

CALS ACADEMIC PLANNING COUNCIL - MINUTES
February 19, 2019
1:00pm-2:30pm
2321 DeLuca Biochemical Sciences Meeting

Attendees: Erika Anna, Jeri Barak, Jane Collins, Barb Ingham, Chuck Kaspar, Hasan Khatib, Paul Mitchell, Nicole Perna (departed at 2:09pm), Dietram Scheufele (departed at 2:15pm), Doug Soldat, William Tracy
Not present: Guy Groblewski, Rick Lindroth, Alan Turnquist
Ex officio: Kate VandenBosch, Dick Straub, Karen Wassarman
Guests: Natalia de Leon (Plant Breeding and Plant Genetics program review), Carrie Laboski (Plant Pathology program review), John Lucey (Center for Dairy Research center review)
Minutes taken by: Julie Scharm

Public meeting attendees: None

The meeting was called to order by Kate VandenBosch at approximately 1:00pm.

Review agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

Review minutes for February 5, 2019

Bill Tracy made a motion to approve the February 5, 2019 meeting minutes. Jane Collins seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Action and discussion items

1. Program review, Plant Breeding and Plant Genetics, second review
Natalia de Leon, faculty member in the Department of Agronomy, joined the CALS APC meeting to provide a response to the program review. The Plant Breeding and Plant Genetics Program felt that the review was comprehensive and well-conducted.

Comments and questions for the program:

- Question: Is the master's program independent from the PhD program? Is the master's program primarily an off-ramp for the PhD program? Response: The master's program is a separate and independent program. Between 2009 and 2010, seven to eight master's students finished the program with a PhD. There is a separate handbook for each degree and a number of required credits for each curriculum. Both the master's and PhD programs are clearly delineated for students to consider. In recent history, the master's program has not been the chosen terminal degree but this might be due to the nature of the demand for a PhD in plant breeding. The admission/application process is the same for each program, and is a direct admit model..
- Question: How is the climate in the program and what steps have you taken to address any issues? Response: The climate is positive now. The program went through a difficult time two years ago when there was an issue occurring amongst graduate students. Bill Tracy was heavily involved in addressing the situation and acted quickly. Mike Havey did a fantastic job of taking

care of the program and the people. The program leadership connected with several campus support groups to support the students. The two graduate students causing the issue were dismissed within ten days. A workshop was organized by the students to address issues. Since that time, the students have been involved in organizing/participating in activities and staying aware of climate, and the group is more connected. The process for handling these situations was already in the program handbook, so that has remained the same.

- Question: How do you plan to address the structure issues with the prelim exam? Response: The prelim is currently a single, oral exam. Any question is fair game and the structure can be different depending on the people involved. The program is making a concerted effort to reconsider the prelim to develop consistency in how students are evaluated and to reduce the level of anxiety in students preparing for the exam. A committee was formed in 2017 to work on the prelim exam structure and the program's Curriculum Committee has now been tasked with implementing the changes. The proposal is to develop a prelim exam with two parts: a written exam that is the same for all students (with topic categories) and an oral exam focused on the student's research project. The program only has one faculty meeting per year so no final decisions will be made until then.
- Question: How will the program address issues with graduate student access to transportation to their field work? Response: The program does not have the financial resources to address this, so there is not a clear answer to this problem. There are also liability issues to consider. There is a city bus that goes to the West Madison Agricultural Research Station.
- Question: What is your perspective on the lack of opportunity for new students to rotate amongst programs? Response: The funding for students is mostly provided by individual grants, so a professor receives a grant and then recruits a student. The nature of the work involves field research, as well as a concentration of work in the summer, which is not conducive to rotations. The program could consider a training grant in the future. At the moment, this issue is not high on the list of priorities.
- Question: What are your thoughts on the administration of the program, in regards to items such as having a permanent departmental home, whether a rotating-home program is a burden on a department, etc.? Response: One of the main attractions of the program is the diversity of the fields of interest, crops, and types of activities. Housing the program in a single department might take away from that strength. The current structure has been working. It would be nice to have more administrative resources regardless of where the program is located.
- Question: It appears that there is no requirement for students to meet with their committee each year and that 20% of students do not end up having an annual meeting. Have you thought about this? Response: Because of the amount of time the students are in the program and the interactions with the various degree/progress steps along the way, the students end up meeting with the committee approximately once per year even though there is no formal requirement.

Barb Ingham made a motion to accept the Plant Breeding and Plant Genetics program review as complete. Paul Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Program review, Plant Pathology, first review

Carrie Laboski, faculty member in the Department of Soil Science, joined the CALS APC meeting to present the Plant Pathology program review committee report. The committee met with faculty and graduate students in the summer and undergraduate students in September. The committee was impressed with the department as a whole. The department has well-functioning graduate and

undergraduate degree programs. At the time of the review, there were four master's students and 27 PhD students comprised of 11 men and 20 women. The faculty gender balance is about 50/50. The department has noticed the larger female student population and their thoughts are that this may be related to the number of female faculty in the department; the department plans to evaluate this. The gender-balanced department creates a very different dynamic, which is a positive trend. The department does well in advising students. The graduate student advisor and student services coordinator are key positions in the Russell Laboratories Hub. There is good interaction between the faculty and the student services coordinator to support undergraduate students. The master's program does not have very many students. The department feels that better funding might increase this number and that there is a bias from the Graduate School towards PhD programs based on the fellowships they offer (mostly for PhD programs). The master's degree students are competitive for job market. The students don't feel any hierarchy between the master's and the PhD students; they feel well-advised by the faculty for a variety of career paths. The students also appreciate the opportunities that the Extension faculty provide. Seventeen graduate students met with the review committee and the energy was overwhelmingly positive. The visit weekend seems like a tremendous amount of work but it results in recruitment and the students noted its success. The building infrastructure is challenging and the students noted that some students might choose to attend another university if they saw the facilities, though many students come to the department regardless because of the strong connection developed during the recruitment weekend. The graduate student handbook is well laid out and easily located. The graduate student stipend is a little lower than others on campus and in peer institutions. The students felt that the number of foundational courses for the graduate degrees was too high and felt like there should be more flexibility. The committee discussed the timing of the prelim exam and possibly moving it earlier to reduce the time to degree but the students did not support this idea. At the time of review, there were about 25 undergraduate students in the bachelor's program. A number of those students are on probation, often because they come from other programs where they were struggling and they are now changing tracks; the department has done a good job rectifying this. Only one undergraduate student met with the committee, despite efforts by the department chair to encourage engagement. The one student had an extremely positive experience. There are a lot of research opportunities for the students. The first-year interest group is a good opportunity for at-risk students and exposure to the major. The student club is well liked. The committee feels that the department should pause the disbanding the major before having another viable major in place.

Comments and questions:

- Question: Has the department encountered any issues with field work and the rotation program (given the prior discussion with PBPG program)? Response: No, this does not appear to be an issue. The rotation is done during the fall and not the summer.
- Question: The committee recommended a reduction in the number of course requirements for the graduate programs. Does this mean the department is requiring courses beyond the Graduate School requirements? Response: No, it is still within the 52 credits. The issue is largely with the prerequisite courses.
- Question: Was the instructional staff load referenced in the self-study discussed by the committee? Response: No, the committee did not discuss this.
- Question: Why did the department create a 355 course? And why is this for graduate students? Response: Unsure.

- Question: The committee recommended decoupling the lab and lecture to increase CFI, but wouldn't that decrease CFI? Response: This is not clear. The lab limits enrollment so if the lecture and lab are separated, it may create an opportunity for a larger number of students to take just the lecture portion.
- Question: If part of the campus/college goal is to increase student enrollment, is there something the department can do to meet this and to provide options beyond a research track?

Possible topics for the next discussion of the Plant Pathology program review:

- Teaching load of instructional staff
- Role in the collaborative

3. Center review, Center for Dairy Research, second review

John Lucey, faculty member in the Department of Food Science and director of the Center for Dairy Research (CDR), joined the CALS APC meeting to provide a response to the center review.

- This is the first time CDR has had a formal review. Historically, the center has completed annual reports for funding purposes/contract obligations.
- During the center review process, it became clear that many people in the college do not know what CDR does and that the center needs to do some work in this area.
- The center has 40 staff and the center director is the only faculty member. 95% of center's funding comes from outside of campus and the state. The center is primarily funded by dairy farmers and fee-for-service activities, and is an industry-facing organization. 90% of the funding that the Milk Marketing Board provides is for staff – it does not fund research projects.
- The annual performance review of the center director is already done. The center director compiles an annual center report for the dean, provides an annual faculty activity report to the department, and has an annual performance review with the associate dean for research.
- It seems there was confusion about how CDR conducts staff performance reviews. CDR has a process that was vetted by CALS Human Resources. Part of the review is completed by the employee and part is completed by supervisor. 100% of the staff go through performance reviews every year and the center takes it very seriously. It was noticed that different supervisors were not always uniform in how they evaluated their staff, so about four years ago, the center brought in an outside training group to address this. About three years ago, the senior administrative team (Carmen, Tom, John) started reviewing all performance reviews as a secondary review, to compile their comments and look at items such as rate/title changes and professional development requests. The section of the review committee report on performance reviews is not entirely correct or was not understood.
- It is unknown why there is concern about the staff meetings. The chair of the meetings is rotated amongst the staff alphabetically. The meetings are not dictated or run by the center director.
- There is a lot of structure in place for the center to work and run well.
- The senior staff are often stuck in their titles and salary ranges which makes some people unhappy, though this is not easily solved. About 2/3 of staff have received some kind of compensation adjustment over the last four years.

Comments and questions for the center:

- Question: Are you, as center director, at capacity? Is there room for another faculty member to assist? The role of CDR center director seems like a lot for one person. Is it sustainable? Response: There are five people on the management team who work on different areas.

Underneath that, the 40 staff are supervised by about 10 supervisors. The bigger challenge is how to sustain an active faculty role and center director role but the model is working right now.

- Question: Are there structures in place to handle expanded activity in new building? Response: Part of the building project is related to the Department of Food Science. CDR has increased its staff numbers up to 40 and depending on funding, this could easily be increased to 50 staff. In the last three years, the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin have approved three new positions.
- Question: How can you expand connections to other units in CALS? What are your thoughts about having an advisory board that has faculty and staff members? Response: The center was originally set up to be a multi-disciplinary, campus-wide funding center, and this was the case in the center's early years. The state funding was eventually eliminated and the current funding agencies now have different focus (which has narrowed) that drives the direction of the work. CDR has an industry advisory group and paid membership consortia group that both meet with twice a year, with a research forum in the fall. CDR also has bi-annual, one-day review meetings with farmer boards. The center is still trying to find creative ways to work with other campus units.
- Question: Are you worried about funding with the changes in dairy markets? Response: No, the funding from the checkoff program does not change even if milk price goes up or down. CDR is more focused on products and innovations and not on-the-farm work.
- Question: Why aren't more faculty involved in the center? There are many faculty on campus that could lend their expertise to CDR. How can faculty bring ideas to the table? Could faculty help to supplement funding? Are we excluding faculty from campus in some way? A faculty advisory group would also help with overall knowledge and leadership of the center. Response: CDR does not set the research priorities for the national organization. CDR sends out RFPs widely and try to encourage proposals but the decisions are made nationally. When CDR tried to start a project with GLBRC, it was complicated because they work with biofuels and the charter from Dairy Management Inc. was restrictive for CDR. The boxes of research that CDR is put in right now is not as broad as the original vision for the center.
- Question: There has been reference to a tense relationship between CDR and Food Science. How will this be addressed? Response: The department was interested in housing the center when it was being established but this was vetoed by Milk Marketing Board; this created a tension when the center was formed. When CDR was initially set up, there was a block grant and many of the funded projects went to Food Science faculty. When the Milk Marketing Board decided to fund staff instead, it created a huge change in the funding model. The competitive pool shrunk and this caused issues. John Lucey is working with assistant professors on projects/funding and younger faculty do not have the same history. At the end of the day, the center wants to work with other departments as much as possible with a benefit to both.

The committee's feedback on the Center for Dairy Research center review will be discussed at the next meeting.

Informational items

1. Search updates

This item was not discussed. Information will be shared via e-mail or eCALS.

2. Redesign update

This item was not discussed. Information will be shared via e-mail or eCALS.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:31pm. No motion was made to adjourn.