Natural Sciences Chairs Council

July 20, 2020

1:00pm – 3:00pm, ZOOM

In Attendance: S. Pantula, S. McGill, M. Chao, K. Cousins, T. Burch, J. Torner, D. Maynard, L. Mian, T. Rizzo, M. Jetter, L. Guzman, D. Rinebolt, R. Hernandez

Announcements by Chairs

* Dr. Torner reported that research is beginning in the physics department. Department is working on setting up offices for new faculty as well as rearranging offices in department for retiring faculty. Additionally department is working on finishing up the development of lab courses for the fall semester.
* Dr. Chao reported that he is involved in facilitating faculty training for the online teaching via the Issues X grant along with Dr. Cousins and Dr. McGill.
* Dr. Jetter reported that the math department is working on setting up offices for the 6 newly hired faculty.
* Dr. Burch announced that they have closed the fall cohort for the Nursing program and have ended taking applications for the spring semester.
* Dr. Cousins reported that the chemistry department is busy with the 13 different labs they are prepping for fall semester. Dr. Cousins also reported that she has been extremely busy with enrollment management.
* Dr. Rizzo reported that the new hire for the Health Science Department has completed all the necessary paperwork and is now looking forward to working in the fall semester.
* Dr. Mian reported that he is busy getting up to speed with the details of the Health Science Department and has attended a lot of meetings and has been interacting with students.
* Dr. Maynard reported the School of Computer Science & Engineeringl has been busy locating offices and office furniture for its 4 newly hired faculty.
* Dr. Guzman reported that the advising center has been extremely busy. The advisors are booked two to three weeks in advance. They are busy doing virtual career panels as well. Advisors are contacting transfer students who have put in deposits but have not registered for classes.

Announcements by Administration

* Dr. McGill shared a screen with the chairs showing the tentative department targets for fall semester. The college is currently at 85% of what we need to meet target. She asked chairs to open seats in courses that are full so that we can enroll more students.
* Dr. McGill spoke to the chairs about Intersession a three week class session that takes place over the winter break and is run by the College of Extended and Global Education. Registration starts November 9th.
* Dr. McGill spoke about spring semester and the need to make sure classes have been assigned to a classroom just in case we are able to return to campus by spring 2021. The optimizer will run August 24th and she wants to make sure that our college uses the classrooms that have been assigned to us.
* Dr. McGill spoke to the chairs about the reassigned time survey that had been sent to them. She reminded them that the deadline to submit this is July 24. Dr. Torner asked if the chairs would be notified of faculty who have submitted requests. He said he was aware that 3 of the physics faculty have submitted requests but he has not been notified of anything.
* Dr. Pantula reported that Dr. Jetter wished to discuss online cheating at this meeting. The math department has a significant problem with students using Chegg, a website where students are supposed to be able to get academic help. The math department recently became aware that solutions to problems were being uploaded onto Chegg. Other chairs lamented that they too are having issues with students cheating.
* Dr. Burch reported that the nursing department uses a system (Proctorial) that is very thorough in its method of trying to prevent cheating. She told them that the students have complained because they don’t like being watched electronically.
* Dr. Pantula reported that some faculty have used dot.camera but the focus was not clear. Another problem that was reported was that if you give students more than 40 seconds to answer a question, they can google the answer.
* Dr. Jetter would like faculty to have access to Chegg so they can look for cheating. Chegg requires individual accounts – no sharing accounts. This could be costly. She will check and see if it is possible to get concurring licenses where 3-4 faculty can share it.
* Dr. Cousins reminded chairs that faculty must stress with the students the policy against cheating. Chemistry also has experienced a problem with student cheating. She said she believed the only way to deal with this it to change the way that you assess a student. Dr. Torner added that faculty need to have their policy in the syllabus and need to emphasize this with their students.
* Dr. Pantula mentioned that there seemed to be some confusion about deadlines. Dr. McGill mentioned using OneDrive or GoogleDrive to post deadlines. Dr. McGill said she would use OneDrive. Dr. Torner suggested a College of Natural Sciences calendar on Outlook.
* Dr. Pantula reported that Chancellor White had sent out an email right before our meeting started announcing cuts to the university this year. Aside from any cuts to the budget, the college’s part-time faculty funding will be at least $1 million less than last year’s due to the college’s net gain in tenure-track faculty. Thus to accommodate student demand, we may consider increasing seats and not sections when appropriate. Dr. Pantula asked faculty to focus on opening seats in sections that are currently full and have waitlists. He also asked them to think about how they can work with the reduced part-time faculty funding and need overall.
* Dr. Pantula informed the chairs that operating expenses will be held at the dean’s office this year to monitor the expenses to absolute essentials. He will meet with chairs/ASCs to work with Tina on this.
* Dr. Pantula informed the chairs that there may not be any Professional Development Funds ($1,000) given to faculty this year. He pointed out that this may not be a problem since travel has been suspended till June 30. 2021, due to Covid.
* Dr. Pantula reported that low enrollment in CNS is a big concern right now. Loss of enrollment means loss of faculty positions in the future.
* Dr. Burch asked if differential tuition had been considered. Dr. Pantula said he had not checked on this with the CSU system, but will discuss this with the Provost. Dr. Burch pointed out that the cost of a nursing student exceeds that of a math student. She has heard that other CSUs had discussed this.
* Dr. Pantula reminded chairs of the August 3rd chairs’ meeting. We will have a guest author speaking. Laura Liswood, author of The Loudest Duck; Moving Beyond Diversity While Embracing Differences to Achieve Success at Work, will be meeting with us. After her presentation, there will be time for the chairs and the academic advisors to have a conversation. This is being funded by the A4US grant.
* Dr. Pantula also informed the chairs that we will have a mini-retreat on August 7th. We will discuss what we will do and not do in the upcoming year. Dr. Chao asked about sabbaticals. Dr. Pantula reported that sabbaticals that have been approved will be honored. He is unsure of what the position will be going forward.