Minutes of the March 8, 2019 FCSM College Council Meeting.

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

Member Attendees: FCSM: David Vanko; Biological Sciences: Mark Bulmer, Angela Cox; Chemistry: Ana Maria Soto, Shannon Stitzel; Computer and Information Sciences: Josh Dehlinger, Scott Hilberg; Physics, Astronomy, & Geosciences: Wendy Nelson, Jennifer Scott; Mathematics: Sergiy Borodachov, Yunwei Cui; At large: Kelly Elkins (Chemistry); Student Representatives: Steve Blama (Graduate Student, Physics), Saraubi Harrison (Undergraduate Student, Computer Sciences)

Absent: Elizabeth Goode (At large, Mathematics)

Guests: Alyssa Sapia (Career Center, External Outreach Coordinator), Howard Kaplon (FCSM), Sam Houston (Computer and Information Sciences)

Chairperson Jennifer Scott called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

1. Special Guest: Alyssa Sapia
   The career center has two career coaches who work with the Fisher College: Alyssa and Matt Smith. Matt’s work focuses on internal relationships; he works directly with students and provides advice about resumes and careers, spends some time at Smith Hall and he also meets with students clubs. Alyssa’s work focuses on external relationships. She is the external outreach coordinator and is continuously making contacts with companies to create career opportunities for stem students. Alyssa described some resources that are available to students including a stem newsletter and an online platform called handshake. The discussion included:
   1.1. Handshake is a national online platform where companies can post open job positions (which need to be approved by Towson). Handshake included companies as well as other employers (for example NASA and police departments). Students automatically get an account as soon as they are TU students. Handshake accounts are lifelong (do not expire) and this service is opened to TU alumni as well (alumni request for an account can be done in the handshake website and career center will approve the request after verifying). The career center wants to be proactive and ask companies of interest to join handshake. If faculty have contacts about potential employers, they should forward them to Alyssa.
   1.2. The career center recently organized a site visit to an emerging technology center, where students had the opportunity to meet founders from start up companies and other contacts. Student participants ranged from sophomore to Master students. The career center hopes to connect students early. Please let students know about these opportunities.
   1.3. In response to a question, Alyssa mentioned that they just started measuring results and collecting data about student success (they only started using handshake a couple of years ago).
2. Approval of minutes from the February 8, 2019 FCSM College Council meeting
   The minutes from the February 8, 2019 meeting were approved unanimously.

3. Announcements from the Dean
   3.1. Dean Vanko is happy to be back to FCSM after 7.5 months. He thanked Vonnie Shields and Angel Kumchev for filling in.
   3.2. Elkins Professor nominations by the Provost are due soon. Please contact Dean Vanko with suggestions by March 25th. Dean Vanko must forward strong suggestions to the Provost’s office by April 5th. The Elkins Professorship recognizes faculty scholarship accomplishments and potential. The application includes a prospective about what the faculty would do in their year as Elkins Professor.
   3.3. RFP for FCSM General Endowment funding will be released soon. Last year, proposals were due June 1st, and that was too late. Dean Vanko plans to move the due date up this year to around Friday, April 19th.
   3.4. Requests for applications for the Fisher Endowed Chair in the Biological and Physical Sciences, and the Fisher Endowed Chair in the Mathematical and Computing Sciences, will be released with the usual due date of June 1st.
   3.5. Dean Vanko requested feedback about the location of the Fall forum. Council members indicated a preference for the Chesapeake Room over the Minnegan Room.

4. Remarks from the Dean
   4.1. Research and Scholarship: Grant submissions and awards appear to be down this year, considerably. Dean Vanko plans to continue to monitor this.
   4.2. New Science building update: Dean Vanko has seen recent picture of the first floor interior of the new building. There is a lot of progress inside the building, including pipes, electrical wiring, cinder blocks and doors.
   4.3. The Provost Office has announced that there may be one-time funds at the end of this fiscal year. The Provost Office has requested a list of suggestions for these funds but there is no direction about the amount. Dean Vanko would like to put together a robust list of things that we could buy with this money. Please send requests to your department chair with a one-sentence justification by next Friday.
   4.4. The budget request for the Fiscal Year 2020 will be reviewed by RPAC, then by the budget committee and then by the president. The budget includes requests for funds for faculty promotion, an increase in graduate students stipend (the second increase of a three year plan), funds for new faculty positions, funds to advance efforts from the office of diversity and inclusion and funds to initiate a program like FYE but for transfer students.
   4.5. Towson University has high graduation and retention rates for all students who start their undergraduate studies at Towson, including underrepresented minority students and students eligible for Federal Pell Grants. However, for transfer students, there is a big gap in the retention and graduation rates for underrepresented minorities and Pell Grant eligible students compared to other students. Dean Vanko would like to understand the reason for this gap. Student members of the council commented on some of the difficulties they have observed, including incongruities on what is taught in lower level community college courses and what is taught at Towson, limited information during transfer advising.
compared to freshman advising, the fact that a long term course plan is not required for transfer students but it is required for students who start at Towson, and basic social support (upper level students seem to know each other but transfer students don’t know their classmates).

5. **Announcements from the Council Chairperson**
   
   5.1. **PAGS** is in the process of purchasing a new projector for planetarium (which will be moved to the new building in the future). The software in the new system allows visualization in a variety of different fields (e.g. fly through the human body). Please contact Alex Storrs or Jennifer Scott if you want to see the planetarium.

   5.2. We need to elect new officers in the May meeting. Many of the current officers will be rotating out (Jennifer Scott, Shannon Stitzel and Josh Dehlinger) as their terms end this year.

6. **Updates from FCSM Departments**
   
   6.1. **Biological Sciences**: The department is undergoing its 7-year external review next week. An external reviewer, Janet Morrison from TCNJ, will visit the department. There are two upcoming seminars that could be of interest for various faculty about endothelial function through exercise (March 12) and about what sharks are teaching us about the evolution of immune system (March 26). The concentration Organismal Biology and Ecology (OBE) has been renamed as Ecology Evolution and Conservation (EEC).

   6.2. **Chemistry**: Three faculty in the department are retiring or changing positions. The department is currently discussing hiring priorities and how to go about hiring for these faculty position.

   6.3. **Computer and Information Sciences**: The department completed two faculty searches and made offers to two candidates. These were replacement positions in Information Technology and Computer Sciences.

   6.4. **Mathematics**: The department successfully hired a faculty member in Applied Mathematics. The department will host the undergraduate research conference in Mathematics on April 6th. Sandy Spitzer was awarded a Robert Noyce Scholarship Program grant from NSF, a one-year grant that can lead to a multiyear grant.

   6.5. **Physics, Astronomy, and Geosciences**: The department is conducting a search for a faculty in biophysics. The review of applications will be done by three faculty from physics and two from biology, and they plan to bring candidates to campus in April. The department is also conducting a search for a machinist. The advertisement was just posted and they hope to bring candidates to campus in April. They hope to hire a person who has traditional machinist skills, more up-to-date skills (such as additive manufacturing and 3D printing), and who is also interested in working with students.

7. **Old Business**
   
   7.1. **FCSM P&T issues**: The college P&T committee has identified some of the issues in the current version of the college PTRM document. The college council briefly considered some of these issues:
7.1.1. Third year review outcome: The third year review should look at how well faculty are progressing toward tenure. The review has a recommended 3-level evaluation scale but it is no clear whether this scale is a guideline or a requirement.

7.1.2. The lost sixth year: It should be explicitly written in document how the activities in year six should be considered (whether they count for promotion to full professor).

7.1.3. There is no clear policy about how to deal with merit reviews for people who are on leave (and may miss some teaching, scholarship, or service component).

7.1.4. Proxy votes: It is not clear when they are allowed.

7.1.5. Minority reports and dissenting opinions: There should be guidelines about who writes and signs minority reports and how these reports are supposed to be routed. These reports have implications to the anonymity to the vote itself.

7.1.6. There is no statement about standards for early promotion. However, during the meeting it was clarified that it is not possible to apply for promotion early.

7.1.7. Evaluating scholarship: Should there be guidelines for evaluating publication quality? Should there be guidelines for evaluating scholarship that is not research (for example scholarship in STEM education)?

7.1.8. External letters: There should be guidelines about how to store external reviewer letters and whether it is allowed to quote those letters in other letters (e.g. department P&T committee and chair letters).

7.1.9. Delivery of binders: There should be guidelines about who should deliver binders to the College P&T committee.

7.1.10. There should be clear guidelines about the frequency of reviews for clinical faculty.

7.1.11. There should be clear language to describe how the third year review narrative is different from the summary of major accomplishments.

7.1.12. When revising the document, it should be clear what are policies vs implementing guidelines. Policies are approved by various universities authorities. Guidelines are subject to a much easier modifications.

8. New Business

8.1. Draft of Faculty Training Requirements for Distance and Online Teaching: The Office of the Provost Information and the Instructional Technology Senate Committee have drafted a policy as well as faculty training requirements for distance and online teaching. They are seeking feedback on these documents through next week. The goal is to have a policy for training faculty to teach online courses that is aligned with the standards of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. There are two training options: one involves a shorter commitment and would allow faculty to try online teaching. The second option involves a significant amount of professional development. The main goal is to ensure that faculty are successful when teaching online courses and that we have mechanisms to evaluation online teaching (since traditional evaluations such as class observations may not be possible).
9. **Special Guest: Sam Houston**

The college council visited the Active Learning Lab (YR407) to get an introduction to the educational technology that will be available in the New Science Complex. Sam described some of the equipment and commented on aspects of the layout that are important when designing and using learning labs, including:

9.1. The room looks empty on first sight but the space is designed to optimize interactions between students working on each table station. Although the room can get loud when students work together, the use of half walls allows the instructor to observe the students throughout the room. The glass boards are very popular when students work together.

9.2. There are aspects of the layout that can be chosen according to the specific needs of the learning lab (for example colors, use of rhomboid vs rounded edge tables, use of rolling vs non-rolling tables, etc).

9.3. The lab supports various types of audiovisual instruction, including various options for displaying materials in student station monitors or in the main monitor and pods for students to connect laptops.

10. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ana Maria Soto
Recording secretary