**CAS Faculty Council Minutes**

**Meeting 10/14/20**

**4:15 in Zoom**

Present: Laura Mentore (chair), Miriam Liss (secretary), Suzanne Sumner, Larry Lehman, Marcel Rotter, Margaret Ray, Caitlin Moore, Gregg Stull, Kate Hafey, Keith Mellinger (Dean).

1. Note: minutes from August meeting were approved electronically; September meeting was cancelled
2. Dean’s Report

Dean discussed reorganization of CAS. Should there be structural changes? There is a lot of talk about UMW becoming smaller. UMW is going to change as demographics change. 880 students were brought in last fall. 760 this fall. Both years, our target was 950. Next year’s target has been set lower, at 850. This was expected, but we need to continue to find ways to be ahead of the changes. Keith says that we can’t afford more administration so there has to be reorganization instead of any additions. The whole workforce needs to be reduced so that we can be “nimble” and “flexible”.

It was noted that faculty have given plans for different structures before (e.g. before the three college system was implemented) but they were not listened to. How do we reconcile that with this new interest in faculty input? Keith asked for any previous documents that faculty have created with suggestions for organizational structure. Margaret Ray has a document that has been previously created and will share with Keith.

COB and/or COE could be integrated into a larger structure. However, if that is the route that we go it would need to come from the Provost or the President.

There are serious inequities in the work profile for the three Dean’s. The CAS dean has very different demands on his time in comparison to the other deans. Many departments have expressed concern about adding more administration.

Question: Will there be a reduction in faculty lines if we become smaller? Answer: If we go down to 3,500 we won’t have the same budget to pay the same number of faculty, staff and administrators. In 2002, our total enrollment was the same as it is now. In that time, the enrollment went up and down – we peaked in 2008 and 2009. The faculty is 254 now; in 2002 it was 189. Keith argues that our faculty was too small in 2002. However, if we continue to decline in enrollment, we won’t have the revenue to support the same size faculty. We can handle this through attrition. He is not hinting at layoffs. We will “grow” into these changes.

Keith notes that COE has 14 faculty and they have 6 administrators. That is a college that is smaller than many CAS departments but way more administration. Do they need that? Maybe they do – they need to deal with completely different accreditation, collaboration with local school districts, and coordination with the VA Department of Education. But perhaps there is a way to do things more efficiently.

There are massive inequities across departments in terms of size. Smaller departments have more of a service burden. Do departments want to merge? Most departments say they don’t want to merge but it is something to think about.

This is not about programs – we don’t want to get rid of any programs. We have defended some of our smaller programs to the state. This is about administrating our programs in different ways. As we think about changes we need to realize what is important is who is in charge of curriculum. You want to make decisions about curriculum in your own program. CPR has three programs but the classics people make curriculum decisions about classics. Another issue is personnel chain of command – who writes evaluations and who do you complain to if there is a problem. These are all things we need to consider if we are going to consider changes.

Old Business - None

1. New Business

## The UMW curriculum approval process with the new online system, CIM (Curriculum Inventory Management)

It got off to a messy start since we had to rush through some courses to be approved for variable credit for the J-term. We approved five courses: SOCG 371, CPRD 100; RELG 231, and CLAS 351 (all special topics courses), and MDFL 201: World Literature in Cultural Context.

Our Chair’s understanding is that going forward, we will be receiving minutes from the CAS curriculum committee, which we will review and vote on, and that subsequent to a vote of approval, the CASFC chair will then enter CIM and manually approve the courses that CAS CC approved so that they can go to the next stage in the workflow. This is the same procedure we usually do, with the minor additional step on the Chair’s part. We noted that in the past, the only time we haven’t approved their minutes is when things are rejected and are not sure why, or when their minutes appear incomplete. Then we ask them to give more of a rationale.

What is our role as CASFC? Are we just reviewing minutes or are we actually reviewing proposals? Our role in the handbook is that we review and approve curricular changes. Do we approve everything or just if a faculty brings a concern to the CASFC? We settled on just approving CAS CC minutes and noted that if faculty want to bring concerns to the CASFC they can do that. The only difference is that the CASFC Chair has to click on “approve” in the CIM system. Will check with Morello to make sure that is Also note that special majors don’t go through CIM – we only see those approvals/rejections at the CAS CC level in their minutes.

Quick discussion of whether curriculum needs to be approved by the CASFC at all or whether it should go straight to UCC. We decided we need control of our curriculum process so we need to be part of the process. One of the rationales for this is that if we are only reviewing materials after they have gone through the UCC, we would not have the opportunity to review or ask for further information regarding proposals that are rejected at the CAS CC level.

1. The alternative grading system approved by the UFC for Spring 2020 in light of COVID-19. Thoughts on reinstating this system for the Fall 2020 semester?

Some concerns that the way that it was done last time created problems for students, the academic standing committee and the Registrar’s office. It became a strategy game for students – what should they pick and when. Students were switching back and forth. There were lots of students who didn’t understand whether they should take the letter grade or not and it affected their academic standing. Some students were overly concerned and actually did well in courses, but opted into the alternative grading system when their GPA would have benefitted from receiving the letter grade, and this created more retroactive shifting between the two systems.

Suggestion – give grades like we always do and allow students to change after the fact. Some students didn’t understand PA/FA option within our regular grading system, versus CR/P-19/NC. Students didn’t understand how grading changes might affect admission to COB and some students will be negatively affected by that.

Question – why are we thinking again about moving to alternate grading? Students knew what we were getting into this semester. Answer – UVA and other colleges in the state are doing it. Student mental health is an issue. COVID – 19 is still a problem and the economy is still an issue.

Another issue – one case of a student who transferred from Longwood and UMW did not accept the COVID graded credits that came from Longwood. Other long-term concerns might be their graduate or professional school applications. We don’t want to do students harm in the name of protecting them now.

Some concern that motivation will decrease if they know that they can change the grade. However, if students all received a letter grade and then subsequently had the option to switch to the alternative grading system, simply knowing that they will see a letter grade might be a motivation to do the best they can.

We should frame this is being kinder to students – they get the option to change after they see their grades so they have all the information. We should give them plenty of time to decide to change. Students on probation can run the scenario changing and not changing with academic services before they have to make the decision. This would be especially helpful if we gave them until a few weeks into next semester to make that decision. This would allow academic advisors, the faculty member teaching the course, etc. to help those students who may need input before making a decision.

Another issue is that students are confused between PA/FA and CR/P-19/NC. We suggest to allow students to be able to change from PA/FA to CR/P-19/NC at a late date.

Final concern expressed by a faculty member to their CASFC rep – students knew what they were getting into. They have not been engaged. How long do we keep babying them? What about next semester? We acknowledged these concerns but as a body will support the switch to the grading system. Students are struggling in ways that we don’t fully understand and it is not possible to distinguish between those who are making effort but struggling and those who are not making effort. We can’t reach out to them in person. They will be competing against UVA students who do have the opportunity to have their GPA improved by the alternative grading system.

Conclusion: We will draft a proposal to share with UFC chair suggesting that UMW should reinstate alternative grading option of CR/P-19/NC (or the equivalent for Fall 2020) but that it should only become available to students as an option after their letter grades are entered, and that the deadline for them to decide be extended until well into the second semester so that students can have all the information about the implications of their choice.

1. The Executive Order banning certain forms diversity training and language at corporations and institutions that are considered federal contractors: how this is currently impacting UMW’s capacity to fulfill our mission (e.g. suspension of Safe Zone training). Thoughts on a possible response, either among UMW faculty or as part of a broader response?

Two perspectives on this issue: One is that we shouldn’t worry too much about this. We can still promote diversity and inclusion as long as we are clear about what we are doing.

However, all faculty and staff Safe Zone trainings have been suspended. There is a lot of concern coming from legal. We can continue with student trainings as long as they are not for student employees. Different schools are handling this differently.

The executive order hurts our ability to educate our students about diversity because what is essentially being eliminated is contextualization – why is it important to learn about racism and privilege.

Question – should we be advocating now and working hard to figure this out if the problem could end in Nov? Other perspective is that we need to stand up for what we believe, and we don’t know for certain when and if this will be removed/reversed as an Executive Order. Several faculty have expressed that we need to stand up against the Executive Order. There is some hope that someone can put together a faculty response.

We will find out from Paul Messplay how much we get from federal funds.

Conclusion – we will work with UFC to come up with a statement in support of diversity and inclusion training.

Meeting adjourned 5:58