

COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCE and MATHEMATICS

Minutes of Council of Chairs Meeting – September 15, 2014

A meeting of the Council of Chairs of the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics was held on Monday, September 15, 2014. All Chairs were present.

Agenda Items:

- Minutes from the August 25, 2014 meeting were approved with minor changes.
- Dean Addison asked for input regarding changes to the academic calendar. Changes being considered are starting the semester on Monday instead of Thursday and moving Fall Break to Thanksgiving week. Discussion followed regarding how these changes would affect orientation, boot camp, and shorten instruction time right before finals week.
- Dean Addison announced that SBAC proposals are due soon and reminded chairs that proposals need to go through proper channels, faculty-chair-dean, then he will send in a consolidated proposal from the college. Dean Addison asked that proposals be submitted to him by October 10th.
- Dean Addison announced that Distinguished Scholar's Day is October 3rd and everyone is invited to the Banquet Lunch from 12:00-1:00 and the Academic College Showcase immediately after lunch. The College of Natural Science and Mathematics will be set up in room 215 of the Student Center.
- Dean Addison informed the council about the Arkansas Louis Stokes Alliance which was formed 8 years ago to encourage minority students to pursue careers in STEM disciplines and to match students to member schools. He announced that UCA recently applied to join the alliance and that the application was unanimously accepted.
- Dean Addison handed out copies of the current performance funding reports. Discussion followed on what the numbers mean and how to use them to support new position requests.

Other Items:

- Dean Addison reminded chairs that VPAT Forms must be completed when purchasing new software. The form can be found on the purchasing website.
- Dean Addison led a discussion on the new People Admin software. Some issues were raised with the delay in background checks and the drug testing requirement and a suggestion was made that a Research Statement option be included for faculty postings similar to the Teaching Statement option and that a box be added to allow input of a department description.
- Dean Addison answered questions regarding the 6 Year Graduation Rates that he emailed to all the chairs.
- P. Desrochers announced that Posters at the Capital will be on February 11, 2015 and that we will follow the same procedure as last year to determine which posters will be presented.
- B. Cash asked for input on raising morale in light of the recent pay increases which some felt were unbalanced and insignificant. Discussion followed involving discrepancies between the 1% COLA that staff received and the 5-6% increase in provost office salaries; establishing an on-going merit/bonus pool; and how to retain quality faculty and staff who leave for better paying positions at other universities. It was recommended that supporting data be gathered and presented to the Faculty Senate.
- Dean Addison asked that PAF's for incentive funding be turned in this week.

- Dean Addison let chairs know that there is an issue with Fee Codes in Banner not showing up on courses that were entered after the new core codes were assigned and that the registrar and provost are working on getting the issue resolved.

Chair Reports:

Biology

Dr. Cash reported:

- 15 students and 7 faculty participated in the 6th Annual Conway EcoFest on September 13th at Laurel Park.
- Dr. Arijit Mukherjee presented a poster titled, "Formation of nodule-like structures and the underlying transcriptomic responses in rice in response to auxin," at the 2nd Annual Plant Genomics Congress in St. Louis, Missouri, on September 11-12th.

Chemistry

Dr. Desrochers reported:

- Don Perry organized the first chalk talks that will take place in the STEM Residential College on September 18th at 6:00pm: pizza will be served.
- Faith Yarberry did a liquid nitrogen ice cream promotion of Map Works for the STEM Residential College that resulted in STEM accounting for 25% of all Map Works signups.
- Donna Nelson, the Science Adviser for Breaking Bad, is giving a public talk on September 26th.
- Kristin Dooley and student ACS participated in Conway EcoFest on September 13th demonstrating green cleaning solutions.
- Bill Taylor submitted an RUI NSF proposal entitled, "Investigating the Influence of Halogen Ligands on the Ability of Late Gas-Phase Transition Metal Ions to Activate Bonds in Small Substrate Molecules". Total request is \$237,000 for three years.
- Rob Mauldin submitted a foundation grant for publication costs associated with a book on the history of the chemistry department at UCA.

Computer Science

Dr. Ramesh Garimella reported:

- Tansel Halic received two research grants on the Development of the Virtual Airway Skill Trainer (VAST) Simulation and Virtual Basic Laparoscopic Skill Trainer (VBLaST) Simulation in collaboration with RPI and Harvard Medical School. Total amount of funding is \$117K supported by the National Institute of Health (NIH).
- The new Computer Science Technician will join the department on October 1st.

Geography

Dr. Allender reported:

- He and Steve O'Connell were invited to present a GIS & StoryMap demonstration to seniors at Pulaski Academy in Little Rock. Human Geography is now a required course for all seniors at PA and there were 86 attending the presentation. Dr. Allender spoke on the employment opportunities with geography and geospatial track majors at UCA and Dr. O'Connell gave a 90-minute presentation on GIS technologies and how to use StoryMaps in their classes.
- His proposal for presenting at the Arkansas Curriculum Conference in November has been accepted. The proposal is titled, "Geography's Influence on Current World Events," and he will be working with Dr. Mounir Farah of the King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies. The presentation is on Thursday, November 6th, at the State House Convention Center.

Mathematics

Dr. Ramesh Garimella reported:

- The Math Department received approval to conduct two tenure-track searches this fall. The department has decided to search for an applied statistician and a mathematics educator.
- Lauren Pinkerton, Admin I, resigned last week to accept a position elsewhere on campus. The position has been upgraded to Admin II and an internal search is being conducted to fill the position.

STEM Institute

Dr. Uma Garimella reported:

- The STEM Institute hosted a one-day follow-up session on robotics, 21 teachers participated. Dr. Helen Hu from the College of Education and Dr. Paruchuri from Computer Science conducted the training; Ms. Minnietta Ready facilitated the training.
- The STEM Institute is hosting a science day for middle school: Science Engineering Night – SEI @ Conway on November 8, 2014, brought to us by the Arkansas School of Mathematics, Science, and the Arts.
- The STEM Institute has two grant opportunities:
 - Leadership in STEM for Girls from Perkins funds to host 1-day workshop for 50 girls in grades 10-14, must include 2-year colleges. \$10,000 budget, \$1,000 planning money. Finished by April 30, 2015.
 - No Child Left Behind funding is available for one more year. There is about \$60K to provide integrated math and science teacher training. Looking for ideas and partners.

Physics

Dr. Frederickson reported:

- The Department has chosen to hire Nancy McDaniel to fill the Administrative Specialist II position left open by the transferring of Dayna Bilderback to the Dean's Office. Nancy has 9 years of experience working in a department then Dean's office at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee. We are now waiting for paperwork to come back from Little Rock to complete the hire.
- The SPS manned a booth at the Conway Ecofest on Saturday, September 13th. Students presented information on different ways to produce electrical energy.
- Dr. Andrew Mason presented a poster titled "Epistemic Views and Metacognition in Group Problem Solving in Physics: Life Science and Health Science Majors," at the second CIRCLE (Center for Integrative Research on Cognition, Learning, and Education) Conference. The meeting was held in St. Louis, Missouri on September 11 and 12 at Washington University.