

COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS
ACADEMIC COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
April 30, 2024
TSC 5004

Present: Shannon Datwyler, Lisa Hammersley, Ron Coleman, Craig Timmons, Julie Griffin, Alex Pettitt, Richard Aguirre, Justin Miller-Schulze, Michael Wright, Matthew Schmidlein, Lauren Perry, Erica Orcutt, Tom Krabacher, Juwairiyah Khan, Brittany Anderson-Steele, Mikkel Jensen.

Meeting called to order at 9:15am.

1. Approval of the agenda msc
2. Approval of the minutes from April 16, 2024 msc
3. Announcements:

Lisa Hammersley

- Commencement is confirmed for the G1 Center.
- The pro-Palestine encampment in the library quad is mostly calm but still may cause distress for some students so faculty are reminded to show grace and provide reasonable accommodations.
- Students can now see the status of their forms in OnBase which should cut back on the number of duplicate forms submitted.
- Mon. 5/13 at 4-7pm is the Scholarship & Awards ceremony in the Cottonwood suite and the Hooding event is the next day at 5-7pm in the same room.

Ron Coleman

- Changes to the student portal will go live soon.
- Virtual labs implementation is ongoing. One con is that students must have good internet connection to access to use it.
- AI tools for Zoom will include tools that can help with note keeping/transcription. Users are cautioned to carefully review the output because the system has some flaws and has produced some inappropriate wording.

Shannon Datwyler

- With the implementation of virtual labs in NSM, that does not mean there will be a decrease in physical labs space even though the use of physical labs is decreasing.
- The steam generator in Humboldt went down so there is no hot water in Sequoia. It will be shut down for repairs until July or by the start of fall 2024 at the latest.

4. Committee Reports

NSM CRC:

Committee Composition, 2023-2024 AY

- Ben Gherman, Chemistry
- Tom Krabacher, Geography
- Evangeline Ballerini, Biological Sciences
- Gabriel Martins, Mathematics and Statistics
- Amy Wagner, Geology

- Mikkel Herholdt Jensen, Physics and Astronomy (committee chair)
- Shannon Datwyler, NSM Associate Dean (non-voting member)

Committee Charge

The Curriculum Review Committee is charged with reviewing new program and program change proposals, and new course and course change proposals from the College of NSM. It also monitors program and course proposals submitted by other University programs.

Committee Activities in the 2023-2024 AY

- Committee meets regularly every other Wednesday afternoon when there's an agenda.
- 8 meetings in AY 23-24.
 - Reviewed 23 course change and new course proposals (some were reviewed multiple times after suggested revisions from the Committee).
 - 5 from Biological Sciences
 - 4 from Chemistry
 - 3 from Geography
 - 5 from Geology
 - 1 from Physics and Astronomy
 - 5 from Mathematics and Statistics
 - Reviewed 12 program change and new program proposals (some were reviewed multiple times after suggested revisions from the Committee).
 - 5 from Geography
 - 1 from Geology
 - 3 from Physics and Astronomy
 - 3 from Mathematics and Statistics
- In addition to the regular meetings, I as Committee Chair also worked with College faculty working to assist and consult as they put together new course and program forms to help them understand the requirements needed for reviews at the subsequent stages of the workflow. I find this to be a useful function of the College committee, sitting between the Department and downstream levels of review to provide some level of expertise before the form undergoes longer-lasting review.
- Finally, I have noted that some courses and programs have been taking a long time to move through the workflow, some taking 2 or more years over the past academic years. In some cases, forms had made it quite far into the workflow (which usually takes almost a full year start to finish), only to be met with new requirements in, for example, formatting. It might be worthwhile for administration at the AVP level and above to consider if there is a way to mitigate some of these delays and shifting requirements which are non-substantive in terms of course content or program requirements, as they are detrimental to curricular innovation, faculty workload, and ultimately student success.

Secondary Committee:

The Secondary Committee reviews the WPAF (Working Personnel Action File) of faculty for the retention, tenure and promotion process. Basically, we look at the file of each person, including the letter from the Primary Committee of the appropriate department, and then in the context of that department's RTP document, we make our own judgement on the applicant and write a letter which is added to the file. Then the file, including our letter, is sent on to the Dean for review.

The current committee consists of: Ron Coleman (Chair), Tracy Hamilton, Tom Krabacher, and Linda Roberts.

The wonderful thing about serving on this committee is that you get to read about all of the inspiring things that our faculty are doing in the classroom, in their research and in their service to both the institution and to the greater committee. We particularly appreciate well-organized files with thoughtful, reflective statements that put the work in context.

This year we read and reviewed 21 files for pre-tenure review, and 4 files for Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor. There were 2 files for consideration of promotion to (full) Professor, making a total of 27 files.

Due to Covid-19, the Secondary Committee switched from doing physical files and in-person meetings to electronic files and remote work, using the electronic system provided by the university. With a few glitches aside, the system has generally worked well and has lessened one of the big challenges faced by the committee when using physical files, namely that a reviewer (committee member) had to go to the physical file at a certain time and place. Electronic files and digital access allow members to review files when they have available time. This has been invaluable when dealing with the large volume of files that the Committee currently evaluates.

The NSM Academic Council proposed a revision to the way that the Secondary Committee is formed and operates, namely forming two Secondary Committees, and this was approved by the faculty of the College and UARTP. This policy will come into play for the coming year.

This coming year, there will be an increase in files, including 19 pre-tenure review and 18 files for Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor, but this workload will be split across the two committees.

Safety Committee:

Purpose of the committee: The NSM Safety committee is charged with the oversight of safety issues associated with the curriculum and operations within the College. The committee serves as a conduit of information between departmental-level safety committees and higher-level committees to develop college-wide policies and practices to ensure a safe environment for our students, staff, and faculty.

Number of times we've met: The committee meets roughly once a month during the academic year. We met a total of 4 times during the Fall 2023 semester and 3 times during the Spring 2024 semester with one upcoming meeting in May.

Topics we've discussed: The focus of the NSM Safety committee during the past two semesters has been to continue to establish college wide safety policies and to address safety concerns within the college. Our first meeting of the Fall semester focused on determining the overall goals of the committee for the coming academic year. Ultimately, the focus was driven by events and topics that occurred during the semesters themselves. Main points of discussion included the College Biosafety Manual, the Student PPE/student training policy, field safety, and overall how to make the safety policies and procedures more accessible to the users.

The committee received the final version of the College level Biosafety Manual after feedback from stakeholders and subsequent edits. The committee voted to approve the College level Biosafety Manual in the early spring semester and it has been shared with Chairs and uploaded to the College webpage. The committee discussed the campus Student Safety Training Policy at length and how it applied to our courses as well as information about how our departments have been with compliance of the policy. The committee determined that it would be best to create a College level guidance document to clarify how to comply with the campus policy and make forms across the departments consistent. The final version of the NSM guidelines on student safety training was approved in the spring semester and was shared with Chairs and uploaded on the College webpage. During the Spring semester the committee reviewed the college wide Safety Policy on Student Training in Teaching Laboratories. It was determined

that the policy is superseded by the campus Student Safety Training policy. For the purpose of clarity, the committee voted to remove the policy from the College safety webpage. Discussions occurred throughout the year about field work. This was in the context of both research and teaching. It was determined that the College could greatly benefit from additional work in the area of field safety. The committee voted to establish a field safety workgroup. This workgroup is comprised of faculty from Biology, Geology, and Geography as well as one staff representative.

Future work: In the immediate future the focus of the NSM safety committee will be to continue discussions on the ongoing safety concerns in the college. Priority will be given to the projects discussed and worked on during the 2023-2024 academic year. Topics that are ongoing from this year include the creation of a lab checkout document for faculty leaving the University, an equipment decontamination form for use when having equipment serviced, and the creation of evacuation maps specific to all the lab spaces. Moving forward the plan is to create more guidance documents and policies that serve the safety needs of the college. There is a desire to also work on additional Standard Operating Procedures, training documents, and working on approaches to reducing waste. Beyond the creation of safety policies this committee will continue to create guidance on chemical, biological, field, radiological, and shop safety.

Awards and Scholarship Committee:

The committee met 3 times during the fall semester to review applications and determine the Outstanding Faculty Awards recipients. In spring the committee reviewed applications and determined the recipient of the Deans Award as well as the scholarship recipients in Academic Works. The committee worked with Academic Council to refine the application submission materials for the Dean's Award to create a uniform process across all departments.

10:00am adjourn