Natural Sciences Chairs Council

March 15, 2021

1:00pm – 3:00pm, ZOOM

In Attendance: M. Chao, K. Cousins, D. Maynard, L. Mian, B. Haddock, M. Jetter, T. Burch,

J. Torner, G. Escalante, D. Rinebolt, T. Valencia, R. Hernandez, S. McGill, S. Pantula

Approval of Minutes -

* Minutes of February 15th and March 1st 2021 were approved.

Announcements by Chairs

* Dr. Chao reported the Biology department had selected the Fehn Scholarship awardee for this year.
* Dr. Torner reported the Physics department held their Physics Careers STEM event last Friday.
* Dr. Haddock reported that he will be busy holding group advising sessions for students for the next 4 days.
* Dr. Maynard reported the Geology department is holding interviews for the 3rd and 4th candidate for the chair position this week.
* Dr. Maynard reported the School of Computer Science and Engineering is starting the process of interviewing their candidates for the director position.
* Dr. Jetter reported the Math department held their Math Colloquium last Thursday.
* Dr. Mian reported the Health Science department held their last Zoom interviews last week and this week will be reviewing and discussing those interviews.
* Dr. Burch reported the Nursing department is very busy with lecturer evaluations. She also reported the department held its dedication ceremony last week for SBC and PDC students.
* Dr. Cousins reported the Chemistry department will hold its STEM Open House this coming Saturday. So far they have about 50 students registered for the event.

Announcements by Administration

* Mr. Hernandez reported that he had received 7 nomination forms for the outstanding faculty awards. There were 4 nominations for research, 1 nomination for service and 2 nominations for teaching. He also reported he had received no formal nominations for outstanding alumnus.
* Mr. Hernandez reported that Strat Comm has asked if the college has any faculty who have stories that might be good for CSUSB magazine. He asked chairs to let him know if they are aware of any faculty with stories.
* Mr. Hernandez reported that Dr. Erika Tatiana Camacho, a director at the National Science Foundation will give a virtual lecture on April 12th from 2 to 3 p.m. Dr. Camacho is working to increase the number of women and underrepresented groups in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
* Dr. Escalante reminded the chairs of a Community College event that will be held April 27th. He asked if the departments had identified 2 faculty from each department to attend. Undergrad students who transferred from community colleges will present their research.
* Dr. Escalante reported that the general science degree committee met last week. He also reported that the data analytics committee will meet next week.
* Dr. McGill reviewed the upcoming timeline for Fall 2021 scheduling. She also indicated that rooms have already been reserved for Plan B courses that will need to move to a larger classroom. These reservations were based on information provided by chairs regarding courses that were high priority to keep face-to-face mode if we are only allowed to fill classrooms to 50% capacity in the Fall. Dr. McGill will also reserve at least one large lecture room during each time slot for online courses that would like to have in-person, proctored exams.
* Dr. Pantula reported that he had finished writing the promotion and tenure letters for this year. He encouraged chairs to continue mentoring our young faculty.
* Dr. Pantula reported that he had met with the ASI representative last week and talked about what is happening among the students. A meeting has been set up for March 26th from 9 to 10 a.m. for students to have the opportunity to talk to faculty.
* Dr. Pantula asked the chairs to think about items they would like to invest in. He asked them to let him know so that if extra money should become available, he is prepared.
* Dr. Pantula alerted chairs to the fact that STEM-Net Fellow, Paul Orwin’s term is expiring soon. He asked chairs if they wanted to reappoint Paul or did they have someone else they would like to recommend. He asked them to let him know by 4 p.m.
* Dr. Pantula reported that he had submitted the sabbatical list to the Provost. He is waiting to hear which ones will be approved.
* Dr. Pantula informed the chairs that the Faculty Senate is looking for volunteers to serve on the Post Pandemic Panels. Please share the information with your faculty.
* Dr. Pantula announced that the STEM Center grant will end in October. We do have some funds available and will ask for an extension of the grant. He asked chairs if they have any ideas of things we should be doing with the STEM Center to please let him know.

Discussions

* Dr. Chao reported that the committee has met and have drafted a proposal for WTU assignment for team teaching which he will send out to the rest of the chairs. The current team teaching WTU assignment can be improved.
* Dr. Maynard inquired who will decide whether a course stays an online course after the pandemic. According to the FAM, Dr. Torner noted, it is up to the department chair. Dr. Maynard then asked how would you decide between courses that faculty would like to keep online. Dr. Torner mentioned that he is not comfortable making that decision and would like the college to make a policy so that the rules are the same for all departments.
* It was noted that for the online courses, not many students are filling out SOTEs. Without this information it is difficult to determine if a course is better being taught face-to-face or online. Discussion ensued on ways to get students to take the time to fill out the SOTEs and submit them. Dr. Torner expressed concern that offering incentives to students could affect the evaluation (e.g., extra points could cause better SOTE results).