Minutes of the April 8, 2022, FCSM College Council Meeting

The FCSM College Council met in the Science Complex, Room 4230 at 1:30 p.m. with Dr. Pamela Loterro-Perdue, Chairperson, presiding. An option to Zoom into the meeting was made available; One council member attended via Zoom.

Member Attendees: FCSM: Vonnie Shields; Biological Sciences: Angela Cox, Anne Estes; Chemistry: Nicole Carbonaro, Stephen Hancock; Computer and Information Sciences: Joyram Chakraborty, Yeong-Tae Song; Mathematics: Min Ji, Jing Tian; Physics, Astronomy & Geosciences: Michelle Casey, Raj Kolagani; At Large: Faith Weeks (Biology), Pamela Loterro-Perdue (PAGS); Students: Alexandra Reifer (Undergraduate). Absent: Dave Vanko (FCSM), Kyle Hurley (Graduate student)

Chairperson Pamela Loterro-Perdue called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

1. Minutes from the March 11, 2022, FCSM Council meeting were approved unanimously with one abstention and four members absent for the vote.

2. Announcements and remarks from Dean Vanko and Associate Dean Shields

   Announcements from Dean Vanko

   2.1. Enrollment this year at TU is down by about 2,000 students, primarily second-year students who did not return and transfer students (because community college enrollments are way down).

   2.1.1. This may require continued belt-tightening in our budgeting, although new investments targeting the R2 strategy continue to be planned.

   2.1.2. The Council discussed the impact of reduced enrollment on the number of SAPs available to departments. Enrollment analysis has led to the loss of at least one, previously approved, Tenure/Tenure-track position within the college. The Council discussed concerns about loss of these positions and the impact on departments especially in the context of a transition to R2 status.

   2.2. Honors Convocation – The FCSM Honors Convocation will be held on the afternoon of Sunday, April 24th, in the University Union ballroom. This event celebrates the achievements of FCSM students, and is attended by students, their families, and faculty and staff. A reception with great food follows. All are welcome to attend!

   2.3. Commencement – University Commencement will be the morning of Wednesday, May 25th, in Unitas Stadium. The combined FCSM and COFAC University Commencement ceremony will feature an honorary degree bestowed upon Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, Director of Michigan State University’s Pediatric Public Health Initiative. Dr. Hanna-Attisha is the pediatrician who demonstrated the extent to which lead in Flint, Michigan, tap water was affecting the health of the city’s children.
Announcements from Associate Dean Shields

2.4. FCSM will hold a TU4U orientation on Saturday April 9th with a good turnout expected.

2.4.1. The Council discussed recruiting strategies employed at the TU4U events and highlighted the importance for students to see the Science Complex in person, specifically the teaching and research lab spaces with the new instrumentation.

2.4.2. It was also noted that a more sustainable mechanism to lead tours might be necessary as the current format which includes two FCSM representatives at the recruiting table making it difficult for one representative to leave to lead a tour.

2.5. Dr. Christopher Salice, Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences and Director of the Environmental Science and Studies program, will begin his term as Interim Dean of the FCSM on July 1, 2022.

3. Announcements from the Council Chairperson

3.1. There will be a reception held to recognize Dean Vanko’s service to the college on Wed. May 11th at 4:00 p.m. in the science commons.

3.2. The Towson University Retired Faculty Association is battling to keep prescription drug coverage as part of their state-subsidized health care benefits. A vote on whether to keep prescription drug coverage will be held by the Maryland state legislature on Monday, April 11, 2022. Chairperson Lottero-Perdue suggested that councilmembers and colleagues contact relevant representatives identified in a previous email from the Dean’s office.

3.3. FCSM council membership will turnover at the end of the Spring 2022 term.

3.3.1. Terms will expire for at least one member from each department. Department elections are underway, and Elana Ehrlich and Nicole Carbonaro will replace representatives Angela Cox and Henderika van Huizen, respectively.

3.3.2. The Council discussed the most equitable way to choose student representatives and the need to clearly define student representative roles and responsibilities. Currently it is the chairperson’s responsibility to recruit students on the recommendation of the faculty within the college.

3.4. Additional FCSM level representative positions will expire. The college will need to elect an academic senate representative from PAGS, CHEM, or CIS, a Resources Planning and Advisory Committee representative, and representatives to the College Promotion and Tenure committee (one each from PAGS and CIS). Nominations will be accepted from April 11th to April 15th including self-nominations.

4. Guest Speaker: Dr. Trish Westerman, FACET assistant provost, FACET – resources provided by FACET

4.1. Dr. Westerman identified FACET (Faculty Academic Center for Excellence at Towson) as a faculty centered resource that aims to aid faculty in achieving excellence in teaching and scholarship, managing workload and mental health, and utilizing emerging technologies in the classroom and in research. She then discussed the services and programs that FACET offers
4.2. Dr. Westerman described the FACET fellow program as a program designed to provide faculty with the resources to lead campus-wide initiatives in their respective areas of expertise and support colleagues through programming and mentoring.

4.3. Dr. Westerman discussed the various aspects of what is entailed in becoming a FACET fellow. These include application submission (early March), Fellow selection (late spring), summer planning and program implementation.

4.4. Dr. Westerman identified the types and roles of the FACET supported fellows which includes the FACET teaching fellow, mentoring fellow, emerging technology fellow, leadership fellow, scholarship fellow, and the disciplinary and interdisciplinary research fellow. The roles of each of these FACET fellows can be found at the FACET website https://www.towson.edu/provost/initiatives/faculty-center/

4.5. Dr. Westerman discussed support for FACET Fellows which includes a $1,000 stipend for Summer 2022, a $3000 stipend or one course reassignment for fall 2022 semester and a $3000 stipend or one course reassignment for the spring 2023 semester.

4.6. Dr. Westerman identified Communities of Practice as university wide groups of faculty with common goals related to improving student and faculty success. These communities provide various resources for students and faculty related to student engagement, open educational resources, emerging technology, faculty mentoring, and fair chance higher education.

4.7. Dr. Westerman discussed the role of FACET in providing support for new faculty and new adjunct instructors.

4.8. Following an informative and engaging presentation on the roles and services provided by FACET, Dr. Westerman addressed questions from the council. Here Dr. Westerman distinguished the TU School of Emerging Technologies from the FACET emerging technology fellow, discussed how FACET can help identify support for emerging technology, discussed resources to identify how to utilize resources developed during virtual learning to the in-person classroom, and discussed the required time commitments for FACET fellows.

4.9. Dr. Westerman reminded the council that Facet fellowship applications were due on April 14, 2022, and that more information could be found on the FACET website (above) or by contacting any of the FACET fellows directly.

5. **Highlights and announcements from FCSM Departments**

5.1. Biological Sciences

5.1.1. The Department of Biological Sciences discussed tenure/tenure-track faculty Search procedures with Vice Provost Reitz and Assistant Provost Iona Johnson

5.1.2. New faculty members Will Ryan, Erin Harberts, and Sarah Longo will begin their tenure beginning in August 2022; Alice Besterman will begin in January 2023

5.1.3. Cell and Molecular Biology CAP interviews were completed, and a departmental vote will take place on Tuesday, April 12th, at 4 p.m.

5.1.4. An ad for the AGEP Promise Postdoc/Research Fellow has been posted. Candidate interviews will commence in April 2022.

5.1.5. Elana Ehrlich has been elected to replace Angela Cox on the FCSM Council beginning in the Fall 2022 term.

5.1.6. Dr. Peko Tsuji has been recommended as the next chair of Biological Sciences. Her term begins Fall 2023.
5.2. Chemistry

5.2.1. The department voted to recommend Dr. John Sivey as the next department chairperson beginning in Fall 2023.

5.2.2. Our tenure/tenure-track faculty in inorganic chemistry search failed. A request to repeat the search in the fall has been submitted to the provost’s office.

5.2.3. A search committee is being formed for the Chemistry Instrument Support Staff position.

5.2.4. Dr. Petia Bobadova, the chemistry chairperson from Appalachian State University, is the external reviewer who will visit in late April to evaluate the BS Chemistry program as part of our USM seven-year review.

5.3. Computer and Information Sciences

5.3.1. One new faculty offer has been accepted and two offers await a response

5.3.2. One additional faculty search is underway with interviews set for April 11, 2022.

5.3.3. Robert Hammel and Darush Devani are retiring at the end of the semester.

5.3.4. Marcy Krawczyk and Shannon Kreiner are leaving the department for new positions.

5.4. Mathematics

5.4.1. Dr. Robert Smits, Professor of Mathematics at New Mexico State University, is the external reviewer who will conduct a site visit to the mathematics department during the week of April 11, 2022.

5.4.2. The department elections committee is holding a vote for the departmental representative to the college council after Melike Kara’s term ends at the end of this semester. This seat is currently filled by Jing Tian.

5.5. Physics, Astronomy, and Geosciences

5.5.1. The department is working with the Office of Inclusion and Institutional Equity (OIIIE) to gather physics/astronomy/geosciences/science-teaching-specific DEIJ resources to contribute to the DEIJ Knowledge Base.

6. Standing Agenda Items:

6.1. DEIJ actions, opportunities, issues, and concerns

6.1.1. Michelle Casey provided updates from the most recent FCSM DEIJ task force meeting. The task force moved forward with planning another summit May 18th at 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. The task force is developing a plan to provide DEIJ accomplishments and recommendations to the interim and new Dean of FCSM. The task force is also working to ensure that these recommendations align with the DEIJ priorities in the FCSM strategic plan.

6.1.2. FCSM diversity action committee is working on the TU diversity strategic plan and is working with the FCSM DEIJ taskforce to identify nonoverlapping initiatives to ensure effective division of labor.

6.1.3. Vonnie Shields reported initial plans by the Diversity Action Committee for a Student Success Summit to be held Friday May 13th. A goal of this summit will be to identify ways to improve student experience at TU and to improve retention rates and time to graduating. [Note after the April College Council meeting, the DAC under Dr. Shields’ direction decided not to hold this summit.]

6.2. Senate update/communications
6.2.1. The academic senate deliberated on and approved a new MERIT process that will take effect immediately. MERIT documents (ARS I and II, CV, and available student and peer evaluations) will be submitted to department chairs by May 31, 2022. Chairs will decide whether each faculty member is awarded merit or no merit. Appeals will be taken up by the departmental MERIT committees. The document outlining these changes has been disseminated by the academic senate via email.

6.2.2. The TU retired faculty association (TURFA) is fighting to retain prescription drug coverage in their MD state subsidized benefits package. The state legislature will vote on the measure in Mid-April. Members of the TU community are encouraged to contact appropriate representatives to advocate for keeping prescription drug coverage in the plans of retired TU faculty.

6.2.3. The council discussed issues with equity in lecturer workload and suggested that the FCSM college rep will bring this issue to the academic senate to consider whether the academic senate should require that some such document exist within colleges or departments.

7. Old Business:

7.1. Summary of take aways from the Provost’s Town Hall held on March 18, 2022. A Paraphrasing of the Provost’s response is in italics.

7.1.1. **Infrastructure to Support Research** (a) What process is TU taking to assess the adequacy of infrastructure to support current and future research-related needs, particularly as we move towards R2 status? For example, some of our existing infrastructure, including OSPR, procurement, mail service, etc. is strained due to staffing issues—negatively impacting many of our current research efforts. (b) Our journey towards R2 means that we will be hiring many faculty who need laboratory space to conduct their research. Space is already stretched for research purposes in our new building. Do you have thoughts about how we could address this?

_The provost office is aware of these deficiencies, and they are working on resolving them by increasing staffing in these offices. Additionally, new positions will be created to increase efficiency._

_UEBL space in the Smith Hall basement will be available to the college indefinitely._

7.1.2. **Workload and Hiring** (a) What is the university policy on “standard” teaching workload? Is a 6/9 workload the “standard” workload from now on, due to our move towards R2? Or is this a college-by-college or department-by-department decision, instead of a university policy? (b) As early as summer/fall, we’ll be hiring new faculty. When the search candidates ask about tenure requirements for 6/6 or 6/9 workloads during their interviews, what do we tell them?

_Your department will have the flexibility to negotiate teaching load and an appropriate balance with scholarship as long as departments can satisfy all of the teaching requirements._

(c) The new ART document is being finalized, but this updated version doesn’t reflect the university’s decision to move to an R2. Can we expect additional changes to the ART to reflect different P&T expectations for different teaching workloads? If so, how soon?

_Yes, you can, and it will._
7.1.3. **Advising** Is it possible for TU to support focused advisors whose primary duties are related to mandatory advising (i.e., advising related to scheduling and course selection)? This would enable faculty to focus on career advising and enable more time to do research.

*Yes. Some colleges do operate this way. This would certainly be possible if the college has a position available to allocate to full time advising.*

7.1.4. **Leadership Changes in FCSM:** (a) When will the interim FCSM Dean be announced? When will the search committee for the next FCSM Dean be determined and when will the hiring process take place?

*At this time the interim Dean has been announced and will be Chris Salice. The search committee for a new Dean of the FCSM will be formed in Late spring early summer. The goal is to appoint a new dean in January 2023.*

(b) Four of the five department chairs within FCSM are rotating out of their positions very soon after the new FCSM Dean’s start date. Do you expect that the four FCSM department chairs who are elected in 2022 and begin their terms in 2023 will be able to complete their terms given the change at the Dean level? *The provost suggested that Chairs will likely be able to complete their terms under the new dean.*

7.1.5. **Communication** On a number of fronts (e.g., changes in merit and financial systems) the shift to a chain-of-command flow up and down administration at TU has been less than ideal. The system aims to be efficient but in leaving key individuals out of discussions and decisions, the process is less effective than it could be if it was more inclusive (even if the process is slowed a bit). What steps can the Provost’s Office take to improve processes moving forward, in large part to reduce workload and friction, and especially given the proposed shift to R2?

*The provost indicated that the current structure for decision making, and communication is working as desired and there is no plan to significantly alter these processes.*

7.1.6. **Virtual Classes** In the future, if the University makes the decision to make all classes virtual, would it be possible to inform the faculty and staff before notifying the students?

*The provost indicated that this is a very unlikely scenario, and if the University made this decision, she jokingly suggested that she would move on to another institution.*

7.1.7. **EV Chargers** There is a significant shortage of EV chargers in the Glen garage. (There are no EV charges in the West Village garage at all.) Often, I cannot find an available charger.

*The provost suggested that there are plans to increase the number of chargers on campus. The locations are being discussed.*

7.2. Chairperson Lottero-Perdue provided the final update on bathroom door accessibility in the SC confirming that automatic door openers will be installed in strategically located restrooms on one of the main levels (2nd or 3rd floor) in SC.
7.3. The council deferred a discussion of undergraduate and graduate student roles on the council until next meeting. The council would like to identify mechanisms to connect the FCSM council with SGA and GSA through student representation. The specific strategy is yet to be determined.

8. New Business

8.1. The council discussed Preparation for President’s Town Hall to be held in the SC commons on May 6, 2022. The council would like to compile questions to provide to the president’s office by April 22nd and noted that the president’s purview is different than the provosts. The president is concerned with the bigger picture issues and the strategic direction of the University. Department representatives are responsible for obtaining at least two questions either from colleagues or by generating them individually.

8.2. The council discussed planning for the final meeting of AY 2021-2022 to be held on May 13, 2022.

8.2.1. New 2022-2025 members are invited to attend along with current members.

8.2.2. Topic Focus: Mental health supports for students and faculty/staff facilitated by a panel of representatives from various university offices.

8.2.3. The council will election next year’s executive committee including the Council Chair, Vice-Chair, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary

8.3. Items from the floor

8.3.1. The council discussed upcoming College level STEM Inclusive Pedagogy seminars on April 22nd and May 13th. Topics include faculty mental health and potential for demoralization vs. burnout.

8.3.2. The council discussed how to improve the student representative experience and improve how students are able to communicate with the college council. That is, how can students communicate their issues to the council?

8.3.3. A council member suggested the idea of a college council retreat. A goal of this retreat would be to identify matters that need the council’s attention for the next academic year.

8.3.4. The council discussed the current model for appointing student representatives and that is currently the chair of the council’s responsibility to recruit and appointment student representatives. There was some consensus that this procedure should be formalized and be more inclusive.

9. Adjournment

9.1. A motion to adjourn (Estes) was seconded (Casey) and unanimously carried.

9.2. The meeting was adjourned by council chairperson Pamela Lotero-Perdue at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Stephen P. Hancock
Recording Secretary.