Minutes of the February 14, 2020 FCSM College Council Meeting

The FCSM College Council met in Smith Hall, Room 306 at 1:30 p.m. with Dr. Kelly Elkins, Chairperson, presiding.

Member Attendees: FCSM: David Vanko, Vonnie Shields; Biological Sciences: Mark Bulmer, Angela Cox; Chemistry: Ana-Maria Soto; Computer and Information Sciences: Joyram Chakraborty, Scott Hilberg; Mathematics: Yunwei Cui, Melike Kara; Physics, Astronomy and Geosciences: Wendy Nelson, Pamela Lottero-Perdue; At large: Kelly Elkins (Chemistry), Elizabeth Goode (Mathematics); Undergraduate Student: Marella Schammel

Absent: Henderika van Huizen, Miracle Davis.

Guest: Howard Kaplon (FCSM)

Chairperson Kelly Elkins called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes from the December 13, 2019 FCSM College Council meeting

The minutes of the November 8, 2019 meeting were approved with two abstentions.

2. Announcements and remarks from the Dean
   2.1. Provost Perreault has announced an FCSM Strategic Planning meeting with the Provost, to be held on Monday, Feb. 17th from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in the Minnegnan Room. Faculty and staff are invited to attend to share thoughts about TU’s next strategic plan.
   2.2. The annual Women in Science Forum will be held on Saturday, Feb. 29th from 8:00a.m. through lunch at the South Campus Pavilion. People are asked to please register, so that an accurate estimate can be made for breakfast and lunch. Our own Biology Chairperson, Laura Gough, is one of the three invited speakers.
   2.3. Dr. Vernon Hurte is the new VP for Student Affairs. A new structure has been established, such that the VP for Student Affairs now reports to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (Dr. Perreault). This arrangement enhances the collaborations possible between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs.
   2.4. Patrick McQuown is new Executive Director for Entrepreneurship. Patrick will oversee the TU incubator, TU’s StarTUp facility located in the old National Guard Armory in Towson, and other entrepreneurial activities. He reports to the VP for Strategic Partnerships and Applied Research, Dr. Daraius Irani.
   2.5. The Provost’s office recently sent out results of this year’s sabbatical applications. There were 52 applications university-wide and all but about 5 were successful. All 8 FCSM requests were successful, which speaks to the overall quality of our sabbatical proposals.
2.6. The USM has released its call for nominations for the FY2021 Elkins Professorships. They are due on April 17, 2020, meaning that we should immediately seek to identify one or two excellent nominees, to be suggested to the Provost. As usual, an internal TU process will determine which faculty members suggested by the colleges will be nominated to the USM.

2.7. Update on FY2020 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020) FCSM grant activity: $7.5M requested YTD by 40 faculty, compared to $4.1M on same date FY19 by 29 faculty - ↑; $1.45M awarded YTD to 9 faculty, compared to $1.07 on same date FY19 to 12 faculty) - ↑

3. Announcements from the Council Chairperson
The Dean would like to hear news, celebrations and concerns in the updates from each department.

4. Melanie Perreault, Ph.D., Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs at Towson University, Presentation and Questions
4.1. Welcome to attend the Strategic Planning session to be held on February 17, 2020 from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. in the Minnegan Room. There are another two sessions in a few weeks.

4.2. Students are flocking to Fisher College. Greater resources and attention have to be given to Fisher College. Resources flow where the students are flowing.

4.3. We are trying to figure out what the Carnegie Classification DPU (Doctoral/Professional Universities) means for us. Looking at what our research productivity is, we should try to double or triple the research expenditures. We are searching for the new Associate Provost of Research and Dean of Graduate Studies, whose duties will be to help us increase research expenditures. We have no ambitions to be an R1 university.

4.4. We are interested in greatly increasing undergraduate research support. TU will increase summer research fellowships to support undergraduate research.

4.5. USM is changing its workload report. It allows more flexibility for reporting workload.

4.6. The salary study will be ready by the end of March. A faculty committee, including one member from each college, will be formed to look at the results.

4.7. With regard to differential tuition, universities all over the country are doing this, and no study showed that students were negatively affected. We guarantee that the Pell eligible students in these differential tuition programs are eligible for additional financial aid. We will monitor it carefully.

4.8. With regard to diversity, we set aside three positions each year as opportunity hires. We also do cluster hires. We can also offer the ABD fellowship program and spouse (partner) hire.
5. **Updates from FCSM Departments**

5.1. Biological Sciences: Three candidates for the bioinformatics tenure track position were interviewed and two are acceptable; negotiations are going on now. Some faculty expressed concerns about the chairs in the labs of the new science building and they said that they like their old chairs.

5.2. Chemistry: The candidate has accepted the clinical assistant professor position. It will start this fall. Two faculty members had babies last summer and returned from their maternity leave. Some faculty expressed concerns over the move to the new science building. Some faculty are concerned about the new Carnegie Classification and felt that more research support is needed and that the PTRM process should weigh service contributions more heavily (a concern is that there is an overemphasis on research). And at least one instrument specialist is needed for the department.

5.3. Computer and Information Sciences: Several searches are going on. Skype interviews or on-site interviews were conducted. Since 50% students are transfer students, a new transfer advising staff was hired. Grant application activities were up. No concerns.

5.4. Mathematics: Dr. Rajeev Walia had a new baby boy.

5.5. Physics, Astronomy, and Geosciences: The search for the biophysics position will be postponed to the next year. We are looking to fill the research machinist position. There are three candidates. Some faculty found that many charging stations on campus for electric cars are not functional. Some faculty expressed concerns for student evaluations of the jointly taught courses. They wanted to disentangle the students’ evaluations for the lecture and the lab when they were taught by different instructors.

6. **New business:** A motion of the Academic Senate for facilitating faculty and students to choose their preferred pronouns in official and unofficial communications was approved. The Faculty Senate also discussed sustainability and environmental issues.

7. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 3:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Yunwei Cui
Recording Secretary