Natural Sciences Department

Minutes of the November 21st, 2014 Meeting

Imiloa 122 9:00-10:30 AM

Members Present: Kathleen Baxter, Allison Beale, Joseph Ciotti, Letty Colmenares, Sam Craddock, Chris Guay, John Kaya, Marvin Kessler, Ross Langston, Hongwei Li, Floyd McCoy, Teena Michaels, Sean Moroney, Carolyn Naun, David Ringuette, Inge White

Guests: Gary Emelle & Jacki XXXX (Kalaheo HS), V.C. Ardis Eschenberg, Jan Sung (Library)

Meeting called to order at 9:05 AM

1. Approval of minutes. The minutes of the 11/21/14 meeting were approved unanimously.

2. Windward District Science Fair, February 13th (Gary Emelle, Kalaheo HS)

WCC will host the Windward District Science Fair on February 13th, 2014. As in previous years, the Natural Sciences Department has been asked for five faculty volunteers who will put together engaging science activities (45 minutes) for groups of 25 students. Time period is 12:15-3:00 PM (five total rotations).

3. Library Needs

Head Librarian Jan Sung introduced herself to the department and inquired about library needs. The department was most interested in obtaining greater access to online journals; however, Jan indicated that the subscriptions are very expensive and the WCC library budget could not support the comprehensive access to online journals that UHM faculty enjoy.

4. Title III Grant (VC Ardis Eschenberg)

V.C. Ardis Eschenberg briefed the department on the award of a $10M Title III grant intended to support student parents and improve STEM programs and facilities. The budget includes funds for a STEM curriculum developer ($336,640 for years 1-5), an administrative assistant ($212,365 years 1-5), conference travel for STEM students ($24,000 for years 2-4), router upgrade ($105,000 year 3), supplies ($66,000- years 1-5), lecture capture software and hardware ($70,000- years 3-5), network enhancements ($60,000- years 4-5), renovation funds for converting a classroom into a laboratory ($180,000- Year 3), funds for renovation of Hale Uluwehi ($2,020,000- Years 4-5), construction of an amphitheater ($250,000- Year 3), funds for upgrading a classroom for computer science classes ($50,000- year 2), as well as multimedia upgrades for Math and Natural Science classrooms ($228,000- year 3). The grant will also fund design fees for the Hale Uluwehi renovation and classroom-to-lab conversion ($202,000 and $43,000, respectively- year 3). The first priority will be the hiring of the curriculum developer, to be utilized jointly by the Math and Natural Science Departments. V.C. Eschenberg agreed to draft a job description for the position and submit it to the department for input.

5. IBC Requirements for Biological Labs

All faculty that work with recombinant DNA, transgenic organisms, infectious agents, and toxins are required to submit an IBC Protocol Registration form by the end of December. This includes materials used in both research and teaching. In addition, Lisa Hayashi will be asking those that do use biological materials to conduct an inventory of their items and submit copies to herself and Hubert Olipares.

6. Departmental Discussion of Global and Cultural Awareness (GCA) GLO:

The department discussed the results of the GCA assessments conducted in AY 2013-2014. The GCA outcome was assessed for four Natural Science courses: AQUA 201, BIOL 124, BOT 105, & GG 101. A total of 63 of 74 students assessed (85%) met the criteria for success. Based on the departmental discussions, the following goals were formulated in order to improve student success with this GLO:

a. Obtain additional supplies funds to assist with STEM demonstrations
b. Increase level of professional development support for faculty
c. Increase access to international journals by increasing funding for online databases
d. Increase access of STEM students to vital resources including Supplemental Instruction (SI) and tutoring (via TRIO)

7. Annual Schedule
The department is overdue in providing input on a year-round schedule. Please see the sample schedule and provide the DC with any corrections prior to the next meeting.

8. Cancellation of low-enrolled classes
The DCs will meet on December 19th to discuss low-enrolled classes. Classes that have enrollment <10 may be subject to cancellation unless they are necessary for graduation/ program completion or are part of the minimum teaching load for FT faculty. The V.C. will send out a list of low-enrolled classes prior to the meeting.

9. Evening Schedule Committee- request for volunteers
Floy McCoy volunteered to serve on an ad-hoc committee to discuss the scheduling of evening classes.

10. Ice Machine Repair
The departmental ice machine has malfunctioned and is need of repair or replacement. The VC’s office has indicated that any repair costs must be borne by the department’s limited supplies funds. Because the estimated cost of repairs is quite high ($1,000), Inge White will look into purchasing a new machine with C3T funds. Ross will also look into purchasing a smaller backup machine using supply funds. The department has also submitted a PBC request to fund future repair and maintenance of the ice machine.

11. Autoclave Repair and SOPs
Lisa Hayashi has ordered parts ($475) for repair and maintenance of the autoclave. Costs for these parts will be split between department general funds (Lisa’s subaccount) and A&P funds (Ross’ subaccount). Letty Colmenares also volunteered to assist with the repairs from the Chemistry subaccount.

12. Committee Reports
Faculty Senate (McCoy)- Faculty Senate has requested departmental input on the status of the “N” grade. Some faculty believe that the “N” grade is being used too frequently and inconsistently. Others felt that it enabled students to try new courses outside of their comfort area and also serves as an alternative to “D” or “F” grades for students who are unable to complete the course due to unforeseen circumstances. It was pointed out that students with legitimate emergencies can be accommodated by awarding incomplete grades or requesting a “late drop” through student services. Although the opinions of the faculty were mixed, the majority believe that the “N” grade should be removed.

Staff Development (Craddock)- The Staff Development Committee is looking for suggestions for Excellence in Education Day. Suggestions included active learning strategies.

International Education Week- International Education week has been a success. Several faculty (Letty Colmenares, Inge White, Joe Ciotti) and students participated. The committee hopes that the departments will play an even greater role in future years and encourage more of their students to participate in International Education activities.

13. Future Meeting Dates
January 7th (special meeting with Chancellor Dykstra 9:30-10:30 AM, Imiloa 122
January 16th
February 20th
March 20th
April 17th
May 8th

Meeting Adjourned at 10:30 AM
Respectfully submitted by Ross Langston