**CALSFA**

Meeting Minutes

Sept 08, 2020

CALS

1. Call to order at 9:05am via Zoom
   1. Attendees: Jennifer Jones, Ryan Stewart, John Galbraith, Travis Mountain, Sean O'Keefe, Alan Grant
2. Approval of previous meeting minutes (August 2020)
   1. August minutes were submitted late, will review and make comments later today.

1. Dean’s update
   1. Budgets discussions still ongoing in Richmond. It appears there will be a flat budget, which is good news since 5% and 10% reduction plans were submitted. So we may not need to use cuts. Next fiscal is more uncertain, but hope for at least a flat budget. Many positions have ben frozen but there has been some hiring for positions not state funded both on campus and in the field. There is anticipation for some tenure track hiring this year. Dean Grant noted this would be from hiring plans submitted by units. Two destination area positions will be hired with provost supporting these positions.
   2. There are continuing discussions to how to improve Elements. A discussion group will include CALS IT and work to improve entry and reporting. If the current system cannot be fixed, there will be a need to look at other possibilities. There had been some discussion in the past of a University system that would work for all people reporting. Wide focus of job activities makes one size fits all difficult.
   3. Dean Grant thanks faculty for their hard work during challenging times.
   4. There was some discussion on COVID cases at the University and in Blacksburg. The University and town appear to have things managed properly, with strong town-University cooperation. Capacity is present to deal with current caseload. Question from Galbraith regarding effective management of student gatherings. Seems to be recognition of possible problems and cooperation between University and town to best manage things. Town passed ordinance to require masks in public. Dean Grant noted that students could be suspended for breaking guidelines. Strong messaging from University, town and department of health.
2. Treasurer’s report
   1. Balance $3,887. Remittances were received from some departments, reminders to 6 remaining departments will be sent soon.
3. Old Business
   1. 2020 Ut Prosim Award Ozzie Abaye School of Plant and Environmental Sciences. Paperwork submitted for her payment, she would receive in the next check or one after. Discussion of whether or not a plaque is needed resulted in agreement that a well written letter is probably better. Discussion of monetary amount and whether increasing it to $1500 would encourage more applications. Consensus was that the monetary amount wasn't a driving factor and that communication was thought to be more important. Target of October sending information out to increase awareness of the award.
   2. Standardized testing was discussed, as there is some interest in removing standardized tests for future applicants since it has been waived because of Covid. The poll that was sent out suggested there was a majority of CALS responses that felt they were valuable and should be kept but that there was a minority who questioned whether or not there were inherent biases in the tests and if high school GPA was relied on too much there would be grade inflation. John would summarize results and have available to send to senate. There is an interest in the faculty senate to have better connections between the senate and faculty associations and have a representative from faculty associations attend senate meetings.
4. New business
   1. What events should we support this fall, we normally have one social and one educational event. University guidelines discourage food and beverage service so having an in person social event with coffee is difficult. Options for an orientation for Elements were discussed. Two main focuses were writing effective impact statements and help session for EFARS. Writing effective impact statements was one area where faculty would appear to need help, and the suggestion that Susan Duncan would be the right person to host a workshop on writing effective impact statements. Scheduling was discussed, and having the impact statements workshop in December with the help session in January a week before the reports are due. Dr. Duncan would be asked about her availability for this.
5. Meeting Adjourned at 10:03am

Next meeting: October 13 at 9:00. Same zoom link would be used for all meetings.