

## Minutes of the September 23, 2024 Meeting of the CELS Executive Council

**Call to Order:** A meeting of the College of the Environment and Life Sciences Executive Council was held at 10:00AM in CBL5 435. Members present were Department Chairs Becker, Boving, Chandlee, Forrester, Lane, Petersson, and E. Uchida; Associate Deans, Sartini, Townson, and Wilga; Faculty Secretary Rice and *ex-officio* members Dias, Palmer, Wilson, and York. Prof. J. Buxton represented PLE. Dean Kirby presided.

**Approval of Minutes:** *It was moved by Lane and seconded by Boving to approve the September 9, 2024 Minutes of the Executive Council. The minutes were approved unanimously as presented.*

### Announcements:

#### **Dean Kirby**

1. Dean Kirby praised the faculty and staff for a smooth beginning of the academic year. No major glitches.
2. The new university budget unveiling has been postponed until October; it is known that increasing tuition dollars brought in and greater indirect cost returns on external grants will be important drivers; J-term and Summer courses are important in the mix.
3. The system of how colleges are funded is seen as an issue impeding full implementation of the new budget model. Some university funding will be provided for teaching and collaboration across colleges.
4. There is a major effort by the URI HR office to modernize position descriptions in their database. Many have been many decades out of date.

**Associate Dean Wilga** Had nothing to report

#### **Associate Dean Sartini**

1. On Wednesday Sept 25 at noon there will be a planning meeting for Open House; each program is requested to provide a set of 'talking points' for the student ambassadors
2. Departments are asked to have some interesting props for Welcome Day displays
3. *Chairperson Lane inquired about some of the intricacies of the Accelerated Bachelors to Masters (ABM). Discussion ensued about ABM in general BIO-BES & AFS-MESM*
4. J-term for Winter 2025 courses were submitted and appear to be on track.
5. There will be presentation on first-year retention and DEI data during the first week in October.
6. There is a need for conversation about flexible pathways for repeating courses (e.g. J-term and Summer) to keep students on track for 4 to 5-year graduation times and to improve retention.
7. There is an issue of University College dropping some students from courses without consulting departments; discussion of decoupling MTH and CHM courses in the same semester; need for more hands-on courses for freshmen.

#### **Associate Dean Townson**

1. The Land Grant Programs (AES & CE) budget will be released soon with the new federal fiscal year.
2. Administrative access to computers has been a controversial issue campus-wide. CELS will be instituting a system of Administrative Access by request with an on-line request form.

**Skip Wilson** Had nothing to report.

#### **Monica York**

1. Business office is working on research overhead reports. These reports should be released by the end of September

2. The business offices requests that P-card reconciliation be done as soon as possible; there have been several lingering items in the pipeline that confound end of federal fiscal year accounting; training sessions are planned.
3. Faculty workload certifications are being circulated.
4. Reimbursements for student travel (>\$5k often abroad) on research grants can be put on PI's T-card.
5. A hire for the post-award grant administrator position will begin in October and there is another open search.
6. Grant PIs should allow 7 working days prior to agency submission deadline to allow proper processing by CELS and the Research Office
7. The search for a Unit 3 Fiscal Coordinator is still open.

**Old Business:**

1. There was no old business

**New Business:**

1. There as no new business

**Adjournment:** *It was moved & seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 10:35am.*

Respectfully Submitted:  
Michael A. Rice, CELS Faculty Secretary