

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

FACULTY MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY 21 APRIL 2015 EXPLORATORY HALL

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Dann Sklarew, the Chair Pro Tem at 12:07 PM

The minutes of the October 16, 2014 meeting of the faculty were approved as submitted.

[Item 1] The Chair Pro Tem introduced the Dean, Dr. Peggy Agouris, who discussed some of her conclusions from the faculty retreat held at the Fairfax Country Club on April 10th:

The aims of the retreat were to discuss the COS experiences we feel we do well, what we want to continue doing as well as potential opportunities, strategies and actions. Some 70 faculty were present and were organized into affinity groups according to their professional interests and experiences (i.e., Climate, Environment and Geoscience; Physical Sciences; Data Science; Life Science; Math and Physics). Concerning what we do well, experiential learning, student research, our Learning Assistants program, K-12 science, teaching, intersectoral and interdisciplinary partnerships within and across colleges, and innovative teaching were all marked as activities we do well in the college. The Dean also noted potential signature areas.

A second consideration was to identify themes in our present work experience we want to encourage for the future. These included cross-disciplinary collaboration, building external partnerships, validation, making a difference, student appreciation and mentoring by faculty, and a growth in knowledge creation and transformation.

A third theme concerned what opportunities exist to pursue in the future. Bringing scientists together in affinity areas, pursuing the challenges of big data for the college, consolidating and leveraging our strengths, and developing expertise in important areas we do well were identified. Science education, sustainability, science policy, and renewable energy were also noted.

At the conclusion, faculty were asked to identify their major areas to pursue for the future. These included strengthening undergraduate research, sponsoring annual interdisciplinary workshops, and providing gap funding for researchers who are in between research support. To summarize, we wish as a college to continue to innovate, but how do we do this with limited resources? We must continue expanding our community outreach and cultivate donors. We must enhance our portfolios in interdisciplinary research and help with the career development for our students. COS needs to be able to move forward on its own by developing action plans for high valued issues. Finally we need to be optimistic about the future and pursue our goals with good energy.

A comment was made concerning all of this that the college needs more REU (Research Experiences for Undergraduates) proposals to NSF to support undergraduate research than we have been submitting in the past.

The dean then moved onto the second issue concerning the newly named Science and Technology Campus (formerly the Prince William Campus). In the future, all satellite campuses will be given names and not geographical locations. The vision for the new campus name and building is to allow Mason to link with outside partners and stakeholders.

The Dean entertained some Q&A's over the name change and implications:

1. Q: Is COS losing research space at PW? A: Probably Yes.
2. Q: Will new programs migrate to PW? A: Probably Yes.
3. Q: What's the role of adjuncts in COS as tenure track positions become rarer?
A: We will always rely on tenure-line faculty for the majority of our educational and research activities. At the same time, we will continue to emphasize term positions to preserve teaching power in the future. We are looking to assure that adjuncts enjoy the same professional privileges as other faculty do in COS.

The Chair Pro Tem invited the Dean to return for our autumn meeting to update us on progress.

[Item 2] Prof. Edward Maibach raised the issue of faculty support for a petition for divestiture of Mason investments in fossil fuel-perpetuating companies to "decarbonize" Mason Foundation holdings. It can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/noFFgmu>. The Foundation currently owns about 2% of such stock and was not inclined to sell these stocks at the current low valuation levels.

[Item 3] Associate Dean Curtin introduced the following motion to be added to COS bylaws:

"A representative to the Graduate Council shall be appointed by the Dean. Additional representatives, when permitted under Graduate Council bylaws, will be elected by the College of Science faculty for a three year term. If any elected representative is unable to complete a term, a new representative will be elected to a three-year term. Any representative to the Graduate Council must meet the requirements for membership specified in the bylaws of the Graduate Council."

Associate Dean Curtin explained the need for such an amendment and general discussion ensued. The vote on this motion was tabled until the fall meeting of the College, in order to allow for a second reading as required by COS bylaws.

[Item 4] Associate Dean Curtin then made a motion from the floor to accept the new Graduate Council bylaws appended to the above cited amendment. This motion passed by a voice vote.

[Item 5] Nominations from the floor for current faculty vacancies on standing committees were entertained. Prof. Tim Leslie's name was added for COS's representative to the Faculty Senate.

[Item 6] No other nominations were made. The nominations committee will present the COS Faculty with a slate for the expired terms and vacancies on COS standing committees and will circulate to the faculty for their vote. The Chair Pro Tem requested circulation of this slate by Friday, May 1, with a voting period over the subsequent 14 days.

Professor Dan Sklarew was nominated and elected Chair of the COS Faculty for next year, and Prof. Suzanne Slayden was nominated and elected as Chair Pro Tempore.

Call for committees' annual reports was made, and none were available.

The meeting adjourned at 1:15.

Respectfully submitted.

Evans Mandes

Secretary