School of Science Steering Committee Minutes
March 7, 2012

Voting Members present: John Watson (President), Simon Rhodes (Dean), Teri Belecky-Adams (Biology), Barry Muhoberac (Chemistry and Chemical Biology), Yao Liang (Computer and Information Science), Gabriel Filippelli (Earth Sciences), Vitaly Tarasov (Mathematical Sciences), Stephen Wassall (Physics), John McGrew (Psychology)

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

1. President John Watson called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. He suggested a minor modification in the agenda. The modified agenda was adopted unanimously (see page 4).

2. President Watson asked for any amendments to the minutes of the last Steering Committee meeting on 02/08/2012. The minutes were approved unanimously unchanged.

3. Dean Rhodes informed the committee that Dr. Margaret Stockdale will join the school as the Chair of the Psychology department in summer, 2012. Negotiations are on-going with regard to an offer made for the Chair of the Chemistry and Chemical Biology department. The search for the Chair of the Mathematical Sciences department is on-going with the visit this week by the third and last candidate. Dean Rhodes reminded everyone of the ground-breaking ceremony of the new Science and Engineering Laboratory Building (SELB) on March 28. The bids for the new building came in somewhat higher than expected. This may cause a minor delay in the constructions. The school’s long-term interests need to be protected, in view of the expected stabilization of an increasing enrollment trend and moves at the state level to control tuition. The trustees are also discussing centralization of student services including admissions, bursars, and marketing. IUPUI deans are concerned about identity and possible negative impacts of centralization.

4. President Watson commented that the next Steering Committee meeting (April 4) is too close to the spring faculty assembly (April 6) to wait until then to formulate the agenda for the faculty assembly. So, he will prepare the agenda before the Steering Committee meeting and circulate that by e-mail for comments and suggestions. The assembly will take place in room LD 010. He also informed the committee that the School of Science has 3 elected representatives to the IUPUI Faculty Council (IFC) (Watson himself, X. Wang, and M. McLeish). The terms of Wang and McLeish are ending. President Watson will contact them to find out if they would like to continue. However, a faculty vote will be needed. Any additional nominations are welcome. In addition to the 3 elected members, the school has 6 at large members of IFC, 3 from tenure-track faculty (TTF) and 3 from non-tenure track faculty (NTTF). In addition, a new school of science (SOS) faculty secretary will need to be elected during the spring faculty assembly, as according to the by-laws, current secretary Mukhopadhyay will become President of SOS faculty and current President Watson will become Past-President next year. President Watson encouraged nominations for Secretary from current and past Steering Committee members or other faculty members. President Watson also expressed happiness at the
approval of the SOS Promotion and Tenure (P&T) guidelines by faculty vote. This new document will be sent to the campus administration and IUPUI faculty council president, and will also be uploaded at the SOS website. Most of the changes in the document will help align the school guidelines with the campus one. Dean Rhodes expressed satisfaction that the new guidelines are approved in time for the next P&T cycle.

5. President Watson brought up the topic of teaching evaluations. He had earlier sent two documents on this: a proposal by Dean Rhodes to make it required for all SOS courses, and another by Professor Ray Chin on the analysis of student satisfaction surveys. He also brought to the meeting a folder containing many other schools’ documents in this regard. The current SOS policy gives tenured faculty members a choice whether or not to conduct teaching evaluations for their courses. President Watson asked for faculty feedback on Dean Rhodes’ proposal from the departmental representatives. Discussions followed on this topic. Tarasov noted that the Mathematical Sciences department uses its own course evaluation form which is less detailed and has more topics than the school form. Belecky-Adams stated that in the Biology department, evaluations are not currently required of all courses. This is due to the majority view there that the tool used by the school is flawed. Wassal commented that in the Physics department the view is that everyone will probably do it, but it should be recommended and not required. Further, the data should not be shared with anyone other than the instructor. President Watson wanted to know how the Physics department Primary committee felt about the data sharing for P&T. Wassal replied that it is up to the candidates to include such data or not. Dean Rhodes observed that only a minority of the faculty members in the school do not carry out evaluations. But the outside forces will likely soon demand it for all courses. He reminded everyone that the original agreement for the conduct of evaluations required participation by probationary (non-tenured) faculty and lecturers. Wassal commented that the student satisfaction data was intended for faculty evaluation only and not for wide dissemination. Muhoberac wondered who gets to see our electronic Faculty Annual Report. President Watson replied that only few people in the university administration can see it at the current time. In any case, the annual review form does not have a box to enter student satisfaction scores. Filippelli informed the committee that such evaluations are generally viewed as mandatory in the Earth Sciences department and close to 95% of the instructors do it, except in some extreme cases. The data is shared with the Chair. Past President Tuceryan observed that in Computer and Information Science department, before the evaluations data go to the faculty, they are copied by the department. President Watson asked who gets to see the copies and noted that in the Biology department the summaries are examined prior to distribution. Associate Dean Lees stated that when he was the chair of the Biology department, he used to open only the data envelope for pre-tenure faculty, part-time faculty, and lecturers. Dean Rhodes wanted faculty to realize that our budget is tuition-driven. Another important factor is the view of the Trustees, who have said that every salary raise will be merit-driven. Soon, the students may be surveyed by other entities and websites anyway. So, it may be in our interest to agree to it ourselves. Muhoberac commented that he agrees with the need, but questions remain about the tool. Ray Chin’s analysis observed that only extreme scores on the current form are significant and there is a large amount of noise in the middle scores. Dean Rhodes observed that that is essentially how it is used in the P&T now. President Watson summarized that there were three issues: whether such evaluations are required or not, the
nature of the survey tools, and how the scores are shared or used. Dean Rhodes made a motion to require all courses to be evaluated. Subsequently, the best tools can be decided. President Watson made an amendment to make exceptions to small enrollment courses and multi-instructor recitation sections. Dean Rhodes thought that the latter was a secondary, implementation issue and felt that all students should have a choice whether or not to participate in course evaluations. Further discussions followed. Wassal noted that student comments are useful. But, if negative comments are used inappropriately, faculty may be reluctant to conduct course evaluations. Muhoberac thought that global scores can be used inappropriately if a chair wants to punish a faculty member. Also, how evaluation scores correlate with student learning was not clear. McGrew informed the committee that he conducted a quick library search for research on this and came up with over 300 articles. Every school and university is facing this issue. The general finding is that some tools may be imperfect, but similar surveys fared well for consistency, validity, and reliability nationally. They also have significant correlation (about 0.3) with student learning. The papers show that teaching data at external sites such as MyProfessors.com usually have good validity scores. President Watson said that he was told that summative and formative questions should not be averaged together to generate the global score. McGrew thought that structures should be developed for sub-scales and factor analysis may be done to design the questions. President Watson opined that the Steering Committee should drive the process of designing the surveys. Filippelli proposed an amended motion that every section in SOS should have a student satisfaction survey. It was seconded by McGrew. Tarasov made an amendment to change “have a student satisfaction survey” to “should be evaluated by students”. Dean Rhodes proposed a further amendment to change it to “have a mechanism for formal student feedback”. A vote was called, and the amended motion was passed unanimously by voice vote. President Watson made a motion that the Steering Committee will initiate an examination of the current student satisfaction surveys used in SOS. Belecky-Adams seconded. A vote was called and the motion was passed unanimously by voice vote.

6. President Watson brought up the issue of proposed changes in the SOS by-laws regarding the voting rights of NTTF (Non-Tenure Track Faculty). He circulated a list of standing committees in SOS with an indication of the committees that can have NTTF members. He observed that the faculty is unlikely to select NTTF to committees, such as the Graduate or Research committees. He also thought that the curriculum is the domain of tenured faculty, but should have valuable input from the lecturers (part of NTTF). Associate Dean Lees observed that voting is separate from giving inputs. President Watson stated that the IUPUI Faculty Council has a subset of voting members from NTTF. Tarasov suggested that the Steering Committee should have only tenured faculty members, but can have one member from NTTF. There was a comment that some committees (such as the Undergraduate Education Committee and the Assessment Committee) already have NTTF members even though the Constitution and Bylaws states otherwise.

7. President Watson noted that time was running out for the meeting, and said that he would schedule an additional meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss the remaining agenda items.

8. Motion to adjourn at 12:45 pm was unanimously approved.
1. Approval of the agenda

2. Approval of the minutes from Feb. 8, 2012
   [http://sos.science.iupui.edu/facultycouncil/SCmin.htm](http://sos.science.iupui.edu/facultycouncil/SCmin.htm)

3. Comments from the Dean’s Administration

4. Upcoming Steering Committee meetings (11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Apr. 4, and May 2, all Wednesdays) and Spring Faculty Assembly (Friday, April 6, LD 010)

5. Nominees for SOS representatives to IFC, SOS Secretary/President-Elect

6. SOS P&T document

7. Teaching evaluations (see attachment)

8. Proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws (see attachment):
   a. role of non-tenure track faculty in SOS faculty governance
   b. conducting administrative reviews
   c. redefining the role of the Nominations and Awards Committee

   Please refer to the SOS Constitution and Bylaws (if you need a hard copy, please bring your own):
   [http://sos.science.iupui.edu/facultycouncil/bylaws.htm](http://sos.science.iupui.edu/facultycouncil/bylaws.htm)

9. Old business

10. New business

11. Subcommittee for Administrative Reviews: organizing administrative reviews of Deans and Chairs for this year