



Faculty Senate

Report of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC)
September 11, 2020
Arthur Wilson, Chair

Shared Governance

- Naming Committees: Professor Roger Fairfax has begun to move forward on the Marvin Center naming taskforce. They have a website and are interested in feedback from the university community. They are also planning a series of town halls to solicit comments in the next few days. The Colonials moniker taskforce, chaired by Professor Mary Cheh, is also reportedly meeting. They have a website and are interested in feedback from the university community.
- Shared services task forces
 - The faculty on the Academic Technologies/Information Technology taskforce has consistently questioned the need for the changes proposed by the administration. While the meetings were informative about administration plans to centralize technology services, the rationale remains unclear. The administration has acknowledged that any budget savings from this restructuring will be modest, perhaps \$5 million/year if all goes well. Despite concern that the start of GW's first fully online semester is a bad time to be restructuring technology services, and near universal feedback from the schools that their AT/IT experience has been good, the administration claims the existing configuration led to anecdotal reports of "service deficiencies;" these remain poorly documented despite repeated requests. Now that classes are underway, already, anecdotal reports of technology related difficulties suggest that this restructuring and the resulting confusion is off to a worrisome start.
 - The faculty on the Research shared services taskforce were disappointed to see Robert Miller leave his post as Vice President for Research, having been promoted to a position in the School of Medicine and Health Sciences. A faculty advisory group on his replacement has been readied. To our knowledge, the Provost has not yet begun a search for Robert Miller's replacement.
 - No new developments on the other shared services taskforces—those concerned with advising, career services, campus spaces, or marketing and communications—have been communicated, although each of these areas has apparently been hit with significant layoffs.
- The FSEC is considering a faculty evaluation of the President's performance. The trustees are expected to evaluate the president's performance later this academic year; a faculty-led evaluation would complement trustee efforts. To ensure timeliness, the goal is to complete this evaluation during the Fall semester. A suitable survey instrument has already been prepared. The FSEC would now like to solicit volunteers with the expertise to help

distribute and analyze the results. Anyone interested in assisting with this effort should contact Shaista Kihlji or Arthur Wilson by September 25.

Senate Responses to University Actions

Faculty frustration with the administration remains high, with several open letters and petitions from multiple schools circulating (CCAS, ESIA, GWSB, etc.) calling for changes ranging from pausing administrative plans to calling for no confidence votes. Tentative discussions between the Provost and members of the FSEC on how to better operationalize shared governance are taking place.

The FSEC met on August 17, 21, 27, 30, and September 4. The August 21 meeting was the regularly scheduled FSEC meeting at which the September Senate agenda was established. The additional meetings were convened on a number of pressing issues, including the administration's decision to hire Heather Swain, possible compensation actions as part of the collection of budget mitigation strategies, and a discussion with Provost Blake on his office's priorities.

Coming into this period, the administration continued to assert that the university faces more than a \$200 million budget shortfall compared to previous expectations for the coming fiscal year. Since previous efforts are thought to have produced \$115 million in savings, the administration proposed substantial furloughs, and compensation reductions in addition to suspending the university portion of retirement contributions. The FSEC chose not to endorse the administration's proposals. The Senate Fiscal Planning & Budgeting in particular has been extremely busy. A delegation from the Faculty Senate that included Professors Cordes, Galston, Tielsch and Wilson, as well as Professor Kulp of the GW School of Business, met with trustees arguing for a different approach, partly due to the fact that enrollment data have begun to look better than initially projected over the last several months. This group also called for a modest level of support from the endowment. A formal response has not yet been received from either the trustees or the administration, although board meetings are scheduled for the next several weeks. Other approaches are also being explored by the Senate Budget committee.

Personnel Actions

There are no grievances at the university.

Calendar

The next scheduled meeting of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee is September 29, 2020; this meeting was originally scheduled for September 25 but was rescheduled to accommodate the Board of Trustees' shifted fall meeting schedule. All agenda items to be considered by the FSEC for the October 9 Faculty Senate agenda should be submitted to Liz one week prior to the September 29 FSEC meeting.