$4.0M	Remaining available 1x Funds for FY21+

5

Appendix C

Master Plan (Steering Committee)

Sept 4 meeting:

- *Scenario 1 SciTech becomes Engineering and Health Sciences campus (Engineering - CS and IT - has significant presence in Arlington)*
- *Scenario 2 Consolidate Engineering and MBA at Arlington and Health Sciences at SciTech*
- *Scenario 3A Rejuvenate Fairfax and locate research centers at SciTech (Engineering - CS and IT - has significant presence in Arlington)*
- *Scenario 3B Rejuvenate Fairfax and create bold new partnership with NOVA at SciTech (Engineering - CS and IT - has significant presence in Arlington)*
- In today's meeting agenda

Master Plan (Steering Committee)

- *Scenario X – beyond the existing 4*
- **Town Hall meetings:**
 - **Oct 8: Demography analysis**
 - **Dec: scenarios**
- **Responses/feedback to me (dwong2): by Oct 15 or ASAP**

Appendix D

Faculty Procedures for Suspect Honor Code Violations

If you suspect a student in your class has violated the honor code, for example by cheating on an assignment or exam, refer to this document and links herein to learn what you can and cannot do.

What you can do: Report the case to the [Office of Academic Integrity \(OAI\)](#)

- Report the case through the [Referral Submission Portal](#)
 - Provide a copy of your course syllabus
 - Provide material/evidence such as copies of documents the student is alleged to have used, SafeAssign reports, and emails.
 - Recommend Sanctions
 - Respectively for 1st/2nd/3rd time offenses
 - Proposed defaults for COS classes (discussed at COS Faculty Meeting on 10/7)
 - 1st offense: 0 points on the assignment/exam
 - 2nd offense: F in the course.
 - 3rd offense: Dismissal from Mason
- Wait for OAI to communicate their decision if a violation of the honor code has occurred.
 - Follow OAI guidance regarding next steps

What you cannot do:

- Do **not** sanction students until OAI makes a decision
 - Do not change grades
 - If final grades are due, use the “HC” grade
 - This may take a while because OAI is backlogged
 - “HC” grades can remain indefinitely

Why can you not sanction students without involving OAI?

The [GMU Honor Code](#) states:

“All suspected violations must be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity within a reasonable time period of discovery of the misconduct.”

- If you sanction students without reporting the case, you violate the honor code.
 - Even if the student admits cheating.
 - This includes “minor sanctions” such as reducing points in an assignment
- If the student later files a grade appeal, they have grounds for a valid appeal.
- Note that not all reports to the Office of Academic Integrity lead to sanctions. OAI reserves the right to dismiss cases without a hearing when (1) the allegations do not rise to the level of an Honor Code violation, (2) there is insufficient material to support the allegation, or (3) the referral is not made in a timely manner.

“All matters involving academic integrity and violations of the University Honor Code must be submitted to the Office of Academic Integrity. Handling such matters without allowing the student's right to due process is against university policy. If legal action were to be taken, you would not be protected by the Office of University Counsel.”

– Amanda Ogisi, Associate Director, Academic Integrity

- Remember that all information related to honor code accusations is FERPA protected. Do not share student information with others unless they have "legitimate educational interest". For more details, see: <https://oai.gmu.edu/ferpa-info/>

This document was prepared by Andreas Züfle, Chair Pro Tem, College of Science, September 22, 2020 and was reviewed by the Office of Academic Integrity.

If you have additional questions, please email oai@gmu.edu.

Appendix E



TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Concept-based questions

Example: What is standard deviation?

Action-based questions

Example: a) Identify if standard deviation is calculated correctly and then, b) choose which explanation fits better

Solution-based questions

Example: Map the final solution with the correct formula

Scenario-based questions

Example: Pick the strongest final solution and explain how you would apply it to a real-life situation (grocery prices for the same item in different stores, calculate standard deviation for the product)



Richardson, J. C., Sadaf, A., & Ertmer, P. A. (2013). Relationship between types of question prompts and critical thinking in online discussions. In Akyol, Z., & Garrison, D. R. (Ed.), *Educational Communities of Inquiry: Theoretical Framework, Research and Practice* (pp.197-222). IGI Global.



QUESTIONS WEIGHT

Give higher weight to action-based, solution-based, and/or scenario-based questions than you give to concept-based questions. [Click to View an Example>>](#)

QUIZ SETTINGS

Give students practice tests with several attempts (usually three) with the highest grade recorded before the mid-term and final exams.

[Click to View an Example>>](#)



COMBINE TESTS WITH ONLINE DISCUSSIONS

Option 1

Multiple-choice practice test with concept-based questions offered before online discussion. Students practice and learn concepts before their participation in discussion.

[Click to View an Example>>](#)

Option 2

Students practice application of concepts in online discussions. Use the discussion setting "post before you view others posts" and ask application/action-based question (probably starting from week 3 or 4) and later use solution-based or scenario-based questions.

[Click to View an Example>>](#)



Want to know more about how to think out-of-the-box to engage your students? [View the webinar recording](#)

Sadaf, A., & Olesova, L. (2017). Enhancing cognitive presence in online case discussions with questions based on the Practical Inquiry Model. *American Journal of Distance Education*, 31(1), 56-69.



Stearns Center
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Created by Larisa Olesova, PhD, Sr. Instructional Designer
Designed by Katrina Johnson, MEd, MA, Instructional Designer

Alternative Assessments

Challenges and the Road to the Future



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Challenges

Tools and Technology	Cheating and Violation of Academic Integrity	Lab-based Exams	Time and Resource Constraints	Formatting of the Exams/Assessments
User knowledge	Questions and answers are out there	How to proctor this online?	Not enough TAs	Policy driven assessments
On-demand support	Loopholes of proctoring (Respondus)	Logistical challenges	Not enough time to revise questionnaire	Restrictions and restrain
Shortage of moderation	Violating honor code	Resource constraints	Not motivated to think "out-of-the-box"	"Not applicable to my unit/subject area"
Updates and upgrades	Are they following?	Is it feasible?	Term faculty VS tenured faculty	Too large of a class

What options do we have?

Short-Term Options	Medium-Term Options	Long-Term Options
Use question banks with the combination of randomized options in Bb.	Rather than just midterm and final, include multi-level assessments.	Project-based/case-study based activities/assessments.
Replace/combine question-based final exam by short video presentation and final report.	Include discussions grade.	Use weighted total grade throughout the semester.
Have a single time-slot exam.	Poster sessions (with peer critique).	Series of low-stakes exams and/or assessments.
	Introduce open-book exams while changing the textbook based tests to a creative set of questions.	Introduce student portfolio where applicable.
		Change the role – instructor VS student

What are some takeaways?

- There is no "one-size-fits-all" model; try to combine various options.
- This is an ongoing discussion; we will share an updated resource with you in a few weeks.
- Keep an "open-mind" and "be creative" with assessments.
- You may consider short to medium to long-terms changes of assessment practices.
- This is not an online-only assessment—it can be translated to both hybrid and F2F teaching; so be mindful of long-term investment.
- Listen to what your students say; get their feedback as well.