Natural Sciences Chairs Council

February 21, 2022

1:00pm – 3:00pm

In Attendance: M. Chao, K. Cousins, K. Dajani, C. Todd, L. Mian, B. Haddock, M. Jetter, T. Burch, J. Torner, G. Escalante, D. Maynard, D. Rinebolt, S. McGill, S. Pantula, R. Hernandez

Approval of Minutes – February 7, 2022

* Minutes of the February 7th meeting were approved.

Announcements by Chairs

* Dr. Torner reported the Physics Department has their first candidate for their open faculty position on campus today. Other candidates will be on campus in the next several days.
* Dr. Mian reported the Health Science Department is currently holding virtual interviews with their candidates for the department chair position. They will begin working on the EHS position after the chair interviews are completed.
* Dr. Todd reported the Geology Department completed their interviews with their candidates last week. They will meet to make a decision later this week. Next week the BA/BS program review will take place.
* Dr. Chao reported that Dr. Putman had her baby – a boy on January 30th.
* Dr. Dajani reported the Computer Science Department has completed their interviews for the open faculty position. They have also been busy applying for grants.
* Dr. Haddock reported the Kinesiology Department is beginning their search for a new department chair. It will be an internal search.
* Dr. Jetter reported the Math Department had made their hiring recommendation to the dean. She also reported that the department will have its external review this Friday, February 25th.

Announcements by Administration

* Dr. Escalante reported that 3 STEM counselors have resigned creating an increased workload for the newly hired counselors. He is currently looking into ways to improve retention of workers in the Center.
* Dr. Maynard reported the A4US grant is hiring tutors for Spring 2022. There is limited space in the Science Success Center and he inquired about available space in the departments.
* Dr. Maynard spoke of the CNS STEM Transfer Day on April 8th. He provided an overview of what was the schedule for the day.
* Dr. Maynard provided the dates and times for the First-Time-Freshman Orientation and the Transfer Orientation.
* Mr. Hernandez reported we are beginning the process for the outstanding student recognition as well as the outstanding faculty recognition. Chairs have received a list of students who are eligible for the award in their departments. Once they choose the student, they are to notify Ms. Rinebolt so that she can send out the information to the student. Department awardees names should be submitted to Ms. Rinebolt by March 4th. He also requested the chairs send Ms. Rinebolt the name of the faculty member who will serve on the committee to choose the outstanding student.
* Mr. Hernandez reported the outstanding faculty award information will go out this week.
* Dr. McGill reported that the College is at 82% of target for the semester and the University is at 88%.
* Dr. McGill spoke to the chairs about evaluations that need to be done for lecturers. Part-time lecturers are the responsibility of the departments. She will meet with Rosie Torres to learn more about the process and will email information to chairs.
* Dean Pantula asked the chairs for some input on how to help students be more responsible in their learning. Suggestions were:
  + Tutors
  + Formation of a student committee to receive feedback from students on what they believe their needs to be.
  + Graduate students serving as counselors.

Discussion on Telecommuting – Jennifer Sorenson, Rowena Casis-Woidyla, Muriel Lopez-Wagner

Dr. Sorenson reported that the telecommuting opportunity is a test to see how telecommuting impacts the university. The testing period will run from March 1st through June 3rd when we begin the 4/10 schedule. Dr. Sorenson reminded the chairs that it is important that the office always has coverage.

Chairs shared questions they had about telecommuting policy:

* Are the days flexible? Can I ask for a Monday one week but change it to a Wednesday on another week?
  + No, the day should remain the same.
* What if someone becomes ill and you need the employee working from home to come to campus?
* You must give an employee 48 hours’ notice if you want them to come to campus.
* Can you expect a staff member to turn on their camera?
  + Yes, you can ask this. You are to communicate with your staff what your expectations are with this arrangement in advance
* Is there a deadline in filling out the request to telecommute?
  + No, but applying late you may not get the day you would like.

Dr. Dajani reported that the application form needs to be updated to include the department chair’s approval. Ms. Lopez-Wagner said they are aware of the issue and the form is being updated.

Announcements by Administration (continued)

* Dean Pantula reminded chairs to please use their HERRF funds.
* Dean Pantula reported that Dr. Jetter has been assigned to the committee to handle the search for the Dean of Undergraduate Studies position.
* Dean Pantula reminded the chairs to encourage their faculty to use their professional development funds. The monies provided by the college and department will not roll forward.
* Dean Pantula reported that the Provost has agreed to extend the deadline for the use of the start-up funds.