

College Council Meeting Minutes
FISHER COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
1:30 – 3:30 p.m., November 8, 2024

2023-2024 Member Attendees Present

Biological Sciences: Daniel Caetano (Co-Secretary) and Elana Ehrlich; **Chemistry:** Nicole Carbonaro (Vice-Chairperson) and Shannon Stitzel; **Computer and Information Sciences:** Jinie Pak and Nam Nguyen; **Mathematics:** Xioayin Wang and Na Zhang; **Physics, Astronomy, & Geosciences:** Parviz Ghavamian (Chairperson); **STEM Education:** Kristin Frank (Co-Secretary); **Staff:** Kara Berger, Hannah Berry; **Students:** Jaelyn McCracken (Chemistry; Undergraduate), Miracle Eze (Biology, Graduate)

Non-Voting, Ex-Officio:

Dean: Matthew Nugent; **Building Manager:** Josh Wilhide

Visitors/Guests: Amanda Charles, Howard Kaplon, Brianne Lauka (Director of Academic Assessment), William Shipley (Mathematics), Jennifer Streb (Chemistry).

Absent: Nichole Mason, Miriam Parnes, Kristin Pinkowski, Ming Tomayko, Jia-An Yan

1. Approval of minutes from the October 11, 2024, FCSM Council meeting with unanimous consent and no abstentions.
2. Announcements and remarks from the Dean Nugent.
 - A. Update on search for the new STEM program director: there are three finalists that will be visiting campus next week. The campus interview will include meetings with students.
 - B. Associate Dean Tomayko is on a University Committee working on TSEM courses. They are looking to expand the TSEM offerings and are working to create a more consistent experience for students across TSEM courses. Talk to Ming if you are interested in teaching a TSEM course.
 - C. Update on the Ph.D. in Sustainability and Environmental Change: TU has an in person hearing with the entire MHEC commission at the end of November. TU is appealing the rejection as some of the justification for denying the program was due to comparing the program goals to an outdated TU Mission Statement. Thus, a central piece of the hearing will be discussing the new TU Mission Statement, which was approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). Dean Nugent expects the vote to happen the same day as the hearing.
 - D. The Provost met with the Deans and addressed concerns about consequences of the national election around DEI issues. President Ginsberg is committed to ensuring campus is diverse, inclusive, and equitable.
 - E. The Provost's office has gotten complaints from students about classes where faculty switched modality in the middle of the semester. If faculty want to switch modality, they must get approval and should talk to their department chair. This does not pertain to switching modality for a single class session to attend a conference or due to sickness. Additionally, the Provost reminds faculty to arrive to class on time to ensure students get the full learning experience.

3. Announcements from the Council Chairperson.
 - A. Sonali Raje, the FCSM elected representative to the Course Evaluation Task Force, will provide an update on the work of the committee at the December FCSM Council Meeting.
4. Update on University Assessment Policies and Procedures from Brianne (Bri) Lauka (Director of Academic Assessment).
 - A. Bri can be reached via email: blauka@towson.edu.
 - B. The Office of Assessment is making changes to data collection processes in efforts to make the data collection, reporting, and assessment useful for faculty. They hope the new procedures reduce the burden of work for faculty, reduce the focus on compliance, and add a focus on student learning.
 - C. Core Assessment:
 - 1) Data for TU Core courses will be collected via a Qualtrics Survey. The survey launched October 9, 2024, and will close December 20, 2024. The narrative analysis is optional.
 - 2) Future Goals of Core Assessment:
 - a. The Office of Assessment is currently considering the review and revision of Core Curriculum and Learning Outcomes including the recertification process for core assessment plans.
 - b. Working on standardized student self-assessment as an indirect measure of core learning outcomes, and this will support analyzing course outcomes across individual courses.
 - c. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) requires assessment reports to disaggregate student outcome data in order to attend to who our courses are and are not supporting. TU is still working to understand how to disaggregate student data, but the focus will be on equity.
 - D. Program Assessment:
 - 1) Program Assessment Data will be collected via a Qualtrics survey. This survey has not yet been launched. The Qualtrics survey and submission of assessment plans in SharePoint are due February 10, 2025.
 - 2) Program Progress Reports is a new initiative to be implemented in Year 5 of the Review of Academic Departments (RAD) cycle. Part of the Program Progress Report will include a curriculum map (required by MSCHE). A curriculum map reports how the program outcomes are met by the students' learning experience throughout the curriculum. Bri is available for assessment planning support and planning the curriculum map.
 - 3) Looking ahead, program assessment data will also be disaggregated.
 - E. Unit Assessment:
 - 1) Unit assessment data is still being collected in the planning module (formerly compliance assist). The deadline for unit assessment was November 1, 2024.
 - 2) The dashboard will be updated by OTS in the new year to reflect the results of this data collection.

5. Highlights from FCSM Departments

A. Biological Sciences

- 1) The department is finishing searches for four faculty members: the sustainability search is under negotiation; the department just finished six on campus interviews for two physiologists; and the science education faculty search will hold campus interviews next week.

B. Chemistry

- 1) No announcements at this time.

C. Computer and Information Sciences

- 1) The department has posted four faculty searches on the TU website.

D. Mathematics

- 1) The Regional Undergraduate Mathematics Research Conference is tomorrow, November 9, 2024.
- 2) The department has a new Department Coordinator, Richard Patterson.

E. Physics, Astronomy, and Geosciences

- 1) Faculty search in computational physics is underway with four on campus visits scheduled at the end of November and early December.

F. Lecturers and Clinical Faculty

- 1) No announcements at this time.

G. STEM Education

- 1) The Blueprint for Maryland's Future includes many changes to the requirements for teacher preparation programs. Based on these new requirements, the College of Education is considering making changes to the math education and science education coursework required for Elementary Education majors. However, STEM Education faculty are not currently involved in these discussions. If implemented, this programmatic change will impact the workload of several people in FCSM. The STEM Education Committee will devote their December meeting to discussing this issue. FCSM Associate Dean, Ming Tomayko, is working with COE Associate Dean, Laila Richman, to better understand these programmatic changes.

H. Inclusive Student Success

- 1) No announcements at this time.

I. Staff

- 1) Planning an in-person meeting to gather feedback from staff.

J. Students (Undergraduate, Graduate)

- 1) Student Ambassadors for the Department of Fellowships and Competitive awards are visiting classrooms to share these opportunities with students.
- 2) Undergraduate students are thinking about ways to plan events across majors to bridge the gap between departments in York Road and Science Complex.
- 3) No announcements at this time from graduate students.

6. Standing Agenda Items:

A. Senate update/communications

- 1) TU enrollment update: There are over 19,399 students with 16,134 undergraduates. FCSM has 3,763 undergraduate and 521 graduate students. Diversity includes 40% of students identifying as white, 33% identifying as Black, 11% identifying as Hispanic, and 6% identifying as Asian.
- 2) Undergraduate applications are at a historic high.
- 3) The administration is working on a new Strategic Plan.
- 4) The Dean of Honors College is encouraging all faculty to consider offering honors college classes. Students can take up to 6 credits working/conducting research in labs.
- 5) The College Council Chairs met with Academic Senate on October 16, 2024, to discuss elected versus appointed committee members across the university. Some takeaway points:
 - a. The Academic Senate prefers consistency in how membership is selected across colleges. Right now, there is no consistency in how College Council membership is determined. Membership of College Council for both COFAC and CLA are appointed by the dean, while all others are elected. The Academic Senate expressed a strong preference that all membership of all committees, including college council, be elected.
 - b. College Council Chairs noted the difficulty in getting people to run for offices. If the Academic Senate insisted that all committee membership be elected, this would be very difficult.
 - c. One idea is that elected versus appointed committee membership depends on the type of committee. For example, if a committee is advisory to the dean, it could be appointed, while a committee that is representative of the college faculty/staff, then it should be elected. Another approach would be to have outward-facing committees (e.g., PTRM) be elected but smaller inward-facing committees (i.e., travel, scholarship, etc.) could be appointed.
 - d. Feedback from FCSM Council members on elected versus appointed committee membership:
 - i. Concern about equity and diversity of committee structure if all committees are appointed.
 - ii. Support for differentiating between elected and appointed committee membership as it is not feasible to elect membership to all committees in the college. Additionally, it can be difficult to get people to agree to serve on an appointed committee.
 - iii. Faculty in different departments have different perspectives on service loads based on varying workloads across campus. In departments where the workload is stretching faculty thin, especially in small departments, electing all committee memberships is not feasible.
 - iv. Support for College Council and Promotion, Tenure/Reappointment & Merit (PTRM) membership being elected.

v. In accordance with our constitution and bylaws, committee membership in FCSM Committees is both appointed and elected. Currently in FCSM membership of the following college committees are elected: College Council, College PTRM, College Curriculum (students are appointed), Diversity, and STEM Education. In FCSM the membership of the following college committee is appointed: Elections Committee, Scholarship Committee, Undergraduate Research Committee, MB3 Committee, Environmental Science Committee, Pre-Med/Pre-Dental Committee.

B. Diversity, Equity Inclusion & Justice (DEIJ) Updates

1) No announcements at this time.

7. Ongoing Issues/Initiatives/Old Business:

A. Nicole Carbonaro is seeking volunteers to form a sub-group to develop a lecturer feedback survey. The intent is to develop a survey to gather both qualitative data and quantitative data that can provide actionable insights to department chairs and the dean. The goal is to distribute the survey to lecturers around finals and give lecturers about a month to respond.

8. New Business.

A. Considering modifications to the evaluation process of undergraduate research proposals including the procedure and due date.

1) Ideas to move the due date to earlier in the fall semester for once-a-year funding or submitting in the semester prior to conducting the research. Input invited from FCSM departments for incoming chair of the undergraduate research committee (Chris Salice).

B. Remedying bird strikes on windows of Science Complex.

1) The recommended solution is to put a film on the outside of the glass. This would cost about \$80k-\$100k in material alone. This does not include labor to install on the outside of the windows. FCSM would need a funding source, either grant or donor, to cover this cost. An additional complication is that Towson has made a broad push in the last two years to standardize the appearance of campus buildings and spaces. We would need permission from TU facilities to place film on the windows.

9. Adjournment.

Respectfully Submitted,

Daniel Caetano and Kristin Frank

Co-Secretaries.