

**College Council Meeting Minutes**  
**FISHER COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS**  
**1:30 – 3:00 p.m., April 12, 2024**

**Member Attendees:** **Biological Sciences:** Daniel Caetano, Elana Ehrlich; **Chemistry:** Hoa Tran-Ba, Nicole Carbonaro (Co-Secretary); **Computer and Information Sciences:** Yeong-Tae Song, Jinie Pak; **Mathematics:** Na Zhang; **Physics, Astronomy, & Geosciences:** Michelle Casey, Jia-An Yan; **At Large:** Faith Weeks (Biology; Co-Secretary), Pam Lottero-Perdue (Physics, Astronomy & Geosciences, Chair); **Students:** Madison Previti (Undergraduate Student), Marcus Rose (Graduate Student).

**Dean:** Matthew Nugent; **Associate Dean:** Vonnie Shields.

**Visitors/guests:** Kristin Pinkowski, Joshua Wilhide, Howard Kaplon, Amanda Charles, Kara Berger, Alissa Harrington, Kelly Cook

**Absent:** Jing Tian (Vice Chairperson)

1. Approval of minutes from the March 8, 2024 FCSM Council meeting: 13 approved; 1 absent.
2. Visitors: Alissa Harrington & Kelly Cook, Blackboard Ultra
  - a. To contact Alissa: [aharrington@towson.edu](mailto:aharrington@towson.edu) or [https://bit.ly/FACET\\_ID\\_Alissa](https://bit.ly/FACET_ID_Alissa)
    - 1) Alissa is able to help with making modules, folders, and will look at your course. Kelly is able to help with active learning, virtual reality, and has lots of experience to help improve your course. There is overlap and both can help.
  - b. If you aren't sure who to ask for help, there is a Support Decision Tree <https://bit.ly/TUDecisionTree>
  - c. Adjunct Ultra Hours Workshop
    - 1) Includes an overview of Blackboard Ultra, How to convert your course, Workshopping time
    - 2) Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> from 5-6:30 p.m. or Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup> from 5-6:30 p.m.
    - 3) Looking into offering some online adjunct workshops as well
  - d. Ultra Roadshow
    - 1) Blackboard and FACET come to your department's location.
    - 2) Overview of Blackboard Ultra
    - 3) Dive into how to convert your course over using a Blackboard shell course.
    - 4) Bring your laptop (not required) and your questions.
    - 5) Email [blackboard@towson.edu](mailto:blackboard@towson.edu) to schedule them to visit.
  - e. Rolling out Blackboard Ultra
    - 1) Required starting Fall 2024 (not this summer, but you can elect to use Ultra)
    - 2) Old courses remain on Blackboard for 2 years in their original version, but anything new will be automatically in Ultra (after 2 years, courses are archived)
    - 3) Ask for help early as the Fall is going to be busy.
      - a) Spring support hours for one off support.
      - b) Asynchronous learning on Blackboard (Student and Faculty Resource courses already enrolled on Blackboard; faculty can access both).
      - c) Set up one on one consultations (virtually or in person).

f. New in Blackboard Ultra

- 1) New layout with pop up Announcements that students must interact with to reach the page.
- 2) Can make ADA accommodations for a student for the semester for all online tests, assignments, and quizzes.
- 3) Discussion board analytics – helps dig through discussions and give you the most salient parts. Also helps pinpoint those that may need assistance.
- 4) Can make modules, which are like binders with guided understanding.
  - a) Can have forced completion to guide students on a specific pathway.
  - b) Add images, visuals, and choose then to use modules or folders.

g. Converting courses from Classic to Ultra

- 1) Can pull content into the new Blackboard site.
- 2) Request a Master Shell course from Blackboard. Allows you to gradually pull things over from the old course without impacting the new site. Request shell at: <https://www.towson.edu/technology/training/blackboard/courserequest.html>.
  - a) Can have multiple shells for multiple courses. Recommend telling them what to name them so you don't confuse the shells.
  - b) If master shell is used at least once per year, it will not be archived or removed.
- 3) Once copy content, everything may be hidden, and you will need to manually open them to be viewable by students.
- 4) Can also unlink columns from the overall grade or wait on posting the grades to prevent students from seeing their grades right away.

3. Announcements and remarks from Dean Nugent

- a. New computers in FCSM: OTS will be installing 431 new computers over the summer. All instructional workstations will be updated as well as several lab workstations in the Science Complex and in 7800 York Road. The new systems will be installed over the summer and will be running Windows 11.
- b. Faculty Promotions
  - 1) 13 faculty promoted to Clinical/Assistant/Associate/Full Professors.
  - 2) 14 lecturers promoted.
  - 3) Listed in the Dean's newsletter sent out on Friday, April 12<sup>th</sup>.
- c. New Dean's office staff
  - 1) New Administrative Assistant has been hired – Emma Dorris. She is a TU graduate and will be providing general administrative support to the Dean's office and the college.
  - 2) Things will operate the same for the rest of the semester, then the college will receive communication about the tasks the office can support and who to contact.
- d. Fall Enrollment
  - 1) Looking good for FCSM. Have a higher number of contracts and deposits from students.
  - 2) Saw an increase in FCSM applications, contracts, and enrollments, which may continue to increase due to changed deadlines with the new FAFSA.
- e. New FCSM Faculty: We have been approved to search for 12 faculty next year, with two converting current contingent faculty to full-time SAPs, and 10 new faculty lines.
- f. Budget: The state budget has been approved. It appears to include a 45-46 million dollar cut to the USM budget, but this needs to be confirmed. It is not clear if this will impact TU's budget.

- g. Ph.D. in Sustainability update
  - 1) Optimistic about appealing the decision with Morgan State, but as of two weeks ago, the administration doesn't want to pursue it. Not approved for Fall 2024.
  - 2) Administration would like us to look at the program and maybe partner with other USM to revise and resubmit.
  - 3) We are still committed to finding a way to get a program in place.
  - 4) We are still on track to move to R2 as the Autism Studies graduate program is growing. For us in FCSM, need to have more Ph.D. programs to help support research.
- 4. Announcements and remarks from Associate Dean Shields
  - a. Tomorrow the Admitted Student event starts at 12 p.m. due to issues with the Administration. We expect around 93 students, including 12 honors students and 24% committed students.
  - b. Partners Day is where high school counselors partner with TU. It has been cancelled for May 10<sup>th</sup> by Admissions. Plan to have in the Fall.
  - c. Honors Convocation is on Sunday, April 21 from 12:45-2:30 p.m. RSVP to Amanda Charles.
  - d. Move to R2
    - 1) Mary Devadas is working hard to get our students scholarships and awards. Her email forwarded from Amanda has details about those coming up, including:
      - a) Truman Scholarship for rising juniors
      - b) Marshall, Rhodes, and Gates-Cambridge scholarships
      - c) McCall MacBain Scholarship to study at McGill University in Canada.
    - 2) Please nominate students that fit the criteria.
- 5. Announcements from the Council Chairperson: See New Business
- 6. Highlights from FCSM Departments
  - a. Biological Sciences
    - 1) The Science Education faculty search failed. Planning to restart as soon as possible.
    - 2) New faculty joining in the Fall.
  - b. Chemistry
    - 1) Three seminars are being offered, starting with Thursday 1-3 p.m. First is this Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Hamilton is from Jasco, which is a company that makes spectrometers. She's an alumnus from Chemistry. There will be a student pizza lunch, and then a demo session at 3 p.m.
    - 2) Another seminar is on May 2<sup>nd</sup> with Dr. Lee Blaney from UMBC where he will present his research, will have a pizza lunch with interested students, and will meet with faculty and staff.
    - 3) The last seminar will be Dr. Beth Kautzman presenting her sabbatical project on May 9<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m. Room will be announced shortly.
    - 4) The department is concerned about an active shooter in the science complex and general safety with card swiping versus keys.
  - c. Computer and Information Sciences
    - 1) College Council meetings always overlap with department meetings, but that should be changing soon now that the department chair is aware.
    - 2) New tenure track faculty accepted the position and will start in the Fall.
    - 3) Concerted lecturer position to a clinical position, one person has accepted already and will start in the Fall.
    - 4) Ramesh Karn is retiring after at least 25 years, and next semester will be the last. His retirement party will be in December.
    - 5) Three new tenure track positions for next Fall.
    - 6) Research seminars are starting soon.

d. Mathematics

- 1) Department Seminar –Monday, April 15 2:30-3:30 with refreshments at 3:30 – Lily Glushakow-Smith: “Developmental Math: Is our approach serving the aspirations of underprepared students?”
- 2) Department Colloquium – Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m.
  - a) April 17: Siddharth Bhaskar, James Madison, “Thicket Density”.
  - b) April 24: Rob Benedetto, Amherst College, “Arboreal Galois Groups: An Introduction”.
- 3) Actuarial Science and Risk Management Advisory Board and ASRM Club’s annual reception and panel discussion. Thursday, April 11, Science Complex Commons, 6-8 p.m. “How Actuaries are Shaping the Future”. Light refreshments will be served, and door prizes will be available.
- 4) Differentiation Bee: Wednesday, April 17, 6:30 p.m. in the Science Complex, Room 123.
- 5) Will be searching for lecturers.

e. Physics, Astronomy, and Geosciences

- 1) PAGES hosted the external program reviewer Dr. Ernest Behringer from March 24-26. He visited our department and completed the 7-year review for both physics undergraduate and applied master programs.
- 2) PAGES has received approval to conduct one tenure-track faculty search in physics next year (to replace Tom Krause’s position).
- 3) Tom Krause’s retirement celebration will take place on June 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. at Liberatore’s in Timonium.
- 4) PAGES faculty discussed the Research Faculty appointments now require a \$5,000/year financial commitment from the departmental operating budget. The thought is that overhead on any grants these research faculty bring in will replace those funds, but the up-front investment may be prohibitive for many departments. With only 10% of indirect costs going to the department from any grants received, only a large grant (>\$150,000 over three years) would break even.
  - a) The Chairperson asked if any departments pay an honorarium to seminar speakers. Math reimburses (unless they are famous or a big deal in the field), CIS pays an honorarium. The Associate Dean suggests looking at the TU Foundation for donors that pay speakers for enrichment.

7. Standing Agenda Items:

- a. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) actions, opportunities, issues, and concerns: New committee was formed so we should hear from them soon.
- b. Diversity Action Committee (DAC): This committee met and is preparing a report to make suggestions for the new DEIJ committee.
- c. Senate update/communications
  - 1) Student Senate representatives gave a presentation to advocate for a “One Excused Mental Health Day per semester” at the last meeting, and the senate is looking for more input. Referred to the Academic Standards Committee.
  - 2) Prescription drug benefits bill was not put forward for vote this year. The bill may die. This means that all retirees will need to pay approximately \$4,000 (current rate) for Medicare D plan for prescription benefits which is subpar to what the University promised faculty. (This applies to faculty hired before 2009 but heads up that all faculty no longer have this benefit.)
  - 3) There is a good chance the Maryland Senate did not pass a bill (Session ended yesterday) allowing duplicative programs with HBCU’s in certain emerging areas (e.g., AI, climate) Still need more clarification on this.

- 4) USM ART Document now includes “failure or inability to perform essential job duties” as a reason to terminate the appointment of a tenured or tenure-track appointee. This was brought to our attention from the CUSF rep who said the CUSF legislative affairs committee was looking into it.
  - 5) April 22–26, is Staff and students’ appreciation week. (From Josh Wilhide: This past week was Student Worker appreciate week <https://seo.harvard.edu/national-student-employment-week#:~:text=The%20National%20Student%20Employment%20Association,campus%20with%20a%20spectacular%20workforce>)
  - 6) The President gave his annual address.
    - a) He feels we will get 6% (between COLA and merit).
    - b) One of his initiatives is to reinstate merit based on performance and not simple pass fail where almost everyone gets it. This got push back from some senators. He was asked how it would be paid for and he does not know.
    - c) Another initiative is to look at advising over the summer and to look at ways the P&T process is more standardized across colleges.
    - d) The renovation of TU electrical substation was approved, and construction of the new enrollment building was funded for 2028.
8. Ongoing Issues/Initiatives/Old Business
- a. FCSM Elections
    - 1) Next year we will have three staff, a STEM Ed rep, lecturer rep, Inclusive Student Success rep (nominations starting soon from a list to be sent out), and new PAGS & CIS reps.
    - 2) They are invited and encouraged to come to the May meeting.
      - a) At our May 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, we will have food, so it starts at 1 p.m.
      - b) Electing new executive members
        - i. Only those that will be on the College Council next year are allowed to vote for the executive committee (not those leaving the Council).
        - ii. Voting for a new Chair, Vice Chair, and two co-secretaries.
        - iii. Reach out to anyone on the Executive committee if you have questions.
9. New undergraduate and graduate student representatives are selected by the (new) FCSM College Council chairperson.
10. New Business
- a. Parking and Transportation Issues
    - 1) When booking transportation for field trips or class outings, there is no clear confirmation, and this causes issues.
    - 2) Possibly move to Docusign to have documentation of the request and response.
    - 3) We can reach out to transportation to handle having more transparency and better communication.
  - b. Items from the floor
    - 1) Accommodation letters about students
      - a) Professors sometimes get these letters about giving students leniency near the end of the semester, but no guidelines on what to do or what we should do.
      - b) You can call Student Affairs for guidance and suggestions on how to handle things.

c) Maybe we can reach out to see what recommendations they have and how to respond in these situations (non-ADA accommodations).

2) No other items shared.

11. Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted,

Faith Weeks

Co-Secretary