

Minutes of the October 21, 2016 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 9:00 am at the CBL 435 conference room. Members present were Department Chairs Dalton, Fastovsky, Gold, Gomez-Chiarri, Opaluch, Preisser, and Sun; Associate Deans Sheely, Thornber, and Veeger, Faculty Secretary Rice and *ex-officio* members Morreira, Palmer, and Silvia. Department Chair and Mitkowski, and *ex-officio* member Van Buren were absent. Dean Kirby presided.

Approval of Minutes: *It was moved by Fastovsky and seconded by Opaluch to approve the minutes of October 7, 2016 and they were approved unanimously.*

Announcements:

Dean Kirby:

1. According to the Provost's Office more J-term course are needed to add flexibility to students and aid in improving 4-year graduation rates. Departments are encouraged to look at courses for possible January offering.
2. More summer course offerings are needed as well. Summer may be a good time to explore modifications of existing courses for on-line offering or taught in alternative ways that cannot be accommodated by rigid academic year course scheduling.
3. There will be a new round of strategic planning efforts by departments and programs driven by the current NEASC Self Study that is now underway, culminating in an October, 2017 visit of the NEASC evaluation team. Information about the current Self-Study the university is undertaking can be found on the Accreditation website: <http://web.uri.edu/accreditation/>
 - a) Departments and programs may get a lump on the process by looking at the 9 areas for evaluation in the NEASC Self-Study Guide: http://web.uri.edu/accreditation/files/NEASC_Self_Study_Guide.pdf
 - b) We may not be looking as hard as we can at tracking of student progress, tracking program graduates.
 - c) Retention of students is a key concern of higher administration.
4. Related to NEASC Accreditation is development of metrics for the a new 5-year plan for the University. See: <http://web.uri.edu/academic-planning/> These metrics are being developed to show how implementation actions flow from the new academic plan. How do we working to assure student success? Are there too many early barriers to success?
5. Associate Dean Sheely will be tasked with the responsibility of direct oversight of all of the USDA formula funds, including Hatch, Smith-Lever & McIntyre-Stennis formula funds. Associate Dean Thornber will remain as primarily responsible for CELS research matters, except for the USDA portfolio.

Associate Dean Veeger:

1. All Department Chairs are asked to check that course fees are properly being assessed for Spring 2017 courses.
2. Department Chair Gold inquired about the new UC Advisors. There had not been a visible effort so far by the advisors to interact with faculty from the affected departments and programs.
3. The University is looking at 400 students per professional advisor as a standard norm based upon a nationwide average. Some executive council members expressed concern that this student : advisor ratio seems to be excessively high and may be counterproductive in reaching goals of greater student retention.
4. As the new Gen-Ed Curriculum transitions into place, there is expected to be a greater reliance on professional advisors to manage Gen-Ed Advising. Each CELS major should develop a list of recommended Gen-Ed Courses that might be best for their major. These

would not be required by the students, but this would be a useful tool for the professional advisors and aid in communication between department faculty and the advisors.

Associate Dean Thornber:

1. Associate Dean Thornber thanked all faculty for beginning the practice of uploading proposal documents into Cayuse.

Old Business:

There was no old business

New Business:

There was no new business.

Adjournment: *It was moved & seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45am.*

Respectfully Submitted:

Michael A. Rice, Faculty Secretary