COS Faculty Meeting

Minutes

September 10, 2020, 3-4pm

Link to Recording:
https://gmu.zoom.us/rec/share/7VwzB5Rjr2Jt7KOTzLswCsLZRxvSxpBgBWj15GV00FPYtlSld902MrNbQm-Lhv5x.wp0OB-RLkSgWybVT

Password: Cadmium48+

List of Attendees provided in Appendix B

1. Call to order
   1.1. 3pm
   1.2. Poll of faculty on how they are feeling today.
2. Approval of minutes from Aug 20, 2020 (Appendix A)
   2.1. Barney motion to approve, Deb seconded.
3. Q&A Dean, Dr. Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm
   3.1. First Q: How and when we will find out about changes to the budget and how those will impact us as faculty?
      3.1.1. A: You'll find out 30sec after I do. Our numbers this past year came out well (FY20). For FY21, there is an increase in enrollment and very positive numbers. COS is doing best across the University. Guess is that we don't have any concerns right now in terms of furloughs/layoffs/cuts/staff/faculty. Nothing is being contemplated in that regard at this point. The first two weeks of the semester was important in terms of what we're doing – we're walking a risky tight-rope, but we're doing ok, and our budget may even grow this year if all goes well, and be relatively unscathed. No merit raises is the downside, but there are no severe cuts that we haven't been able to absorb. The college did absorb a 10% cut in our fund balance due to FY20 cuts. Did absorb a little bit of FY20 impacts on tuition. Very optimistic. Don't lose sleep.
   3.2. Q Followup via private chat: There was some resources that we were requested regarding teaching online like doc cams and tablets, and what are the status of those requests? Got ETF (large equipment) email for COS today – how does that relate to our budget?
      3.2.1. A Jason Kinser: rooms fit for microphones and cameras, but tablets will not be University funded.
      3.2.2. Ute Shaw: ETF is for large equipment. One is for research (normally not had that opportunity). The education ETF has not received a $300k allocation for education ETF yet. The one that just came out is for large research equipment.
   3.3. Q followup via chat: Kinser: Can this new ETF cover items such as Cloud Services or does it have to be a physical item?
      3.3.1. A: Pat: Hardware.
   3.4. Q from submitted Qs: What is the status of the Kallaco test kit issue? What happened with the AAUP statement? Was someone from COS involved?
      3.4.1. A Fernando: Statement organized by the President's office from COS Ali Andalibi.
      3.4.2. A Pat Gillevet: AAUP is discouraging students on reddit and elsewhere from participating in testing and is not productive.

3.4.3. Lance Liotta: President promised testing would not involve home testing due to the false negatives from the Kallaco kits. Going forward, testing would be done with supervision. COS CLIA certified lab has been doing student surveillance every day now and sending results back to student health with PCR testing. Also doing testing for athletes as well. Same day results testing. They were independently inspected by the state and got 100% accurate results, and certified for clinical testing.

3.4.4. Pritha: We have an analytical lab in person. Last couple of weeks held a lab with appropriate number. However, the students have not been taking their COVID questionnaire's serious, and don't have the green/yellow/red emails showing they are allowed to be on campus. Testing is being done, but the people who are on campus dealing with labs are NOT finding it safe.

3.4.5. Deborah Polayes – Every student in micro is not let in unless they have taken the survey. They lose points if they don't come in, so these students have been excellent with doing the tests. There are all these issues about privacy.

3.4.6. Pat: Have the right to check students email permission to be on campus. It is mandatory, and students signed off on it when they came to campus.

3.4.7. Lance – have right to tell them to wear a mask. It is in the Syllabus requirements for our classes.

3.4.8. Suzanne: Like to thank the AAUP for all the hard work they have done on this. If the specimens are collected unreliably, all results are unreliable. Faculty have a right to be concerned about their safety as a result of the false negatives. And we shouldn't be accusing the AAUP for fomenting riots on reddit. AAUP is right.

3.4.9. Patrick: Alternative is to do nothing.

3.4.10. Suzanne: That is not the alternative. If the AAUP had used fewer words, and known where to focus, we might have gotten more confidence in our results. Our faculty have reason to wonder about their safety when they thought they were getting negative results when those were in fact unreliable.

3.4.11. Rebecca: Some grace in this process. Thanks Suzanne.

3.5. Q: What can the college administration do to support faculty working from home? What measures is the university/college considering to address the challenges that faculty with small school age children are currently facing (e.g., working from home while homeschooling and with no/limited access to childcare)?

3.5.1. A: Fernando: Great question. Complexity of the question reflects the complexity of the answer. These are trying times and everyone's position is different. Look at question together. What would be considered helpful at this time for individuals and see what we can do. I am open to solutions that are helpful. We want to make sure everyone is safe – faculty ,students, staff and healthy, physically and mentally. Liked taking temperature of the room. Want to make sure that we grade on the higher scale of that well-being every day. We all have different care situations – children, parents, etc. Short answer is that the college will be supportive of a series of actions that are most helpful. We need to define what those actions will be. This question will likely come up – More likely spring of 2021 will look like fall of 2021 as best as we can tell at this point. When you think about it that way. What are we going to do to navigate this year? What should we try to do? I would like to ask each of you what would be needed, put it in writing, get a list together, of things we can do financially, legally, and all of these things. I don't want anyone coming to campus that doesn't want to for their safety. Big items we can do for everyone. Pockets we can do for groups of people. I don't have a big idea of what those issues are. Let's put together to do our

best to be supportive in navigating this entire year."it is what is" in the words of a famous person.

3.5.2. Eli followup from Chat: Can we start suggesting on what to do on the current question now or will there a form passed out to all faculty to suggest?

3.5.3. Rebecca: President Washington did send out a quality of work life survey (COVID-19 survey). Please do fill it out.

3.5.4. Lance: daily work schedule is something we've been doing – when its better for parents to be with their children in K-2nd, they stay home, and then staff come in later and start later in the day. Staggered schedules.

3.5.5. Peter P: More breaks built into academic calendar for faculty/students

3.5.6. Barney: have a clear lab schedule of when people come in.

3.5.7. Rebecca: Can we offer COS wide support for faculty on one-on-one workshops for faculty for new software tools.

3.5.8. Jason Kinser: check with Stearns center first

3.5.9. Rebecca: send around links.

3.5.10.   Dale: Microsoft Teams office hours every week

3.5.11.   David Wong: All those new software and associated trainings are sucking up a lot of our time!!

3.5.12.   Mikell Paige: These surveys are not coming from gmu.edu email addresses. Campuslabs was the email sender, and having a hard time telling what is phishing and what is not. It is wasting time to tell if these are legitimate emails. Encourage trusted email sources.

3.5.13.   Rebecca: agrees with

3.5.14.   Peter: We really need to expand our online collaborative tools and access for Mason.

3.5.15.   Dale: ITS has a very limited amount of resources. Grossly understaffed. They have to pick and choose the platforms that they can support. We may all have our own preferences, but this University has chosen Microsoft and are supporting those tools. Dale struggles with this every day. We can't know everything and support everything to provide quality support as opposed to all tours.

3.5.16.   Pat: above our pay grade.

3.5.17.   VTech supports both Microsoft and Google

3.5.18.   Rebecca: We don't have the infrastructure to support it, but we'll hand off to Fernando.

3.6. Q: What other measures is the university/college considering, in addition to tenure clock extensions, to ameliorate, address, and/or consider the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on scholarly and research activity/productivity as it pertains to tenure cases? Related: Are administrators aware of the gender disparity in which professors have been allowed to return to research full time? What can be done to support faculty more equitably in their return to research efforts?

3.6.1. A: We will look at needed adjustments to the tenure clock; can definitely see extensions, special teaching load accommodations to accommodate the slow down in research. Don't want to go into the evaluation of any tenure case that would be impacted negatively by the COVID-situation. Will do their best to not include the impact of COVID. Adjusting the overall schedule are on the table.

3.6.2. Rebecca: Want individual faculty or departments to bring forward?

3.6.3. Fernando: Yes, these things need to come from the faculty and be discussed in groups like this. There should be agreed upon, and has to permeate through the entire RPT process. Committees needs to consider this.

3.6.4. Rebecca: Departments need to be discussing this now and have departments come to some consensus.

3.6.5. Fernando: They did an automatic extension of one year on all tenure clocks at Maryland. Individuals could opt out if they wanted to. Happy to entertain special teaching loads of 0-1, 1-0 so that teaching doesn't stop completely. Whatever cancels out the COVID-effect, we can consider.

3.6.6. Rebecca: put on agenda this semester.

3.6.7. Fernando: Happy for departments to share best practices.

3.7. Q from Brenda: When are course overloads for faculty going to be approved?

3.7.1. A: Fernando: Who's got that ball? I don't know.

3.7.2. Pat: Ute?

3.7.3. Ute: In general it comes from the department. Each faculty is allowed one course overload, and now it needs a justification on why that is. They just approved some in physics. A memo goes from HR to the provost. We us the adjunct matrix for compensation.

3.7.4. Greta Ann herin: sounds like an increased pressure on term faculty lines?

3.7.5. Lcrerar: There needs to be consideration about term faculty as well as tenure faculty. We CANNOT pick up that slack.

3.7.6. Fernando: One would not imply the other. Not a zero sum game. We also want to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on term faculty in their own promotion process. We'll do that to. This means that the college is going to have to invest some resources in navigating this transition, and we're prepared to do so.

3.8. Q: What role does COS have in the new School of Computing? How will this impact our budget and future plans? How will this new school affect our existing programs?

3.8.1. A: Fernando: I don't have all the information because I've been trying get acquainted with what the School of Computing means, with discussions with Dean Ken Ball in VSE. With the focus of that school, it is expected that COS will have significant involvement, as stated in the document description. It is a little less clear in specifics of what we want to do. What kind of staffing in terms of faculty. How is that body count going to be distributed? That hasn't even been started to be discussed? I expect a little bit of a negotiation, and a process in which we're going to have to be very actively involved with eyes wide open with a disposition to participate. And have a little bit of ownership in the school. It will be transformational for the University. Want to makes sure that COS is properly presented in the new college. Will work with colleagues in a more collaborative way. Maybe others have more specific information.

3.8.2. Pat: some thrust in the VPR office to try to expand the SIP codes for the tech talent money that is coming through. For mathematics?

3.8.3. Fernando: Tech transfer – we are getting some funds to hire faculty specifically in mathematical sciences. Some of that is happening already. How this will be associated with the school is still fuzzy. Good news is that some resources are coming into college. In these times that's actually pretty good.

3.8.4. Ute via chat: 3 hires in math

3.8.5. Pat: People fundamental in establishing SoC have all left, except Ken Ball.

3.8.6. Fernando: Had some good conversations. Ken is very open to having discussions. We'll have a role.

- 3.8.7. Rebecca: A school is different than a college. Does it have a dean? But it reports to a Dean?
- 3.8.8. Fernando: That's a confusing question with different answers every time. For SoC, part of College of Engineering and Computing, with two schools (engineering, computing). Each will have a director. I don't know if we have one as Mason, but Washington was Dean at engineering at UCI. School of Law and Public Policy, Integrative Studies, and these have Deans.
- 3.8.9. Suzanne: There are schools at the level of a college and have a Dean. But there can be schools within colleges that have a director instead (and departments with chairs).
- 3.9. Q from submissions: How are we as a college addressing assessment while delivering virtual classes? Respondus Lockdown can be biased and cheating can still be rampant in some classes. Can we bring in the Stearns center to work with faculty on alternative pedagogy? Can we develop testing that assessing learning and places less of an emphasis on information regurgitation and memorization? What supports can be put in place to help faculty assess their students fairly? For profit companies saving student biometrics. Could we develop a high quality testing center?
    - 3.9.1. A: Mikell – We've looked into some of them. With staff on it. Not just computer, but paper exams. Security is handled by someone else rather than faculty.
    - 3.9.2. A: Rebecca: Considering designing tests that are different and less cheatable and less prone to inviting students to looking up answers. Assessment that is more open-ended and problem based (with their own challenges)?
    - 3.9.3. Barney: Has anyone looked into how FCPS is doing their online grading?
    - 3.9.4. Rebecca: No idea. My daughter won't be recorded with a video camera while she takes an exam. Worth looking into.
    - 3.9.5. Jason Kinser: Stearns Center has offered to talk to Colleges about newer methods of student assessments in our digital society.
    - 3.9.6. Fernando: Start with Stearns Center
    - 3.9.7. Rebecca: Faculty interested in Stearns center talking to us about new assessment methods?
    - 3.9.8. A: People vote yes (thumbs up)
    - 3.9.9. Rebecca: Our students are dealing with a lot of stress too, trying to get a degree. So I invite everyone how complicated this is for our students, and err on the side of generosity if you can.
    - 3.9.10. Fernando: jumping off;
    - 3.9.11. Peter P : Reminder to faculty to not require students to turn on video.
    - 3.9.12. Joel Schnur – Consider pass/fail for a number of courses
4. Adjournment – 4:04pm

Appendix B
List of attendees

Rebecca Jones
Peter Plavchan
Andreas Züfle
Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm
Mike summers
Aarthi Narayanan
Ale Luchini
Alexandra Masterson
Aman ullah
Amy Macrina
Andre Z Clayborne
Andrea
Anthony Falsetti
Arie Croitoru
Assad Khan
Audrey Kelaher
Barney Bishop
Ben Dreyfus
Benoit Van Aken
Bill Kennedy
Brendatondi
Brett Froelich
Catherine Sausville

Chi Yang
Dale Pokorski
Daniel Hanley
Daniel Tong
Dann Sklarew
David Wong
Deborah Polayes
Dahfer Marzougui
Diego Valderrama
Eli
Fadi
Geraldine Grant
Greta Ann Herin
Hao Jing
Igor I Mazin
Jagadish Shukla
Jason Kinser
Jennifer Bazaz Gettys
Jim Kinter
Joel Schnur
John Qu
Joon-Seok Kim
Julia Nord
Karen Akerlof
Kathleen
Kathy
Kelly Knight

Kenneth Foreman
L18-liu-exp
Lance Liotta
Lcrerar
Liping
Mark D Uhen
Mary E O'toole
Megan Erb
Mikell Paige
Mnels
Natalie J Burls
Owen Kelley
Patrali Banerjee
Patrick Gillevet
Paul A Dirmeyer
Pritha Roy
Ruixin Yang
Shobita Satyapal
Suzanne Slayden
Thomas Lovejoy
Tim Leslie
Tracy Mason
Ute Shaw
Xianjun Hao
Xiaoyan Tan
Younsung Kim