School of Science Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

11/22/13

Voting Members Present: Simon Rhodes (Dean), Bethany Neal-Beliveau (Psychology/President), Horia Petrache (Physics), Vitaly Tarasov (Mathematical Sciences), Dennis Devine (Psychology), Christoph Naumann (Chemistry and Chemical Biology), Yao Liang (Computer and Information Science), Jiliang Li (Biology), Lin Li (Earth Sciences)

Non-Voting Members: David Skalnik, Doug Lees, Kathy Marrs, Jeff Watt, Snehasis Mukhopadhyay (Computer Science [Past President]), Michelle Salyers (Secretary)

1. Introductions – President Neal-Beliveau (BNB) called the meeting to order at 2:04pm. She announced that Michelle Salyers has been officially selected as Secretary/President Elect.

2. Approval of agenda – President Neal-Beliveau called for approval of the agenda; there was a motion, a second, and it was approved with no additions.

3. Approval of minutes – President Neal-Beliveau called for approval of the past minutes; there was a motion, a second, and these were approved with no additions or corrections.

4. Comments by Dean Rhodes (DR). There is not much to add after the long fall Faculty Assembly this morning. The only thing we did not talk about is ongoing faculty search and screens. Some search processes are more mature than others. Some are attracting more applications than others (depending on area and number of potential applicants in a particular subfield). The searches seem to be going well; if you have not heard much, ask the relevant search committee chair in your Department.

BNB asked if anyone that was not at the fall Faculty Assembly had questions for DR. She also noted that at the Assembly, Dean Rhodes did thank us all and that was very nice.

5. New business

BNB – knowing we had the Assembly this morning, we did not have a lot of business on our agenda. Then she turned the floor over to Vitaly Tarasov to discuss the proposed change to SOS By-Laws brought forth by Mathematical Sciences.

Vitaly Tarasov (VT): Faculty from the Mathematical Sciences department want to change the By-Laws to allow faculty to vote on whether specific faculty could have voting privileges. Two faculty in Mathematical Sciences, for example, Kevin Berkopes and Elizabeth Its, do not have voting rights, but are very involved with teaching. Their department is concerned that it is unfair for faculty such as these who do not have voting rights. Dr. Berkopes is the director of the Mathematics Assistance Center (MAC) and half-time lecturer with teaching responsibilities that are very comparable to the lecturer staff. When he was appointed, the position was supposed to be half Lecturer, but he is not and VT is not sure why. Dr. Its is the other faculty member, and she is an Associate Research Professor who does research and teaching. VT noted that Clinical Professors do vote, but Research Professors do not. The Mathematical Sciences department voted to allow them to
vote on departmental issues, and would like them to have voting rights in the SOS. But the SOS bylaws do not have the opportunity to grant status to individuals. In the By-Laws there is a phrase that allows voting faculty to make a decision for Emeritus faculty. They propose adding a sentence to clarify that faculty could change voting rights for other individuals.

DR asked if he was asking for voting rights by person, and not category of groups? Not asking for all research faculty, but for these individuals? VT responded that yes, just for the individual, not for all researchers. The Mathematical Sciences department agrees that these two people should be able to vote. The department faculty voted to allow them to vote. The department is asking for them to have voting rights at the School level. BNB clarified that if we make these changes to the By-Laws, then their cases would come before the full faculty for a vote.

DR asked which phrase will be changed. VT clarified that after the Emeritus sentence in the By-Laws, we could add the following sentence: “The Voting Faculty can grant voting status to individuals from the Nonvoting Faculty”.

Kathy Marrs (KM) asked if there would be a formal procedure, with CV, etc., so that an individual could apply. VT responded that he thinks it should come from the department. That their department voted that the proposed faculty could vote internally, and so now are bringing it to the SOS level. Because they have teaching loads, then they should be able to have voting rights. In the past, directors of the MAC did not teach much, but now in this case, this director does.

Jiliang Li (JL) asked if we would change the By-Laws just for 2 people? VT responded that they would like to make the request for these two people, but that the request is to change the By-Laws so that others in similar situations can have this process. JL asked what procedures to go through for changing the By-Laws. DR responded that this is it. The request comes through the Steering Committee. Dennis Devine (DD) noted, but then we go to faculty. DR agreed.

Doug Lees (DL) asked if we are requesting voting privileges because someone is teaching? So then does this open up to everyone teaching in the School and then all administrative and service functions, academic specialists should be eligible. KM noted that other departments will want to do this, and DL responded that is may be a can of worms, other temporary teaching appointees may want the same thing. VT is saying that the teaching load is comparable. That teaching is part of the offer. If the teaching load is comparable to others who can vote, they should too. DL noted that teaching levels are not comparable across departments now.

Christoph Naumann (CN) stated that for Lecturers, their focus is teaching. So if issues come up related to research and they are only focused on teaching, then voting can shift based on people who may not have the experience. So some types of decisions are voted on by tenure-track faculty. DR reminded him that Lecturers already having voting privileges.

VT: Mathematical Sciences would like the opportunity for these two. Then in the future, new ones would have to go through the same process. DD clarified that this would still be case-by-case. BNB responded that it would be similar to Emeritus Faculty now.
Snehasis Mukhopadhyay (SM) noted that would be a problem if someone’s teaching load changes, then should we take back voting privileges? VT said that in both cases, these are similar to Senior Lecturers in terms of times of contracts. BNB, asked that if her primary role is research, what happens if down the road if the department decided to decrease her teaching load. Michelle Salyers (MS) asked if we could just change the appointment so that she is a Lecturer and then already has the ability to vote. KM reminded us that she was a Lecturer and asked to be changed to a Research Professor track. We briefly discussed the option of a dual appointment. DD asked if we could put in something that takes away voting if the job responsibilities change. DR said that would not be able to be tracked. We vote on a person because they are engaged. Someone could hire a person in a lab, promote them to Research Scientist, but they have little to do outside of the lab. We can vote for someone because they are an engaged, thoughtful contributor to the School in a broad sense and they have earned that right. That’s who we would want to vote for.

BNB said this would be similar for Academic Specialists. Not adding a whole new block of people. DR said the system has some checks and balances.

BNB clarified that we as the Steering Committee vote for this now, then bring it to the faculty. She asked if that would be in the spring. SM said we can do an electronic vote with faculty now. VT agreed and said then he could prepare the cases for the spring Faculty Assembly where he could present the cases.

JL asked what the wording would be. VT read from the page "The Voting Faculty can grant voting status to individuals from the Nonvoting Faculty," and that they propose to add it at the end of the third paragraph of Subsection 1 of Section 1 after the sentence "Emeritus members of the School of Science shall also be nonvoting faculty unless otherwise determined by the voting faculty to have voting status."

BNB asked for a motion and VT moved, and it was seconded. The motion was approved with no dissents or abstentions to bring it to the full faculty for voting.

DR suggested that Charley Goodlett should read it and provide wording suggestions. BNB will run it by him and then create a survey for faculty voting.

**New Business - Honors Program (Kathy Marrs)**

BNB hopes that this becomes a vibrant exciting program for our school. We need buy-in from departments and more honors courses going beyond some of the current honors requirements.

KM noted that this is something that came about as part of the SOS Strategic Plan. Reinstating the honors program would be good. When the Honors College started, schools were asked to put theirs on hold. Now other schools are starting to bring them back. Now students would be eligible if they meet grade requirements. This has gone through Undergraduate Education Committee. This December, the SOS will look at the grades, and invite people to apply. Benefits include using the Honor’s College lounge and living arrangements. May be eligible for the Dean’s scholarship, but not the initial big ones. This will really help transfer students. They will be considered part of the Honors College.
Any Honors College student in the SOS will be part of our honors program too. We need to think about our academic structure to make sure that this supports them. We have few honors experiences at the sophomore level and higher. Perhaps we should look at special sections of labs, for example, that could be reserved for honors, or other opportunities. Currently, honors projects are mostly contracts with individual faculty (like writing a paper, extra project) and do not give them new credits. Jeff Watt (JW) has an example of different types of things they can choose. There are some free-standing honors labs.

DR clarified that grades come from normal course grade. JW replied that yes; then students get an honors notation added if they complete the projects. He provides additional projects, with multiple types that they can pick from. But, they have to be earning an A or B in order to earn the extra designation. He gave an example of using assignments related to understanding heart attacks. Lots of extra work involved in the different options.

KM recommends that we go back to our departments to talk about what honors options we have now, and what honors contracts we already use, and how many. Are there other opportunities we could offer (e.g., Capstone)? Honors students will be asked to do 12 hours of honors coursework in Science and 12 outside of Science. They may not have had those classes, because as freshman they were not originally in honors, so we need sophomore ones too.

JL asks if they will have two contracts if students are in Honor’s College and our honor’s program. KM replied that it is not separate, will just use one. BNB asked if we use same paperwork. KM: Yes, will use their honors contracts and paperwork. Yao Liang (YL) asked if the contract is per class? KM replied yes, you can do multiple options like Jeff does, but you can make an individual activity that a student can do. JW suggested that with smaller courses, quality control will rest with instructor. But for larger courses with multiple sections, the departments will want to have equity across them.

KM said that if department chairs are worried about creating a lot of new classes, not necessarily. We could just have additional exercises.

BNB asked if there is a separate section for honors, could you do it without separate contracts? KM did that once where the big class was mixed, but recitation was separate just for honors. She also mentioned one in Physics by adding a credit hour and that did not work well. JW said we used to offer one in a Finite Math course and reserved a section for honors students and had an extra class on Fridays to talk about game theory and special topics. BNB said that Psychology has new course requirements and we would not have manpower to offer new sections. So if we could offer an honors section within a larger section, that would be easier. KM said, yes. Please do think about options. We will have some SCI interdisciplinary courses and those could be a possibility down the line.

BNB said that Psychology has an Honors Capstone Research course (PSY-B499) that is a full-year project. Students apply in the spring to be accepted into the program and into individual labs. We may need to expand it, but it works well. KM said that since they will not get many freshman opportunities from us, then having a senior option is great.

Horia Petrache (HP) asked if the student cannot keep up, do they get partial “credit”? KM replied that they will give the student a semester to turn around their performance in the
next semester. But, a student has to complete the courses to get Honors Designation on the diploma.

BNB reminded us as to bring this up at our faculty meetings, especially the upper level courses. KM said we (Biology Department) now have 3 sophomore level labs. You may find you need them. Kathy said that if faculty ask, there is no new money for this. Matt Rust will be working with these students as an honors advisor, so there is staff support. Kathy and Jeff will both be listed if there are questions or concerns.

BNB reminded us that the honors students will be able to use the Honors College and the fancy space in the bottom of the library. KM said that at graduation, they also get medallions the size of a Petri dish. LL asked what are the other benefits. Will it speed up graduation? KM replied no, but we have a lot of good students who may have missed the Honors College opportunity. This gives students extra experiences, many want extra learning experience. DR noted that by having good GPAs, they earn it too. LL noted we could also use it to recruit excellent students in graduate programs. DR agreed, saying that for example, maybe Matt Rust could do an event for those people, and then we could present about opportunities for graduate training. They would be the people on paper that our graduate programs are looking for. LL added that faculty members could engage more with those students to give them other experiences, and that will help recruitment. KM said yes, we will have advisory council and we could work in information on careers.

DR asked if departments could have an honors version of the undergraduate research opportunity. KM suggested maybe having a thesis, or presentation component. BNB added to present at a local or even national research conference. DR said it makes our best students identify themselves. LL agreed and said that also we could retain our high-quality students, and this is important. BNB added that yes, even retaining them as undergraduates is helpful. She noted that Kathy made a good point in Faculty Assembly that over the years we have worked hard on helping the low-end students having difficulty, and now it is good that we focus on the high-end, high-performing students. We will get more as the quality of our students improve. She wants to develop new options, for example, she has some of her honors students involved in teaching, too.

Old Business - SOS Strategic Plan

BNB asked where is the IUPUI Strategic Plan in the process. DR said it is not done, but about the same stage as our SOS plan. There is a new version on the University website. Jane mentioned (at Faculty Assembly) the three types of written plans we hope to present. The middle version of that has just been posted for IUPUI. Jane and Evgeny have mapped in asterisks where there are similar aligned themes. Our website is open and people can post comments. So far, the students are providing the most feedback on the Plan. BNB added that this is another thing to take that back to our departments, and ask them to make comments. She asked Michelle to talk about what we are doing in Psychology.

MS described that in response to her meeting with Dave Skalnik and the Research Committee, she asked her Chair if she could poll the faculty on ideas that would help meet the research-related strategic goals. They discussed making the survey broader and a small committee met to design the approach. Psychology will take each goal, and do a brief
Survey Monkey. It reminds faculty what the goal wording is, and lists the objectives for that goal. Then for each objective, we ask what ideas they might have for reaching this goal. Then Michelle will summarize the responses and bring them to the next faculty meeting for discussion and prioritization. The department will do this with each goal, each month or so, to work their way through the plan. BNB added that Psychology is coming up with ideas at the level of faculty, and determining which ideas we want to use. KM wondered if other departments want to have a similar process. DR added that some of these things will be done by chairs, others by school committees.

BNB reminded us that it came through this morning (at Faculty Assembly) that the departments are different and may have different goals. And so, departmental level strategies may work differently. DR noted that a lot of things have happened already. We are not going to wait and start a clock. KM said that every year about this time, the SOS has to complete annual report to Dr. Banta. We will use the Strategic Plan going forward. Every year, the SOS has to say what our goals are, and then what activities we are doing. Then next year, we have to report on whether we met them. So this will be used in another way. DR said that this is another example that it will not be on the shelf, but will frame how we pass this information on. Also, people learned a lot about each other in the process. BNB reminded us that if our faculty have ideas, we can go to the website or share them with Jane and Evgeney directly.

Set a date for the next meeting at December 16th at 1:30 to 3 in LD. We should bring our calendars for spring semester to that meeting.

BNB called the meeting to a close at 3:16, and the motion was unanimously approved.