

College Council Meeting Minutes
FISHER COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
1:30 – 3:30 p.m., March 14, 2025

2024-2025 Member Attendees Present

Biological Sciences: Daniel Caetano (Co-Secretary) and Elana Ehrlich; **Chemistry:** Nicole Carbonaro (Vice-Chairperson) and Shannon Stitzel; **Computer and Information Sciences:** Jinie Pak and Nam Nguyen; **Mathematics:** Jing Tian and Na Zhang; **Physics, Astronomy, & Geosciences:** Parviz Ghavamian (Chairperson) and Jia-An Yan; **STEM Education:** Kristin Frank (Co-Secretary); **Lecturers and Clinical Faculty:** Miriam Parnes; **Staff:** Kara Berger, Hannah Berry, Kristin Pinkowski; **Student Success:** Nichole Mason; **Students:** Jaelyn McCracken (Chemistry; Undergraduate), Miracle Eze (Biology, Graduate)

Non-Voting, Ex-Officio:

Dean: Matthew Nugent; **Associate Deans:** Christopher Salice and Ming Tomayko; **Building Manager:** Josh Wilhide.

Visitors/Guests: Amanda Charles, Ashley Fullwood (Director of Academic Advising), Elaine Lewis (Assistant Vice President for Academic Success), Clare Muhoro (Associate Provost for Academic Affairs), William Shipley (Mathematics).

1. Approval of the minutes from the February 14, 2025, FCSM Council meeting with unanimous consent.
2. Announcements and remarks from Dean Nugent.
 - A. USM Board of Regents Awards included two recipients from FCSM: Mary Devadas and Alexei Kolesnikov were each awarded the Board of Regents faculty award for Excellence in Mentoring.
 - B. Renovations are underway in the Associate Dean Suite. Emma Dorris and Associate Dean Salice are temporarily relocated to the 5th and Associate Dean Tomayko is temporarily relocated to the 3rd floor.
 - C. The big screen in Science Commons will run announcements celebrating FCSM twice a week, general FCSM announcements twice a week, and a science inspired image/video each Friday.
 - D. The Science Complex building committee is being reinstated and will have department chairs from Biology, Chemistry, and PAGS as additional members. Faculty/staff should talk with their department chair if they have proposals or ideas for changes to make to the building.
 - E. Ongoing projects include working to get a big mural outside the planetarium and collaborating with Design and Graphic services to create large posters to promote each department and program, in both the Science Complex and 7800 York Road buildings, on the pin boards in the Science Complex.
 - F. There has been no update on budget cuts. The Dean does not expect an impact on full-time faculty/staff or college/department operating accounts.

- G. The Dean serves on a campus-wide budget committee looking at various budget models. They meet about twice a month and there is no conclusion/recommendation yet for the University's budget model.
3. Updates and announcements from Associate Dean Tomayko
- A. Thank you to those who participated in TU Admitted Student Day events over the past few weeks. There are additional events for admitted and prospective students throughout the rest of the semester.
 - B. Tutors in the Natural Sciences tutoring center will receive gold-colored T-shirts to help distinguish peer tutors from other students in the tutoring center. The Dean's office is considering expanding this to other tutoring centers.
 - C. The book club will continue to meet once a month through the rest of the spring semester and will continue in the fall.
 - D. The Associate Deans will continue to host monthly informal gatherings to chat with faculty and staff.
 - E. Commencement planning is underway with speakers and banner carriers already determined. Faculty volunteers are needed to join the faculty procession and support with student robing and on the floor.
 - F. FACET is working to develop modules for TSEM courses that address appropriate use of AI and citing AI. This module will be included in all TSEM courses in the fall. They are also developing a module on research and writing with AI that will be used in some TSEM courses.
 - G. FCSM is looking for volunteers to teach TSEM courses and serve as a First-Year Experience (FYE) advisor.
4. Updates and announcements from Associate Dean Salice.
- A. There are some indications that federal grant funding is continuing as program officers are being rehired. Many thanks to faculty who are submitting proposals.
 - B. The Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) is providing some funding to support graduate students across the university. Allocations to FCSM should be similar to what they have been in the recent past.
 - C. The FCSM Undergraduate Research Committee is reviewing 35 undergraduate research proposals.
 - D. TU OURCI will host the Student Research and Creative Inquiry Forum on April 17, 2025. The deadline for undergraduate students to apply to present a poster is Friday, March 28, 2025.
 - E. FACET is hosting a writing retreat for faculty March 20-21st from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. in CK404B. Food will be provided each day and there will be yoga on Thursday at 1pm and chair massages starting at 10am on Friday.
 - F. The Dean's office is working to increase corporate partnerships. These partnerships would provide opportunities for students and help get the word out to the community about the work being done in FCSM. Let the Dean's office know if you have an idea for a corporate partnership or if there are ways the Dean's office can support and help develop these partnerships.

- G. The Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) is collaborating with 4-year liberal arts colleges to establish Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) for 4+1 programs where students would come to TU to complete a masters' degree after completing their 4-year degree at the liberal arts school.
 - H. To increase students' access to undergraduate research, Associate Dean Salice is looking into work study as an opportunity to support and fund undergraduate research for eligible students.
5. Discussion on Academic Advising with Clare Muhoro (Associate Provost for Academic Affairs), Ashley Fullwood (Director of Academic Advising), and Elaine Lewis (Assistant Vice President for Academic Success).
- A. The Enrollment Summit in Fall 2024 identified opportunities for better coordination between the work of advisors in the colleges and Academic Advising and Office of Enrollment Management
 - B. Overview of Academic Advising Process:
 - 1) First year students, regardless of the number of credits they come in with automatically go through the First Year Advising Program. This is a proactive and intentional advising program. Each first-year student is paired with an FYE advisor. These FYE advisors include professional advisors and 100+ faculty/staff from across campus. After a student's first year, if they have declared a major, they are transferred to an advisor in that department. Otherwise, they stay with the FYE advisor until they have declared their major.
 - 2) Transfer students who come to TU with a declared major are assigned a faculty advisor in the department. If the transfer student has an undeclared major, they are assigned a professional advisor until they declare a major.
 - C. There are three main divisions within Academic Advising, Retention and Completion (Located in Cook Library).
 - 1) First Year Engagement: This team works on all things first year experience including orientation and the Freshman Transition Program (FTP).
 - 2) Transfer Advising: This team works to build capacity and resources to support first year transfer students to build a sense of belonging and provide transfer students resources to be successful at TU.
 - 3) Retention and Intervention: This team handles academic warnings, advising technology, and advisor training (both faculty and staff).
 - 4) Academic Advising, Retention, and Completion runs the progress reporting campaign each semester. This team handles the outreach to students identified as being at risk through the advising reports.
 - D. Elaine Lewis (Assistant Vice President for Academic Success) facilitated a conversation with FCSM council members to learn more about how FCSM staff/faculty engage in academic advising.

- 1) FCSM council members reported that student advising is mostly done by faculty with professional advising and peer advising in CIS. Most advising is 1-1 through scheduled appointments.
- 2) FCSM council members identified the following challenges with academic advising:
 - a. It is difficult for faculty advisors to keep track of curriculum changes in each major and changes to requirements.
 - b. The Degree Completion Plan (DCP) process is time intensive and the excel spreadsheets are often not updated by each department to reflect curriculum changes.
 - c. Students report not feeling connected with their academic advisor.
 - d. Reviewing and releasing advising holds is time consuming.
 - e. There is an unclear expectation of academic advising outside curricular issues and course planning.
- 3) FCSM council members identified the following successes with academic advising:
 - a. Chemistry is piloting a program where department admins support the DCP process. Each semester the admin identifies students with a DCP hold and sends out a template DCP with a typical course progression. Students are told to edit as needed and email back to admin who checks for red flags before passing it along to the faculty advisor.
 - b. Using SSC to manage the coordination of scheduling many advising appointments in the weeks before course registration.
 - c. Putting some ownership on students to prepare for advising meetings such as completing checklists and watching videos about completing DCPs.
- 4) FCSM council members identified the following goals for academic advising:
 - a. Provide faculty/staff additional training on how to use SSC.
 - b. Provide videos to support students in the advising process and advising requirements, such as DCP
- E. FCSM council members were asked to continue this conversation within their departments and compile requests for resources/information from TU Academic Advising and Office of Enrollment Management
6. Updates and announcements from Council Chairperson
 - A. Guidance was provided to FCSM council members on what types of announcements and updates to share at the council meeting. This resource is in the FCSM council SharePoint.
 - B. FCSM council committee members from Biology, Chemistry, CIS, Math, Student Success, and Staff rotate off in Spring 2025. These departments/groups need to run elections to choose their representatives. The FCSM election committee will be contacted to support the election of staff representatives.

7. Updates and announcements from FCSM Representatives
 - A. The Biology Department is doing an extensive review and re-structure of the undergraduate curriculum. They are optimistic that it will produce significant positive impacts in many aspects.
 - B. The Tall-Wiedefeld Society grant awarded \$4,000 to Women in Forensic Science (*second year grant award winner*). The award is an extension of last year's grant to the Women in Forensic Science program, which offered seminars in the use of the FBI's National DNA database to help identify unknown criminal suspects; forensic investigative genetic genealogy to identify unknown human remains, missing persons and suspects in unsolved crimes; and the use of drone and 3D planning technology at crime scenes. Students' seminar attendance inspired internships at crime laboratories, participation in crime scene ride-alongs, research project presentations at professional forensic science meetings and connections with female forensic professionals for job opportunities.
 - C. There were two noteworthy publications from the Chemistry Department
 - 1) Kelly Elkins and student co-authors published a manuscript in the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* on their survey of forensic DNA training experiences in U.S. laboratories.
 - 2) Mary Devadas and student co-authors published a paper in *Chemistry: An Asian Journal* exploring photoluminescence of Pt-doped gold nanoclusters. This paper was featured on the journal cover and as an Editors' Choice article.
 - D. Computer and Information Sciences has interviewed twelve candidates for four positions. The department expects to make offers by the end of spring break.
 - E. The Computer and Information Sciences Department is currently running an election for department chair.
 - F. Mathematics faculty and staff were recognized:
 - 1) Emily McGeady was awarded the 2025 Marilyn Dannenfelser Staff Award.
 - 2) Alexei Kolesnikov was awarded the 2024-2025 USM Board of Regents Mentoring Award
 - G. The Mathematics Education Graduate Program (MS) is considering offering the program fully online – a change necessary to be able to continue offering the program.
 - H. The Mathematics Department is hosting the following upcoming events:
 - 1) Department seminars on March 24, 2025 (Jing Tian) and April 7 (Banghee So)
 - 2) Differentiation Bee on March 25, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in SC2123
 - 3) Integration Bee on April 30, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in SC 2321
 - I. Two graduate students from Physics, Astronomy, and Geosciences, Saneyda Hernandez (advisor Jia-An Yan) and Simeon Popov (advisor Alan Jackson), were each awarded Fellowship grants of \$13,872 from the Maryland Space Grant Consortium
 - J. The Lecturer survey will close on Monday, March 24, 2025. Results from the survey will be discussed at the April FCSM Council meeting.

- K. STEM Education has a new webpage including information about the STEM Education programs at Towson and affiliated faculty.
<https://www.towson.edu/fcsm/departments/stem/preparing-teachers/>
- L. Chelsea McClure, Adjunct Professor in Department of Secondary and Middle School Education at Towson University, will be giving the last STEM Education Seminar on Friday May 2, 2025, from 12-1pm in SC 5250. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to attend.
- M. The STEM Ed Faculty continue to work on program changes to all Teacher Preparation programs to align with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. (For some context: recent state regulations that require teacher candidates to have a full year internship in a public-school classroom.)
- 1) Curriculum changes for secondary education programs (UTeach) are in the works and moving through the curriculum process. Most programs had to remove a couple courses and reorganize the course sequence to accommodate the new regulations.
 - 2) There is some conversation about creating a Secondary Science Education Major with concentrations based on discipline (e.g., secondary science education with earth/space concentration, biology concentration, etc.). This means that UTeach students would no longer major in the content area with a concentration in secondary education. Questions and comments about the proposal can be sent to Ron Hermann.
 - 3) There is much concern from the STEM Ed faculty about the program changes for middle and elementary school programs based in College of Education (COE).
 - a. COE has asked STEM faculty to reduce both the number of math and science education content courses and methods courses (including ones with field placements) which will have significant impacts on course scheduling and faculty workload across FCSM.
 - b. It is unclear if COE is removing any of their courses from these programs.
- N. Nichole Mason's term as Student Success Representative on FCSM council ends this spring. She is looking for recommendations for who could take her place on the council.
- O. FCSM Staff will host a staff meet up event get together on Thursday, March 20, 2025, from 1-2 p.m. in SC 2321.
- P. Accessibility and Disability Services (ADS) is hosting an Assistive Technology (AT) Demo Day, where they are showcasing accessible technology solutions designed to empower individuals with disabilities across various environments. This event will educate students, faculty, and staff through exploring the latest AT advancements in academic, home, medical, and occupational settings. The event is Friday, March 28, 2025, from 1-4 p.m. in UU349.
- Q. The Hill-Lopes Scholars Program will host science writer Lisa Munoz for a talk about her recent book *Women in Science Now*. The event is open to anyone and will be held on Thursday, April 10, 2025, at 4pm in Science Commons.
- R. Undergraduate students attended a career fair last week. They felt well prepared by the career center events on developing elevator pitches and learning how to present themselves at a career fair. Students were disappointed that many companies/agencies canceled participation in the career fair due to staffing and funding cuts.

- S. Undergraduate students would like to see more STEM honors classes. Dean Nugent explained that this request should go to the Dean of the Honors College
 - T. No announcements at this time from graduate students.
8. Standing Agenda Items
- A. Senate update/communications
 - 1) Associate Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies, Sidd Kaza, reported that around 180 graduate students will receive summer research support. Out of 66 Federal Grants given to TU faculties, 20 might be at risk of being withdrawn because of new and evolving US policies.
 - 2) On March 11, 2025, the FCSM senators met with the chairs and the Dean to discuss the posting policies in Science Complex and request faculty input into posting policies. (Amanda Charles was also present.) As a result, the Dean is reinstating the Science Complex Building Committee with the chairs of BIOL, CHEM, and PAGS serving as additional members. The FCSM senators asked for faculty departmental representation on the college/building space committee. It was decided that for now the three chairpersons are sufficient representatives of faculty, and they will meet once a month prior to their established meeting with the dean. Among other business this committee will evaluate requests for new posting locations in the SC to increase science identity. These can be used to post research papers, conference posters, other scholarly materials, or general overviews of lab activities to inform visitors and students of ongoing research activities.
9. Items from the Floor:
- A. There was discussion about whether updates are necessary to department PTR documents based on varying workload amongst colleagues in a department. Dean Nugent explained this is not a new issue and likely already addressed within department documents.
10. Adjournment.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin Frank
Co-Secretary