

Minutes of the September 13, 2017 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 3:00 pm at the CBL 435 conference room. Members present were Department Chairs Dalton, Gold, Gomez-Chiarri, Mitkowski, Opaluch, Preisser and Sun; Associate Deans, Sheely, Thornber and Veeger; *ex-officio* members Palmer, Silvia, and Van Buren; *ex officio* member Morreira, and Faculty Secretary Rice. Department Chair Fastovsky was absent; Dean Kirby presided. Prof Hiro Uchida of ENRE and Michelle Fontes-Barros were in attendance .

Approval of the Minutes: *It was moved by Opaluch and seconded by Gold to approve of the August 30, 2017 Minutes of the Executive Council. The minutes were approved unanimously pending identified corrections.*

Announcements:

Dean Kirby:

- 1) Department Chair Mitkowski earned kudos for advising large numbers of students in large-enrollment classes to be sure to be signed up for 15 credits so as to be able to graduate on time. This goes a long way to cut into the problem of students hanging around for too many semesters. He was also praised for his effort to be "point of the spear" in the swift resolution of a problem of shrinking faculty parking opportunities. All were pleased with his work to bring attention of the issue to the proper authorities.
- 2) The On-line Faculty Fellows Program is now recruiting participants for the Academic Year. If there is a desire to learn more about how to develop an offer online courses, consider being an On-Line Faculty Fellow.
- 3) The Call for Proposals for the Undergraduate Research Initiative is being released for this year jointly by the VP for Research and Provost's Offices. The program is expanding in size in comparison to past years.
- 4) University-wide enrollment is up and budget target goals have been met. CELS is in good shape as to enrollments, but seats in courses (particularly Gen-ED) remains as a rough area. The Dean's Office is asking for development of more courses to fall under the "Integrative" course classification area. Many CELS courses could fit into this classification with only minor tweaking.
- 5) The RI Department of Education is pushing again an initiative to instate "Performance Based Funding" for the higher education institutions in the state. The Provost's Office is leading the effort to get a system of accounting that is proper for the unique situation of URI being the sole flagship public Research-Land Grant Institution for the state, and taking into account all the unique missions of the other two public Higher-Ed institutions of the state.
- 6) The effort to restructure the system of TA allocations across colleges is moving forward. All colleges are asked to develop a system of allocating TAs according to teaching needs from centralized college pool, similar to how the CELS allocations are currently structured. There is a proposal to add 50 new TA positions University-wide over the next 5 years. Department chairs are asked to develop workload plans for

TAs to cover courses that have been growing due to increased enrollments to be ready for any new TAs appearing in the pipeline.

Anne Veeger:

- 1) There is an effort to assess how to best implement the deployment of the professional student advisors in the college. Advisors will be doing an initial assessment of student graduation audits and leave it to individual departments to do final "sign-off" if they so desired.
- 2) Students will be asked to be pro-active in filling out their worksheets PRIOR to seeing any advisors, and move the CELS student culture toward having the students doing preliminary work to find courses and plan their academic pathway.
- 3) All advisors are asked to keep a look out for elements that are generally 'red flags' in the formal degree audits.

Carol Thornber:

- 1) On October 20, 22 and 25 there will be open forums to meet the three top candidates to fill the position of Vice President for Research and Economic Development. Faculty are encouraged to attend.

Meredith Silvia:

- 1) A series of periodic 'brown bag lunch' discussions will be initiated for Department Chairs about changing policies and new procedures. Stay tuned for further information.

Fontes-Barros:

- 1) There will be a series of workshops on building diversity in CELS. There will be two in the Fall Semester, October and November, to be held in the Galanti Lounge, with more to be held in the Spring Semester. Faculty are encouraged to participate. More information is provided in Appendix 1.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business:

- 1) Department Chair Opaluch opened a discussion about changing of budget categories in mid year to pay for unexpected expenditures. The general answer from Dean Kirby is that the new budgeting system is in flux in attempt to tailor budget categories to fit the average yearly needs of each of the three budget groups. If there is an unusual budget need, ask the dean's office. The goal is to put in and fund proper categories so that spending is constant throughout the year, without excessive end-of-year spending. Periodic expenditures are understood and can be accommodated. Communication with the dean's office will help facilitate future budgeting adjustments to minimize need for budget transfers.
- 2) Department Chair Dalton inquired about the Homecoming-Family Weekends; Associate Dean Veeger explained about the efforts to join the two formerly separate

events and join them as part of the 125th Anniversary fundraising campaign. More information can be found at: <http://web.uri.edu/alumni-family-weekend/>

Adjournment: It was moved by Gold and seconded by Mitkowski to adjourn at 3:40pm

Respectfully submitted:

Michael A. Rice, Faculty Secretary

APPENDIX 1

<p><u>Deep Teaching URI – A workshop series on inclusive approaches to serving students</u> Bryan M. Dewsbury, Michelle Fontes-Barros and Annemarie Viccaro</p>

The workshop series aims to achieve the following goals:

1. Engender a paradigm shift among faculty toward more inclusive ways of practice
2. Assist faculty with specific strategies for developing inclusive classrooms
3. Enable greater student success by helping faculty change the dynamic of the classroom
4. Concretize the role of education in growing from and shaping social structure

Menu of Workshops

Where we can improve:

1. **Who –R-I and a Chance at birth** (BD) October 2nd, 2017, Galanti Lounge, 3rd floor Library
Faculty will take a deep dive into the social and academic histories of CELS students. We will discuss the intricacies and implications of a finely parsed data set, and discuss the ways in which it will inform our future academic and social programming. (BD)
2. **Connecting and Communicating in advising** November 20, 2017, Galanti Lounge, 3rd floor Library (MFB/AS)

We will discuss best practices in how to connect and serve our students better through a more intrusive advising model specific to the population of students we serve.

What we can do [SPRING]:

3. **Departmental Climates of Inclusion/Exclusion** (AV) TBD
Faculty and staff will work together to conduct a mini-audit of their departmental environment.
4. **Inclusive Instruction in STEM** (BD) TBD
Specific classroom practices (with assessment) that promote inclusion and the development of a sense of community in the classroom.

The way forward

5. **Charting the future** (BD/JC) TBD
Identify and plan the specific practices they plan to engage in the 2018/19 academic year.