College of Science and Engineering Policy, Planning, and Budget Council (PPBC) Minutes

December 14, 2023

Attendees: Dietmar Schwarz (Biology), Bob Mitchell (Geology), Amr Radwan (Engineering & Design), Brian Hutchinson (Computer Science), Takele Seda (Physics & Astronomy), Amy Anderson (Mathematics), Tim Kowalczyk (Chemistry/AMSEC), Janelle Leger (Dean)

Absent: SMATE representative (no currently appointed representative)

Not present, *ex officio*: John Hardgrove (AS Senate), Jackie Caplan-Auerbach (Associate Dean)

1. Councilors reviewed and unanimously approved November 16, 2023 PPBC meeting minutes.
2. Councilors discussed the CSE Strategic Plan Task Force’s draft plan for stakeholder feedback:
   1. A survey soliciting faculty and staff input on priorities for the strategic plan was launched on December 4, 2023
   2. A separate survey for students currently enrolled in CSE majors is underway
   3. The Task Force will use initial feedback from surveys to draft mission and vision statements, strategic priorities and sub-goals
   4. Feedback on the drafts will be sought from student open forum(s), staff open forum(s), department and program meetings, and digital feedback
      1. Councilors suggested separate open forums for graduate and undergraduate students to ensure the distinct perspectives of graduate students are heard
      2. Digital feedback likely to be through a simple web form circulated by programs
   5. Councilors pointed out that surveying CSE majors systematically selects against feedback from students who intended to matriculate into a CSE major but faced barriers to entry
      1. Feedback from these students is especially important for informing priorities
      2. Administering a complementary student survey tied to enrollment in introductory / service courses was suggested as a mechanism to solicit this input
   6. Councilors suggested finding an effective route to share the draft plan with legislators, whether directly or via Western’s legislative liaison, to strengthen communication and check for alignment of strategic priorities with state legislative priorities
   7. The Task Force plans to revise draft statements and strategic priorities based on feedback and conduct one further round of digital feedback on the revised drafts
3. Councilors reviewed feedback from CSE faculty on the proposed CSE Scholarship Committee:
   1. Some departments and programs with fewer TT faculty already find it difficult to appoint a member to every CSE committee
   2. Councilors suggest every department and program should have the option to appoint a member to this committee, but they can choose to “opt out” of appointing a member
   3. A suggestion for one-year appointments was discussed. Councilors appreciated the intent of ensuring broad representation over time on a smaller committee but felt that full turnover annually would present more logistical challenges than advantages. Councilors retained the draft language indicating two-year terms
   4. Councilors discussed a question in the collected feedback about grievance procedures and questions from students about the process. It was agreed that these items should be outside of the committee’s purview and remain the responsibility of the Dean (and delegated to the Associate Dean if desired)
   5. Councilors debated whether the committee roster should be posted publicly
      1. It is common practice for university-level grant and fellowship selection committees, and some scholarship committees, to keep rosters private
      2. The CSE Scholarship Committee charge includes responsibilities beyond selection of scholarship recipients, and faculty may rightly wish to know whom to contact for questions or feedback to the committee
      3. Councilors agreed to permit the membership list to be posted publicly and to revisit the practice after one year of committee activity as needed
   6. Norms, confidentiality, and management of conflicts of interest were highlighted as aspects of the Scholarship Committee’s procedures that should be discussed and self-determined by the committee’s members early in its establishment
      1. General sentiment among Councilors is that members should not need to recuse themselves from discussion of applications associated with their home department, but details are left to the discretion of the Scholarship Committee
   7. Councilors debated whether to add the word “equitably” to the aspect of the committee’s charge focused on recommending award recipients
      1. The intent is to encourage faculty to review applications holistically. Councilors wish to make clear that Scholarship Committee members do not serve to maximize the number of awardees affiliated with their home department
      2. The criteria for each award are stipulated by each individual scholarship or fellowship; these take precedence over intent to promote representation across departments and programs among the award recipients
      3. Councilors borrowed language from the Personnel Committee’s charge to emphasize that criteria for each award should be applied fairly
   8. Councilors unanimously approved a motion to accept the revised language establishing the CSE Scholarship Committee in the COPEP
4. Councilors reviewed stakeholder feedback on review of TT faculty in joint appointments
   1. A chair expressed concern about the impact of the proposed one-day turnaround time for the secondary unit head’s summary letter on the quality of that letter, which could unfairly negatively impact the candidate’s review
   2. Councilors discussed advantages and disadvantages of shifting the deadline one day earlier – from 9 days to 10 days prior to the deadline for faculty reviews in the primary unit – for reviewing faculty in the secondary unit to conduct their expedited review
      1. Councilors universally supported increasing the turnaround time for this letter to two days, provided it did not create any new constraints elsewhere
      2. The deadline for faculty under review to submit their dossier for departmental review is set by the chair of the primary department
      3. The expected outcome of this change is that chairs would move the dossier submission deadline slightly earlier to accommodate the additional day for the secondary unit head to prepare their letter
      4. Councilors agreed to a shifted deadline for secondary unit faculty review submission from 9 to 10 days prior to the primary unit faculty review deadline
   3. Incorporating the timeline revision discussed above, Councilors voted unanimously to approve the new language outlining the review procedure and timeline for TT faculty with joint appointments for inclusion in the COPEP