Natural Sciences Chairs Council

July 19, 2021

1:00pm – 3:00pm, ZOOM

In Attendance: K. Cousins, B. Haddock, M. Jetter, T. Burch, K. Dajani, G. Escalante, D. Rinebolt, T. Valencia, S. McGill, S. Pantula, R. Hernandez

Approval of Minutes – Minutes of the June 21st meeting were approved.

Announcements by Chairs

* Dr. Haddock reported that the Kinesiology Department is working through how to run some of their labs.  He also stated that some of the enrollments are low and they will likely be cancelling a few more classes.
* Dr. Dajani reported that things are going well in the School of Computer Science and Engineering. Labs are being renovated and some new furniture has been received. He is working with Dr. Maynard concerning the scheduling of classes.
* Dr. Jetter reported first time freshmen were automatically enrolled in their math class based on the multiple measures placement system. Students in STEM majors requiring Calculus should have been enrolled in Preparation for Calculus if their multiple measures placement showed them ready for GE math, but some of these students are actually ready for Calculus. She told chairs that if they advise any FTF who believe they're ready for Calculus but were enrolled in a different course to let them know they can take a diagnostic test on the ALEKS platform to determine their readiness and be permitted into Math 2210 if they earn an acceptable score. Further details are posted on Teams, and Undergraduate Studies is also sending targeted emails to students in the appropriate placement category who need Calculus.
* Dr. Burch reported the Nursing Department is having to deal with students who do not want to get vaccinated and the problem that creates with finding field placements for them. Most hospitals require vaccinations for their staff.
* Dr. Maynard reported that the Geology Department is busy getting ready for the arrival of their new department chair, Dr. Claire Todd.
* Dr. Cousins reported the Chemistry Department has been busy adjusting class enrollments.
* Ms. Rinebolt spoke to the chairs about classroom visitation requests that were made for the spring semester but were not completed by the faculty they were assigned to. She will send a listing of outstanding classroom visit reports that have not been submitted and asked the chairs if they would reach out to their faculty and ask them to please submit them.
* Ms. Valencia reported that Academic Affairs will be keeping 50% of our carryover. She stressed the importance of faculty spending their monies when they are awarded and not allowing the funds to sit in their class accounts. Dr. Pantula said he has every intention of honoring the start-up packages that were offered, but reported that going forward we will not extend the time for the expiration of the funds.
* Ms. Valencia also reported that the HEERF funding has been reduced and we’ve been asked to reduce our approved requests by 11.65%.  There were two sets of approved requests and the Dean emailed copies of the approved requests to the department chairs last week.  We ask that each department chair review and identify requests that will not occur because we are now returning face to face.  We have to submit our reductions by Wednesday, July 21, 2021.
* Dr. Escalante reported on the events that the STEM Center will be holding in the next few weeks. Early advising for first year students will take place August 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th. Transfer students will meet at 9 a.m. on those days and freshmen will meet at 1 p.m. He also spoke of orientation sessions that will be held for STEM students. August 17th there will be a session for cohort 6 STEM students and August 18th there will be session for cohort 5 STEM students.
* Dr. Escalante also reported that a STEM Club has been started here at CSUSB. Officers have been established and membership is at 38 students so far.
* Mr. Hernandez reported that he is currently working on a planner for STEM Center students for this coming fall semester. He also reported that he has developed a logo for the Science Success Center.
* Mr. Hernandez reported that the University has determined that plexiglass will not be needed as we return to full capacity for fall semester. If you would like plexiglass for your work area we must reach out to HR for their approval to move forward with the request.
* Mr. Hernandez gave an overview of the upcoming events for the college:
  + 7/29 staff share luncheon in the Commons
  + 8/2 leadership retreat – lunch
  + 8/30 leadership retreat, part 2
  + 8/19 CNS Convocation from 2-4 p.m.
* Mr. Hernandez inquired if there was any interest among the departments to have a series of small events taking place across the departments.
* Mr. Hernandez reported there has been a lot of planning taking place already for the week of Homecoming in October. Lots of events have been planned.

Announcements by Administration

* Dr. McGill inquired of the chairs if they thought they would be able to get 3 participants from their departments to be on the Faculty Learning Center RPT committee. She mentioned that there is a $2,000 stipend for each participant.
* Dr. McGill quickly reviewed the scheduling updates that were posted in the agenda.
* Dr. McGill mentioned that she has sent out a proposal for online/hybrid courses. She asked chairs to be sure and review the document. A discussion on the suggested guidelines will be postponed until all chairs are present.
* Dr. Pantula spoke with the chairs concerning repopulation of the campus. He inquired if there were any concerns they were hearing from their faculty. He reported that he had heard concerns about face masks. Primarily the concern seems to be whether or not faculty can demand face masks and what can they do should a student fail to comply with the request. Who enforces the rules? Dr. Haddock reported that masks are a major problem for the Kinesiology Department.