Minutes of the December 14, 2018 FCSM College Council Meeting.

The FCSM College Council met in Smith Hall, Room 306 at 1:30 p.m. with Dr. Shannon Stitzel, Vice-Chairperson, presiding.

Member Attendees: FCSM: Vonnie Shields; Biological Sciences: Mark Bulmer, Angela Cox, Chemistry: Ana Maria Soto, Shannon Stitzel; Physics, Astronomy, & Geosciences: Alex Storrs; Mathematics: Sergiy Borodachov, Yunwei Cui; At large: Kelly Elkins (Chemistry); Student Representatives: Ian Gilbert (Undergraduate Student, Chemistry and Molecular Biology, Biochemistry & Bioinformatics)

Absent: Josh Dehlinger (Computer and Information Sciences), Scott Hilberg (Computer and Information Sciences); Jennifer Scott (Physics, Astronomy & Geosciences); Wendy Nelson (Physics, Astronomy & Geosciences); Elizabeth Goode (At large, Mathematics); Steve Blama (Graduate Student, Physics)

Guests: Jen Stano (Human Resources Partner for FCSM), Howard Kaplon (FCSM), Angel Kumchev (FCSM)

Vice-chairperson Shannon Stitzel called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

1. Special Guest: Jen Stano
   Jen Stano is the Human Resources Partner for the Fisher College of Science and Mathematics, the College of Education and the College of Health Professions. Steve Jones, Associated Vice-President for Human Resources, was hired last December and he created HR Partners as part of a new model to improve HR support throughout campus. There are 4 HR partners across the university. In the past, there was some frustration about not knowing who to contact in HR for specific tasks. With this new model, each college has one contact for everything. HR partners may not have answers to all questions but they will be able to connect faculty and staff with the right person. Jen completed a B.S. on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, a Masters in Business Administration and is currently completing a Doctorate in Management (with a dissertation on Onboarding). Jen has had very positive interactions with everyone at the FCSM and members of the council also commented that we are very happy to have Jen as our HR Partner. Jen mentioned some aspects of her position and also answered questions from council members, which included the following points:
   1.1. Jen is open to quick questions as well as to long-term projects.
   1.2. Anything discussed with Jen is confidential unless she lets us know that it is not confidential. She will be transparent and clear about what needs to be disclosed.
   1.3. She will take guidance from the Dean’s Office regarding the level of involvement that the Dean’s Office would like to have in HR related issues.
   1.4. FCSM members may contact Jen in various ways. E-mail is preferable but she is open to phone calls and in-person meetings. In response to a question, she mentioned that she would consider having office hours, if that would be helpful.
   1.5. In response to a question, she mentioned that HR can be involved in faculty searches upon request. They can provide benefits information as well as highlight many positive features of Towson University.
1.6. Jen also works with issues related to international faculty. Her role is usually to facilitate conversations and to provide a sense of urgency.

1.7. In response to a question, she explained that “onboarding” can mean many things; for example, it could refer to socialization issues in the first year of employment. Jen’s dissertation focuses on onboarding that improves retention.

1.8. In response to a question, Jen listed some services that HR can provide (in addition to their more known roles such as benefits): training and development, training for leadership positions (e.g. chair positions), developing training plans for leadership positions, workforce planning (for example in response to enrollment growth), data reports (e.g. data to justify a need, exit interview data), adjunct hiring (which often occurs close to the beginning of classes and must be done such that it ensures compliance and also ensure that faculty have everything they need to do their job).

1.9. Jen is interested in getting feedback about where she could be most helpful.

2. Approval of Minutes
The minutes from the November 9, 2018 FCSM College Council meeting were approved with one abstention.

3. Announcements and remarks from the Acting Dean
3.1. There is a fund for Faculty Excellence that would allow us to bring a speaker to Towson that could impact many faculty. There is about $6000 left in that fund, and the request to invite a speaker involves a formal application of about 4 pages.

3.2. We are expecting 11,000 to 12,000 transfer students in the Spring of 2019 (about the same number as in the Fall of 2018).

3.3. Dr. Melanie Perreault has been hired as the new provost. She will start on February 18, 2019. Each candidate interview included open sessions that faculty and staff could attend. Dr. Perreault’s open session was the last open session.

3.4. In the last council of chairs, Dean Shields invited three guests: Nancy Dufau (Assistant Vice-President for Sponsored Programs and Research), Sara Slaff (Vice-President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel) and Nick Hammond (Executive Director of Entrepreneurship).

3.4.1. This meeting served as an introduction of Nick Hammond. Nick has a background in science and he can help identify various entrepreneurship opportunities, such as patents and related matters. He will be reaching out to chairs and possibly visit various departments in the future.

3.4.2. Sara Slaff is interested in examining the document that research volunteers sign when working in labs at TU, particularly for minors (such as high school students). Currently, volunteers sign a waiver in case unexpected events occur. Official paper work is needed, but Sara is not sure if our current document is enough. Sara will examine the document to see if there is anything that should be added. This probably does not apply to TU students who are minors because their enrollment agreement should cover their participation in lab courses.

3.4.3. The office of Nancy Dufau helps faculty process grants. She plans to hire someone who can give additional help to faculty in terms of writing and preparing grants. This may include hour-long sessions for grant writing, mainly directed to new faculty.
3.5. Dave Schaefer is leading the transition of the move to the new building. He has organized various committees to move equipment, chemicals, plants, animals, etc. However, each faculty member is responsible for packing his/her own lab. This refers to the small lab items that can be packed by faculty (this does not refer to big equipment as all big equipment will be moved by an outside company). There is a special excel file that should contain all the equipment that needs to be moved. It is also recommended that faculty scan paper materials so these materials don’t need to be moved. Finally, faculty are encouraged to take a look at room SM 400 to see the technology that will be available in the new building and determine how they will be teaching their classes in the new building. Will Carosella is usually available on Fridays and he may also be contacted for one-on-one sessions, if needed.

3.6. Please let your departments know that the deadline for Undergraduate Research Proposals is in late January. One change in this new cycle is the maximum request has been raised from $500 to $750. However, the overall budget has not increased. This means that the budget section of the proposal should be more deliberate than in the past because some proposals may not be fully funded. In the past, most proposals were funded for the whole amount so the budget didn’t need to be too precise, but in this cycle the committee may not be funding all proposals at the maximum. Another change in this new cycle is that requests for stipends may be allowed, in an effort to include all departments in the Fisher College.

4. Announcements from the Council Vice-Chairperson
Congratulations to all the faculty and staff who received Excellence Awards at the Fisher College Fall’s Forum.

5. Updates from FCSM Departments
5.1. Biological Sciences: The department has hired a new Administrative Assistant I. The department held an expo where 49 students presented their research and 20 faculty participated judging posters to give awards to the students with the best posters. The Bridges Grant was renewed. The department is revising their PTRM document to include appropriate evaluations for Clinical Faculty members.

5.2. Chemistry: The department hired Jennifer Streb as the new operations manager. The department has completed two faculty searches, recommendations have been made to the Dean and both searches should be finalized soon. The department is conducting a search for an Administrative Assistant I. Interviews will start in January and the successful candidate is expected to start when classes start.

5.3. Computer and Information Sciences: No representative was present but council members commented that this department recently sponsored a hackathon event.

5.4. Mathematics: The department was re-certified as a Center of Actuarial Excellence. Towson University is the only school in Maryland with this designation. The Baltimore County Public School system has selected Towson University to offer a cohort (20 students) for a Masters of Mathematics Education. This cohort will take place between 2019 and 2023, and it would allow teachers to get a Masters’ degree in 3 or 4 years for certification purposes. The department is currently conducting a search for an Assistant Professor in Applied Mathematics for which they have received 150 applications.

5.5. Physics, Astronomy, and Geosciences: The department concluded their search for a Geology faculty position. Dr. Michelle Casey will be starting in the Spring of 2019.
6. **Old Business**
   **Upcoming revisions to FCSM P&T document.** Please solicit feedback from departments about any concerns with the current College P&T document.

7. **New Business**
   **Draft of Student Class Attendance Policy:** The University Class Attendance & Absence Policy Committee seeks input on a draft document about student attendance. The discussion included comments from council members as well as feedback submitted by faculty from various Fisher College departments:

   **7.1.** The document should be more specific about “timely manner” when it says that “students requesting an excused absence must do so in a timely manner” in the implementation section and in the notification and documentation section. There have been issues with student athletes requesting accommodations with very short notice, usually at the time of playoffs. Furthermore, not all student athletes attend all games, which increases uncertainty.

   **7.2.** The document should be more specific about what constitutes a “religious observance” in the definitions section.

   **7.3.** In the definitions section, the document states that “participation in university activities at the request of university authorities” are excused absences. The document should be more specific about what constitutes a “university activity” and who can authorize them. It is not clear whether events organized by SGA, games for club sport teams (not official teams), sorority events, and similar activities are university activities.

   **7.4.** Some parts of the document need to be clarified so that they don’t present an undue burden on faculty. For example, point 5 in the implementation section and point 2 in the academic accommodations section that faculty “are required to allow students to make up any missed work” and that the make up assignment is scheduled not to interfere with the student schedule, be of the same level of difficulty as the original assignment and other details may require considerable effort from the faculty.

   **7.5.** Some parts of the document seem inconsistent with each other. For example, in the implementation section, points 1 & 2 state that faculty may limit the number of allowed absences and may use attendance as part of the grade, but point 5 states that make up arrangements “should not advantage nor disadvantage the student or the rest of the class.”

8. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjournment 3:05 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ana Maria Soto
Recording Secretary