

College Council Meeting Minutes
FISHER COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
1:30 – 3:00 PM, December 13, 2024

2023-2024 Member Attendees Present

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

Non-Voting, Ex-Officio:

Dean: Matthew Nugent; **Associate Dean:** Ming Tomayko; **Building Manager:** Josh Wilhide

Visitors/Guests: Sonali Rajee

1. Approval of minutes from the October 11, 2024, FCSM Council meeting.
The minutes were approved with unanimous consent, with 3 abstentions.
2. Announcements and remarks from Dean Nugent.
 - A. The proposal for the Doctorate degree in Sustainability and Environmental Change was denied. This is the final decision. Dean Nugent shared that there are undergoing discussions with two other USM institutions about starting a TU association with existing Ph.D. programs in similar areas. An important note is that this denial does not negate the proposal of new PhDs in the future.
 - B. Announcement about the Fall Forum at 3 PM today (12/13/2024) and the FCSM Spring Semester Welcome Back on 01/23/2025 from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM in SC2226.
3. Announcements and remarks from the Associate Dean Ming Tomayko.
 - A. A new STEM program director was hired.
 - B. The Winter Commencement is next Thursday (12/19/2024).
 - C. Semester Welcome Back on 01/23/2025 from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM in SC2226.
 - D. Associate Dean Tomayko is working with the Office of Human Resources to bring two Feedback workshops, with one directed at providing feedback to students (Friday 01/31/2025 – from noon to 2 PM in SC2323) and the other at obtaining feedback from colleagues (Friday 02/28/2025 – from 1:30 to 2:30 PM in SC2323).
 - E. There was an “Ask me anything” advising session last week. There will be another event on Monday 02/10/2025 from 1 to 2 PM in SC4230.
 - F. Associate Dean Tomayko also shared Career center announcements for the students.
4. Announcements from the Council Chairperson
 - A. No announcements at this time.
5. Progress report on the Course Evaluation task force: Sonali Rajee
 - A. The Course Evaluation task force committee has not met yet. The first meeting was delayed because of the time it took for some colleges to elect their representatives. The first meeting will happen on January 15, 2025. The task is to create an instrument that will be used by instructors to evaluate their own teaching. Sonali then presented the results from a previous survey with faculty feedback about the current teaching evaluation system.

6. Highlights from FCSM Departments

A. Biological Sciences

- 1) Welcome Dr. Nicole Barbour (Sustainability & Environmental Change), Dr. Carmen Falcone (Physiology), and Dr. Krista Kraskura (Physiology) as new faculty on the last two successful searches. One with PAGES and another search that hired two faculty.

B. Chemistry

- 1) An offer has been made for the upper-level laboratory manager position, and we hope they can start in January.

C. Computer and Information Sciences

- 1) No updates.

D. Mathematics

- 1) No updates.

E. Physics, Astronomy, and Geosciences (PAGES)

- 1) PAGES holiday party next Monday --- SC 2321 from around 12:30 to 2:30 PM.
- 2) PAGES completed the quantum/biophysics faculty onsite visits. We invited the four top candidates to do on-site interviews. A department meeting will be held next Tuesday to discuss the search. It is an open search for a tenure track position in Biophysics or Quantum Information.

F. Lectures and Clinical Faculty

- 1) No updates.

G. STEM Education

- 1) No updates.

H. Inclusive Student Success

- 1) No updates.

I. Staff

- 1) Office hours once a month. Staff members talked with the Diversity, Equity, Justice and Inclusion (DEIJ) committee to streamline some procedures.

J. Students (Undergraduate, Graduate)

- 1) No updates.

K. DEIJ

- 1) The newly formed committee has voted on the priorities. They used the previous task force report as the jump start for what the priorities are. Work on increasing professional development, communication, and a better system to recruit and retain diverse faculty.
- 2) On Wednesday 03/12/2025 the Career Center is hosting a "pay equity day" event.
- 3) The University is working on some sessions with students about knowing their rights, aimed at international students.
- 4) The University has activated a committee to create resources for faculty and students to facilitate conversations about faith and religion on campus.

7. Standing Agenda Items:

A. Senate update/communications

- 1) The Provost's office has gotten complaints from students about classes where faculty switched modality in the middle of the semester. If faculty want to switch modality, they must get approval and should get approval from their department chair (doesn't apply to individual cases where faculty may have missed a lecture due to some reason).

- 2) Dr. Vernon Hurte, Sr VP for Student Affairs and University Life, addressed the senate to explain their adoption of the bereavement procedure. The changes, adopted in 2024, include that documentation is no longer required. Faculty had previously expressed concern over potential student abuse of the policy, the extra work put upon faculty, and the question of how to deal with final assessments especially for graduating seniors. The provost voiced her support of this procedure noting that we should build trust with our students, and that the policy will remain in place.
- 3) The Academic Senate is still waiting to hear from the Academic Standards Committee about the Wellness Day Policy.
- 4) Ellen Hondrogiannis from Academic Senate met with the Senior VP of Campus Operations and the Associate VP of Facilities, and she asked whether faculty and chairs could have input into displays in the Science Complex (SC). They were receptive to our concerns, but noted that their office only provides guidance, and that deans make the decisions. But the deans have to follow policies set by the University Space Committee. A follow-up meeting would be scheduled between the deans and facilities to talk more.
- 5) Provost Melanie Perreault recently suggested an additional change to the ART document to be aligned with the other USM institutions, the removal of Department Chairs from departmental-level PTR meetings. There was intense discussion about this proposed change at the December Academic Senate meeting. A motion to let faculty vote on that matter was approved, with the choice being between the Chair being present in the PTR meeting but mostly silent or not being present at all.

8. Ongoing Issues/Initiatives/Old Business:

A. Lecturer surveys – tweaks and suggestions (Carbonaro).

- 1) Nicole Carbonaro presented the current form of the survey. There was a concern about making the department choice obligatory, but we need this information to provide actionable items to the Chair in each department. The question was discussed as well as whether changes should be made or not. Several revisions were noted to be changed before the final survey is released in January.

9. New Business

A. Role of department chairs on PTR Committees – discussion.

- 1) Discussion about the role of department chairs in the process of tenure and promotion of faculty. Dean Nugent clarified that the motivation for the change is to ensure that no person appears in more than one level of the process during the tenure evaluation of a faculty member. Dean Nugent also announced that there will be a survey to collect the opinion of the faculty about the issue and that at this time no final decision has been made on the matter.

B. Items from the floor

10. Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted,

Daniel Caetano and Kristin Frank (Co-Secretaries).