

Department of Environmental Science, Policy and Geography

Minutes from faculty meeting on 20 October 2011

Present: Henry Alegria (Interim Chair), Barnali Dixon, Armando Hoare, Chris Meindl, Erica Asano, Kathy Carvalho-Knighton, Madhu Pandey (left at 1:05 to teach class), Donny Smoak, Iuri Herzfeld, Bob Wang (had to leave at 1:15)

Absent: Joseph Dorsey, Leon Hardy, and all Biology faculty.

Dr. Alegria called the meeting to order at 12:35 pm

Dr. Alegria asked if minutes from the previous ESPG faculty meetings required further revision. No revisions were suggested. Faculty voted to accept minutes from the 10 October 2011 ESPG faculty meeting.

Dr. Hoare noted that in the election for the ESPG Department Associate Chair, the faculty vote was evenly split between Dr. Meindl and Dr. Dixon. The Interim Chair (Dr. Alegria) broke the tie by voting for Dr. Dixon for Associate Chair.

Dr. Dixon suggested that the Department had several more issues to discuss in order to revise the graduate student handbook. She asked about graduate faculty credentialing and who shall be qualified to serve on thesis committees and teach in the ESP graduate program. Dr. Dixon suggested that faculty should have to substantiate claims of expertise for supervising theses in particular fields. She asked about what other specific qualifications we might ask of all graduate faculty. Some faculty claimed that a Ph.D. is or should be required; others claim that a Ph.D. is not necessary, particularly if people have demonstrated expertise in a field.

Dr. Alegria asked if the faculty want to pursue credentialing in our graduate program? So far, our Dept. has not been opposed to having folks from outside campus serving on thesis committees. Dr. Dixon asked "What qualifies as evidence of expertise?" to adopt outside committee members. Faculty members debated this issue at some length. The faculty unanimously decided that Department should indeed credential graduate faculty members in ESP: both thesis committee members and those teaching graduate classes—but that these decisions are separate (some can teach graduate classes but not serve on committees and vice versa). The Graduate committee will propose specific guidelines for credentialing to discuss with the full Dept. Faculty at a later meeting.

Dr. Dixon then brought up the issue of how to dismiss poor performing students from the program. As things now stand, if students fail the comp exam twice, they are dismissed. In light of the fact that the comp exam is being rolled into a new thesis proposal defense exercise, the issue is how many times a student can attempt to defend their thesis proposal/pass comp exam? The faculty agreed that students should continue to get two chances to defend thesis proposal/pass comp exam. "Failing" can include poor performance OR merely taking more than six months to successfully re-defend one's thesis. Dr. Dixon asked about what the criteria should be to dismiss a student for failing

to make adequate progress toward their degree? Dr. Alegria suggests that the thesis chair should have the right to warn a student that they are not making adequate progress. At this point, students should have the option to either seek a new adviser or demonstrate adequate progress within a certain period of time, or they could be dismissed from the program. The faculty decided to seek models for handling these cases from other universities.

The faculty agree to move forward the revised undergraduate curriculum degree proposals for both policy and science tracks.

Dr. Alegria announced that the College of Marine Science has expressed interest in offering undergraduate and graduate classes that might benefit ESP students. Faculty debated the relative worth of several possible course offerings from the CMS. Dr. Dixon asked faculty to suggest the classes we think are appropriate for our students.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm

Respectfully submitted by Chris Meindl