

College Council Meeting Minutes
FISHER COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
1:30 – 3:00 p.m., April 11, 2025

2024-2025 Member Attendees Present

Biological Sciences: Daniel Caetano (Co-Secretary); **Chemistry:** Nicole Carbonaro (Vice-Chairperson) and Shannon Stitzel; **Computer and Information Sciences:** Jinie Pak and Nam Nguyen; **Mathematics:** Jing Tian and Na Zhang; **Physics, Astronomy, & Geosciences:** Parviz Ghavamian (Chairperson) and Jia-An Yan; **Lecturers and Clinical Faculty:** Miriam Parnes; **Inclusive Student Success:** Nichole Mason; **Staff:** Kara Berger and Hannah Berry; **Students:** Jaelyn McCracken (Chemistry; Undergraduate), Miracle Eze (Biology, Graduate)

Non-Voting, Ex-Officio:

Dean: Matthew Nugent; **Associate Dean:** Ming Tomayko and Chris Salice.

Building Manager: Josh Wilhide.

Visitors/Guests: Ellen Hondrogiannis and Sonali Raje.

1. Approval of minutes from the March 14, 2025, FCSM College Council meeting.
The minutes were approved with unanimous consent.
2. Announcements and remarks from Dean Nugent.
 - A. Dean Nugent sent the “News from the Dean’s Office” document on April 9th with announcements. A copy of these announcements is attached to the minutes.
3. Announcements and remarks from the Associate Dean Ming Tomayko.
 - A. Thank you to all the departments and programs who participated in the admitted student day events.
 - B. The final admissions event of the year is an open house for high school juniors on May 3rd in the Union.
 - C. FCSM and the College of Health Professions welcomed about 60 Baltimore city high school juniors from the Building Steps program. Students toured the Science Complex building, enjoyed a Planetarium show, and visited the Health Profession facilities.
 - D. Next Sunset meditations in the planetarium will be on Fri May 9th at noon.
 - E. Next FCSM Book Club meeting is on Thurs May 1st at 12:30 p.m.
 - F. Next Community time with the Associate Deans is Tues May 6th at 2 p.m.
4. Announcements from Associate Dean Chris Salice
 - A. Arbor day celebration was held on April 2nd. It was a successful event with great turnout and included the presence of President Mark Ginsberg.
 - B. Climate change in your backyard: A planetarium event on April 18th.
 - C. Student Research and Inquiry Forum will take place on April 17th. It will include an Alumni reception.
 - D. Poster Session on May 9th is open to students that took a CURE course and for students that did independent research.
 - E. Cook Library is expanding the poster printing capacity for the Fall semester. Meanwhile, students will be recommended to print posters on designated days to facilitate the process.

- F. The TU work-study program informed that they cannot provide a list of students eligible for the work-study because job opportunities must be available for everyone.

In addition, the work-study program is operating at the capacity of their funding at the moment. However, they indicated that they could help create Handshake ads tailored to help Principal Investigators find students eligible for work-study to work in their labs.

- G. The Open Hours with OSPR event happened on April 9th. The discussion was productive. OSPR opened the floor to answer questions. The news is that some grants from major funding agencies might still be funded. OSPR also talked about GrantForward, the search engine for funding opportunities open to Towson University faculty.
 - H. Ongoing efforts to build a network of industry professionals as potential research collaborators.
 - I. Finally, a working group on interdisciplinary research using Artificial Intelligence is currently under development. The goal is to foster research collaborations between departments.
- 5. Announcements from the Council Chairperson
 - A. Reminder that some College Council members are up to the end of their terms. Please contact your departments to elect new members. Also please note that one of the representatives of each department must be tenured.
 - 6. Visit from Sonali Raje (CHEM): Course Eval Task Force request for input/discussion from CC on a new peer teaching evaluation form.
 - A. Request to receive feedback from the faculty from the different departments on the new peer teaching evaluation form, with the objective of evaluating what changes need to be made. Feedback is expected by April 25th, if possible, or by mid-May.
 - B. Mary Slate (FACET Teaching Fellow) created, together with FACET, the current version of the new peer teaching evaluation form.
 - C. The provost requested a document that can be used by the entire university and thus homogenizing the process on the campus. However, colleges are open to decide how they can modify this document based on their individual needs.
 - D. The goal of this document is to help provide feedback to faculty regarding their teaching as well as to help to improve their teaching.
 - 7. Visit from Academic Senate Member at Large Ellen Hondrogiannis regarding SC posting policy.
 - A. Request that faculty representatives from the College Council would be part of the SC building committee meetings such that faculty can provide different perspectives and also bring reports back to the College Council.
 - B. Request to have a member of the University Space Committee attend the SC building committee meetings to help clarify which modifications to spaces in the Science Complex are allowed (to minimize likelihood of rejection by the University Space Committee).
 - 8. Highlights from FCSM Representatives
 - A. Biological Sciences continues the work to revise and update the undergraduate curriculum to follow the Vision and Change goals. Faculty are now cataloging and rearranging the course topics to provide a clearer scaffold organization. The department was also able to secure summer support for Thesis graduate students.

- B. The Chemistry department reported that some equipment was damaged by the lack of electricity and has not been repaired or replaced yet. The Tall-Wiedefeld Society grant and the Women in Forensic Science were awarded. Kelly Elkins and student co-authors published a manuscript in the Journal of Forensic Sciences on their survey of forensic DNA training experiences in U.S. laboratories. Mary Devadas and student co-authors published a paper in Chemistry: An Asian Journal exploring the photoluminescence of Pt-doped gold nanoclusters. This paper was featured on the journal cover and as an Editors' Choice article.
- C. The Computer and Information Sciences (CIS) department reported that Dr. Mike McGuire will continue serving as the department chairperson for another term. CIS had an advising kick-off event, including information about accelerated programs, study abroad and away, career planning, and food and games for the students. The department is also hiring CIS student advisors to assist with class registration and student advising /communication. The student advisor will also help with the coordination and marketing to promote the CIS community.
- D. The Mathematics department announced that the addition of an online-only option for completing the Mathematics Education MS Degree was approved this Wednesday (April 9).
- 1) Upcoming events from the Department of Mathematics: Actuarial Science and Risk Management (ASRM) Reception & Panel Discussion, April 11, Science Complex Commons, 6-8 pm. Free registration for students. Mathematics Majors: Celebration and awards. Wednesday, April 30, 3:30 – 4:45, YR 205. UEC (University Earned Credit Program) Site Visit: April 30, 2025 (Wednesday) 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. TU Actuarial Science & Risk Management (ASRM) Alumni Event – April 23rd, 6-8 p.m. - Big Data, Bigger Insights: How Actuaries Turn Numbers into Knowledge. Integration Bee: Wednesday, April 30th, SC2321. Department Colloquium: 1) April 24th, 3:30-4:30 p.m. - Halil Tasova, California State University-San Bernardino, and 2) April 25th, 3:30-4:30 p.m. - Dr. Alf Dolich, City University of New York (CUNY). Department Seminar: April 15th: Lily Glushakow-Smith: "Developmental Math: Is our approach serving the aspirations of underprepared students?"
- E. The PAGS department announces that Physics undergraduate student Lukas Hamann is our newly minted prestigious Goldwater Scholar under the supervision of Dr. Vera Smolyaninova in our department. Lukas will receive a one-year full scholarship to support his undergraduate studies.
- 1) Upcoming events from the PAGS department: April 11th: 11 a.m., SC 1230. Title: A Tale of Two Young Evolving Sun-Like Solar Systems. Speaker: Dr. Carey Lisse, Astrophysicist, Applied Physics Lab, Johns Hopkins. April 18th: 11 a.m., SC 1230, Dr. Scott Coombe from the Office of Navy Research (ONR) will give a seminar talk (title: TBD). On April 25th, Dr. Jocelyn Sessa from Academy of Natural Sciences, Drexel University, will give a talk titled "Using mollusks to understand past and present climatic and oceanographic conditions". Dr. Raj Kolagani's sabbatical talk on May 2nd, 11-12th, SC 1230. Dr. James Overduin's sabbatical talk on May 9th, 11-12th, SC1230. May 30th 6 p.m. Jeff Klupt & Mark Edmonston's Retirement Party.
 - 2) Planetarium events: April 18th, 12 to 1 p.m., 2025. Planetarium Showing: Climate Change in Your Backyard. April 18th, 2 shows: 7 & 7:45 p.m. Big Astronomy: People, Places, Discoveries explores three observatories located in Chile, at extreme and remote places. It gives examples of the multitude of STEM careers needed to keep the great observatories working. The show is narrated by Barbara Rojas-Ayala, a Chilean astronomer.

- F. Lecturers shared that the survey shows some interesting patterns, and they are working on compiling a summary for the Dean and Chairs. A more detailed update will be shared at the next College Council meeting.
 - G. The TU Interfaith America grant committee includes cross campus partners and faith leaders that worked on deliverables including Religious Accommodations Syllabus Statement to be presented to Academic Senate for approval and a guide for students on how to engage in religious, spiritual, or secular conversations/dialogue in and outside of the classroom that includes information on how to request religious accommodations.
 - H. The CIS Advising & Career Kickoff Event was held last Thursday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and had one hundred and fifteen students attending.
 - I. The CIS Department is developing a new first-year course focused on professional development, computing ethics, and academic success. This course intends to create a captured audience for professional development workshops, seminars, etc.
 - J. The Hill-Lopes Scholars Program hosted a successful event featuring journalist and social science researcher Lisa MP Munoz about her book Women in Science Now on April 10, 2025. Approximately 80 people were in attendance. The program is currently featured in the April issue of local publication i95 Business and was interviewed by WJZ at the Women of the World Festival (WOW) Baltimore on April 5, 2025. The Hill-Lopes Scholars Program also has an article in the TU Newsroom featuring several FCSM/Hill-Lopes alumni.
 - K. Graduate students are creating a survey sheet to receive feedback/opinions on how the graduate student representative can efficiently represent and discuss graduate student issues in college council meetings.
 - L. Undergraduate students announced that Bruce Laws will be holding seminars for upper class students transitioning.
9. Standing Agenda Items:
- A. Senate update/communications
 - 1) There is a General Ed Task Force revisiting the Gen Ed courses offered at Towson.
 - 2) Elin Lobel has termed out as president of TUAAP.
 - 3) Over 400 responses were received to the survey asking for feedback on the chair's role in department P&T meetings. The AS is currently looking through the results.
 - 4) From the President's Annual TU AS address:
 - a. TU is projecting a 16–17 million dollar deficit.
 - b. President wants to implement external letters for all colleges for both tenure evaluations and promotion to full by 2026-27.
 - c. President is still looking to move toward selective merit evaluation, based on more stringent criteria. The president indicated that this spring the new merit process will be implemented for staff. (An update has been provided by Human Relations; staff evaluations will not be changed this Spring.)

5) Provost's Office Announcements:

- a. The office is looking at small academic departments to see if they could be combined with other departments, with the affected faculty choosing the department closest to their research. These decisions would have to be approved by the University Curriculum Committee and, ultimately, the Board of Regents.
- b. The provost's office is also looking at suspending programs with low enrollment, stating this decision is more about the quality of the academic experience.
- c. With respect to the Leadership Survey the provost felt it would be more meaningful to conduct 360 degree evaluation for these positions.

6) Announcements from the Office of Graduate Studies:

- a. The office is being separated into Research and Graduate Studies. Sidd Kaza is currently the Associate Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies.
- b. There will be a National Search for a new dean to head the new College of Graduate Studies. David Ownby, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, will serve as interim Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

10. Ongoing Issues/Initiatives/Old Business:

A. Updates on results from Lecturer survey (Carbonaro, Parnes):

- 1) 51.9% of the lecturers responded to the survey.
- 2) Lecturers feel that they are heard and valued.
- 3) Lecturers feel that they are supported.
- 4) Lecturers have concerns about the teaching load. Most have concerns or are neutral about it.
- 5) Lecturers were neutral about the scholarship expectations of their job.
- 6) Lecturers demonstrated concerns about the amount of service expectation. Most are neutral, and some disagree with the current service load.
- 7) Lecturers disagree about the current compensation when compared to other universities. However, there were some concerns that Question 18 did not reflect the point of view of the lecturers.
- 8) The results will be summarized and shared in the next meeting.

B. Reminders to FCSM departments to choose new College Council representatives ahead of the final College Council meeting in May of the 2024–2025 academic year.

11. New Business

A. Items from the floor

12. Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted,

Daniel Caetano (Co-Secretary).



THE JESS & MILDRED FISHER COLLEGE OF SCIENCE & MATHEMATICS



NEWS FROM THE DEAN'S OFFICE

Dear FCSM Faculty and Staff,

I hope this message finds you well as the semester and academic year move ahead. We are certainly living in interesting times! Over the past few months, we have had to adjust to some changes and challenges, but what has not changed is that we have remained true to our values as we engage in our incredibly meaningful work. We have a lot to be proud of in the FCSM. We continue to provide a learning environment that gives students of all backgrounds the opportunity to realize their full potentials, while pushing the boundaries of human knowledge through our world-class research. Nevertheless, we are certainly facing some headwinds as we look ahead, but times of great challenges and uncertainty also present opportunities for creative solutions and innovative ideas. I am inspired and amazed every day by the incredible community of talented and committed faculty and staff within the FCSM, so I am certain that we are up for this challenge!

There has been a lot going on in the FCSM, so I thought it would be a good time to provide an update on various activities in the college.

COMMUNITY & COMMUNICATION

I am pleased to see that several of our initiatives are helping to bring us together. Associate Deans Ming Tomayko and Chris Salice have started their monthly community-time meet

ups on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 2 PM to give everyone a chance to take a moment to simply chat with their colleagues. I have continued to host my monthly brown bag lunches on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at noon, and Elana Ehrlich in Biology has organized a Caregiver Support Group that meets on the 2nd Thursday of every month at noon. All of these regular get-togethers meet in the Science Complex room 5220. I am also pleased to see “Celebrating FCSM” broadcasting on the big screen in the Science Complex Commons showcasing our successes and events. Please continue to submit information for posting to: fcsm@towson.edu with the subject line “Celebrating FCSM”, and promote campus-wide events through the TU Digital Signage Network that we also run on the big screen twice a week. I am also happy to report that we are working with TU facilities to install a large FCSM sign on the wall above the landing on the 3rd floor looking out onto the Commons, and soon we hope to have some colorful murals and posters displayed throughout the Science Complex.

We have also had a series of successful workshops for faculty and staff development on topics such as: recommendation letter writing, preparing effective assessments, and how to give productive feedback. These were organized by Ming Tomayko and included several faculty and staff who generously volunteered their time. We have an amazing array of talent in our community. Thank you to all of you who are contributing!

ENROLLEMENT

If we don’t have students, we don’t have a university. I am glad to report that applicants to the University for Fall 2025 are at an all-time high. Towson University had a total of 25,821 applications for admission this year, which represents a 6% increase over last year. The breakdown, as well as the data for the College, are shown in the table below. Decision day is not until May 1st, yet it is encouraging to see that 2,253 new students have already sent in their deposits indicating that they are planning to attend TU (data as of April 8th). This is a 23% increase compared to the average of the past 3 years at the same point in time!

TOWSON UNIVERSITY			
Student Type	Applicants	Admitted	Contracts
Freshmen	21,925	16,556	1,449
Transfer	2,047	1,181	448
Graduate	1,849	895	356
TOTAL	25,821	18,632	2,253
FCSM			
Freshmen	6,038	4,837	344
Transfer	494	300	107
Graduate	456	253	56
TOTAL	6,988	5,390	507

While a lot can happen between now and August, enrollments are looking strong both for the University and the College. A lot of work goes into student recruitment, and I want to recognize and thank Associate Dean Ming Tomayko for bringing her energy and enthusiasm to organizing and leading the FCSM component of our undergraduate open houses and accepted student events. I also thank Associate Dean Chris Salice, our graduate program directors and staff for working together to promote our graduate programs. And of course, these events would not have been a success without the faculty, staff, and students who volunteered to help. I know this often meant taking time away from your families to come in on weekends, so I thank you on behalf of the University and College for contributing to this critical work.

RESEARCH

Every day a discovery is made somewhere in the FCSM. It may be as simple as discovering a way to reduce background in an analytical method or finding an easier way to solve a math problem, but these are important steps that contribute to expanding knowledge. Importantly, in our college these discoveries give our students an opportunity to truly learn by doing. This integration of teaching and research is one of the things that makes the FCSM a special place. Thus, I am pleased to report that research in the FCSM is flourishing! At our mid-year report we appear to be on track to once again set a new record for grant expenditures, number of proposals submitted, and new grants received. At the 6-month point last fiscal year we had external grant expenditures of ~\$3.2 million whereas at the same point in the current year we were at ~\$3.6 million. From 2019 through 2024 an average of ~70 grant proposals were submitted per year by FCSM faculty and staff. As of the half-way point this fiscal year, we have already had 54 proposals submitted. New grant awards are also up in this fiscal year compared to previous years. And while this is good news, it is important to be aware of the significant challenges to federal funding for research. In these turbulent times we will have to be nimble and ready to react when opportunities arise. To that end, I am delighted to have welcomed Associate Dean Chris Salice to our Dean's Office team in January. Chris has already begun working with faculty to identify ways to promote and grow our research enterprise in the FCSM.

While grants fuel our research, it is the outcomes that matter, and in this area we have seen some wonderful recent successes. For their efforts in mentoring student research, Professors Mary Devadas and Alexei Kolesnikov were notified that they will receive the Board of Regents Faculty Award for Mentoring, the highest honor bestowed by the University System of Maryland. Professors Keith Reber and John Sivey from the Department of Chemistry along with three students co-authored a paper in *Nature Water*, a top journal in their field. The paper describes new insights into how compounds in chlorinated drinking water can transform into toxic byproducts. A study led by Biology graduate student, Leah Nielsen, in collaboration with Professors Harald Beck and Chris Oufiero was published in *Scientific Reports* revealing new mechanisms that mammals use for color vision. These

two high impact papers are just a small sample of publications from our college. I encourage you all to check in with your colleagues to learn about their recent research.

Our students' research success was also on display at our recent FCSM Honors Convocation where we recognized 57 FCSM undergraduate research grant recipients. And just this week we were informed that Physics major Lukas Hamann was named a Goldwater Scholar, in large-part in recognition of the research he has done under the direction of Professor Smolyaninova. Lukas is the first Physics major ever to be recognized with this high-level distinction. I could keep going on listing accomplishments and accolades of our FCSM community, but for the sake of brevity I will stop here.

BUDGET

You knew there would be a section on budget. If you are paying attention to the news about the Maryland State budget, then I am sure you have some concerns over how this will impact Towson University. The State is facing a significant budget deficit as well as decreased revenue projections due to reductions in the federal workforce. Approximately one third of the Towson University budget comes from state allocations. The remaining two-thirds comes mostly from student tuition and fees, which is why student recruitment and retention is critical to our ability to operate. Nevertheless, it is clear that state budget cuts will require that we make some adjustments going forward.

At the start of the academic year we had to adsorb a 1% cut to all of the College's operating budgets, which we did at the Dean's Office level, and for the upcoming year we are preparing for an additional 3% cut to our overall college budget. While this may sound modest, it equates to an approximately \$1.25 million reduction in our overall budget. Toward this end, I have been working with the College leadership team to implement these reductions while minimizing the impact to our critical functions. While some of our community will be impacted by these cuts, I am confident that the majority of you will notice little difference going forward. This is because of our incredibly resourceful team's ability to find creative solutions to manage these challenges. I am grateful every day to be able to work with such a talented, collaborative and hard-working group. That being said, we will continue to face some tough decisions as we move ahead, so we will all need to work together to be flexible and creative during these challenging times. I am confident that we are up to the challenge!

WELCOME NEW FACULTY AND STAFF

As I have said many times, the FCSM is great because of its people. It is you, the faculty and staff who make the FCSM a place where we can deliver outstanding education and conduct cutting-edge research. Thus, I am delighted to welcome several new members to our team. In January, two new assistant professors, Drs. Stan Presolski and Filipa Simao, joined the Department of Chemistry. The College was also delighted to hire Dr. Denise Hayman as the

STEM Program Director, Tonya Santaus as Lab Manager in Chemistry, and Yulanda Florence as our new Student Success Coordinator. If you see them in the hallway, please introduce yourself and extend a warm FCSM welcome.

We have also been very busy on the faculty recruitment front. The College has successfully completed searches for 9 new Assistant Professors who will join us this coming August: 4 in Biology, 4 in Computer & Information Sciences and 1 in the Department to Physics, Astronomy and Geosciences. Math also has additional faculty searches currently underway. I look forward to welcoming these exceptional scholars to our team this summer.

PRIORITIES GOING FORWARD

During my first year I had the pleasure of meeting 1 on 1 with over 120 of you, and further, I have had the opportunity to visit each department's regular meetings several times. I have also had some open sessions with our dedicated staff, and I have had the opportunity to participate in our College Council meetings. I also try my best to take a few moments now and then to just walk around the College to say hello. Through these interactions and others, you have shared with me your thoughts on how best to keep the College on a strong trajectory. My first year and a half also coincided with the arrival of President Ginsberg who underwent a similar information gathering process campus-wide, which led him to present his 10 Presidential Priorities. I encourage you all to review these priorities at:

<https://www.towson.edu/about/administration/president/priorities.html>

Building on President Ginsberg's priorities and in-line with the TU strategic plan, I aim to focus our efforts on achieving the following goals:

Educational Excellence

Enhancing Student Recruitment, Retention and Success

Expanding Research Activity and Experiential Learning

Promoting the Accomplishments and Development of our Community

Cultivating a Culture of Belonging and Personal Well-being

Building a Path to Financial Sustainability

I am sure you share my excitement to continue to make the FCSM a special place where we can educate and discover. I am always happy to listen to more of your ideas on how best we can achieve our mission, so please feel free to reach out to me anytime.

Sincerely,

Matt Nugent

Dean, FCSM

Towson University