School of Science Steering Committee Minutes
October 7, 2011

Voting Members present: John Watson (President), Simon Rhodes (Dean of the School of Science), Teri Belecky-Adams (Biology), Michael McLeish (substituting for Barry Muhoberac) (Chemistry and Chemical Biology), Jiang Zheng (substituting for Yao Liang) (Computer and Information Science), Lin Li (substituting for Gabriel Filippelli) (Earth Sciences), Vitaly Tarasov (Mathematical Sciences), Stephen Wassall (Physics), John McGrew (Psychology)

Non-Voting Members present: David Skalnik (Associate Dean), Kathy Marrs (Associate Dean), N. Douglas Lees (Associate Dean), Mihran Tuceryan (Past President), Snehasis Mukhopadhyay (Secretary)

Invited Guest: Simon Atkinson (Chair, Biology; Member, New Academic Directions Working Group)

1. President John Watson called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.
2. The agenda was adopted unanimously (see page 4).
3. The minutes of the last meeting on 09/02/2011 were approved unanimously.
4. President Watson turned the floor over to Dean Rhodes. Dean Rhodes mentioned the Computer and Information Science (CIS)-Informatics(SOI) New Academic Directions Working Group that he participated in. There were two options for the working group to consider: (i) CIS moving to SOI, and (ii) Disbanding SOI. As the committee was in the first meeting, instructions came in to stop that particular discussion, as the sequences of decisions to be taken made it unnecessary at this stage. The working group continued to meet to discuss about computing curricula in a collegial way. This resulted in an agreement on a proposed new B.A. in applied computer science from CIS with some SOI and Computer Information Technology (CIT) department courses. Also, a decision was made to establish a permanent council (with 2 members each from science, engineering and technology, and informatics) to diffuse any curriculum disputes/problems before they go to campus committees.
5. Dean Rhodes also mentioned about an increase in the health care premiums determined by the university. Health care costs to the university are very high. So, the university will introduce a sliding scale for premium depending on an employee’s salary. Existing plan choices will still remain. For many employees the premium will be higher starting January, 2012. Dean Rhodes asked everyone to look carefully into the open enrollment packet to be sent by the university to employees. Associate Dean Skalnik asked if the new plans will include biometric screening. Dean Rhodes answered some parts of the questionnaire faced legal problems; however, some incentives (such as for non-smoking) will remain. Atkinson commented that biometric screening and wellness programs will be available on a voluntary basis.
6. Dean Rhodes informed the committee that there will be some changes in the Dean’s office to improve research services to faculty, improve student recruitment and retention, and to bring clarity to responsibilities in student and faculty services.
7. Dean Rhodes mentioned on-going discussions involving John Applegate (IU), Dean Uday Sukhatme (IUPUI), and Tim Sands (PU Provost) regarding Ph.D. programs and the status of PU programs at IUPUI. There were some questions as to whether IUPUI Engineering and Technology is part of these discussions. Dean Rhodes views this as an opportunity to get independent recognition and responsibility for our own productivity and achievements.

8. President Watson invited Simon Atkinson to comment on the status of New Academic Directions Working Group looking into merger of Schools of Science and Liberal Arts. Atkinson informed the committee about the Science and Liberal Arts town hall meetings. A survey is being prepared to be sent to the faculty. Generally, there are concerns about the effects of merger and no real arguments for its advantages. It is not clear how such a combined structure will serve students well and how it will impact promotion and tenure standards, given the difference in culture in the two schools. Wassall asked what changed since the last time such an issue was discussed. Atkinson stated that, for one thing, there is no fiscal crisis now, but the arguments have not changed. President Watson asked if it would be a good idea for the Steering Committee to write a letter to express its position. The general feeling was that it was a good idea. President Watson will draft a letter.

9. Dean Rhodes mentioned about another working group, i.e., the health sciences campus committee, which is of relevance to Science. He thinks that we need to follow these discussions closely. President Watson will send an e-mail to the Chair of that working group to inquire about the status.

10. President Watson mentioned that the future steering committee dates this semester will be November 4 and December 2. He also reminded everyone that the School of Science Fall Faculty Assembly will be on November 11 from 9:00 am to 10:30 am, tentatively in room LD 010.

11. Dean Rhodes discussed the new Bachelor’s in General Sciences (BGS) degree proposal. He had already sent a draft document in this regard to the Steering Committee. This is related to the closing down of the continuing studies program and is a consequence of the new academic directions considerations. The existing students may be returning students, more mature students, or military veterans. This degree now needs to be housed; the possible options are Liberal Arts, Science, and University College (UC). Many of these students do take many science courses. Also, UC’s charter specifically said that it will not grant any degrees. Associate Dean Lees mentioned that UC offers freshman seminar and some other professional courses. There were discussions about advantages and disadvantages of housing BGS in Science. Dean Rhodes asked the School of Science departmental chairs and they were not interested in housing it in the short term. Associate Dean Lees commented that the program needs to be housed somewhere soon, as it has a large number of students being the biggest degree program on campus. President Watson suggested that School of Science Undergraduate Education Committee be involved in these discussions.

12. President Watson reminded everyone that the revision of the School of Science Promotion and Tenure Guidelines document is still pending. The document was submitted to the campus administration for comments and some changes are mandated by campus guidelines. Most of the changes are procedural, or relate to the use of adjectives in criteria. According to the School of Science by-laws, an ad-hoc committee needs to be formed by the Steering Committee in consultation with the Dean to make these revisions.
Watson proposed that a committee be formed and appointed consisting of all the current departmental representatives to the School of Science Unit Committee (excluding Dean’s appointees to the committee). Discussion followed. Dean Rhodes commented that procedurally the process of revision should be clean and clear. McGrew observed that this ad-hoc committee makes it clear. Both Wassall and McGrew were worried whether sufficient time was available. President Watson thinks that the ad-hoc committee can bring the revisions to the Fall Faculty Assembly, followed by an electronic vote. He thinks that the document needs to be cleaned up, but does not require a lot of work. McGrew asked if the faculty voting will be item by item or the whole document. President Watson said that one approach could be to have three levels of voting: one on the changes mandated by campus, and two more on the two relatively controversial clauses pertaining to who presents candidate dossiers in the Unit Committee and whether departmental representatives can vote in the Unit Committee. The motion to appoint the ad-hoc committee (as mentioned above) was voted on and unanimously approved by the steering committee.

13. Dean Rhodes mentioned that he had so far four volunteers for the Diversity Committee. In the interest of time, he will contact the faculty and staff and appoint the members of this committee.

14. President Watson asked the departmental Steering Committee representatives about the procedures adopted in selecting departmental representatives to SOS faculty committees. Various departments use different, non-uniform procedures. President Watson observed that these committees are owned by the faculty, and that the School of Science constitution and by-laws need to be followed and complied with.

15. Due to shortage of time, it was decided to postpone discussions on agenda items 12 and 13. No new or old business.

16. Motion to adjourn at 10:30 am was unanimously approved.
SOS Steering Committee

Agenda

Friday, October 7, 2011, 9-10:30 a.m.

Chemistry & Chemical Biology Conference Room (LD 326T)

1. Introductions
2. Approval of agenda
3. Approval of minutes from September 2, 2011
   http://sos.science.iupui.edu/facultycouncil/SCmin.htm
4. Comments by Dean Rhodes
5. New Academic Directions
6. Future SC meeting dates: November 4, December 2
7. Fall Faculty Assembly date: November 11
8. Bachelor of General Studies
9. Revision of the SOS P&T document, forming an ad hoc committee to conduct the revisions
10. SOS Diversity Committee
11. Selecting departmental representatives to SOS faculty committees
12. Departmental constitutions and bylaws
13. Administrative reviews of Deans and Chairs
14. Old business
15. New business