

Minutes of the March 6, 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 CBLS 435. Members present were Department Chairs, Bengtson, Fastovsky, Green, Greene, Gold, Mitkowski, Opaluch, Roberts, and Thompson; Associate Deans Rhodes and Veeger, CE Associate Director Sheely, CE Representative Morreira, Faculty Secretary Rice, and *ex-officio* members Curfman, Messier and Porter. Members absent were Department Chair Sun, and *ex-officio* member Anderson; Dean Kirby presided.

Approval of Minutes: A motion to approve minutes of the February 27, 2014 meeting of the Executive Council was made by Bengtson and seconded by Opaluch. Minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Announcements:

1. Ms. Michelle Fontes-Barros, CELS Diversity Coordinator said that the CELS Diversity Committee had begun its work and there are a number of activities underway to enhance student & staff diversity in the College. The CELS Seeds of Success Program (<http://web.uri.edu/cels/seeds-of-success/>) is a program to recruit & mentor underrepresented students to the college.
2. The Development Officer of the College, Amy Porter, gave a brief overview of efforts to find and recruit donors who might be interested in funding our programs. In support of this effort, Porter & Fontes-Barros are looking to develop an "outlook statement" for the College that could be shared with potential donors and/or prospective underrepresented students. They developed a questionnaire for members of the CELS community to consider (See Appendix 1). This is part of an increased effort to engage the whole CELS community in development activities, so there will be an increased effort to get the message out about what we and are alumni do. One successful means to enhance alumni engagement in the College is inviting former students to the retirement parties of retiring faculty members. Dean Kirby stated that as time goes on, attention to issues of development in the College is becoming the responsibility of everybody.
3. Dean Kirby made several announcements based upon the most recent Council of Deans Meeting:
 - a) The program for developing standardized "Academic Maps" is underway under the administration of University College and the program will become fully active during the summer. Department Chairs were asked to assure that all information feeding into these Academic Maps of individual undergraduate degree programs be submitted soon if it has not been done already. These Academic Maps will form the basis for a new degree audit program, and they may be useful for the Dean in presenting the case to the Provost for the need of support courses, funds or space allocation.
 - b) In the governor's budget for FY 2015, there is a potential \$5M financial shortfall that may have to be accommodated by the University. However, the state budget is not yet finalized.
 - c) The Provost is proposing an Office of Teaching & Learning to consolidate the functions of a number of programs such as the Teaching Fellows Program aimed at enhancing teaching effectiveness.
 - d) The Provost has announced that there will be a continuation of the phased

retirement program over two years for senior faculty over the FY-2015 to 2018. Faculty interested in the program for the 2014-15 AY should contact Dean Kirby for information and submit a proposal before the April 14, 2014 deadline.

e) Effort is underway to offer incentives for faculty currently in 12-month appointments to convert to 9-month appointments.

f) Over the next few months, the University email system will be changing. The Outlook server will be discontinued in favor of a g-mail based system. Dean Kirby added that another issue for the college is that it may be more cost effective to consolidate all computer servers in the College into the University-based mainframe computer and have virtual servers where needed. Additional cost savings might be realized by use of a centralized computer hosting high-use programs such as word processors, spreadsheets and presentation programs that nearly everybody use.

g) The University has released a major report on the economic impact of our institution. Details can be found at <http://web.uri.edu/economic-impact>

4. Associate Dean Veeger announced that the program by the Grad School to offer matching tuition waivers, RA-ships or TA-ships for PIs with active grants is moving forward. The goal of the program is to increase the total number of graduate students who are on funded assistantships. Contact Associate Dean Veeger for details.

5. Associate Dean Veeger announced that there is now better enforcement of rules for the transfer of students from University College to the degree-granting programs. This better enforcement of GPA and other transfer requirements has been manifested in higher quality students being transferred into some of our undergrad programs.

6. Associate Dean Veeger asked that if chairs have not submitted their requests for per-course instructors and lecturers or the next academic year, this should be done very soon.

7. Faculty Secretary Rice announced that a major vote will be taken on the revamp of the General Education Program at the University. Senators from CELS were urged to engage with the issue as a vote on the topic will be scheduled for the March 20 Senate meeting.

New Business:

There was no new business.

Old Business:

Discussion ensued about the administrative reorganization of CELS. Some units are getting together to formulate how to best structure the three fiscal units. Dean Kirby said that support staff will most probably be allocated by nature of tasks and that the issue is balancing of staff allocation with nature of work to be tasked. Chairperson Gold urged that decisions about reorganizations be made soon so that transitions can be made quickly, thus avoiding the problems of uncertainty inherent in a protracted transition.

Adjournment:

It was moved & seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 pm

Respectfully Submitted:

Michael A. Rice, Faculty Secretary

Appendix 1
Dean's Executive Council Meeting
Thursday, March 6th, 2014

We want to create a compelling outlook statement for CELS that we all agree on and share both internally and externally. We need your help to create this so please answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

- What are 2-3 things that you believe are the biggest strengths in CELS?
- What are the top 2-3 things that you would most like to highlight about your department?
- If there were one thing you could change about CELS, what would it be?

We will gather your feedback to see the commonalities and then will draft an outlook statement based on what we collect. We will be sure to share the draft statement with you as soon as we get all of the information from each department as well as Dean Kirby.

Thank you!