

Departmental Committee Meeting Agenda

02/06/2015, 09:00 - noon

Attendees: Chris Justice, Vivre Bell, Ron Luna, Rachel Berndtson, Tatiana Loboda, Eric Kasischke, Julie Silva, Keith Yearwood, Klaus Hubacek, Giovanni Baiocchi, Mila Zlatic, Rachel Moore, Johnathan Resop, Molly Brown, John Townshend, Louis Giglio, Kristen Bergery, Paul Torrens, Katie Doyle, George Hurtt, Ralph Dubayah, Laixiang Sun, Naijun Zhou, Jack Ma, Elle Lim, Matt Hansen, Chengquan Huang, Rob Sohlberg

1. Introductions of new faculty and staff

- Molly Brown – Research Associate Professor and food security researcher coming from NASA (working with Sun and Hubacek)
- Maureen Kelly – FRA, coming from NASA's Develop program (working with Sohlberg)
- Christian Knot – FRA from Munster, Germany, working with Hansen on conflict monitoring using remote sensing

2. Recent Developments and Chair's Updates

- Response to President Loh's email (regarding budget cuts):
 - Note: The Governor is trying to rescind COLA and Merit pay for the next few years (currently being voted on in Annapolis), but the Unions are fighting against it – either way the State will need to find \$156 million
 - Possibility of a total 3% cut for FY15 and more cuts in FY16
 - Furloughs put in place to avoid lay-offs
 - 1. Only apply to State-funded people, soft money employees won't be affected
 - 2. Furlough length goes according to salary, those who make less than \$60k won't be furloughed
 - 3. Chair doing what he can for those on bottom end of pay scale
- College is cutting back on State supported travel, but students shouldn't suffer
 - Trying to send all students who have applied to AAG, but they must be approved by the Dean – awaiting his decision
- Chair met with Dean Ball about research faculty (RF) and professional track titles (new set of ranking)
 - Dean Ball will ask Provost for salary increase to coincide with title changes – no promises
 - Dean Ball is supportive of research faculty and is looking into salary increase associated with promotion
- Provost sent around an email about FARs (Faculty activity report) and OPAs, which are due Feb 28th
 - T/TT to use Lyterati and RF to use old FAR format
 - Chair must sign off on them, so please submit them by February 16th
 - Mandated – everyone must complete an OPA

ACTION: Complete FARs and OPAs by Feb 16th [ALL]

- Dean's Research Initiative will continue this year (at a lower rate – \$200k)
 - Seed grant can be used for funding, so continue to pursue it and get collaborations going across the campus
 - *If you're going to submit a proposal, let the Chair know*
- BSOS is no longer providing its own Scantron Service
- MD Day, April 25th – Dept participation is mandatory and we need volunteers
 - We currently have help from the Research faculty and Paul Torrens' lab
- ACTION: Contact Ron Luna concerning participation in Maryland Day [ALL]**
- Richard Moss invited to join the Dept as Research Faculty
 - JGCRI is reviewing
- GIS Center – setting up Center Advisory Group
- Torrens' work was recently showcased by NSF
- Chinese/Lunar New Year Social event – February 19th, 3:30 – 5:00, 1124 LeFrak
- Martha Geores is recovering from her operation
 - *Taking up a collection if you want to donate and sign the card, please see Wilhelmina*

3. Associate Chair Issues – Dubayah

- No issues, however, there was some interchange with the Graduate Committee
 - If there is a move to change core curriculum, it must go through the proper channels (i.e. go to the teaching teams, and up to the faculty/Dept Committee)
 1. Can discuss at Spring retreat, date and location TBD

4. Undergraduate Committee Report – Loboda

- Completed all items in the queue, so Committee is not meeting right now, but if any issues arise, it will reconvene
 - College Guidance – we are under no pressure to increase majors, but we need to focus more on the quality of our students rather than the numbers, reduce size of 400 level classes, senior Faculty teaching UG courses

5. Undergraduate Director Academic Issues – Luna

- We are encouraged to participate in the Summer Research Initiative
 - Contact Ron Luna or Kim Nickerson, if you want to nominate individuals that are minority/under-represented, etc. Encourage them to apply, Luna will review
- Courses continue to fill, thus wait list continues
 - 297 students enrolled – highest ever
- Office of extended studies is giving us space on their website to advertise
 - High school students and professionals alike can take occasional courses
 - Byron Marroquin is creating course profiles
- Freshmen connection – 3 courses in Fall, which means additional revenue, and more freshmen entering into the major
- Be on the lookout for a course evaluations email
 - Important to take them seriously and improve your teaching as needed, listen to TA suggestions, etc.
 - College is paying attention to course evaluations

- Note: Evaluations also discussed at the Chair's Council meeting
- Many faculty members feel the teaching evaluations are not straight forward, but open to interpretation – *we need to discuss this at the Spring Retreat*
- Undergraduates love being in the Dept – conduct side survey?

ACTION: Include course evaluations discussion in retreat agenda [Dubayah]

6. Graduate Committee Report – Sun (Please review attached recommendations prior to meeting)

- There was a follow-up discussion to the Graduate student annual review
 - Several issues were raised and we completed the attached policy, which was approved
 1. One response from irate student who disapproved of “strangers” evaluating PhD work
 - The average time spent on a PhD in Dept is nearly 6 yrs
 - S* - offers flexibility that wasn't previously available
- Adjust wording: take out “Fall/Spring” and insert “annual” (i.e. one committee meeting each year)
- BS/MS
 - Which actions should be taken at the end of the 5th year if a student has not completed his/her work? [Reference attached policy; see pages 7-8]
 - Dept Committee agrees on first (2.1)
 - Dept Committee will discuss second (2.2) at next Committee meeting
 - Form attached to policy/Grad Committee suggestions – required for scholarly paper (see attached page 8)
 - Statement about the “incomplete” procedure to be included

ACTION: Make sure students understand that unbiased opinion (e.g. external evaluators) towards their advisor's evaluation of their PhD work is necessary and often beneficial [Grad Student Rep]

ACTION: Discuss “Academic Benchmarks” at next Dept Committee meeting/Spring Retreat [ALL]

7. Graduate Director Academic Issues – Liang

- Reviewed the status of incoming graduate students
 - Accepted 15 PhD students (some will decline our offer)
 - Identified 5 additional students
 - Thus 20 total that may be accepted
 - We have 4 TA slots and 2 GIS slots
- Incoming class will be 10-12 PhD students, which should be sufficient given the number of faculty we have
 - There is no need to push for 20

ACTION: Revisit right-sizing of PhD program (numbers) [Spring Retreat ALL]

8. Research Director Issues – Hurtt

- Unlike the State Budget, our External funding and Research Faculty are growing
 - Currently larger than it's ever been
 - 3rd largest research Dept on campus

1. Speaks volumes that even with so many troubles, we are still increasing research output and research faculty numbers
 - We could easily make a case that we can hire more State people, because we/campus get a higher return – more research, more research faculty, etc.
 - We need to help Dean Ball make this case (Townshend offered to assist)
- JGCRI
 - Richard Moss joint appointment with JGCRI is nearly complete
 - We will bring a few more candidates over to GEOG, starting the process of identifying them and introducing them to Chair and faculty for approval
 - We must ensure we have the capacity to manage that, i.e. research coordinators and they are stretched thin
 - Should we hire more staff? Faculty? Or Both?

9. Research Faculty Committee – Giglio

- Merit review committee for research faculty and staff need to meet
- Visitor parking at Hartwick is becoming a large issue – Douglas will start towing [UPDATE: towing began Friday after the Dept Committee meeting – spaces have been cleared of construction employees]

10. FRA Committee – Sohlberg

- Pushing for salary increase associated with title change/promotion, as FRAs increase in rank (no change in position, but there will be a change in title and should be a change in pay)
- FRAs must petition for rank increase, which is then reviewed by a committee
 - Ranks are issued according to merit

11. Diversity Task Force – Hansen

- Waiting on edits from Kim Nickerson for the document that we submitted on suggestions for increasing minority enrollment
- Nothing new to report as committee hasn't met since last semester

12. Awards Committee – Kasischke

- Nothing to report

13. MPS Advisory Committee Update – Torrens and Ma

- MPS is developing a new GIS course, which will hopefully be offered this fall/winter
 - Trying to add a new course every year as technology and interest evolves
- Enrollment has been consistent
 - Last spring was first time we had spring and full enrollment
 - 17 enrolled, which is an increase, but it could be higher
- Currently we cannot accept international students as there are restrictions with visa requirements (mismatch with quarterly system and full time designation), otherwise we could increase our numbers with international students

- There will be a (follow-up) meeting w/ Wayne Macintosh (BSOS) to discuss the situation (Townshend offered to attend)
- Idea: Chinese GIS courses (c. 35 paying students), who will take English classes before arriving
 - Huge interest from Hong Kong (Torrens)

ACTION: Gather facts on current campus policy re. international quarter system students and send to Townshend who will talk to the Provost about getting the policy changed [Ma]

14. GIS Center Update – Torrens

- We still have an outstanding lecturer position – no viable candidates identified yet
 - If you have suggestions, please send them to Paul Torrens
- Short courses are being set up (Rubio Han)
- Corporate sponsorship/collaborations in the works (need guidance at the BSOS level) – Oracle, for example, is interested
- Max Baber (U.S. Geospatial Intelligence Foundation) visited GIS Center about accreditation
 - Proposal forthcoming
- There is a push from University level to get involved in Games and Design
 - Campus is pushing GEOG to lead the way with next generation technology
- Build-out for Center is ongoing
 - Meeting today with design team
- Computing needs being discussed with OIT, which is offering space and power
- Another push from campus for entrepreneurship
 - Start-up companies coming from our lab technology, courses, etc.
 1. Know of alumni companies? Let Torrens know

ACTION: Send corporate contacts to Luna so he can invite them to career fair [Torrens]

15. Faculty Merit Committee – Kasischke

- Merit Committee discussed issue of grant management (in Merit Pay Review Plan policy – posted to Dept intranet)
 - Should we factor the number of ongoing grants managed, especially those that last 10+ years, into the research portion of merit?
 - Faculty should include any special considerations in their cover letters
- Exceptional Course Evaluations – if repeatedly high, analyze why students are giving high marks on course evaluations

ACTION ITEM 12/5/14: Edit Plan of Organization to reflect changes [Bell]

Motion: Members of the Tenure/Tenure Track Faculty accept the changes to the Merit Pay Review Policy and processes discussed in section 3 of this memorandum

For – 14

Against – 0

Abstained – 0

16. Other Business

- Proposed procedure for graduate faculty nominations – Loboda
 - i. Emails sent out requesting votes, but getting nothing back – no movement
 - In the future, if faculty don't vote, should we assume that's an "affirmative" and move ahead without voting?

Motion:

"The nominee to the graduate faculty of the Department of Geographical Sciences will be considered accepted **by the Department**, following a positive response from the Graduate Director and after two weeks from the initial request for vote from the Assistant Director of Academic Programs **unless at least 50% of the T/TT faculty submit a negative vote**. The Assistant Director of Academic Programs will send a reminder to the faculty twice prior to the closing date of the voting period: 1) one week after the initial date of announcement, and 2) two working days prior to the closing of the voting period. After the closing date of the two-week voting period, all T/TT faculty will be notified in writing about the outcome of the nomination."

ACTION: Clarify wording in yellow [Loboda, Hansen, Dubayah] and vote at the next meeting [ALL]

17. Upcoming Dates:

- March 6th, 2015 – Departmental Committee Meeting
- Dept. Lunar New Year Celebration – February 19th
- Maryland Day – Saturday, April 25th – VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
- Spring Retreat – Date TBD

Suggestions of Graduate Committee to Department Committee Meeting Feb 6, 2015

I. Additions to the Handbook of Graduate Students

S*: a temporary mark that will change to a permanent Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U) pending a student's progression through certain criteria within a given time frame. Faculty advisor outlines the criteria and timeline in which the student needs to pass in the annual review letter. Upon successful and timely completion of the criteria, the S* becomes an S review. Upon unsuccessful completion, the S* becomes a U review.

Student's advisory committee sends Assistant Academic Director the review mark they feel the student should get before the full faculty annual review meeting. At annual review meeting, these review marks can be discussed further, pending any red flags between committee given mark and completion of academic benchmarks.

Advisory committees that submit student reviews:

- Student in PAC stage: January PAC meeting (held before annual review meeting)
- Student in proposal writing stage: Fall semester dissertation committee meeting (in the case that the dissertation committee has not formed, student's advisor only submits review)
- Student in ABD stage: Fall semester dissertation committee meeting

II. BS/MS Academic Benchmarks

Failure to meet any benchmarks within given time-frame results in termination from program. Students can appeal failed benchmarks to Graduate Director.

1. Senior year:
 - a. Pass all graduate level courses with grade of B or better
 - b. Semester 1: meet with faculty advisor to discuss coursework and scholarly product plan
 - c. Semester 2: meet with faculty advisor to discuss coursework and scholarly product plan
2. Fifth year:
 - a. Pass all graduate level courses with grade of B or better
 - b. Start of semester 1: meet with faculty advisor to discuss scholarly product plan through GEOG789 (submit independent studies form and proposal)
 - c. End of semester 1: meet with faculty advisor to discuss scholarly product plan; advisor assesses student's progress towards work outlined in GEOG789 proposal
 - d. Start of semester 2: meet with faculty advisor to discuss scholarly product plan through GEOG789 (submit independent studies form and proposal)
 - e. End of semester 2: submit final scholarly product by April 1st; faculty advisor and graduate director review and submit evaluation for pass/fail

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHICAL SCIENCES: Graduate program evaluation for M.S. scholarly paper

The student's academic advisor and the Graduate Director should complete one of these forms for the student in question following review of the scholarly product. Student must pass each criteria from both reviewers to pass the scholarly product benchmark and graduate. Option to appeal to Graduate Director if student does not pass.

Scholarly product due in final form by April 1st of graduating semester.

Semester:

Criteria for written components:	Check one for each listed criterion	
	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1. Statement of problem is clear and well-conceptualized.		
2. Relevance of problem within the context of previous geographic research is presented.		
3. Conclusions are well-justified.		
4. Methodology is well-selected and well-executed.		
5. The scholarly product is appropriate and thorough.		
6. There is appropriate use of primary and/or secondary sources.		
7. The scholarly product is well-written.		
8. The scholarly product is in a form suitable for professional standards (i.e. the style, structure, bibliography, figures, etc conform to formats commonly seen in journals of geographic research).		

Comments (optional):

Advisor name/signature

Graduate director name/signature

Student name/signature