

College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics  
Minutes of Virtual Council of Chairs Meeting  
March 1, 2021

All members except Stephen O'Connell. Guest: Dr. Yaqian He represented the Geography Department.

Agenda Items:

- February 1, 2021 minutes approved with minor revisions.
- Discussion on offering as many online courses as possible in the summer to allow for preparations to bring students back into the classrooms in the Fall. The current plan is for most classes in the Fall to be hybrid with fully online course offerings requiring prior approval. Please continue to spread course offerings throughout the day to help with population density in the buildings.
  - The online/hybrid designation requests will be permanent and allow for greater flexibility in course offerings going forward.
  - Expectation is to continue wearing masks in the classroom even as mandates loosen.
  - Discussion on concerns regarding increasing enrollments in online offerings and decisions to not hire additional faculty where needed.
- Please send all document requiring a dean's signature to [cnsmdocusign@uca.edu](mailto:cnsmdocusign@uca.edu). This will allow for better management of documents especially when one of the Deans is out of the office and unable to access their email.
- Dean Addison reminded Chairs that wording on syllabi matters and it is extremely important that syllabi are reviewed at the beginning of each semester before being distributed to students. Syllabi are to be treated as a contract between the faculty and student and the new appeal process states that syllabi policies are not appealable. Discussion followed.
- Dean Addison shared the new grade appeal process timeline with council.
- Ginny Adams led a discussion on issues with grant accounting. She is working with Joy Ritchey to come up with solutions and needs to know what other issues that need to be addressed.
  - Significant delays in processing paperwork and budget transfers due to staff working remotely and not having access to needed resources or files.
  - Having to send multiple emails on the same issue and lack of communication when something is changed after it leaves the department.
  - Salary match not being applied correctly causing auditing issues with grant funding sources.

Other Items

- Discussion on the new procurement card process and other support services that seem to be pushing workload to departments and faculty.
- Day of Giving is March 11<sup>th</sup>, please be reaching out to alumni with save the date information and how their gifts support our programs.

## Chair Reports:

### Brent Hill, Biology

- Sarah Martin completed her MS thesis (mentor: Vicki McDonald). Thesis title: Determination of Bat Species' use of Artificial Bark Enhanced Habitat at Select Sites in North and Central Arkansas.
- Publication: Sallinger, ES, Robeson MS, and TS Haselkorn. 2021. Characterization of the bacterial microbiomes of social amoebae and exploration of the roles of host and environment on microbiome composition. *Environmental Microbiology* 23(1): 126-142. doi: 10.1111/1462-2920.15279.
- Kyle Hurley is actively recruiting judges for the Arkansas State Science and Engineering Fair. The fair will be virtual this year so judging can be done remotely.

### Pat Desrochers, Chemistry

- Paper with four UCA undergraduates published in *J. of Physical Chemistry A* (February 2021) Camille Foscue, Hayden Brown, Kathryn Walden, Dayna Hession, William S. Taylor\*, and Makenzie Provorse Long, Near-Thermal Reactions of Au<sup>+</sup>(<sup>1</sup>S, <sup>3</sup>D) and AuX<sup>+</sup> with CH<sub>3</sub>X (X = Br, I): A Combined Experimental and Computational Analysis.
- Faith Yarberry had a commentary appear in Celebrating Chemistry (part of the ACS's Chemistry Celebrate Earth Week 2021 outreach). Listen Up! The Life Cycle of a Cell Phone.
- Several of our majors were honored as Purple Society inductees: Kathryn Walden, Zane Grant, Nsiong Archibong (February 2021). Kathryn was honored as one of the outstanding female students.
- Lecturer 1 search progressing. Ad now posted on UCA website. Target March 29th evaluation date. Anticipating final decision before the end of April.
- ATOM Scholars program (NSF S-STEM) is recruiting second cohort of students (6) for 2021-22 AY.

### Stephen O'Connell, Geography

- Willow Harper (undergraduate student and advisee of Ling Zhang) received 3rd Place in the Undergraduate Paper Competition at the Southwest American Association of Geographers annual meeting, held virtually in November 2020. Her paper covered a pilot study on childhood obesity in Arkansas.
- MGIS alumna Andrea Zekis was appointed in 2020 as a CDC Graduate Research Fellow and is currently working in Atlanta on epidemiological modeling using GIS.
- The Masters in Geographic Information Systems program (MGIS) was recently ranked third in a new online GIS graduate school ranking list published by Best Value Schools. (<https://www.bestvalueschools.org/masters-in-gis/>)
- Matthew Connolly and Yaqian He (along with Dr. X. Huang of UA) received a \$40,000 NASA Epscor grant to determine irrigation patterns and microclimates in the Arkansas Delta using drone imagery and machine learning techniques. The goal of this project is to develop an App to help farmers improve irrigation management strategies and it will create research opportunities for at least two undergraduate Geography or Environmental Science students.
- William Flatley was one of five panelists for an online session entitled "Fire and Climate Change" that was organized by the US Forest Service and attended by approximately 250 forest managers in the eastern United States.

- Matthew Connolly and Hal Halvorson (Biology) were awarded a \$5,000 EPA subcontract to collect and analyze water quality samples in the White Oak Bayou wetlands in Maumelle. This project will employ at least one Environmental Science student.
- Michael Yoder (retired full time, current adjunct) had a book chapter (“Community Assessments and Asset Mapping”) published in The Community Development Handbook, ed. Liz Russell.
- Yaqian He (with Dr. E. Lee and J. Shanmugasundaram) will serve as guest editor for a joint special issue of Land and Climate entitled “Land and Monsoon Interaction: Physical and Societal Aspects of Asian Monsoons”.

#### Ramesh Garimella, Mathematics

- An article entitled “Creating and using videos for teaching math: Suggestions from the field” of Jason Martin co-authored with A. Weinberg was published in MAA FOCUS, 40(4), pp. 20-23.
- Dr. Todd Abel and STEMteach math majors Leah Gerald and Devon Bartlett had a presentation accepted for the NCTM 2021 Virtual Conference titled Introducing Trigonometric Functions: History, Astronomy, and Mathematical Modeling. Devon Bartlett graduated in December, but was a student when the presentation was originally proposed and the conference originally scheduled.
- Dr. Lisa Skultety presented a talk entitled, "Rethinking our Instruction in Light of COVID-19" at the virtual Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators National Conference.
- Dr. Lisa Skultety gave an invited talk for Delta Kappa Gamma (an Honor Society for Women in Education) entitled, "Honoring and Responding to Students' Academic Trauma".
- Dr. Kwon gave a virtual departmental seminar titled “Comparison of the Method of Moments Estimator and Maximum Likelihood Estimator for the Success Probability in the Fibonacci-type Probability Distribution” on February 24, 2021.
- Dr. Wejiu Liu will give a virtual departmental seminar titled “Energy Functions in Waves and Their Applications” on March 3, 2021.
- Dr. Nesrin Sahin has been accepted to a six-day workshop on Undergraduate Teaching with Mathematics and Statistics Action Technologies. The workshop will be held this Summer and is specifically designed for teaching pre-service secondary teachers. It is an NSF-funded project provided by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.
- Math faculty members Dr. Loi Booher, Ms. Haley Hurley, Dr. Carolyn Pinchback, and Dr. Lisa Skultety are writing contest exams for the upcoming Arkansas Council of Teachers of Mathematics (ACTM) Virtual Contest. Ms. Haley Hurley will give a virtual seminar this week about the "custom question editing" options found in the Pearson MyLabs platform to the ACTM Math Contest writers to authors from other campuses. We are aiming for that seminar to be done late this week. She plans to give the same talk to UCA faculty later this month. Dru Sanders, from the Dept of Student Transitions, has agreed to be a "proofreader" for the exams once they're finished. Dr. Garth Johnson is the Director of ACTM State Math Contest.

#### Carl Frederickson, Physics

- A search is open to replace Jack Gaiser who is retiring at the end of the school year. The department is looking for a faculty member for the Engineering Physics program. A strong pool of candidates is developing. Review of applications will begin March 15th.
- The UCA VexU Robotics team competed in their first competition on Saturday February 20th. They came away from the virtual competition with a number of ideas to improve the robot.