

# COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCE and MATHEMATICS

## Minutes of Council of Chairs Meeting – March 7, 2016

A meeting of the Council of Chairs of the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics was held on Monday, March 7, 2016. Stephen Addison presided, members present: Ginny Adams, Jeff Allender, Pat Desrochers, Ramesh Garimella, Uma Garimella, Brent Hill, and Carl Frederickson.

### Agenda Items:

- Minutes from the February 8, 2016 meeting were approved.
- Dean Addison asked chairs to get their merit/equity adjustments to him by Wednesday, March 9. The Dean has requested a correction in the CUPA data and asked that chairs double check their numbers so there is an accurate record for the budget book. He also asked that they review the merit portion of equity and indicate low performance as needed.
- Dean Addison led a discussion on reliability of grades and recommended the chairs read, “The Uncertainty of Grades in Physics Courses is Surprisingly Large” by David M. Harrison and “Grading in the Sciences (Elective Seminar)” by Donald M. Feke. He asked chairs to talk to their faculty about grading issues and to discuss grading practices with adjuncts so there is a consistency in grading regardless of which section a student is in. Discussion followed.
- Dean Addison reminded chairs that classes in banner appear in the EMS system. He also advised chairs that the Mac version of EMS will be going away with the next EMS update and that he asked John Black to set up a PC’s that can be remote accessed so those people who use Mac’s will still be able to access the EMS system.
- Dean Addison announced that April 1-2 is a very busy weekend for the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics: we are hosting the Oklahoma/Arkansas MAA Conference, the Arkansas Academy of Science is being held in Fayetteville, the Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair is here, and poster abstracts for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual CNSM Student Research Symposium are due March 31<sup>st</sup>. The Dean encourages faculty to participate in what they can and discussion followed on the need to prioritize the number of events that we participate in especially in the Spring due to the strain on finding enough volunteers to run the events.
- Dean Addison announced that the Internship Banquet is tonight. Discussion followed on the effectiveness of this event and the need to be able to mingle with employers.
- Dean Addison led a discussion on the new course withdrawal policy regarding when students can withdraw and what kind of grade they receive. There was also discussion regarding what kind of grade students should receive when dropped for non-attendance.

### Other Items

- Dean Addison asked for a representative from each department to be on the Open Source Journals committee. The committee will develop guidelines and come up with a list that we would support. Discussion followed.

## Chair Reports

### Biology

Dr. Hill reported:

- Leah Horton had a proposal accepted for presentation at the Mixed Methods International Research Association Conference, Durham University, UK, in August 2016.
- Ginny Adams returned last week from a trip to the Galapagos to discuss the possibility of starting a study abroad program there.
- Arijit Mukherjee had an abstract chosen by the American Society of Plant Biologists for a talk at the Plant Biology 2016 meeting in Austin, Texas during July. He was also invited to chair the symposium titled, "Biotic Interactions in Roots."
- Three candidates were brought in to interview for the Genetics tenure track position and we are in the process of negotiating with the first choice.
- Paper Accepted:
  - Laken C. Woods, Gregory W. Berbusse, and Kari Naylor. Frontiers—Mitochondrial Research. "Microtubules are Essential for Mitochondrial Dynamics—Fission, Fusion, and Motility—in Dictyostelium discoideum."
- The Biology 10 year review was submitted to Dean Addison.
- The Anatomy and Physiology Lecturer I search has ended and Dr. Candice Thomas will fill the position.

### Chemistry

Dr. Desrochers reported:

- The department recently hired Marsha Massey as its second permanent lecturer. Marsha will join the department in Fall 2016 following completion of her PhD in inorganic chemistry from the University of North Carolina. Marsha's initial teaching responsibilities will include CHEM 1402 and 1450.
- Rob Mauldin had four home-school high school students join his CHEM 1451 lab for an experiment on acid/base titrations, Feb 22, 2016. The students work under the guidance their science teacher, Ms. Sherri Brixey.
- The department received its formal report from its external reviewers (B. Holmes, UNC Asheville, C. Wick, Louisiana Tech U.). The report details strengths and weaknesses of the chemistry program at UCA and makes recommendations for future plans. The department now has 4 weeks to complete its formal reply.
- Renovations of Prince 201 to become wet-research lab space are ongoing. Space allocation was agreed upon with Dean Ishee (HBS) and Dr. J. Moore (Dept. of OT). The process is now in a detailed engineering and design phase to ensure proper HVAC and fume hood operation. Dooley has already moved her laser equipment to this new space.
- Kristin Dooley received a URC summer stipend award for 2016.
- Karen Steelman participated as a board member at the American Rock Art Association board meeting in Phoenix, AZ, Jan 29-30, 2016.

## Computer Science

Dr. Ramesh Garimella reported:

- The Department has received 41 applications to fill two tenure-track positions in computer engineering. The Search Committee will meet tomorrow to start short listing the candidates
- Tansel Halic's R01 NIH grant proposal to develop a Virtual Endoluminal Surgical Simulator (VESS) with Harvard Medical School has been approved. The grant period will be for 5 years. The UCA portion is \$144,869.
- The CS graduate students Sertan Kaya, Doga Demirel, and Alex Yu, mentored by Sinan Kockara and Tansel Halic, were given travel awards for their poster presentation at the 2016 Mid South Computational Biology and Bioinformatics Society Conference held between March 3 and 5 at the University of Memphis. Also, one of the 2 posters presented received 2nd best poster award.

## Geography

Dr. Allender reported:

- Steve O'Connell and Jeff Allender attended the annual State Coordinators Meeting of the National Geographic Society in Washington D.C. last week. We had a very successful Hill day, were able to meet with the Educational Advisors of four of our six congressmen and arranged a 35-minute meeting with Senator Boozman and his top three advisors. It was incredibly productive! He was very interested in how geography was doing in Arkansas, I've met him before to discuss the new, required middle-school geography course and he's been very supportive of it. He supported an education bill that already passed, Every Student Succeeds Act, which is replacing the No Child Left Behind.

Now it's in the appropriations phase, and he is leading the support to not only fund it, but also include geography. As it went through, it allowed teachers to apply for competitive grants in innovative teaching technologies for social studies, but only listed history and civics. We want it to include geography and economics as well so we can compete for these grants. Boozman and French Hill have already signed onto the support letter and Womack probably will soon.

## Mathematics

Dr. Ramesh Garimella reported:

- Applied Stat Search has been successful.
- The Department has received 15 applications to date to fill a tenure-track position in mathematics education, recently vacated by Dr. Linda Griffith. The Search Committee will meet soon to short list the candidates.
- On March 5, 2016, approximately 100 junior and senior high school students in central Arkansas took part in the Arkansas Council of Teachers of Mathematics Regional Contest held in the Department of Mathematics at UCA. Competition was held in the categories of Algebra Algebra II, Geometry, Pre-calculus, Calculus, Statistics, and I. Mathematics Faculty members Dr. Carolyn Pinchback and Mrs. Loi Booher were co-directors organized the contest. Top three finishers in each category received trophies, and certificate were given to honorable mentions. Mathematics Faculty members Dr. Charles Watson, Mrs. Crystal Spellman, and Dr. Ramesh Garimella and all graduate teaching assistants in mathematics helped in organizing the contest, grading the tests and presenting the awards. There were several such regional contests held

through out the state. Top three finishers in each category from each region will be invited next month to UCA Math Department to participate in the ACTM State Math Contest.

- A paper co-authored by R.B. Lenin titled "Analysis of N-Policy queues with disastrous breakdown" is accepted for publication in the journal "TOP: Operations Research & Decision Theory."

## STEM Institute

Dr. Uma Garimella reported:

- Dr. Garimella was invited to represent mid-western region and present (paid trip) at Library of Congress Annual Sources Conference in Orlando Florida: "This is our Town: Using Geocaching Portal to Cross Curriculum Teaching in the Classroom"
- Dr. Garimella, Dr. Hu and Dr. Hamilton (UALR) attended the MSP national conference for grantees.
- STEM Institute in collaboration with Department of Mathematics and College of Education submitted NCLB proposal to ADHE.
- Cara Cates and Sharon Mckinney, STEM Institute specialists coordinated UCA STEM Leadership for Girls Conference on UCA campus. 80 high school students from Conway, Vilonia, Mayflower and Greenbrier attended the conference. Several UAMS faculty presented at the conference.
- STEM Institute host STEM coalition meeting on UCA campus. More than 100 people from Business, school district, Educational cooperatives, STEM Centers and UCA attended the meeting.

## Physics

Dr. Frederickson reported:

- The UCA Chapter of the Society of Physics Students (SPS) hosted the Zone 10 meeting on Friday and Saturday March 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. There were 70 attendees from the University of Southern Mississippi, Louisiana Tech, Rhodes College, Hendrix College, the University of Mississippi, Henderson State, and UCA. You can see photos on Facebook in the *SPS Zone 10* group and using the hashtag #SPSZoneX on twitter.
- Dr. Andy Mason attended the Research Methods Workshop March 2-3 in Austin Texas. The Uteach Institute provided the workshop.
- Drs. Rahul Mehta and Azida Walker accompanied students: Jordan Barajas, Angelo Gomes, Michael Wilson, Thomas (Jacob) Cameron, Kenneth Jumper, Max Milan, Sarah Spellmann, Clint Costello, Christina Junkans, Brandon Miller, Caleb Webb to Denton Texas on February 25-27. All of these students are in the Nuclear Physics course this semester and they spent the weekend making measurements using the linear accelerator facilities in the Department of Physics at the University of North Texas.