Natural Sciences Chairs Council

April 19, 2021

1:00pm – 3:00pm, ZOOM

In Attendance: M. Chao, K. Cousins, D. Maynard, L. Mian, B. Haddock, M. Jetter, T. Burch,

J. Torner, G. Escalante, D. Rinebolt, T. Valencia, S. McGill, S. Pantula

Summer Session Presentation – Rose Wilson, Mark Atkinson

* Mark Atkinson introduced himself to the chairs. He is the new Assistant Dean of PACE. Rose Wilson provided an overview of the plans for summer session this year.

Approval of Minutes -

* Minutes of April 5 2021 were approved.

Announcements by Chairs

* Dr. Jetter reported that Mathematics Department is offering calculus bridge courses this summer to assist students moving from quarters to semesters the opportunity to be prepared for their next classes.
* Dr. Torner announced the Physics Department will not have any classes scheduled for summer session.
* Dr. Burch reported there is some uncertainty with the Foreign Trained Nurses Program that is usually offered in the summer. The list of around 700 potential candidates for the program has shrunk to 8.
* Dr. Haddock reported that his group advising sessions have been a great disappointment. Students register but then do not show up. His most recent attempt he had 18 students registered and only one student showed up.
* Dr. Cousins reported she has been busy with yearly evaluations. She just finished faculty and lecturers and now has staff evaluations to do. It is a little overwhelming.
* Dr. Cousins reported that she is not very pleased with the advising program as it is currently set up. It has been very chaotic. Students sign on to EAB and do not carefully look at what they are doing. She has had many students sign up for advising with her that are not chemistry majors.
* Dr. Maynard reported that the Geology Department has hired a new chair. Dr. Claire Todd.
* Dr. Maynard reported the School of Computer Science and Engineering has completed their search for a new director and have submitted their recommendation to the dean.
* Dr. Mian reported the Health Science Department is in the process of scheduling campus interviews for their candidates.
* Dr. Mian reported the department is busy working on their 1st and 3rd year evaluations of faculty.
* Dr. Mian announced that the department ASC, Stephanie Martinez, has accepted a position with Academic Affairs office and will be leaving their department at the end of April.
* Dr, Chao reported that the Biology department has submitted the CIRM Bridges to Stem Cell Research grant for renewal.
* Ms. Valencia reported that she had sent out budget reports of the faculty class accounts to the department ASCs.  She also reminded the department chairs that continuing faculty and year 2 faculty PDF expires on June 30, 2021.  The year 1 faculty funds will carry over into the next AY.

Announcements by Administration

* Dean Pantula shared that Mr. Hernandez was absent today and he would give an overview of the work being done by him. Plans are currently in process for the Sweet Success event to be held on May 6th. Mr. Hernandez is also working on planning an event for the leadership team to hold an end of the year get together at Dean Pantula’s residence. He is also waiting for the voting to be completed to announce the outstanding alumni award recipient.
* Dr. Escalante shared that the community college event will be held next week.
* Dr. Escalante also reported that he is working on the Entrepreneurship Program that will have 18 units with a few units from CNS.
* Dr. Escalante reported he is continuing to work with the two committees planning the General Science degree and the General Analytics degree.
* Dr. McGill reminded chairs that she circulated the “Course is Full” spreadsheet for Summer 2021 this morning and asked chairs to add seats (or sections if necessary) to Summer courses that are full.
* Dr. McGill reminded chairs that the Fall schedule should reflect the assumption that we will be fully back in-person for the Fall, with in-person instruction being the default mode of delivery.  (If Covid conditions do not allow a return to 100% capacity in classrooms in Fall, a campus-wide decision will be made to switch to Plan B, with 50% capacity achieved by moving large courses online and moving smaller courses to larger rooms).  If there are courses listed as being online for Fall that should be offered in person, please make the change in instruction mode this week by April 23rd, before students start registering on April 26.
* Dr. McGill reminded chairs that all teaching and reassigned time for tenure-line faculty and FT lecturers should be entered into PeopleSoft by April 23.
* Dr. McGill reminded chairs that April 30 is the deadline for faculty to sign up for training via ATI in teaching online.  Departments may want to consider requiring that faculty who are scheduled to teach online for Fall 2021 have either received training in teaching online already or will register for training this summer.  This will be a discussion item at a future meeting.
* Dr. McGill reminded chairs that AY 2020-21 assessment reports will be due in December 2021, so they should ensure that appropriate data for those reports are being collected this year.
* Dr. McGill informed the chairs of the WSCUC requirement that they must have WSCUC approval to have more than 50% of the classes in any program online.
* Dr. Pantula explained to the chairs his decision to support the Provost’s position on a conflict of interest.
* Dr. Pantula reported he is working on finding out how many new positions we will have for next year. He has requested 10-15 and is awaiting word from Academic Affairs on how many we will actually receive. Dr. Chao inquired about staff positions. Ms. Valencia reported that we should get 2.5 staff positions for the upcoming year.
* Dr. Pantula addressed the plan to return to campus. The cabinet is meeting this week to finalize the plans. At this point there has not been a date set to return to campus but discussion have centered around a July 1st possibility. Dr. Chao inquired as to whether there has been any discussion about allowing some ability to work from home. He suggested it would reduce the carbon footprint if some folks were permitted to work from home.