

ST MARY'S

COLLEGE of MARYLAND

The National Public Honors College

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

OPEN SESSION REPORT SUMMARY

Date of Meeting: October 15, 2021

Date of Next Meeting: February 4, 2021

Committee Chair: Peter Bruns

Committee Members: Paula Collins, Elizabeth Graves '93, Melanie Hilley '93, Larry Leak '76, William Seale, Tuajuanda Jordan, Susan Dyer

Executive Staff: Jeff Byrd, Katie Gantz

Faculty Liaison: Libby Williams

Staff Liaison: John Spinicchia

Dashboard Metrics: N/A

Executive Summary:

Discussion Items

Faculty Senate Report

Dean of Faculty Report

Information Items

Recommended review of bylaws language regarding dismissal of faculty under contractual appointment, Section V.K.1.a

Minutes of May 7, 2021

Action Item(s) related to specific strategic goals as appropriate:

III.A. Endorsement of the 2021 Performance Accountability Report

III.B. Recommendation to approve the update to the Non-Residents Who May Temporarily Qualify for In-State Status of the Policy on Student Residency Classification for Admission, Tuition Charge, and Differential Purposes

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**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF OCTOBER 15, 2021**

**OPEN SESSION
AGENDA**

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. DISCUSSION ITEMS**
 - A. Faculty Senate Report
 - B. Dean of Faculty Report
- III. ACTION ITEM**
 - A. Endorsement of the 2021 Performance Accountability Report
 - B. Recommendation to approve the update to the Non-Residents Who May Temporarily Qualify for In-State Status of the Policy on Student Residency Classification for Admission, Tuition Charge, and Differential Purposes
- IV. INFORMATION ITEM**
 - A. Recommended review of bylaws language regarding dismissal of faculty under contractual appointment, Section V.K.1.a
 - B. Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2021

The committee expects to close a portion of this meeting.

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

REPORT OF THE INTERIMS DEAN OF FACULTY AND VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

(See OnBoard for supporting material.)

NEW STAFFING

After assuming their positions on June 1, 2021, an initial challenge for the Interims Dean of Faculty and Vice President of Academic Affairs was addressing the issue of workplace support presented by the retirement of Executive Assistant Joan Pickett on June 25. The unit has been extremely fortunate to have hired [Ms. Mai Savelle](#) (2A) as the new Executive Assistant to the Provost and Dean of Faculty. Mai is adapting quickly to the administrative protocols of the College.

Additionally, much of the mentoring work with pre-tenure faculty and the evaluation and promotion planning that has been the responsibility of the Associate Dean of Faculty is now in direct conflict with many of the responsibilities assumed by Interim Dean Gantz. To ensure this professional development programming and mentoring support continues uninterrupted, Academic Affairs has appointed [Associate Professor of Psychology Jennifer Tickle](#) (2B) as the Interim Assistant Dean of Faculty on a part-time basis.

RETURN TO FACE-TO-FACE TEACHING

In response to the cumulative effects of 18 months of remote/hybrid teaching, the Provost appointed a Teaching and Learning Rapid Action Task Force (RATF) of faculty. In June, the RATF put forth recommendations for development and implementation of on-campus support initiatives to assist in transitioning back to full-time, on-campus work. [The resulting report](#) (2C) generated both longer-term goals and some ideas that Academic Affairs implemented immediately for the fall semester. Those changes include the following:

- A list of fall best practices for faculty were issued in advance, including earlier availability to syllabi and learning platforms for students, rearticulation of in-class expectations, a commitment to assign and return graded work by the end of the fourth week to better facilitate student decisions to stay in or drop the class before the deadline.

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- The Registrar extended the Drop Period to the fifth week of the semester to allow students to drop without a grade of W on their transcript, and without incurring the \$25 fee.
- Academic Affairs is actively revising the Faculty Handbook, distinct from the Faculty Bylaws, for completion by Spring 2021. As noted in the report, a set of centralized, standardized policies will offer clear distinctions between best practices and institutional expectations for the classroom.

NEW ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS

As expected, progress on finalizing community college articulation agreements has slowed. Nonetheless, we are happy to report the finalization of the following:

- College of Southern Maryland
 - Public Policy
 - Neuroscience, Biology concentration
 - Neuroscience
 - Marine Science
- Wor-Wic Community College
 - Marine Science

AY21 CLUSTER HIRE INITIATIVE

We are excited to report that Academic Affairs is pursuing a new strategy to bring outstanding scholars to our campus and support efforts to diversify the faculty. We have expedited line requests from five programs by designating them part of a cluster hiring initiative. Cluster hires have been used by other institutions to provide a cohort experience for faculty of color with the aim of increasing retention. Our goals for this cluster are similar, but we are also asking that programs participating in this initiative seek out candidates who have experience teaching BIPOC, first generation, and low income students. We believe this effort to build and support a network of committed scholars whose pedagogical practices improve the educational experience of underrepresented students will positively impact our student retention as well as our ongoing efforts to improve equity gaps in student performance.

At this time, five programs have been extended the opportunity to participate in the cluster hire initiative: Anthropology, Biology, Computer Science, Economics, and Psychology. In

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collaboration with IDEAA, Academic Affairs will provide targeted mentoring, psychosocial support, and resources for research development.

MENTORING AND RETENTION OF NEW FACULTY

College initiatives begun in 2016 to improve retention of our new faculty are yielding positive results. The summer 2021 issue of [Liberal Education](#), the flagship publication of the American Association of Colleges and Universities, featured the article, “Staying Power: Make Sure Mentoring for New Faculty Has Lasting Effects,” authored by Interim Dean of Faculty Gantz. While the article specifically discusses the implementation of a new, cohort-based mentoring system, two other changes since 2016 are part of our retention strategies. First, New Faculty Orientation has been streamlined to address the most pressing questions for new hires: what is the College’s approach to working with Title IX and learning accommodations? Who should they talk to in our Grants Office and Library when starting their research and creative work? What do our students say are the most important qualities in new faculty? Second, a monthly seminar for new faculty meets to convene all new hires with the associate dean (or this year, with the interim assistant dean of faculty), and discuss a broad topic of general interest: running group discussions, time management, long-term planning for tenure and promotion.

As noted in the article, Academic Affairs has been tracking improvements as measured by retention to the third-year pre-tenure review, our initial benchmark for tenure-track faculty. Since changes were implemented in 2016, retention of faculty to the pre-tenure review has improved overall, with exceptional gains for faculty of color. We will continue to track retention of these cohorts as they near tenure.

WINTERIM

During the 2020-21 academic year, the College offered its inaugural Winter session (Winterim), a compressed term offered completely online and at low additional cost to full-time students. Winterim was implemented specifically to assist those students working to catch up on credits, and a substantial number of students were able to move from being “behind” to being “on track” for on-time four-year graduation. Overall, 31 courses were offered and the cost to the student was \$200/credit. Courses were expected to enroll 6 students but exceptions were made for compelling reasons.

Winterim is planned again for AY21. The cost has been set to the general part time credit fee of \$300/credit (in-state) or \$450/credit (out of state) as approved by the Board of Trustees in Spring 2021. With the per credit cost reflecting the general part time credit fee, the minimum number of

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students enrolled per course can be lowered to 4 and still be profitable, if the course can pedagogically support the lower number of students. This will allow for a wider variety of courses to be offered without exceptions having to be granted.

ATHLETICS

As of August 1, 2021, twelve of our NCAA teams are now part of the newly rebranded [United East Conference](#) (formerly North Eastern Athletic Conference). This conference is composed of both public and private Division III colleges and universities located in Maryland, District of Columbia, Pennsylvania and New York. The footprint of the United East Conference is a little larger than our previous conference (Capital Athletic Conference; CAC) and will require overnight stays when we play the teams in upstate New York. Since the UEC does not have track & field, field hockey, or swimming, Athletic Director Crystal Gibson has arranged for SMCM to be affiliate members of other conferences for these sports. Our track and field team will be an associate member of the Coast-to-Coast conference and swimming and field hockey will remain affiliate members of the Atlantic East Conference.

Fall athletic competitions have begun on campus and all fall teams are holding official contests for the first time since the fall of 2019. Two major firsts for St. Mary's College athletics should be noted. Senior sailor Leo Boucher qualified for the US Junior Pan American Sailing team and will be representing the USA when competing in Columbia in November. Also, during the week of Sept 20, 2021, the men's soccer team was ranked #3 in the country. This was the highest ranking in men's soccer history.

October 6, 2021

Report to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees
Elizabeth Nutt Williams, Faculty Senate President

There are several issues I would like to bring to the attention of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. Below I detail issues around program prioritization, shared governance, academic restructuring, and the business administration major proposal.

Reflections on Program Prioritization

As I described in the spring, the program prioritization process and resulting outcomes remain significant concerns for the faculty. The faculty continue to manage changes related to the elimination of programs (such as advising students on the impact of those changes, merging programs into new ones, and distributing tasks in now smaller departments), an even more challenging task during a pandemic. The additional work to manage the changes, including the impact of losing a number of colleagues, has been a strain. Morale is very low, and many faculty worry about the possibility of continued cuts, particularly in the Arts and Humanities. Any reassurances the Board can give would be welcomed.

Concerns about Shared Governance

As you know, the faculty passed a resolution on January 29, 2021, in which it requested that “the Board of Trustees in consultation with the President of the College shall take concrete steps to return to the fundamental principles of shared governance and collaboration and repair and prevent further harm moving forward.” Two positive steps have been taken in response to this resolution. First, former Board Chair Lex Birney formed a Communications Working Group comprised of Board, administration, and faculty members, which current Board Chair Susan Dyer plans to continue. Second, Chair Dyer invited the faculty and staff representatives to the Board committees to join the new Trustee orientation this year. Both these steps have helped improve communication and form closer relationships among Board and faculty members. I am very happy to see these changes and will continue to assist in any way that I can.

A remaining concern, however, stems from the ways in which we enact shared governance. While there appears to be a common understanding of the definitions of shared governance, our processes need attention and clarification. As governing partners, the faculty asks that the Board seek our input and expertise at the front end of new initiatives rather than after the fact. The faculty remain committed to working with the administration and Board moving forward. However, as the faculty already feel dispirited by prioritization, receiving the news of academic restructuring only after the Board vote has made faculty feel shut out of the process. We hope to remind the Board of the many times the faculty has stepped up to help, such as the budget crisis (when faculty helped find ways to cut spending) and the accreditation crisis (when faculty mobilized to help launch a comprehensive new assessment approach). We again stand ready to work with the Board on initiatives, but we respectfully ask the Board to consider approaching the

faculty for their input and expertise on curricular and academic matters early in the process. In the spirit of shared governance and with our shared commitment to equity and inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives, we ask the Board to continue to strengthen the partnership with us in an effort to find the most creative and useful solutions to the problems we face. We hope moving forward to avoid the inefficiencies of the current process and to further improve our respectful and cooperative collaboration with the Board.

Academic Restructuring

One way in which the faculty has made good faith efforts to work with the Board is that of academic restructuring. As you know, the faculty first learned about the restructuring two days after the Board vote (see concerns expressed above). I personally worked with interim Dean of Faculty Katie Gantz and interim Vice President for Academic Affairs Jeff Byrd over the summer to provide structures for the faculty to consider. The faculty senate has since charged the Academic Planning Committee of the faculty to address faculty concerns and recommend possible solutions. As no one solution has yet received widespread support, we appealed to President Jordan and Chair Dyer to allow the faculty more time to work on viable solutions; we appreciate the support of President Jordan and hope that the Board approves her request to extend the timeline for our work.

Business Administration Major Proposal

Another example of the faculty commitment to work with the Board is the Business Administration Major Proposal. We understand that the Board has interest in instituting a business major at SMCM, and we further appreciate that faculty members Amy Henderson and Don Stabile were asked to formulate a proposal. The faculty senate had asked Drs. Henderson and Stabile to revise and refine the major to make it more interdisciplinary and distinctive of SMCM, which they did. The faculty senate particularly liked the possibility of focusing more on social responsibility in business and has moved the proposal to the faculty for review and vote, which will likely take place on Oct. 26.

While there are some positive views of the potential of a business major, I did want to inform the Academic Affairs Committee of the concerns that have been raised, as they are significant. The most significant concerns are related to staffing and cost. For example, there are concerns that hiring only one tenure-track faculty member to both coordinate the program and teach the primary business courses may not be sufficient and that having so many courses in a major covered by adjuncts is contrary to our mission and may not be sustainable. In addition, there are concerns about the salary estimates for the tenure-track position, both about their accuracy and about the impact on salary inequities and morale across the college. There are also some concerns about the impact of the major on other programs (such as Economics). Again, the overall idea is not one that appears to be generally opposed by the faculty, but the proposal has a number of flaws with which the faculty are currently grappling. I will again update the Board on our progress at the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Libby Nutt Williams, Ph.D.
Faculty Senate President

Report from the interims Dean of Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs regarding Outcomes from AY20 Task Forces 2 and 3

Summary of Outcomes from Task Force 2

To briefly summarize the main outcomes of the AY20 prioritization process, Task Force 2 (TF2) recommended four new academic majors for inclusion in the program array: Applied Data Science, Business Administration, Marine Science, and Neuroscience. In addition, TF2 recommended the addition of two co-curricular programs: Track & Field and Pep Band. We are pleased that both Marine Science and Neuroscience have successfully passed MHEC review, and are now available to our students. Business Administration has been submitted to the Faculty Senate and is currently under review for recommendation by the faculty. Applied Data Science has not made the same progress, in light of a number of key faculty departures during this academic year. Track & Field begins its first year in competition this academic year and the pep band is beginning the search for a director. Further discussion of these new programs continues below.

Revisions to the Program Array as related to Task Force 3

In addition to the four new majors, last year's Pivot process informed the Board decisions to discontinue ten majors and nine minors. Steps to immediately discontinue or to gradually phase out affected programs were effective with the incoming class of 2021; in all cases, the College committed to delivering coursework to complete our AY20 students' already-declared majors or minors by spring 2024, allowing a full four-year path to degree completion.

As a result of the curricular changes undergone during program prioritization in Spring 2021, a number of eliminated or downsized programs are in their first year of "teach-out" plans. Devised in collaboration between Academic Affairs and the program chairs, the teach-out plans create a streamlined curricular sequence for every student who had officially declared a major or minor in an affected program as of last spring to complete any remaining requirements by the end of Spring 2024. These programs include the following (note that not all eliminated programs had currently declared majors/minors requiring a teach-out plan):

- Art History
- Astrophysics
- Democracy Studies
- Film and Media Studies
- German
- Latin American Studies
- Religious Studies
- *Reduced to minors only:* French, Chinese, Theater Studies, Music

Updates to the LEAD Curriculum implementation

As noted in the May 2021 report, prioritization disproportionately affected programs in the Humanities. The Pivot recommendations included the elimination of several majors and minors offered at the College.

A recommended outcome also included a revision to the CORE 101 curriculum to invest in a Humanities-based experience, and with it, a commitment to a meaningful curricular presence for the humanities in the education of our students. Development of the Humanities in the Core curriculum was charted by the provost for fall 2021.

However, faculty work on intensifying writing instruction in the CORE 101 seminars had already begun, and this work needs to precede the development and implementation of Humanities in the Core. The Humanities in the Core initiative will consider questions of content and methodology, and these will be best received when mapped on top of a well-developed writing pedagogy.

Pilot trainings for faculty teaching CORE 101 began this summer, as both new and returning Core instructors from all disciplines met with Writing Center Director and Professor of English Ben Click in structured workshops to teach writing. CORE 101 is the College's only required writing course, and the writing instruction will necessitate planning and coordination to scale up across the full faculty cohort. Because this pilot workshop requires accountability, and because the training produces a shared understanding of our expectations for teaching writing, we see a path toward a more uniform experience for SMCM students learning writing skills. We also believe Core seminars can be the place to start addressing some significant equity gaps.

Academic Affairs will plan a spring kick-off of Humanities in the Core work with some early summer work in advance of AY22. Associate Dean of Curriculum Christine Wooley is currently reviewing possible speakers to bring to campus this spring to lead discussions on reshaping the Core as an exploration of Humanities approaches. Columbia University lecturer in American Studies [Roosevelt Montás](#) is at the top of our list for this event.

Academic Restructuring Specified by Task Force 3

Senate President Libby Williams, Interim Dean of Faculty Katie Gantz, and Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs Jeff Byrd worked over the summer to develop models of divisional structures and solicited feedback from faculty in open forums and with specific stakeholder groups. Given the complexity and importance of the task, President Jordan proposed recommending an extension until February to the Board of Trustees. The Faculty Senate subsequently charged the Academic Planning Committee to continue the development of the model and implementation plan in more detail.

Status of New Programs Specified by Task Force 2

Marine Science

The Marine Science major was approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) in late spring and was added to our AY 2021-22 catalog. Students entering SMCM in Fall 2021 are able to designate marine science as a major. The new major proposal required the addition of a faculty member with a specialty in physical oceanography. The search is underway for a tenure-track faculty member and the new faculty member should be on staff August 2022. According to Admission, the number of contacts from prospective students regarding this program is running ahead of even our most popular majors.

Neuroscience

The Neuroscience major was approved by MHEC in late spring and was added to our AY 2021-22 catalog. To fully staff the major, an additional faculty member in neuroscience was specified in the original proposal. Dr. Daniel Tobiansky was hired as Assistant Professor of Neuroscience and started at the College on Aug 1, 2021.

Performing Arts

During the summer of 2021 a working group of faculty members from the Departments of Music and Theatre met to discuss and outline the new performing arts major. The working group was facilitated by Dr. James Mantell, Assoc. Prof. of Psychology. The general outline of the new major was completed in July. The members of the working group are preparing the curricular proposal and it will be submitted to the curriculum committee in the near future.

Business Administration

The business administration proposal was forwarded by the Faculty Senate to the faculty for discussion at their Sept 9, 2021 faculty meeting. There was not sufficient time for a vote at the meeting so the proposal will be included on the agenda for the Oct 26, 2021 faculty meeting. The Faculty Senate has been working with the program committee to answer any questions from the faculty in advance of the October faculty meeting.

Applied Data Science

Since the May 2021 Board of Trustees meeting, four members of the committee that proposed the applied data science program have taken a leave of absence (Dr. Alan Jamieson - computer science, Dr. Lindsay Jamieson - computer science, Dr. Linden McBride - Economics, and Dr. Emek Kose - Mathematics). All four faculty members were instrumental in the program design and Dr. Jamieson and Dr. Jamieson were the faculty members who proposed the major. Therefore, we are currently understaffed in applied data science and without the faculty leadership necessary to continue the conversation needed to modify the proposal this academic year.

Track & Field

The track and field team begins its inaugural season this year and will compete as an associate member of the Coast-to-Coast Conference. Coach Potter expects to have 46-50 members on the team during spring competition, including a few athletes who will be enrolling in January. This past year, track and field recruited and enrolled 18 new first-year students. For 2021-22, Coach Potter plans to recruit 10-15 student-athletes per gender and carry a roster of 65-70 student-athletes. Having a track and field team has positively affected our cross-country teams. The cross-country teams are performing at the highest level in the history of the program and have one of the largest rosters in team history. The recruits for cross country will also be members of the track team. In past years, we would lose cross-country recruits because most wanted to run track as well as cross-country. While we currently have a new track facility we are without a field for field sports. Work has begun on the field sports field that will be located next to the JLR stadium.

Pep Band

The position description of the director of the pep band has been crafted and the position should be advertised soon. Once the director is hired, their first responsibility will be to take the lead in organizing the group. To prepare for the pep band, the college is hosting a fight song composition contest. The community has been challenged to provide the lyrics for a fight song with a \$500 prize for the lyrics selected. Submissions are due by Nov 19, 2021.

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEM 2122-01

RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE THE UPDATE TO THE NON-RESIDENTS WHO MAY TEMPORARILY QUALIFY FOR IN-STATE STATUS OF THE POLICY ON STUDENT RESIDENCY CLASSIFICATION FOR ADMISSION, TUITION CHARGE, AND DIFFERENTIAL PURPOSES

(See OnBoard for supporting material.)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The Academic Affairs Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve changes to the Non-Residents Who May Temporarily Qualify for In-State Status section of the Policy on Student Residency Classification for Admission, Tuition Charge, and Differential Purposes.

RATIONALE

Section 1005 of the Isakson and Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 removed the requirement for covered individuals to enroll in a course at a public institution of higher learning within three years of being discharged from the military to receive in-state tuition. The policy presented reflects the removal of the three year requirement from Section IV - Non-Residents Who May Temporarily Qualify for In-State Status section of the Policy on Student Residency Classification for Admission, Tuition Charge, and Differential Purposes.

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

OPEN SESSION MINUTES

Date of Meeting: May 7, 2021

Status of Minutes: DRAFT*

*These minutes were not finalized.

Academic Affairs Committee Members Present: Committee Chair Peter Bruns, Board Chair Lex Birney, Paula Collins, President Tuajuanda Jordan, Larry Leak '76, William Seale

Staff Member: Michael Wick

Others Present: Carlos Alcazar, Nicolas Abrams '99, Betsy Barreto, John Bell '95, Fatima Bouzid, Geoff Bowers, Allison Boyle, Anne Marie Brady, Donny Bryan '73, Kelsey Bush, Carolyn Curry, Susan Dyer, Elizabeth Graves '95, Gail Harmon, Esq., Alice Harvy, David Hautanen, Sven Holmes, Glen Ives, Helen Ann Lawless, Doug Mayer '04, Shana Meyer, Joan Pickett, Dan Pindell, Paul Pusecker, Bryan Ruiz, Jenny Sivak, Danielle Troyan '92, Harry Weitzel, Ray Wernecke, Libby Williams, Anna Yates, Derek Young

Executive Summary

Academic Affairs Committee Chair Peter Bruns called the meeting to order at 9:50 a.m.

Faculty Senate Report

Faculty Senate President Libby Williams provided a brief update to her written report. She reported that faculty were unprepared to learn on February 8th that their academic structure would be reorganized. There were mixed messages regarding faculty input in the process. She stressed the need for transparency and collaboration. Trustee Leak asked Dr. Williams to forward her remarks to the Committee, since they were not included in the submitted Faculty Senate written report.

Dean of Faculty Report

Provost Wick updated the Committee on the progress of the LEAD Core Curriculum. A steering committee is overseeing the implementation. An update on six new programs was provided. The Neuroscience and Marine Science proposals have been submitted to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and are pending MHEC approval. Provost Wick addressed the concern of the faculty on the restructuring proposal. Four plans were being considered. The Faculty Senate conducted a survey that yielded 31 responses. A workgroup will be formed in the Fall.



Action Item:

III.A. Recommendation to Approve 2021 Candidates for Graduation

Committee Action Taken/Action in Progress:

The proposed action item was approved by the Academic Affairs Committee at its meeting on May 7, 2021.

Recommendation to the Board:

The Academic Affairs Committee recommended approval of this action item by the Board of Trustees at its meeting on May 7, 2021.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the open session and move into close session.

The open session meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.