



WILLIAM & MARY

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REPORT OF THE W&M FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE APRIL 2024

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W&M BOARD OF VISITORS, FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE

There is a definite rhythm to the academic year. With only a few weeks left in semester, the intensity of effort for both the faculty and our students notches up to a higher level, and multiple deadlines start to loom. It is also a time when we learn of our student's successes in getting admitted to summer internships or research fellowships, and in the case of seniors, being admitted to graduate or professional schools, or landing their first job offers. It is also a time when many Ph.D. students are scheduling to defend their dissertations. At the other end of the "student pipeline", the campus is densely populated with tours for prospective students and their families. Finally, it is a bittersweet time, as the impending retirements of long-serving faculty colleagues and friends grows closer.

Even after the departure of those departments and programs that will make up the new School, Arts & Sciences will still be, by far, the largest faculty unit of the university, and the one that educates the majority of our undergraduates. A&S is a sprawling (and sometimes unwieldy) entity, spanning such disparate departments as Chemistry and Religious Studies, Economics and Music, Modern Languages and Biology, to name a few. It is not entirely clear that the present structure of A&S is optimal, and it now may be an opportune time to sharpen the articulation of its mission. W&M's strategic plan, Vision 2026, calls for "Highlight[ing] the important role of Arts & Sciences in advancing the liberal arts mission of W&M". Last Fall Dean Raitt formed the *Future of Arts & Sciences Committee*, with faculty, staff, and student members, tasking them with collecting ideas "on our future direction and where we want to be in five and in ten years." This committee began by an environmental scan of the structure, workings, and mission of Arts & Sciences at 30 other universities (W&M's peer institutions as defined by SCHEV as well as other public universities in Virginia), and is now embarked on gathering feedback from the W&M community, with meetings in March with the Graduate and Undergraduate Student Assemblies, and in April with A&S Chairs and Program Directors and the Staff Assembly. Open meetings are planned this month with A&S faculty and staff. A preliminary report is expected at the end of May, with the goal of a final report in the Spring of 2025.

At their most recent meeting, the faculty of A&S voted to endorse the exciting proposal from the School of Marine Science for a new undergraduate major in Marine Sciences. Faculty Assembly will also be considering this proposal at our April 16 meeting.

Faculty Assembly, by our Bylaws, is tasked with a holding a triennial survey of the faculty to gather faculty attitudes, perceptions, and opinions on a wide range of issues. These surveys provide valuable information on changes in the priorities of the faculty, and can identify areas of concern. The last survey was conducted in 2019 and the previous one was in 2015, so we haven't kept to the three-year cadence. A new survey was conducted this spring, with submissions closed

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at the end of March. We received a 52% response rate from the 719 eligible faculty. The data are being examined by the Assembly, and the Board can expect to see a synopsis report this Fall.

Members of the Assembly have continued to work with the Provost's team on Phase 2 of the Faculty productivity study, which will be presented to the Board's Academic Affairs committee at this meeting. The Assembly will also be considering a new Statement on Academic Freedom and Intellectual Diversity, which is of course an important topic in these fraught times of increasing dissent and tension in campuses across the nation. The Assembly is also continuing to receive updates and provide input on the work of the Faculty Handbook revision working group.

This is my last report as Faculty Representative to the Board. It has been an honor and privilege to serve on the Board; I have found it enlightening and enjoyable. I would like to thank the Rector for appointing me, the wonderful Student and Staff/Professional Faculty representatives over the last two years for their comradeship, and finally all the members of the Board for their time, energy, and devotion to William & Mary, for being open to input from the faculty, and for being so supportive of the faculty and our mission.