

Minutes of the May 5, 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 1:30 pm via Webex Teleconference due to in-person meeting restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Members present were Department Chairs Chandlee, Dalton, Gold, Gomez-Chiarri, Mitkowski, Roberts, Savage and Uchida; Associate Deans, Sartini, Sheely, and Thornber; *ex-officio* members Palmer, Silvia, and Wilson; and Faculty Secretary Rice. Dean Kirby presided.

Approval of the Minutes: A motion was made by Gomez-Chiarri and seconded by Sheely to approve the April 21, 2020 Minutes of the Executive Council. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Announcements:

Dean Kirby:

1. Fall looks like it may be virtual, or at least partially. The faculty should think about how to break large classes (e.g. BIO101, AVS101) into smaller sections of about 50 or so - start the discussion and how to do it without additional financial resources. Suggestions to date include a 'flipped model,' lectures could be online, combined with smaller recitation sections (including exams) on campus to be held in a large room. The Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (ATL) will provide additional training over the summer to improve on-line delivery. Colleges have been asked to identify courses that can be offered fully online. An open question under discussion is if students be provided the option to take courses either online or face-to-face (i.e. offering two sections of a class). AAUP is discussing with administration if faculty will have the option not to teach face-to-face if they wish to do so (maybe they can teach choose to their courses online.) There are still considerable numbers of moving parts and the Faculty Senate will be active in these issues over the summer as well.
2. There are 454 freshmen committed to coming into CELS, which is a bit more than last year - so far we have a normal freshman class, assuming there will be no additional 'meltback' during the summer. Chairperson Gold noted some melting in incoming MESM students, with some students requesting to defer a year.
3. CELS is losing a lecturer position due to low enrollment courses. All faculty are urged to make sure to bring the enrollment numbers up.
4. Professor Emeritus of Biological Sciences, J. Stanley Cobb recently passed away.

Associate Dean Thornber

1. VPR Snyder's *ad hoc* committee is working on the planned phased of research on campus - modeled from UC Berkeley and the UC system plans for a phased reopening. Dean Kirby added that we *will* be bringing graduate students back to campus for research in the Fall under some set of guidelines.
2. Reminder: Guidelines from the Governor's office require use of face masks while working on campus if there is a chance of coming into contact with others.
3. There is a new Controllers Office memo on guidelines for new sponsored awards, that include summer salary guidelines.

4. Until further notice - email Ted Myatt and Franca, with copy to Associate Dean Thornber about paperwork related to grant budget preparation.

Associate Dean Sartini

1. The plan for a virtual commencement is coming together. There may be an on-campus in-person ceremony in the Fall.
2. Discussion ensued about how the various CELS departments would be handling recognition of their student accomplishments.
3. Deadline for students availing of the alternative grading option is May 15th. There is a concerted effort among advisors to communicate with undergrads and direct them to read instructions on the web page. Graduate coordinators should communicate with grad students.
4. There will be further updates on students that have not enrolled for the Fall.

Associate Dean Sheely

1. Faculty, research and extension staff are asked to respond to email from marketing at URI request for information on showing how we have been working with COVID19

Old Business:

There was no old business

New Business:

There was no new business

Adjournment: *It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 2:10pm*

Respectfully submitted:

Michael A. Rice, Faculty Secretary