

Department of Biology
Faculty Meeting
April 18, 2006

Minutes

In attendance:

Faculty: Bautch, Bloom, Burch, Burmeister, Copenhaver, Dangl, DeSaix, Duronio, Goldstein, Grant, Harris, Hogan, A. Jones, C. Jones, Keiber, Kier, Kingsolver, Lieb, Lohmann, Matthyse, Matson, Mitchell, Peet, Peifer, D. Pfenning, Pukkila, Reice, Rogers, Sekelsky, Servedio, Sockman, Vision, Wiley, Willett, Yeh

Students: Mindy Roberts

I. Announcements

Susan Strome and Bill Saxton, the senior search candidates, will be visiting the weekend of April 21, 2006:

The college of Arts & Sciences will no longer support slide projectors as of Fall 2007: Steve Matson announced that the college is encouraging people to migrate to computer-based media and will provide services to assist converting slides to digital format. Steve will provide specific information regarding technical assistance for this transition in an E-mail.

Incoming freshman seminars and lunch: Steve relayed a request from Steve Weiss, associate dean, for volunteers to participate in orientation activities for incoming freshman and transfer students by having lunch with the students and their families. Steve will provide more specific information in an E-mail.

Renovation for old Wilson Hall is proceeding on schedule.

First year seminar on entrepreneurship. Steve announced the opportunity for members of the department to organize a first year seminar on entrepreneurship in the life sciences. The specific focus of the course may be broadly interpreted and would be up to the discretion of the participating faculty member. Funding is available to cover the costs of course development.

Use of animals in research on the UNC campus. Steve announced that the NIH is continuing to scrutinize UNC's animal use policies to ensure humane treatment of animal subjects. The NIH has threatened to pull all funding support to laboratories on campus, so the resolution of this matter is of the utmost importance to anyone receiving support from this agency, regardless of whether they use animals directly. As a consequence, UNC has adopted a policy of zero tolerance for violation of animal protocols. Examples of the most common infractions include: failing to properly certify animal handlers, performing techniques that are not outlined in animal care protocols, failure to list personnel in animal care protocols, use of chemicals or drugs not listed in the application, keeping animals in the laboratory for longer than 12 hours in a day, and use of improper euthanasia techniques. Steve emphasized the need for members of the department to adhere very strictly to these guidelines.

II. Presentation by Kerry Bloom on the status of the genetics/molecular biology faculty candidate search.

Kerry began by detailing the status of Bill Saxton and Susan Strome. They are considering the offers to join Biology seriously and are in the process of evaluating their options.

Next, Kerry reviewed the remaining four junior candidates (Melissa Rolls, Marty Cohn, Craig Michelli, and Alla Grishok) individually with respect to their research interests, recommendation letters, and feedback from the faculty. After presenting the recommendation of the search committee and discussion, a motion was proposed to offer the position to Marty Cohn with the understanding that if he were to decline, the position would be offered to Michelli. The motion was passed unanimously.

II. Status report from Ken Lohmann of the admissions committee.

Ken briefly announced the results of the recruitment efforts for 2006. The final enrollment came to 20 students (14 MCDB, 5 EEOB, and 1 inter-disciplinary).

This number of enrolled students represents a significant increase over last year. Ken attributed this success to more aggressive marketing techniques employed by the admissions committee (i.e. spamming the students who took the biology GRE exam, re-design of the departmental brochure, maintaining close contact with the students after their visit). A suggestion was made to solicit feedback from students that did not accept admission to UNC Biology to gauge where they went and why using a questionnaire.

Kerry also mentioned that 3 students were accepted into the joint NIH Cytoskeleton and Motility fellowship program this year.

III. Steve Matson initiated discussions about the faculty search for 2007.

Steve recommended that Biology initiate a search for an ecologist in the area of population biology and biological communities. Several factors contributed to this recommendation including: available laboratory space, the departmental strategic plan, and the need for instructors for Biology 54. This position would be made at the level of Assistant Professor. After some discussion, several members of the faculty endorsed the plan that the search be conducted very broadly with respect to potential areas of research.

IV. Steve Matson announced that he had made a recommendation to the undergraduate studies committee to reorient advanced placement credit for incoming freshman. The change was approved by the undergraduate studies committee and will go into effect for the class entering in the fall of 2007.

IV. Adjournment of regular meeting.

Submitted by Steve Rogers