

Department of Forest & Wildlife Ecology

Faculty Meeting Minutes of April 6, 2010
216 Russell Labs

Present: Berkelman, Bowe, Cary, Craven, Drake, Gower, Gunther, Karasov (presiding), Kruger, Lorimer, Lutz, Mladenoff, Nack, Ozdogan, Peery, Ray, Rickenbach, Rissman, Rodock, Scott, Townsend, Van Deelen, Watt

Absent: Field, Foster, Guries, Langston (sabbatical), Pidgeon, Radeloff, Ribic, Samuel, Timme

Professor Karasov called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

1. Agenda and minutes. The Chair added to the agenda updates on IT (2.f.), IUFRO (4.d.), and a course proposed for September (2.e.). The minutes of the March 2 meeting were approved (Townsend/Berkelman).
2. Reports and Announcements
 - a. **Leopold Lecture.** Professor Craven reminded the faculty that the annual Leopold Lecture will occur in two weeks at 6 p.m. in the Ebling Conference Room in the Microbial Sciences Building, preceded by an ice cream social at 5 p.m. in the Allen Centennial Gardens. Planning is proceeding on schedule.
 - b. **Tom Steele appointment change.** Professor Rickenbach reported that the Kemp Natural Resources Station's manager, Tom Steele, who has an 85% there and a 15% in FWE, has requested, for personal and professional reasons, a reduction for at least a year in his appointment to 25-hour week, which would eliminate his appt in FWE and return that funding to the Department. Karla Ortman will assume some of his duties at Kemp. He will retain an affiliation with the Department. The faculty discussed the consequences of various uses of the 15% salary savings, designated as instructional funding.
 - c. **Vice Chancellor Sweeney offer to visit.** The Chair relayed an offer from Vince Sweeney, Vice Chancellor for University Relations, to address a department meeting. Professor Ray noted that the office is the primary conduit for UW public communication, including with the Legislature.
 - d. **Replacing 2000 van.** The Chair referred to an e-mail from a couple weeks prior concerning an offer to purchase a 2008 Chevy mini-van for \$9,600. Professor Bowe volunteered to accompany the Chair to inspect vehicle. The faculty briefly discussed Departmental options; the Chair will return with concrete options for faculty consideration.
 - e. **September course.** Craven requested help in recruiting about 20 students for a 3- to 4-week intensive introductory program early this fall to educate students—particularly wildlife students—about hunting.
 - f. **Information Technology update.** Mr. Gunther distributed and reviewed a summary of the activity of the IT staff in March and solicited input on the summary's format. He noted that Russell Labs is in the process of hiring a systems administrator. The Chair noted that he had also referred an IT-security-related matter from the CALS Chairs meeting to Gunther.
 - g. **Townsend promotion.** The Chair congratulated Townsend on attaining the rank of full professor.
3. Old Business
 - a. **Wisconsin Bioenergy Initiative (WBI) search update.** Professor Gower summarized the ongoing recruitment of WBI positions, which will receive 50% WBI funding for 3-5 years, after which colleges bear responsibility for full funding. He discussed Dr. Puneet Dwivedi's status among approximately eight candidates and Dwivedi's ongoing interviews on campus and nationally. Dwivedi had discussed with Professor Troy Runge, head of the WBI Search Committee, his willingness to teach needed courses in the Department. Noting the likelihood of only one hire in the sustainability field unless another college expresses interest in sharing a hire, Gower asked the faculty to strategize on the politics of obtaining one of the WBI positions.

The faculty discussed how the Department may express its support for Dwivedi prior to the WBI decisions. The Department will meet tomorrow, Wednesday, at 7:30 a.m. to discuss recruitment strategies. The faculty thanked Gower for his efforts.

4. New Business

- a. **Undergraduate education initiatives for the Department.** In returning to the Department, Professor Ray said he foresaw his role as assisting with developing and changing undergraduate programs, including as many as two service courses, revision of curriculum in light of changes such as recent retirements, the termination of the Recreation Resources Management major, and the College's move to a different degree format. He is also working with colleagues to revamp the FWE 901 seminar and will continue teaching the college's freshman seminar to about 200 students per year. Craven summarized the committee's ongoing discussion of course options, noting it will produce a written proposal for the curriculum committees' consideration in a couple weeks. Approximately 150 wildlife students who would have taken the former WE 318/319 would instead enroll in these proposed courses, in addition to students from Letters & Science and elsewhere. Furthermore, the Committee is considering outreach via distance learning courses which serve non-traditional (e.g., not full-time) students as a way to bring in new funding to the Department.
- b. **Modification of FWE 100.** No report.
- c. **Indirect cost returns to cover costs associated with fellowships.** At the Dean's recommendation, Professor Townsend raised an issue of support for recipients of non-NSF or non-NIH fellowships. Prestigious fellowships from the EPA and NASA do not receive tuition remission as do those from NSF or NIH; thus most principal investigators must pay their grad students' tuition. Students benefit more from fellowships awarded earlier in their careers, but that's also when more expensive non-dissertator tuition rates apply. Currently, the Dean's Office has agreed to cover half the tuition/fee shortfall for students in this situation; with the Department (i.e., PIs individually) responsible for other half. Townsend asked whether the Department would consider using indirect cost returns to cover the Department's share of tuition, as part of a larger discussion about indirect cost returns. The Chair asked about the Department's general principle of treating indirect cost returns as a communal pool, or whether the faculty preferred to return it to those who are the primary indirect cost generators. The faculty discussed past practices for distributing indirect cost returns, the amount of indirect costs which CALS retains, the historic reduction in the returns, and the history of inconsistency which creates its own difficulty. Responding to a question about uneven treatment of fellowships from NASA versus NIH, Mladenoff said the root of the problem emanates from researchers in large science fields feeling no need to "subsidize" the smaller sciences via the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF). The faculty advocated creating a list of needs and soliciting the Dean's advocacy to fix the larger problem. The Chair said they will continue to investigate options and return the issue to the faculty. Townsend requested comments on the matter by e-mail.

Townsend also noted a recently announced CALS initiative to include partial buyout of a professor's salary into formula fund budgets, using a uniform, across-the-board 10 percent salary switch to redirect 101 monies to a fund to pay student tuition.

- d. **International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO).** Noting that CALS no longer covers annual membership renewals, Rickenbach asked whether the Department would like to support an ongoing membership in IUFRO. Little support was expressed.

5. Adjourned 3:06 p.m.

submitted by Ken Scott