

## **Resolution for Faculty Senate regarding the proposed change to the Fleming Museum in the University Manual, and explanatory memo**

Whereas the University Manual of the University of Vermont states that the Director of the Fleming Museum reports to the Provost (section 204.13.2); and

Whereas the administration of the University of Vermont has proposed that the Director of the Fleming Museum report to the Director of the School of the Arts in the College of Arts and Sciences; and

Whereas the University Manual requires that relevant bodies be consulted if a change to the University Manual is being proposed (section 020); and

Whereas the Faculty Senate has responsibility “to review, to recommend, and to participate in the formulation of policy with regard to academic organization, including the establishment or elimination of colleges and departments and the reorganization of the general university and college academic structure” (Constitution and Bylaws, 1.2.c); and

Whereas the Faculty Senate Executive Council has reviewed the proposal to change the reporting line of the Director of the Fleming, interviewed the authors of the proposal, and received comment from Senators and the staff of the Fleming Museum; and

Whereas the Faculty Senate Executive Council has received satisfactory answers to its questions about the proposal (detailed in accompanying memo) and recommends that the Faculty Senate accept the proposal; and

Whereas the Fleming Museum is a University asset which has not been fully integrated into the University fund-raising work;

Therefore be it resolved that the Faculty Senate accepts the proposed changes to the University Manual allowing for the Director of the Fleming Museum to report to the Director of the School of the Arts in the College of Arts and Sciences; and

Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate advises the Provost to allocate utilizes resources from the Strategic Investment Fund to provide the Fleming Museum with sufficient resources to fulfill its mission to the University community and to the State of Vermont until such time as the Fleming’s fundraising infrastructure can be sufficiently expanded as to fund its activities.

### *Discussion of Review of Proposed Change to the University Manual regarding the reporting structure of the Fleming Museum*

In August 2022, Vice Provost J. Dickinson came to the Senate with a proposal to change the organizational role of the Fleming Museum in the University Manual. The University Manual (Section 204.13.2) describes the Director of the Fleming as reporting to the Provost

of the University. The proposal changes this reporting structure so that the Director would report to the director of the newly established School of the Arts in the College of Arts and Sciences. This proposal emerged in part because in spring 2022, Janie Cohen, the long-serving Director of the Fleming Museum, informed the Provost that she would be retiring in Spring 2022. The Provost's office regarded this as an opportunity to consider the role of the Fleming Museum within the University's organizational structure. Also, the School of the Arts in the College of Arts and Sciences was established in July 2022, via the approval by the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees earlier in 2022. Provost Prelock and the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Student Success J. Dickinson proposed that the Fleming could best fulfill its mission to serve the University and the State of Vermont by changing its organizational placement and reporting structure. Because this proposed change would require a change to the University Manual which describes the Director of the Fleming as reporting to the Provost (section 204.13.2), it was determined that the Faculty Senate had the responsibility to review and give advice on this proposal, described in the Senate Constitution and Bylaws 1.2.c: *To review, to recommend, and to participate in the formulation of policy with regard to academic organization, including the establishment or elimination of colleges and departments and the reorganization of the general university and college academic structure.*

#### *Process*

Because these kinds of changes do not happen very frequently, an approved, standard procedure for the Senate had not been developed. Faculty Senate President Borchert (in consultation with the Faculty Senate Executive Council) and VP J. Dickenson agreed upon the following procedure:

- 1) After the October 24 Senate meeting, Senators received the proposal for this change and were asked to comment within two weeks;
- 2) staff of the Fleming Museum were given the opportunity to make comments anonymously to the proposal;
- 3) the FS Executive Council served as the reviewing committee for the proposal. The committee met on November 7 with J. Dickinson, Kelley DiDio, Director of the School of the Arts, and Sonja Lunde, incoming director of the Fleming Museum; it met in a separate meeting with Chris Dissinger, staff member of the Fleming Museum who served as the Interim Director between Janie Cohen's retirement and Sonja Lunde assuming the position. At the regular meeting of the FS EC, the EC considered all available information and voted to recommend that the Senate approve the proposed change.

#### *Concerns raised in review of proposed change*

The EC raised a number of questions about the proposal. These included questions about the goals of the change, its impact on the budget and the implications for the change to the Fleming's role within the University.

**The goals of the change:** The EC was told that the primary goals of the change were to provide greater integration between the Fleming and the academic mission of the University, and to improve the fundraising infrastructure of the museum. While the Fleming Museum staff regularly work with faculty to use the Fleming's resources, the

proposers felt that this work could be enhanced by integrating the Director into the leadership structure of the School of the Arts. In addition to expanding academic offerings in the museum, this would be an opportunity to think creatively how to integrating the programs and resources of the SoA with those of the Fleming. Further, the proposers suggested that the Fleming's fundraising infrastructure could be enhanced by working with the Director of the SoA and CAS' Foundation officer.

**The Budget:** The proposed change will not affect either the Fleming or CAS budgets except at the margins. The Fleming is a support center in the University's IBB system, and it will remain so. The Fleming will be responsible for covering its own budget with its gift, endowment, and general fund resources. CAS' business office will be helping support this work in the Fleming, rather than the Administrative Business Services Center, as a part of CAS shared services model. The primary change will be in the reporting line. This information was confirmed in a memo from the Provost to CAS Dean Bill Falls on October 27 (shared with the EC).

**The place of the Fleming Museum in CAS:** The EC asked about whether this change would make the Fleming a part of CAS, and potentially make it more difficult for faculty in other units to access the Fleming's resources. The EC was assured that the Fleming will remain a University asset, and that the resources of the museum would be open to all members of the University community.

**Staff responses:** Four out of six members of the Fleming staff expressed support for the proposal. They appreciated the potential for different kinds of integration with the faculty, and also noted that they were already working fulltime in sharing the Fleming's resources with Faculty, and with students in curricular programs. They were open to different kinds of integration, provided it was within the scope of existing personnel to carry them out. They also expressed interest in increasing the fundraising capacity of the Fleming. Finally, there was a concern that the process of change was not as inclusive as they would have hoped.

**EC Conclusions:** The Faculty Senate Executive Council voted to approve the proposed change. It has the potential to reinvigorate the fundraising work of the Fleming, and to provide opportunities for the new director to establish her vision in collaboration with the leadership of the School of the Arts.

There are also several concerns that we think should be attended to if the Senate agrees with the EC's conclusions.

1. We were told that there would be no financial impact for either unit (beyond minor business support from CAS to the Fleming), and that the Fleming would remain a support center. We have confidence this will remain the case during this administration, though this should be monitored over time.

2. More immediately, it is critical that the Fleming have sufficient resources to fulfill its mission. The initial plan for this is to increase support for the fundraising operation of the

museum, which has perhaps suffered in recent years. This seems reasonable to us, but strong support was also expressed in the EC for short-term additional support from the Provost until such time as this infrastructure can be re-established.

3. The Faculty Senate will need follow up regarding how Fleming programs will be better integrated into units across the university. It would be useful for the Fleming director to come to the Senate in future years to provide a report on the impacts of this change should it be approved by the Senate.