

Minutes of the February 27, 2014 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 12:30pm at the CBL 435. Members present were Department Chairs, Bengtson, Fastovsky, Green, Greene, Opaluch, Roberts, Sun, and Thompson; Associate Dean Rhodes, CE Associate Director Sheely, CE Representative Morreira, Faculty Secretary Rice, and *ex-officio* members Curfman and Messier. Members absent were Department Chairs Gold and Mitkowski, Associate Dean Veeger, and *ex-officio* members Anderson and Porter. NRS was represented by Professor McWilliams and PLS was represented by Professor Brown; Dean Kirby presided.

Approval of Minutes: *A motion to approve minutes of the February 6, 2014 meeting of the Executive Council was made by Bengtson and seconded by Gold. Minutes were unanimously approved as written.*

Announcements:

1. Dean Kirby made several announcements based upon the most recent Council of Deans Meeting:
 - a) The Grad Council is exploring new models by which grad assistantships are funded. Priority would be placed on new grad students to aid recruitment of top grad student talent. Various fund sharing between University and PI are under consideration. Assistantships through the Grad school would be for 2 years for a master's degree and 3 years for a doctoral degree and require 50% match. There is a general concern in the Central Administration about overall decline in graduate enrollment (although CELS remains robust). Effort is needed in enhancing grad recruitment. Revamping grad assistantship policies may help.
 - b) CELS will not be utilizing the Ryan Center for graduation this year. CELS graduation will be in the Mackal Field House. Students will be issued tickets such that the student plus five extra for guests. In case of rain, students will be issued two tickets and main graduation would be in the Ryan Center.
 - c) Sakai has been upgraded with a new online self-paced tutorial. The Sakai system is better equipped for offering of full-online courses.
 - d) Graduation rates from the University as a whole are low in comparison to other New England state universities, but better than U Maine. The College of Business Administration has the highest graduation rate of students (around 80%), possibly due to a more structured program for their students. Colleges were urged by the Provost to develop strategies to improve student retention & graduation rates. Improved advising protocols is a suggested solution.
2. Professor David Fastovsky was awarded his second Fulbright Scholars Grant & he was congratulated by the Den and all of the Executive Council membership.
3. Dean Kirby and the Executive Council welcomed CE Associate Director Deborah Sheely to her first Executive Council meeting.

4. An undergraduate minor study program in Global Studies will be housed primarily in CELS with Professor David Abedon as key contact person for the program. Faculty from several departments around the University are participating in the effort.
5. The Sodexo Corporation, an institutional food service provider is entering a partnership with the Nutrition and Food Science Department in expanding internship opportunities for students.

New Business:

Associate Dean Rhodes will be working with the Research Committee to identify critical research equipment needs for existing faculty and provide recommendation to the Dean.

Old Business:

Discussion of the proposed reorganization of the CELS business office structure and budget procedures dominated discussions in old business. Developing more uniform policies about use of course fees was discussed. Distribution of research overhead return to PIs was discussed. Dean Kirby stated that there are current obligations to some PIs in CELS, but his stated goal is to attain a 50%-50% return to PIs. The Dean's share would primarily be used to enhance startup funding for new hires. The Dean's office is working on ideas for the new organization structure and has identified the need for a new budget specialist to work with the "third" budget organizational unit. Dean Kirby said that CELS is not the only college working on reorganizing their business & budgeting structure. CELS offering the first effort may be the model for other colleges to follow. By way of "principle of the first draft" our own ideas may be better for CELS because a structure coming from elsewhere for us to follow may be less than optimal for our needs.

Adjournment: *It was moved & seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 pm*

Respectfully Submitted:
Michael A. Rice, Faculty Secretary