

## Faculty Meeting Minutes (Open session)

December 6, 2021 | 2:30 - 3:30 pm | Benson Hall, Room 109- ZOOM

Attendance:

Meeting start: 2:30 | Adjourn 3:06

**Faculty Present (blank=absent)**

Department Chair, Jim Pfaendtner - Present

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

**Others Present**

Debbie Carnes	Dave Drischell	Nicole Minkoff			
Nicole Devine	Andrea Gleichweith				

**AGENDA**

- Announcements/updates
- Prelim outcomes and blanket vote (DeForest)
- Discussion on the current S/NS grading policy in the college (Nance)
- Discussion of interviews for teaching faculty (Pfaendtner)
- Review/update of faculty search candidate interview format (Pfaendtner/DeForest/Nance)

**Announcements**

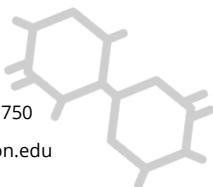
In early January the teaching faculty position will go live for applications. Interviews will be in late Spring Quarter. Ideally this position will be filled before decisions are made for the faculty position.

There are two upcoming gatherings. A staff-faculty happy hour is on 12/10 in the afternoon. The traditional department holiday party will not take place again this year. Instead ACES is hosting a happy hour with a funky gift exchange on 12/17. Please attend.

**Prelim outcome and blanket vote (DeForest)**

A discussion of preliminary exam outcomes took place. Cole sent a document to faculty about students and the outcomes. Jim will talk to the faculty affairs committee to work on an info sheet for adjunct and affiliate faculty. All 12 of the students who took prelim exams were recommended to pass.

For students who are transitioning from the master's program into the PhD program, faculty have an understanding of when the prelim should be taken and that the research the students present at the prelim should be different from the research, they did to complete their masters. It would be valuable if the grad committee could articulate this in a way that can be communicated to students when they start the program.



A motion was made to approve all the students who took the prelim exam. The motion was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The department changed the prelim structure several years ago. Since then, almost all the students have passed the prelim exam. Either the students are exceptional or the exams are not rigorous enough. It's worth discussing this point, that almost 100% of students pass. It is an outlier in Chemical Engineering departments of similar rank. If you have suggestions for the grad committee, pass them along to Cole.

John Berg said that too much time is spent in prelim exams discussing research progress. A half hour would be enough. There should be more time to question more deeply in a general way on the critique and on general chemical engineering fundamentals. It should be up to the adviser to allocate time. Jim supported this idea.

Lilo pointed out that it may be difficult to set expectations for distinct research that are universally applicable for master's students that are transitioning to the PhD program.

An ad hoc policy might disadvantage some students, as opposed to a uniform standard.

Eric said the papers that are assigned often do not have a connection to traditional ChemE fundamentals.

Hugh suggested that it could be stated to students that 1/3 will be on the critique, 1/3 on wide ranging ChemE fundamentals, and 1/3 on research. This would formalize for students that anything they have been exposed to in their core curriculum may be brought up.

David said that this year the grad students did not take a course in thermodynamics, for example. Is that subject fair game for the prelim exams? Jim said that there are no required courses, but there are required categories of classes. Students have to satisfy each category.

Stu commented that with regards to the questions that are asked in prelims, they seem improvised. There is no guidance on the nature of the questions that should be asked. Should there be a more formal preparation? Or a check list of the categories of questions the committee should ask, for example. John Berg disagreed with this idea, he would like more opportunity to ask questions.

Eric asked if there are students who get to the general exam who seem as though they shouldn't even have passed the prelim. Was there a case where the prelim resulted in a wrong assessment?

Lilo said that some institutions have a uniform evaluation committee that is the same for all the students. It is done in a single day, all the students present. Jim pointed out that many institutions do not have the advisers on the prelim committees.

As a conclusion, the graduate committee will discuss this during Winter or Spring and come back to the faculty if there are new ideas to implement.

### **Current S/NS grading policy in COE – discussion and feedback (Nance)**

For Spring quarter 2020 through Spring quarter 2021, the S/NS policy was in effect, only for undergraduate courses. There is discussion about whether this should continue to be allowed on a case-by-case basis. CEP would like feedback from faculty about this. Is there a cap on these credits that should be allowed, what are the feelings towards this?

Jim said that he is opposed to this for the courses that are linked to the accreditation, and because of the rigor that is promised to employers and other graduate programs.

Nicole Minkoff said that this would be different than it was for the “extraordinary circumstances” quarters where any student could opt for S/NS in as many courses as they wanted. This would be a petition process, it has to be approved by a committee. Whether the committee is inside or outside of the department is still being discussed. Nicole also reported that Dan Ratner said that for ABET the grading would not be a concern because we are not reporting grades to ABET we are reporting outcomes.

It was discussed that this would be a disservice to students for core courses.

Stu asked how this is reflected in a student’s GPA. The GPA is calculated without those credits.

David Bergsman said some flexibility makes sense, for when a student has an extraordinary circumstance, so that the student isn’t penalized. But it’s important that the process for approving this is equitable and reasonable.

Jim said this may also mean that some students are not making satisfactory GPAs according to the current rules but they are still able to earn a bachelor’s degree in Chemical Engineering.

Shachi suggested that S/NS grading be available for just one core course and the other S/NS credits could go towards electives.

Jim said that one grade of S/NS would not draw much notice, but a 2.0 across the board in ChemE is not satisfactory.

The expectation is that use of S/NS would be quite low, the bar to getting it approved would be high.

### **Review of faculty search interview format (Pfaendtner, DeForest/Nance)**

The search committee is moving into the second round of the process. There are 275 candidates. From Jim’s poll of other departments, most prefer to do in-person interviews. Other STEM departments on campus also prefer in person interviews. Chemistry is doing in-person interviews now.

The committee anticipates scheduling Zoom interviews with 10-12 candidates on Jan 6. These will be discussed in the faculty meeting on Jan 10 to decide who to invite for in-person interviews. The first in-person (or virtual) interview will be Jan 24 and then almost every Monday after for the rest of Winter quarter.

Jim proposed that this year we do not do the combined all faculty lunch and Chalk Talk. It is difficult to find a large enough room. Are there any faculty who think we should not do in-person interviews? Let Jim know if you have concerns.

Is it an option for the candidates to choose virtual if they are not able to travel? This may make it difficult to equally compare the candidates. And most of the competitors are hosting in-person interviews, it would disadvantage the department.

Lilo advocated for flexibility. With regard to the lunch, Lilo suggested a hybrid version with a few faculty in-person with the candidate and others participating online.

Candidates cannot be asked about their vaccination status. But they need to be told that restaurants in King County require proof of vaccination. An office will be made available to the candidates while they are visiting.

#### **Discussion of interviews for teaching faculty (Pfaendtner)**

Jim expects a small number of applications. There will be a teaching shortage if more teaching faculty aren't hired. The dean supports this.

What do people want to see in an interview for this position? For example, do we want a teaching demonstration? What would help you make a decision about a teaching faculty member? The teaching faculty needs to provide coverage for the UO labs.

There needs to be a long-term strategy on the UO labs, given their current state. The teaching faculty will be the primary owner of the UO labs and will work with everyone on long term planning for the UO labs. They should also provide additional teaching support across electives.

Lilo suggested a chalk talk for these candidates would be very useful, where they discuss their vision for teaching and innovation in the classroom instead of a teaching demonstration.

Ben said the process felt appropriate and focused. He was expecting to be asked to provide a teaching demonstration, which he was not asked to do. David Bergsman said a teaching demo is useful to be able to ask questions and to see how they respond.

Jim suggested the candidates could be offered to do either a department seminar, a teaching demo, or other formats.

Stu suggested that interacting with the undergrads could be a major component of the interview process.

Shachi agreed that the chalk talk would be valuable. And the candidate could be asked to present something about their plan for how to use the UO labs. Jim commented that this was included in the job description.

If there are any further comments, please let Jim and the committee know.

Meeting adjourned.