**Administrative Council Meeting Minutes**

**March 21, 2022**

Attendees: Dr. Cindy Akers (Interim Dean), Dr. Christy Bratcher, Dr. Robert Cox (Interim Assoc. Dean), Norman Martin, Laci Hardman, Dr. Phil Johnson, Dr. Scott Burris, Dr. Chance Brooks (Interim AFS Chair), Prof. Eric Bernard, Dr. Warren Conway, Dr. Glen Ritchie and Dr. Mike Ballou

1. Minutes from the February 21, 2022 meeting were approved as distributed.
2. Dr. Akers let the council know that Monty Christian has agreed to work with us to help define excellence and how to move forward to measure our excellence in the three areas of Academics, Research and Engagement.
3. Dr. Bratcher reported that she had research numbers for the department chairs for their evaluations, however she had figured them on an academic year instead of a calendar year. She will redo the figures and get them out as soon as possible. She also said she would see if anyone from Institutional Research could come and give a tutorial at one of the deans/department chair meetings on how to read some of these reports, since most are reported on an academic calendar year. Dr. Bratcher announced the first candidate for the chair position in Landscape Architecture was coming in today and would be interviewing on Tuesday and Wednesday. The second candidate will interview on March 29th and 30th, and the third on April 11th and 12th.
4. Karl Rich, Director of the Master of International Agriculture Program in the Ferguson College of Agriculture at Oklahoma State University, joined the meeting via Zoom to give a presentation to the chairs regarding their Master of International Agriculture Program.
5. Dr. Cox gave an update on Blackboard. He noted that all faculty that are using Blackboard Gradebook, need to have it set up so that it matches their syllabus grading policy. This is extremely important and Karissa would be glad to help show faculty how to get this set up.
6. Dr. Akers asked the chairs if any were having departmental graduation banquets, and if so, to please let our office know. The deans would like to attend if possible. She also asked the department chairs what their thoughts were on student organization sponsorship asks. There are so many student organizations on campus, and even within the college that if you help sponsor one, you would need to sponsor others. Most thought the best was to set a budget at the beginning of the year for things like this, and when the money ran out that would be all you could do for that year. Another idea was to set up a systemic approach on an annual basis. Dr. Akers indicated that we will revisit this topic this summer, as we are beginning to receive more and more requests for support.
7. Norman Martin noted that the new student DEI profiles are up on our website. He asked the chairs to please send names of students to him that they would like to highlight on this page. Norman did not have an update on the new logos for the centers and institutes yet. He has not heard anything from Communications and Marketing as to their progress on those.
8. Laci Hardman indicated 16K updates went out to the business manager a couple of weeks ago. She will review these again this summer to see where we are at that point. Laci noted that the summer course offering spreadsheets will be due on the 23rd. She also reported she will get with Dr. Bratcher and they will try to come up with a supplemental teaching/research quarterly template for PI research grants, as they (Office of the VPR) are going to stop allowing any carry forwards. Laci also told the chairs she would be happy to go over startup packages with faculty so that they can understand them better. This summer when special instruction fee submissions are due, she will try to do a special instruction fee audit, as well as a possible training for those who are responsible for submitting the fees. Laci also reminded the chairs that faculty cannot get paid above their normal salary for summer salary.

DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

AAEC: Dr. Johnson reported that his group has a meeting set for Friday with Gordon Davis, however it would depend on when the Texas Tech Men’s basketball game was. Dr. Johnson also reported that they are having issues with GRE scores. He has found out that this has become a “take home” test because of COVID. They have been having lots of people come up with perfect scores. At this point, they are not taking GRE scores into consideration for admission. Dr. Johnson also asked if the chairs felt like we should try to resurrect Gamma Sigma Delta (The Honor Society of Agriculture). They have not had any students inducted in quite some time now. The chairs were in agreement this is a good society to promote to the students, and Dr. Scott Burris volunteered to help Dr. Johnson get it going again.

AEC: Dr. Burris reported that Rudy Ritz and Courtney Gibson from his department, and Donna McCallister from AAEC, were involved in a USDA/NIFA HSI Grant that could help undergraduate students, if they can meet research criteria, get funding. The program notes “This program will provide and evaluate an enhanced undergraduate research experience to students in agriculture, food, and natural resources (AFNR). All departments in the college are encouraged to participate and may nominate students for undergraduate recruitment scholarships to support their research work. Up to eight (8) undergraduate recruitment scholarships valuing $5,000/year are available to support Hispanic and/or underrepresented students in pursuing undergraduate research opportunities within AFNR. Students will also receive support for conference and research travel. The TTU PI’s (Rudy Ritz, Courtney Gibson, Donna McCallister) can answer any questions toward this effort as work may begin as soon as Summer 2022. Dr. Burris also noted that they have filled their Assistant Professor of Practice position. Chelsea Hatch will begin April 15th. Dr. Burris, Dr. Lindsey Kennedy, Dr. Nathan Gill (NRM) and Dr. Nellie Hill (Kansas State University) led a Bridge Adventure Program (personal growth and development program) to the Grand Canyon National Park during spring break. This was a transformational learning experience for the students that went. This program was developed with the purpose of using outdoor adventure as a way to encourage retention, leadership development, and other educational opportunities to promote diversity and inclusion in agricultural and natural resources fields. The nearly 20-mile backpacking trip down to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and back helped students learn to push their limits as well as overcome obstacles.

AFS: Dr. Brooks stated that AFS has solicited the help of Suzanne Tapp from the TLPDC to help them in their tactical planning. He also noted he has reached out to Matt Owens to set a time for Gordon Davis to visit with the department. Dr. Brooks also noted they currently have an Assistant Professor of Practice position open and are working to have someone in that position by fall. He also asked the deans if they are still planning on having an IT position for the college, as his faculty indicated to him that if they were to hire an IT staff member for the department, they need someone that can handle big data. Dr. Brooks asked Dr. Bratcher about the interdisciplinary program, and she said she would follow up with Dean Sheridan sometime today.

LA: Prof. Bernard reported that many of their students and faculty members had just returned from the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA) meeting. Nazia Trina, an international graduate student, won the “Best Poster Honorable Mention” in the poster competition. Prof. Bernard also noted that they are still waiting (12 years thus far) for the Department of Homeland Security to amend the DHS STEM Designated Degree Program list to include Landscape Architecture. Until this happens, it will be much harder to recruit international graduate students. He also noted they are also working on setting up a meeting with Gordon Davis. He stated he is not sure if all the work in the Pavilion was competed during spring break, but will check on it today.

NRM: Dr. Conway noted that several of NRM’s societies and groups have held their national meetings over the last month, with many of their students and faculty attending them. He noted faculty have taken on leadership roles in some of these societies, and students have won posters, contests, etc. In regards to the Ranch Management Program, Dr. Conway reported that it has yet to be sent to the Higher Education Coordinating Board. It was currently going through a “good neighbor” review. Fundraising has begun for the Ranch Management Program, and they received a nice donation to kick it off. The recent increase in fuel charges has caused some budget issues. Dr. Conway is going to see how this month goes before he reevaluates an increase in the charges per mile for fleet vehicle usage. They currently charge the faculty $.43/mile. The state mileage reimbursement rate as of January 1, is $.585.