

Final Departmental Committee Meeting Agenda:

10/31/14

9 am – noon

Attendees: Chris Justice, Katie Holland, John Townshend, Keith Yearwood, Ron Luna, Giovanni Baiocchi, Rob Solberg, Rachel Marks, Tatiana Loboda, Julie Silva, Martha Geores, Paul Torrens, Klaus Hubacek, Shunlin Liang, Naijun Zhou, Louis Giglio, John Resop, Rachel Berndtson, Chengquan Huang, Eric Kasischke, Hongya Zhang, Jack Ma, George Hurtt, Ralph Dubayah

1. Introductions of new faculty and staff – Justice

- Introductions – Alexander Klippel + two from China

2. Recent Developments and Chair's Updates – Justice

- Accept previous meeting minutes and approval of agenda
- In-Young Yeo has taken a position in Australia
- Kathleen Stewart hire – negotiations continue
- Dean Ball's Faculty-Student dinner (Oct 28) –
 - Under-represented by students
 - Dean Ball will attend Dept meeting on Feb 28
- GEDI budget –
 - not as much funding as expected from University
 - \$94 million NASA cap, most used to build the instrument, more funding needed for everything else
- NPS CHINA – Liang and Ma
- Derek Thompson –
 - Emeritus professor who introduced GIS to the Dept. has new ideas for community outreach
 - Assisting in approaching ESRI for CGIS funds
- BSOS outreach venture –
 - Series of interviews with faculty via 5 minute video (roughly an hour to film)
 - Townshend and Goward are guinea pigs
 - Perhaps journalism students could assist – they get credit, we get advertising?
- *Geograffiti* articles – due Dec. 5 – encourage more student submissions
- Donations/Gifts – Donors like to see that faculty members are giving, too!
- Bell recovering well, will be responding to email first week of November
- Administration – We need more front office staff
- Townshend retiring in June, and will become a research professor

3. Awards Committee – Kasischke

- Sent a memo around clarifying the point of Awards Committee, awaiting feedback from the faculty before moving forward
- Increasing effort to keep people abreast of developments, which is the responsibility of the entire Dept, not just the Committee

4. Associate Chair Issues – Dubayah

- No issues – out today

5. Undergraduate Committee Status Report – Loboda

- Discuss TA needs vs. capacity
 - Talked about the TA situation at last meeting, but want to put more thought into a strategy before bringing it to the Dept committee
- Brought to our attention: offering of a specific honors course fell through the cracks
 - Very small (capped at 15), for elite students only, was once offered by George and Steve, but there was insufficient enrollment
 - Required by University of offer it, so we need to push it
 - Must be taught by a tenured prof.
 - Make it a rolling course? Different prof. and/or curriculum each time, to make it more dynamic
 - One offering per year at least
- Undergraduate majors – based on Luna's reports, we've attained the numbers required by the College, now we must work on quality of courses/students
- "New STEM" – GEOG is Stem, but BSOS is not

6. Undergraduate Director Academic Issues – Luna

- Byron Marroquin will be taking over for Kristen Bergery; Rachel Berndtson and Kristen will take Crossgrove's job in the Spring (Crossgrove retiring)
 - Byron will be the new Undergrad Advisor
- BSOS is looking at summer/winter enrollment
 - BSOS summer/winter enrollment is declining, except for GEOG –our enrollment is increasing (195 in both winter and summer 2013)
 - Second largest Dept in BSOS of students taking irregular semester courses
 - Due to interest, or lack of classes during regular semester? There is a ripple effect due to insufficient professors and money
 - Perhaps get Grad students to teach the mini-mesters?
 1. 4 applications for this coming winter (we need 12)
 - Faculty/Advisors won't let certain students teach
 2. We need quality teaching with reliable faculty
- We are taking students from computer science, engineering, and other departments – not necessarily the best students, but they grow, become stronger scholars, once they join GEOG
- ENSP students perform the best, but don't do as well on practical exams – how do we improve this?
- Lab vs. practical exams – which is more important?
- Change pre-requisites? **Calculus** is becoming a pre-req by many UMD departments
 - Students may be bad at math, but are great at GIS, so make math a benchmark to ensure all students excel on practical exams, too
- Make sure students don't wait until last minute to take (tough) courses and end up not graduating

- Students lack problem-solving skills – **SYSTEMIC PROBLEM** – rather than laying out the steps, make them figure steps out alone
- Perhaps more application-based, rather than theory, is necessary?
- Suggest a **logic course such as philosophy**

7. Graduate Committee Status Report – Sun

- Action Last Meeting - Graduate Outcome Assessment Status
- Action Last Meeting - Grad Student Research Conference
- Action Last Meeting – Grad Applicant Open House 2015
- We are far behind our benchmarks (80%)
 - Portfolio/proposal defense rating is still at 62%
- Satisfactory – 80% of students successfully defend their portfolios within 3 yrs, of course, we would like 100%
- Portfolios should be submitted within 2 yrs of starting the program, although portfolios could move faster
- Dissertation defense stage – revisit benchmarks currently in place and create a proposal on how to improve the process
- Students are under the impression that they can't start their portfolio until they pass their PAC, which is incorrect
 - PAC is to demonstrate that you have the broad knowledge about a topic to write a thesis
 - Portfolio sets up specific idea that you want to research
 1. Students should have an idea of what they want to research by the time they get to their PAC (committee of experts formed once you have your topic)
- Stand-alone Master's program (case by case basis): must vote on it
 - Allowed if students come w/ Fullbright or other funding – PI cannot fund this person on research grants
 - **ACTION:** formulate a requirement that makes sense (thesis, scholarly paper, e.g.) [Berndtson, Liang, Sun]
 - Grad director must approve admission and plan of study
- PhD Conference/half-day workshop – still in development (Nicole Motzer is organizing)
 - BRIDGES?
- Open House – Liang will discuss

8. Graduate Director Academic Issues – Liang

- Action Last Meeting – Circulate Strategic Plan – submitted
- Action Last Meeting – Climate Survey – depression in the Dept (grad students)
 - Silva and Marroquin are working to shorten the survey, and then will send it to Liang for next faculty meeting
 - Be proactive – create a better environment for everyone, to help avoid depression and other mental issues
- Based on current number of faculty (13), there is one student per faculty member for the PhD program
 - 7 profs want students this year
 - Graduating 10 this year

- If we bring in 13 students, we don't have enough faculty members to sit on committees
 - We need to "right-size"

9. Research Director Issues – Hurtt

- JGC3 –
 - Recent Washington post article – yr 3 planning
 - Meeting with Piers and Tucker Nov. 25
 - Research center –
 1. How to deal with human dimension science
 - Just completed workshop, reimagining how to do that...
 - Richard Moss still in discussion – another meeting with VPR still required (another year before anything happens)

10. Diversity Task Force – Silva

- Submitted strategy for recruiting under-represented students to BSOS/Kim Nickerson (Oct 10) - He's happy and we are working on improving our strategy
- Database offers a list of students from which we could recruit, if we find a match, bring them into the Dept.
- Building a partnership with the UMD McNair program
 - McNair students get graduate fellowships
 - McNair Conf. at UMD in March 2015
 1. Booth w/ promotional materials (\$1500)
 - Berkeley and/or National Conf. in 2015 for McNair – Byron could go
 - **ACTION** – decide if we want to organize a table at UMD or Berkeley?

11. Merit Committee Task Force – Hubacek

- Working on revised version of policy document
- Will be submitted to the Dept., comments considered – if none, assume that it is passed

12. Any Other Business –

- MD Day (25 April) – who will be here and who is going to AAG?
- Need students and faculty to work the booth

13. Upcoming Dates:

- November 19th - GIS Day – need more volunteers, especially from human side
- Nov. 20th – event w/ Paul Torrens
- December 5th Departmental Committee Meeting
- December 15th – 19th AGU San Francisco
- December 21st 1:00 pm Graduation – reps: CJ & ?