

Minutes of the November 2, 2020 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 9:00am via Webex Teleconference due to in-person meeting restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Members present were Department Chairs Chandlee, Dalton, Gold, Mitkowski, Petersson, Roberts, Savage and Uchida; Associate Deans Sartini, Sheely and Wilga; *ex-officio* members Palmer, and Silvia; and Faculty Secretary Rice. *Ex-officio* member Wilson was absent. Dean Kirby presided.

Approval of the Minutes: *A motion was made by Gold and seconded by Roberts to approve the October 19, 2020 Minutes of the Executive Council. The minutes were approved unanimously.*

Announcements:

Dean Kirby

1. In response to a query from Chairperson Gold, Dean Kirby stated that the recent limitations of social gatherings in the state to 10 persons or fewer does not apply to formal classes that follow CDC guidelines. Social gatherings outside the classroom should be limited per state mandates.
2. In response to a query from Chairperson Uchida about announced policy to enforce time limits on PhD Assistantships, Dean Kirby stated that this issue is under discussion. Students in several CELS departments including ENRE are potentially affected and may affect or competitiveness for to graduate students. There is an issue about state law prohibiting direct waivers of tuition. Payments must be charged against some budget somewhere. The dean's office will be working with the VP for Research and the Provost's office to try to fine some acceptable resolution.
3. *Building plans:* A shared research building is expected to be designed to be placed in the area north of Pharmacy between CBLS and the Coastal Institute. There will be work in the Plaza Level of CBLS over the spring and summer to create more lab space near the tank rooms. Construction is is expected to be a bit disruptive. Upgrades to Woodward Hall facilities are in the queue with an expected 6 to 8 year time horizon.

Associate Dean Sartini

1. After Thanksgiving all classes and final exams will be fully online.
2. There will be an outreach to students by advisors in the Student Affairs office in support of spring semester registration to gauge the level of engagement and satisfaction by students.
3. Faculty & advisors should contact Associate Dean Sartini if student are in a jam enrolling in required classes for graduation. Availability of some chemistry courses appears to be problematic. Other classes such as genetics, and experiential learning opportunities may also have limited seats available.
4. Department chairs are asked to look at the lists of available courses in department web pages to see if they are up to date. This is different from the catalog lists.
5. There is still a problem of communicating with students by email through Brightspace if the students have not switched over from the old my.uri.edu domain. Please inform students.

Associate Dean Sheely

1. There will be slightly different reporting requirements from USDA-NIFA on AES and CE programming. There will be more of a focus on 'success stories.' Associate Dean Sheely will be

coordinating the reporting effort with a deadline in mid-January. There will be a questionnaire sent around to AES and CE project leaders.

Associate Dean Wilga

1. Given the shift to online classes after Thanksgiving, there was a question as to access to labs and buildings for students. Research will be continuing and student researchers (independent study, etc.) will have access. It is only formal lectures and student labs that are affected.
2. The CBL5 252 classroom is now open after the structural repairs. It is available to students as socially-distanced study space.
3. Associate Dean Wilga will be reaching out to new faculty members regarding needs and concerns.

Old Business:

There was no old business

New Business:

There was no new business.

Adjournment: *Without objection Dean Kirby declared adjournment at 9:30am*

Respectfully submitted:

Michael A. Rice, Faculty Secretary