

Policy, Planning, and Budget Council Meeting Minutes
College of Science and Engineering
16 April 2020

Zoom Meeting Interface

Present: John Gilbertson (chair), Andy Klein (minutes), Takele Seda, Arpad Benyi, Jim Hearne, Thanh Le, Dietmar Schwartz, David Rider, Brady Foreman, Takele Seda, Kris Aguayo (Student Senator), Elias Bashir (Student Senator), Jackie Caplan-Auerbach (Associate Dean of CSE), Brad Johnson (Dean of CSE)

Minutes from 02/27/2020 were approved.

Discussed changes to the COPEP surrounding Personnel Committee's role, did some group editing of the document. Unanimously approved changes to COPEP.

PPBC had a Q&A session with Dean Brad Johnson relating to operation during COVID-19. During this Q&A, the following issues were discussed —

A question arose about the composition and role of the ISC, and Dean Johnson provided an overview.

A question arose about Elwha and Jarvis fellowships for student summer research. The College will fund them if there's a way that students can work remotely, and will accommodate alternate projects/plans if it still allows students to stay active in research.

There were some questions about implications for tenure-track faculty caused by the COVID-19 disruption. The MOU answers these questions, for the most part, but Council members sought clarity on how the "extra year" will be counted, differences for faculty working on experimental vs theoretical research, time required to train up new students and delay involved with that, etc. Dean Johnson and Assoc. Dean Caplan-Auerbach suggested that this is a major unprecedented event that, hopefully, we will all understand had major implications (including both professional and familial), and that faculty will not be penalized. They expressed that there is no way to write language that accounts for every possible exception, so we will all need to be adaptable and understand if faculty have been disproportionately affected by this event. One Council member asked if course evals will be "required" for tenure dossiers for Summer courses, as this is not addressed in the MOU. Dean Johnson speculated that, yes, Summer evals will ultimately also be optional.

Enrollment numbers were discussed. In CSE, enrollment drop this quarter is very low (1% or less). Unknown for Fall.

Question about hiring freeze came up. T/TT hiring is completely frozen for now. For NTT hiring, contracts have not yet been written. Need to await June state revenue forecast (assessing inevitable revenue hit on the State of Washington) and the State's subsequent adjust to the supplemental budget, then NTT contracts will be written. Dean Johnson was optimistic that the NTT situation in CSE will not be impacted significantly.

There were numerous questions about how and when MS and UG students will be able to conduct research. Generally, it is envisioned that activities will slowly ramp up rather than a switch being turned on. "Essential" research falls in a grey area, it is thus very difficult to navigate, and will be something of a process that develops and adapts based on the current state.

A Council member asked how faculty/student feedback is being collected. Johnson responded that the ISC team has asked for feedback continuously, as has the Dean himself in every meeting. Beyond that, the "regular channels" for feedback are still valuable.

There was lots of discussion about the lab experiences that Western offers, and how we will be able to offer that going forward. No easy answers, but the discussion included speculation about issues and potential mitigation approaches.