School of Science Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2012

Voting Members present: Simon Rhodes (Dean), Snehasis Mukhopadhyay (President), Jiliang Li (Biology), Barry Muhoberac (Chemistry and Chemical Biology), Yao Liang (Computer and Information Science), Gabe Filippelli (Earth Sciences), Vitaly Tarasov (Mathematical Sciences), Horia Petrache (Physics), Michelle Salyers (Psychology)

Non-Voting Members present: N. Douglas Lees (Associate Dean), Kathy Marrs (Associate Dean), David Skalnik (Associate Dean), Bethany Neal-Beliveau (Secretary), John Watson (Past President)

Guest: Jane Williams

1. President Snehasis Mukhopadhyay called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

2. President Mukhopadhyay called to approve the agenda. The agenda was adopted unanimously (see page 4).

3. President Mukhopadhyay asked for any amendments to the minutes of the last Steering Committee (SC) meeting on 10/05/2012. No amendments were offered and the minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Dean Rhodes presented the following updates: Current enrollment for the school is good, as is the School’s budget. Faculty searches are currently underway for Mathematical Sciences, Computer and Information Science, Biology (Neuroscience), Psychology, and Forensic Science. Construction of the Science and Engineering Laboratory Building 1 (SELB 1) is on schedule, and planning for SELB 2 is underway. It is the #1 building on IUPUI’s Capital Requests list (request for $22 million, 30,000 sq ft). SOS strategic planning is currently underway. Jane Williams (Psychology) and Evgeny Mukhin (Mathematical Sciences) are currently meeting with departments. There have also been meetings with staff and students, and surveys will be sent out to students, faculty, and staff. A SOS Task Force for online courses has been formed to explore opportunities for the School to be a part of IU Online. John Watson mentioned a concern that the IU School of Medicine will not accept online courses as prerequisites. Dean Rhodes will query the Head of Admissions about this policy. Barry Muhoberac asked about quality control of online courses and if students would come to campus for exams. Dean Rhodes stated that there are all sort of ideas of how these courses should be developed and run, and it may be first come, first serve for the IU approval in various disciplines. The idea of various IUPUI Schools forming a Health campus as suggested in the New Academic Directions Report will not be pursued. Most of the SOS departments will be going through external reviews in the next few years; Psychology just finished theirs.

5. President Mukhopadhyay initiated a discussion of the SOS Course Evaluation Survey. He mentioned that there had been a meeting the previous day to discuss the survey. Jane Williams looked at 3 banks of items for course evaluations and benchmarked the current SOS and Math survey items against them. The goal is to come up with items that students can assess and that will capture the professor’s behaviors that correlate with effective teaching. They want items that will measure satisfaction with the professor, not with the
subject matter. Watson is working on a preamble that will describe what the items are meant to measure and who will have access to the data (Chairs and instructors). Watson reminded the SC that the survey results are just one piece that will be part of the teaching dossier for faculty going up for tenure and promotion. Analyses on the items will be conducted after the first semester it is used to examine their validity. These results will be shared with the faculty so they know what the survey can and cannot measure. Muhoberac mentioned that there are measurable ways of teaching behaviors associated with effective teaching – can teach professionalism. President Mukhopadhyay told the SC that the survey is meant to be a summative (not formative) instrument to measure professionalism and teaching effectiveness. He reiterated that the preamble will state what the survey is trying to measure. Each section will have a brief description of what is trying to be measured to help the students answer the questions appropriately. Muhoberac asked about a factor analysis of the results – can we compare results of large versus small differences? To obtain faculty buy-in, need to provide meaningful data that will allow an instructor to compare his/her teaching with other instructors teaching similar kinds of classes. This information should be put in the preamble. Watson reminded the SC that we have to keep in mind the goals for what a good score on the survey should be. Dean Rhodes pointed out that we should consider data carefully, because even if a score is below a department’s average, it could it still nevertheless be a good score. President Mukhopadhyay brought up that the P&T criteria for teaching are not very good at capturing the multiplicity of data and context and that the teaching guidelines may need to be revised. We need to look at the criteria for evaluation and the departmental guidelines should reflect the diversity of measures used to gauge teaching effectiveness. Williams mentioned that the Center for Teaching and Learning reviewers are not familiar with content – they assess teaching environment, so peer reviews of teaching are also important. Williams continued by saying that the course evaluation survey is only one part of the teaching evaluation. The departments should probably be the ones to decide what should be used for evaluation, but surveys should only be one part. President Mukhopadhyay reiterated that department P&T guidelines should state teaching expectations. The survey is a narrow, but important measure of effectiveness. Williams stated that the purpose of the survey results is to see if a faculty member’s teaching effectiveness is improving over time. Dean Rhodes believes that the survey results will typically help point out problems cases because the SOS faculty, overall, are good teachers. He reminded the SC that there is also mentoring data for each faculty member and each department should determine how this data is used in evaluation of teaching. We need to make sure that the P&T Guidelines are in line with this diversity of instruments that can be used to gauge teaching effectiveness. Watson asked if the Unit Committee or the SC should review the Guidelines and provide clarification of what is expected in a candidate’s teaching evaluation. Dean Rhodes suggested an ad hoc committee made up of Unit Committee members, SC members, or both. His suggestion was for the SC to go through the Guidelines and provide clarification and give suggestions to the Unit Committee. President Mukhopadhyay stated that the preamble is the first step in coming up with concrete guidelines for the role of the survey. Vitaly Tarasov stated that we need to decide on the survey instrument first, then discuss how it fits into the P&T Guidelines. President Mukhopadhyay asked who will have access to the survey results? Will Chairs and instructors have access to the results from both sections
of the survey? Will teaching effectiveness be part of the P&T teaching evaluation? Will student satisfaction? Williams stated that teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction are correlated. President Mukhopadhyay next initiated a discussion of who owns the data. Muhoberac suggested that the data should be kept at the level of the Chair and only go to the Dean if there is a problem. Watson concurred that only in extreme cases would it go higher than the Chair. President Mukhopadhyay asked if it would be available to higher administration. Dean Rhodes reminded that SC that the Trustees own everything and could request the data. It could be put in the preamble that our expectation is that data is to be used by the faculty member and the Chair. Committee members voiced concern that the Trustees could use data to go after a single professor. Williams suggested that it should state in the preamble that “A copy will go to the faculty member and a copy will go to the Chair.” Dean Rhodes does not have time to go through all of the survey results. He sits down with the Chairs and discusses who needs mentoring for their teaching. Muhoberac brought up idea of customary vs. extreme use of the survey data and the faculty should know that it is possible that higher administration could see the data. Watson stated that there must be some reason for anyone above the Dean to request the data, and the faculty need to be reminded that the data may go higher. Muhoberac suggested that truth is needed in the preamble to protect junior faculty. Gabe Filippelli mentioned that, in that case, we need to let faculty know that survey data from the past is available to higher administration. Williams thinks it is important that the preamble state that the data goes to the Chair and the faculty member, so as not to cause undue concern among the faculty. President Mukhopadhyay concluded the discussion by saying that the preamble will follow the language used by the Schools of Liberal Arts and Engineering that the data will be made available to the faculty member, the Chair and the Dean, if necessary. Watson is working on the preamble and Williams is working on the survey items; both will be brought to next month’s meeting for discussion.

6. Williams asked if the SC would like to meet with her and Evgeny to discuss strategic planning like they have with each department. It was committee consensus that the SC will be important once they have generated a list of potential goals and need input for distilling it down to 5-8 goals.

7. The Subcommittee for Administrative Reviews (SAR) met to discuss the mechanism for the 2012-13 administrator reviews.

8. Motion to adjourn at 5:45 pm was unanimously approved.
1. Approval of agenda
2. Approval of minutes from October 5, 2012
3. Comments by Dean Rhodes
4. SOS Course Evaluation Survey
5. SAR (Subcommittee on Administrative Reviews) only: Mechanism for 2012-13 Administrator Reviews