

CELS Research Committee Meeting October 15th 2020 - Meeting Notes and Discussion

In attendance: Thomas Boving (GEO), Niall Howlett (CMB) (Chair), Jason Kolbe (BIO), Elizabeth Mendenhall (MAF), Carlos Prada Montoya (BIO), Tom Sproul (ENRE), Mark Stolt (NRS), Cheryl Wilga (ex officio)

Absent: None

In this meeting we had a general discussion on topics of relevance to CELS research and brainstormed on research topics to focus on during the semester/academic year.

- We discussed the composition of the research committee. Two departments are not represented - Fisheries, Animal, and Veterinary Sciences and Plant Sciences and Entomology. The possibility and logistics of including one or more graduate students on the committee was also discussed. I will reach out to Michael Rice on the addition of new members to the committee. **Update:** *There may need to be modifications to the by-laws if we want to pursue this*
- COVID-19 Update: Cheryl discussed COVID-19-related issues and updates to University-wide research policies
 - For field work and research requiring regional travel, researchers need to be aware of specific travel restrictions and/or quarantine regulations. Researchers are strongly encouraged to consult the Rhode Island Department of Health COVID-19 Travel Information for Residents and Visitors, before making travel plans: <https://health.ri.gov/covid/travel/>
 - Undergraduate students are now permitted to perform research again and will need to be added to faculty COVID-19 safety plans. Include a justification for why they are essential to research program.
 - Investigators need to remain cognizant of the space restrictions/limitations and to implement a lab schedule where necessary
 - For investigators who need PPE supplies, the Dean's Office (Judy) has a limited supply of PPE when necessary
- ADVANCE: Organizational Change for Gender Equity in STEM: "Diffuse and scale-up the adaptation and implementation of proven organizational change strategies to address gender-based inequities for STEM faculty." A big focus is on intersectionality and this is where we can bring in diversity, equity, and community. Build on the success of the previous NSF Advance to implement institutional changes to improve community, equity and diversity and URI. Will involve multiple faculty, offices, and programs to implement. Cheryl described ongoing discussions about applying for this funding mechanism. One idea is to use funds to hire diversity officers for colleges where there are none (CELS and COE are the only colleges with diversity officers). The mechanism does not allow for faculty hires. Partnerships with other NSF-funded mechanisms, e.g.

EPSCoR are encouraged, as are other partnerships, e.g. potentially with NIH-funded RI-INBRE program.

- Tuition differential: We also discussed the limits on the out-of-state tuition differential provided by the Provost's Office. There has always been a 3-year limit on the tuition differential. However, this was not strictly enforced. Moving forward, it seems like this limit will be enforced and faculty need to be made aware of this.
- Research committee orientation for new faculty: we discussed many of the research challenges faced by new faculty. There was a general consensus that an open forum meeting between the research committee and new CELS faculty could be beneficial.
 - Who to contact in the research office for logistical and budgeting assistance?
 - Who to contact in the CELS Deans office for help with budget preparation (and a lot of other things)? For example, is there someone who can help with logistics/travel/scheduling for candidate interviews or visiting speakers etc.?
 - How and when to navigate budgeting/requesting for TA and RA support
 - New faculty advisors: one senior and one a few years ahead (near peer)
 - Untenured faculty slack group