

Faculty Meeting Minutes (Open session)

April 19, 2021 | 3:45 – 4:45 pm | Benson Hall, Room 109- ZOOM

Attendance:

Meeting start: 3:45 | Adjourn 4:45

Faculty Present (blank=absent)

Department Chair, Jim Pfaendtner - Present

Stu Adler	P	Kyle Caldwell	P	Vince Holmberg	P	Rene Overney	P	Neda Bagheri
François Baneyx		James Carothers		Samson Jenekhe	P	Lilo Pozzo	P	Cao Guozhong
David Beck	P	Chad Curtis	P	Mary Lidstrom		Buddy Ratner	P	Jonathan Posner
John Berg	P	Cole DeForest	P	Jun Liu		Daniel Schwartz	P	
David Bergsman	P	Hugh Hillhouse	P	Elizabeth Nance	P	Eric Stuve	P	
						Stephanie Valleau	P	

Others Present

Debbie Carnes	Dave Drischell	Nicole Minkoff			
Nicole Devine	Andrea Gleichweith				

AGENDA

- Announcements – Pfaendtner
- Grad recruiting and MS program – DeForest, Beck
- Research proposal analysis - Pfaendtner
- Faculty hiring – Pfaendtner, All

Announcements – Pfaendtner

Shachi Mittal has accepted our offer!

The Teaching and Learning Symposium is on Tuesday, April 20th. There are two sessions: 2:00-2:50 pm and 3:45-4:30 pm. The objective is to prepare faculty for in person learning in the fall. This year the symposium is all online. There is no cost. There will be a keynote speaker addressing an inclusive environment. Jim added that the longtime director of the Center for Teaching and Learning is retiring and a search will be announced for a new director.

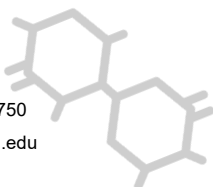
At the next faculty meeting, there should be an answer to all the department faculty searches.

There will be a discussion about AY 21-22 at the next faculty meeting and it will address how many classes will be offered, what does the department need to teach, what are the needs/gaps, how do we meet those needs, and what do people want to teach. This will precede the survey that is normally done. Discussions and negotiations will occur mid-May.

A question was asked about Chad's new position. Chad was hired at Nevada State College in a tenure-track position in their new data science position. He will help develop the program.

PhD Graduate Update – DeForest

Many applicants waited until the last minute to notify the department about their decision. It is an exceptionally strong class. There have been no offers off the waitlist. The 26 incoming students were all from the first round.



All of the information is on the Buddy List that the committee has been maintaining. Cole thanked everyone for their efforts in helping recruit.

Cole compared this year with previous years. The previous couple years, the number of incoming PhD students was down. The goal this year was between 15 and 29. More offers than usual were made this year, and a higher percentage of students accepted.

Over the years, the number of applications to the PhD program have been decreasing. This can be improved with more outreach at conferences and targeted advertising.

There are a lot of really good students coming in next year. Many of the ChemE faculty draw students from other departments to fill their labs. Next year, will need to bring in ChemE students so there are enough products to support the new ChemE PhD students.

Lilo asked about the breakdown of international students, were there fewer applicants this year? Cole will be looking into this and suggested also reaching out to grad program directors at peer institutions.

Dan asked when was the last time the department had so many new incoming students. In 1998, there were 23. Eric said this is probably the largest number and congratulated Cole.

Jim also congratulated Cole and all who were involved in the effort, this is a great group of students. The department has a great network of adjunct faculty who have been interested in ChemE students in the past. Jim is confident that the larger number of incoming students will be successfully placed in research groups.

A question was asked about what schools the applicants turned down to attend UW. That information is not available. But they do survey the applicants who declined offers. The results were not very different or surprising. Cole will survey the incoming group about what schools they declined and why they chose UW.

MS Program Update - Beck

The application numbers to the program were similar to prior years. Offers were made to achieve a particular class size without sacrificing quality.

Unfortunately, the research track acceptances are off from previous years. This year there are 8 accepts, normally there would be twice that number by this time. Last year though, admits for thesis accepts were down until July so there is still time.

The Masters student class starting in Fall 2021 looks smaller particularly because the research track accepts are off. "Accepts" do not equal "attendance". Last year, of the 33 who accepted offers, 22 showed up.

Recruiting efforts are continuing. In order to get the attend:accept ratio to increase, Dave is doing Zoom meetings with all of the foreign applicants to encourage them to show up in the fall.

Like last year, the application deadline has been extended to June 1.

Jim acknowledged that this is hard work, and it is tough year because of the pandemic and continuing visa issues.

Research Proposal Analysis – Pfaendtner

In November, Jim discussed proposals, there were 8 submitted for FY21. There are now 27. So the number has rebounded quite a lot, but it still won't be where it was a year ago.

In addition to the low number of proposals, the total number of awards requested in FY21 have been low. The dollar amount of proposals has increased. \$15 million has been added to a total FY21 request of \$17.7 million. This number is still off but it is improving. Awards are looking good; but they are a lagging indicator and expected to decrease in FY22.

Jim thanked everyone for their hard work and efforts in scholarship and fundraising.

Faculty Hiring - Pfaendtner

Jim provided updates on candidates and offers for the tenure-track position.

A discussion of the proposed Research Faculty hiring took place.

Lilo asked what would happen if it doesn't work out with PNNL (providing funding for the proposed research track hire). Jim replied that PNNL has committed to 3 years of support and hopes that it grows in the future. ChemE needs to make it clear what the expectations of the trajectory of the new candidate are.

The candidate could write proposals to any funding agency he wants, and can work internally within PNNL to procure funds.

A question was asked if the candidate would work at PNNL primarily. Jim replied no, especially because the candidate works in computational research. One possible outcome is that he moves to be a full-time staff member at the lab and a dual-appointee with ChemE. But in the near-term, he would be in Benson Hall, he could hire students who would be collocated with computational groups.

A question was asked if the students would be paid by PNNL. Jim replied that it depends on the funding portfolio. There is no mechanism to be a UW ChemE grad student on a PNNL budget, it comes as a sub-contract if it is from their lab funding. Or it is funding at UW that they have applied for as PI. This is a great model for ChemE, if there are lab staff members who want the university experience and the dual appointment and are running programs through ChemE. Computational researchers would be located in Benson.

A question was asked about what happens after 3 years. Jim replied that the intentions of our department will be communicated in the beginning.

It was asked if PNNL is offering startup funds in the form of salary for students. Jim replied that typical research faculty hires do not include startup funds.

Jim thinks the offer has to be made by May 1. Jim said there would be a seminar visit where the candidate could give a talk and meet with faculty. Then the faculty would convene to vote.

Jim asked if there is opposition to moving forward. None was expressed.

A day/time will be selected to do small group meetings. Then a faculty meeting will be scheduled when there can be a quorum attendance. There will not be a chalk talk, just a seminar.

Jim said that it is probably not in the interest of ChemE to put a couple of years of student support on the table. It is not keeping in practice with what COE has done in the past with recent hires. There should be good mentorship at PNNL about what a successful trajectory looks like.

A question was asked about why Chemistry would not be hiring the candidate. Jim replied that the candidate is in a ChemE department now and his training is in ChemE. Chemistry has not engaged with PNNL as much as ChemE.

The college is supportive and would like more connection with PNNL.

Jim reminded everyone that this has to happen quickly. Please be responsive to emails about this.

The meeting adjourned at 4:37.