School of Science Steering Committee Minutes
May 2, 2012

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

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

1. President John Watson called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m. He called to approve the agenda. The agenda was adopted unanimously (see page 3).

2. President Watson asked for any amendments to the minutes of the last Steering Committee meeting on 04/04/2012. No amendments were offered and the minutes were approved unanimously.

3. In the absence of Dean Simon Rhodes, Associate Dean Lees provided Dean’s updates. He stated that the construction of the new Science and Engineering Laboratory Building (SELB) has started with an expected completion date of May, 2014. There was a challenge to one of the charges to School of Science (SOS) for the building that resulted in saving of approximately $0.25 million/year for the school. The R&R costs assigned to SOS will now be phased in over a four-year period. In response to a query from McGrew, Associate Dean Lees also stated that the estimate of assignable space in SELB will about 32K square feet, 77% of which will be for SOS and the remainder for School of Engineering and Technology. Changing the topic, he also mentioned that changes will be proposed to the charge of the SOS Technology Committee, since undergraduate technology fees are not longer allocated to the school. This will involve changing the SOS by-law statements concerning the duties and responsibilities of the Technology Committee.

4. President Watson stated that nominations are still open for the SOS Faculty Secretary/President-Elect position to be vacated by current secretary Mukhopadhyay who will become the president.

5. Initiating discussions on the SOS Student Satisfaction Surveys (SSS), President Watson informed the committee of his meeting with Jane Williams (Psychology department) who conducts the current SOS student evaluations. Williams offered to perform a factor analysis of the data which may help in refining or replacing some of the questions in the current SSS. President Watson has also met Jacqueline Singh from the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) who has her Ph.D. and significant industrial experience in the area of evaluations. Singh thought that there may be some issues with the purpose of some of the questions in the current SSS and that it may be difficult to combine dual goals of measuring student satisfaction and being an instrument for faculty performance in the promotion and tenure (P&T) process. She is willing to meet with the Steering Committee (SC) to discuss her opinions. President Watson asked if the SC should appoint an ad-hoc committee to work on it even during the coming summer. McGrew thought
Singh should meet next academic year’s SC who will have to make recommendations in this matter. Muhoberac agreed that the objective of SSS needs to be defined/clarified. President Watson is going to meet with a Fellow at the Testing Center who is examining the survey forms of many other units on campus. He also stated that some courses in SOS in the current semester are going through an on-line student survey process as a pilot study. Muhoberac liked the idea of using on-line surveys, as it may show how SSS global scores and student actual grades are correlated. If the SSS includes student IDs, then such analysis can be carried out. McGrew thinks it better to keep SSS anonymous (no student IDs), than merely confidential. Tarasov wondered whether many students will participate in the on-line survey process. He also suggested that the SSS should be short. President Watson concluded by stating that the issue needs to be revisited next year, as there are many unknowns at the present time.

6. Old business: None.
7. New business: Liang suggested that SOS organize a research seminar series to promote the school and an atmosphere of research. The frequency need not be high, but these seminars could involve high profile speakers, possibly including Nobel prize winners. Muhoberac observed that SOS organized a seminar by noted physicist Carl Sagan several years ago, but did not follow it up with other such high profile seminars. Associate Dean Lees noted that it cost SOS about $25K to organize the seminar by Carl Sagan. Associate Dean Marrs stated that Pratibha Nelson of CTL already organizes seminars by some high profile speakers and that SOS can possibly partner with CTL in this regard.

8. At this point, the associated deans were asked to leave and the minute continued among the rest of the committee constituting the Subcommittee for Administrative Reviews (SAR). The minutes of this part of the meeting were not recorded to preserve confidentiality.

9. Motion to adjourn at 12:33 pm was unanimously approved.
SOS Steering Committee

Agenda

Wednesday, May 2, 2012, 11 a.m. - 12:30 a.m.

Biology Conference Room (SL 306C)

1. Approval of the agenda

2. Approval of the minutes from April 4, 2012
   http://sos.science.iupui.edu/facultycouncil/SCmin.htm

3. Comments from the Dean’s Administration

4. Nominees for SOS Secretary/President-Elect

5. Student satisfaction surveys (update and plans for further evaluation)

6. Old business

7. New business

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