

Minutes of Departmental Committee Meeting

1:30 Tuesday, October 11, 2016, Room 9341

(Professors Berry, Brunold, Burke, Burstyn, Cavagnero, Cui, Ediger, Garand, Gellman, Hamers, Hermans, Jin, Landis, McMahon, Moore, Nathanson, Schmidt, Shakhshiri, Sibert, Smith, Stahl, Weisshaar, Zanni attending.)

Cheri Barta, Desiree Bates, Arrietta Clauss, Libby Dowdall, Tracy Drier, Pat Egan, Andrew Greenberg, Iliia Guzei, Jeanne Hamers, Tony Jacob, Tim Kachel, Steve Myers, Vanessa Orr, Matt Sanders, Mike Schwartz, Chad Skemp, Cheri Stephens, Karen Stephens, Cecilia Stodd, Chad Wilkinson also attended.)

Open Session

Minutes of the last meeting (09/13/16) and minutes from the last meeting of 2015-16 (05/10/16) were approved on voice votes.

Announcements and Reports

Safety Update

Bob McMahon talked about the aftermath of the University of Hawaii explosion in a lab which severely injured a lab technician. Fines were imposed for specific violations which were listed, and which can serve as a lesson for us. Many of these conditions – having, disseminating, and enforcing safety protocols, using proper PPE, and so on – are things we are grappling with even now. Some, like multiple lab exits and doors that swing outward, have been or will be incorporated in the designs of the Shain tower and the new chemistry educational building. We should all examine the list of violations and determine if any of them apply to our labs.

Administrative Update

Pat Egan pointed out that our faculty recruiting effort will take place under the old recruiting system. There is now a link to the older jobs website on the new site. He is working on effort certification, which must be completed by the end of October.

We have hired Tim Kachel as the Grants Postaward Accountant. We will now need to fill Tim's old position. We hope to fill the Undergrad Office position in 2-4 weeks.

Bob McMahon thanked the staff for the job they've been doing with multiple staff vacancies. He has been pushing the College to unfreeze the payroll position, a critical need.

Climate Task Force Report

Judith Burstyn reported that we now have complete committees, and the Task Force will be meeting soon.

Faculty Senate Report

Judith Burstyn reported that a new academic calendar has been approved for 2017-18 and beyond. It will cut the length of an academic semester from 43 to 41 days of teaching for a Monday-Wednesday-Friday course. Classes will always start on Wednesday. This will have implications for our labs. January session will always start on Tuesday. The changes will allow a 4-week session to be fit into the Summer sessions.

New post-tenure review rules will come up for a vote in November.

Fall Course Evaluations

Jeanne Hamers reported that a goal on campus is to have all course evaluations go on-line by Fall 2018. But because the Undergraduate Chemistry Office is short-staffed, we will have all faculty evaluations on line this Fall. One objection to on-line evaluations is that participation goes down somewhat; this can be countered by encouraging use of devices – cell phones or tablets – to complete the survey in class. One advantage of on-line evaluations is that results are available immediately after the grades are posted.

For now, we will keep our old questions, but Jeanne has asked the Curriculum Committee to come up with a new set of questions in the near future.

Communicating Science to the General Public

Bassam Shakhshiri asked faculty to encourage all students who are writing their dissertation to include a chapter communicating their work and its importance to the general public. The Wisconsin Institute for Science Literacy will begin sharing these chapters with federal agencies.

Board of Advisors Meeting is Friday, October 21

National Chemistry Week – October 16-22

Forgotten Genius: Tuesday October 18; 7 PM in the Marquee, Union South

Solving Mysteries Through Chemistry: Thursday, October 20; 3:45-6 PM @ the Boys and Girls Club on Allied Drive

UW System Chemistry Faculties Meeting Hosted by UW-Stevens Point is October 28-29

Workshop – Creating an Inclusive Educational Environment – November 18

Business

Report on Diversity Recruitment – REU and CHOPs

As a prelude to several reports from people associated with diversity initiatives, Mark Ediger reminded the Department of some goals set up by the Diversity Committee – to increase the diversity of the Department's student body by 2013 to match the number of PhDs granted nationwide each year. By 2018, admit a diverse student body so that we match the national average PhD student body.

CHOPs has been an effective program in bringing minority students to the Department and getting them to apply. Of the 87 students who have attended CHOPs so far, 77% were minority, first-generation or low-income students. 81% of those eligible (some are still juniors) applied to our program. 74% ended up enrolled in postgraduate education, many in top tier institutions. CHOPs coordinators – Cheri Barta, Desiree Bates and Arrietta Clauss – will work on recruiting and retention effectiveness.

Andrew Greenberg presented information about the Summer REU programs he coordinates for the College of Engineering. 3 programs have Chemistry participants. There have been as many as 723 applicants for 35-40 slots; this is one of the largest REU programs in the country. They are now required to take 50% of their participants from non-research oriented programs, giving those students a chance to do research during their undergraduate years.

With no additional business brought to the Department Committee, the meeting was adjourned after a motion from Sam Gellman and Marty Zanni.

November 7, 2016. MJS