

# FACULTY ASSEMBLY

## Minutes from the December 3, 2019

(postponed from November 26, 2019)

### Executive Board:

**Dr. Binh Tran**, Chair  
*School of Engineering*

**Dr. Robin Young**, Vice-Chair  
*School of Theology and  
Religious Studies*

**Dr. Sharyn Battersby**  
*Rome School of Music,  
Drama & Art*

**Dr. William Barbieri**  
*School of Theology and  
Religious Studies*

**Dr. Ann Cederna**  
*School of Architecture and  
Planning*

**David Lipton**, Esquire  
*Columbus School of Law*

**Dr. Michael Mack**  
*School of Arts & Sciences,  
English*

**Dr. Venigalla Rao**  
*Arts & Sciences, Biology*

**Dr. Alex Russo**  
*Arts & Sciences, Media  
Studies*

**Dr. Janet Selway**  
*School of Nursing*

**Dr. Vijay Sookdeo**  
*School of Arts and Sciences,  
Mathematics*

**Dr. Julia Young**  
*School of Arts & Sciences,  
History*

The meeting was convened by 2:10 p.m., Room 110, Pangborn Hall

Minutes of the October meeting were approved.

**FA Executive Board:** The FA Executive Board is still seeking participation from remaining schools not currently represented.

**Library:** The Senate's Academic Services Committee has a meeting scheduled with the Provost in December. The committee is currently creating a document listing faculty concerns regarding the shrinkage of materials (books, journals, electronic access) and the failure to hire new staff as reported back in October.

- The FA discussed the feasibility of each school submitting a similar document to the Provost delineating the specific library concerns and needs as well as the vital role of the library to conduct excellent research and achieve our mission as a research institution.
- Faculty are invited to reach out to the Academic Services Committee with ideas to improve general communications with the Library and assist with resource planning.

**Faculty Hiring:** As a clearinghouse for information and to monitor progress on the goals of Academic Renewal, the Faculty Assembly is monitoring faculty hiring.

- The Provost's website (as of 12/3) currently shows 11 faculty searches positions approved for new hires (5 in Business, 2 in Engineering). Several faculty mentioned there are other positions approved, but not shown on the website. The Music School (part of the Rome School of Music, Drama, and Art has) has been waiting for a minimum of four tenure-track lines to be filled over the course of the last five years, and yet there were no searches reflected in that list.
- Questions were raised as to what, if anything, under the auspices of Academic Renewal-pruning and allocation based upon the consultants' reports—has transpired since the 18-month buyout period is ending.
- The FA raised the issue regarding the timing of when positions are approved. Concerns were raised that late approvals impacted the ability of search committees to advertise for and recruit the best applicants. Frustrations were voice regarding the disregard for faculty time during 'these' late searches.

**Donors:** Deep concerns were raised about the role of donor influence in faculty and dean searches.

- Faculty mentioned the President and Provost have approached the faculty of schools undergoing dean's searches regarding adding donors to the search committees. It was mentioned that they wanted a particular donor, who also happens to be a Board member and alum to be a part of the dean's search committees.
- Some faculty noted a previous attempt to include donors during the last search for Dean of Arts and Sciences. In subsequent meetings, pushback by faculty continued to occur regarding this request by the President, even though the faculty resisted the idea multiple times.
- The CUA Faculty Handbook has clear guidelines regarding composition of search committees, in particular dean searches where external candidates are considered. These guidelines do not include donor involvement. There was also speculation that there may be a push by the administration to revise the Faculty Handbook to include donors.
- As deans are members of a faculty, concerns were raised whether or not donors would also be involved in future faculty searches.
- It was suggested that the Board of Visitors (who are just donors) could be involved in other ways instead of being on the faculty search committees.
- Questions arose regarding the qualifications of donors (other than financial resources) serving on search committees. Since the donors are not identified, it is difficult to assess their expertise and the value of their contribution to the search process.

Discussion ensued regarding premature influence by the President and Provost in some prior faculty searches. Concern was raised regarding why some applicants selected by search committees were rejected by the President and Provost for on-campus interviews and final selection.

It was suggested that these issues be raised by the members of the Faculty Handbook Committee and the Academic Senate.

**Donor Influence on Campus:** Finally, there was discussion over a list that was presented to the Assembly reflecting the millions of dollars spent for Koch funded think tanks. The questions raised were regarding how are these donors influencing and possibly reshaping the University into a certain mindset? There was a call for more transparency about how much influence donors currently have in search committees and the hiring of specific applicants. Several members on the Board of Trustees have direct ties to the Koch Foundation. CUA has been cited as one of the top universities accepting Koch money, with George Mason University taking the top spot.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:03 p.m.