Minutes of the February 9, 2018 FCSM College Council Meeting.

The FCSM College Council met in 7800 York Road, Room 459 at 1:30 p.m. with Dr. Michael McGuire, Chairperson, presiding.

Member Attendees: FCSM: David Vanko; **Biological Sciences:** Harald Beck, Jacqueline Doyle, Elizabeth O'Hare, **Chemistry:** Shuhua Ma, Ana Maria Soto, Shannon Stitzel; **Computer and Information Sciences:** Josh Dehlinger, Michael McGuire; **Physics, Astronomy, & Geosciences:** Wendy Nelson, Jennifer Scott; **Mathematics:** Yunwei Cui; **Student Representatives:** Dawn Myers (Graduate Student, Mathematics), Claire Glenn (Undergraduate Student, Computer and Information Sciences).

Absentees: (Notified in advance) Sergiy Borodachov, Vonnie Shields

Chairperson Michael McGuire called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

1. **Approval of Minutes**
   The minutes of the December 15, 2017 meeting were approved unanimously with 1 abstention.

2. **Announcements from the Dean.**

   2.1. Sad news about Dr. Shiva Azadegan (CIS) passing. Funeral Services and a Memorial Reception will take place on Sunday.
   2.2. USM Regents' Faculty Awards will be approved today at the Board of Regents meeting during a closed session
   2.3. Dr. Gary Levy (Associate Provost) makes his annual budget presentation open to all Academic Affairs at 10:00 am, February 23rd, in LA 2110.

3. **Remarks from the Dean.**

   3.1. Remember – FCSM's Top Three Focus areas:

   <u>Student Success and Assessment</u>

   <u>Research and Scholarship</u>

   <u>Diversity and Inclusion</u>
   Last meeting, Dean Vanko reported that Dr. Leah Cox (VP of Inclusion & Institutional Equity) was gathering college Diversity Action Plans in preparation for a possible rejuvenation of the action plans. We now have marching orders to revisit, tweak, update, and basically re-focus on our college Diversity Action Plan.

   3.2. New Science building update: Retaining walls being installed; dirt being removed; geopiers to begin soon; cranes to be installed in late March; concrete skeleton to be completed around end of 2018.

   Dean Vanko indicated that this is a good time to collect ideas for enhancements that would highlight the scientific focus of our college. Some examples include rock displays from local quarries, a Foucault pendulum (which rocks back and forth in place but appears to move due to the earth rotation), a display for the slab of the white oak tree that was recently removed (which may include labeling of its 77 rings with historical events, scientific events and donor alumni names), and interactive research displays.

3.3. Nigeria trip: Clare Muhoro, Sidd Kaza, Yeong-Tae Song and Dean Vanko visited Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria in January, for the purpose of signing an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) to explore collaborative activities, particularly in software engineering, but perhaps, in the future, other disciplines (e.g., chemistry, hydrogeology).

Obafemi Awolowo University is a large university, encompassing 11,000 hectares (about 27,000 acres) and serving about 25,000 students. This is one of the best public universities in Nigeria and it is an African Center of Excellence with a big agricultural component. This university was recommended by the World Bank as a potential partner for Towson, after Clare Muhoro visited the World Bank's DC office to highlight Towson strengths.

Four representatives from Obafemi Awolowo University will visit us in about 3 weeks. Collaborations are available to anyone interested and are in good alignment with the top focus areas of the College.

4. Remarks from the Council Chairperson.

4.1. Suggestions for Spring agenda items should be sent to Mike McGuire. Request for guests to talk to the council should also be sent to Mike. The executive committee has suggested to invite Laura Gough, the Chairperson from Biology, to talk about a new way to deal with service load assignments.

4.2. Suggestions for nominees for the Regents Award should be completed earlier than last year. We would like to notify nominees in May rather than in the late Fall so that they have more time to work on their applications.

5. University Senate Update.

5.1. A bill is currently being discussed in Annapolis that would grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students in the University of Maryland System.

5.2. The University Constitution needs to be updated. However, past efforts to change the constitution were not successful because a change requires at least 2/3 of the faculty to vote and on the last two attempts there were not enough votes. Please inform your department and encourage them to vote. Jennifer Ballengee, Chair of the University Senate, has sent a draft of the new constitution, which reflects how the university has changed over the last few years (for example, the number of lecturers has increased). One of the proposed changes is to split the University Senate into an Academic Senate (Faculty Senate), a Staff Council, and a Student Government Association. This would strengthen faculty voice and would allow the Faculty Senate to focus on issues important for faculty. The discussion will continue at the next senate meeting on Monday.

5.3. There has been some discussion about the need to issue trigger warnings for sensitive topics in class (for example, slavery, sexual violence, cancer). There is a push back in favor of academic freedom as for some courses, the whole class would require a trigger warning (for example Cancer biology).

6. Updates from FCSM Departments

Members from each FCSM department updated the Council on departmental news and activities.

6.1. Biology: There are two Clinical Assistant Professor searches underway. The department is also updating its merit procedures and working on developing new CURE (Classroom Undergraduate Research Experiences) courses. These courses provide the opportunity for authentic research experiences to students, which have been shown to improve academic performance and increase retention.

6.2. Chemistry: There is tenure-track search for a physical chemistry faculty underway.

6.3. Computer & Information Sciences: Three searches are currently underway: two are for Clinical Assistant Professors in Computer Sciences and in Information Technology. A third search is for a tenure-track Data Science faculty.

6.4. Mathematics: Six candidates are being interviewed for two positions in Mathematics/Applied Mathematics. The department plans to meet on February 20th to decide who should be offered the positions.

6.5. Physics, Astronomy & Geosciences: The department has a new hire: Peggy McNeal will be joining PAGS in the Fall. The astronomy group has obtained a grant that would support 5 or 6 students for summer research. The department has had a good representation of students in recent scientific meetings.

7. Old business.

The council reviewed the list of Fisher Endowment Fund priorities. The new list incorporates recent suggestions from various FCSM faculty. The council went over the list, eliminated some items that are no longer relevant and discussed some of the funding suggestions. The discussion included the need for additional funding for undergraduate research given the recent funding changes from the Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry, the desire to revive the Saturday Science Series, the unfeasibility of using endowment fund for hiring personnel given that the funds are affected by the market and are not guaranteed, and the desire to help transfer students be successful at Towson.

The items in the revised list will be ranked by the FCSM faculty as "high", "medium" or "low" priorities using an online form. The purpose of the ranking is to identify if some of the priorities should change. Currently, the endowment is mainly used to promote opportunities for authentic undergraduate research, support graduate students in the summer, support the Endowed Chair in Computer Sciences and Mathematics and to promote the visibility of the College.

8. Additional Business.

Today was Harald Beck's last Council Meeting. He has a schedule conflict this semester and this is his last term. A representative should be elected to fulfill Harald's Spring 2018 term and a new 3-year term. Representatives are also needed to fill Harald's positions in the Executive committee and as Corresponding Secretary.

9. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ana Maria Soto
Recording Secretary