

Department of Biology, Faculty Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2008

Present:

Shawn Ahmed, Kerry Bloom, John Bruno, Christina Burch, Sabrina Burmeister, Jennifer Cobble, Greg Copenhagen, Jeff Dangel, Jean DeSaix, Mara Duncan, Robert Duronio, Patricia Gensel, Sarah Grant, Tyson Hedrick, Alan Jones, Corbin Jones, Joseph Kieber, William Kier, Jason Lieb, Ken Lohmann, Steve Matson, Ann Matthyse, Robert Peet, Mark Peifer, David Pfennig, Patricia Pukkila, Jason Reed, Seth Reice, Steve Rogers, Ted Salmon, Lillie Searles, Jeff Sekelsky, Kevin Slep, Keith Sockman, Christopher Willett, Elaine Yeh

Not Present:

Albert Baldwin, Victoria Bautch, Frank Conlon, Stephen Crews, Bob Goldstein, Albert Harris, Joel Kingsolver, Sarah Liljegren, Cathy Lohmann, William Marzluff, Greg Matera, Charles Mitchell, Charles Peterson, Karin Pfennig, Maria Servedio, Darrel Stafford, Todd Vision, Haven Wiley, Peter White

I – Announcements (Steve Matson):

- Welcome back to Bob Goldstein
- Eric Wieschaus lecture is tomorrow (Thursday 3/20)
- Note Greg Copenhagen's announcement: Regalia rentals – Commencement: May 10th
- The Honors Symposium is April 4th
- The Genome Sciences Bldg: it is being built; Bell Tower parking will cease at the end of the month; the building is slightly over budget; a committee is working to trim costs, some bids are coming in low, the project will not be put on hold.
- Kerry Bloom has received the Thad Beyle Distinguished Professorship
- Bill York has received the C. Know Massey Award

II – Galapagos Initiative (Steve Walsh, Professor, Dept. of Geography, UNC):

A broad-based initiative is underway between the University of San Francisco, Quito, the Charles Darwin Foundation and UNC to develop an interdisciplinary research program and research station on the Galapagos Islands involving marine sciences, sociology, anthropology, global health, faculty and students. B. Gray-Little, H. Thorpe, T. Waldrop, J. Bruno, C. Mitchell are involved. UNESCO identifies the Galapagos as: At Risk. If interested in interdisciplinary research involving the Galapagos Islands contact Steve Walsh: swalsh@email.unc.edu.

III. Graduate Student Recruitment Update:

EEOB (Ken Lohmann) 6 applicants visited, offered admission to 9 via the biology portal, no acceptances to date, other admissions possible through the BBSP

BBSP (Mark Peifer) 300 students interviewed, 230-240 offers extended, 10% to minorities.

Thanks to Pat Phelps for excellent work. Target recruitment is 85-90 students. Current acceptance status: mid 30s including 7 minorities. Deadline for acceptance is one month away. Thanks to faculty and students for the recruiting work. Biology showed a dominant role in the recruitment process. Thanks to J. Dangel, S. Grant, J. Kieber, G. Copenhagen: 4 of 7 faculty to host parties. The Next Step: During the students' first year – How to recruit them into your lab. The BBSP program will form subgroups of 15 students, groups of 4 professors will oversee and mentor them. This gives the students local homes. You are encouraged to get involved in one of these first year groups. It will help recruit people into your lab.

Bob Duronio: Currently talking to dept. chairs to ID faculty that will get involved in these small first year groups. Applicants responded that they appreciated how hard people were working to recruit them.

Greg Copenhagen: Please extend thanks to the biology dept. staff who have worked hard during the recruitment process: Kenyetta, Janis and others.

Steve Matson: We are not done with the recruitment process – the students are not committed to a program as they were in the past, we need to work hard to get them into the department.

IV. Ecology Faculty Search (Steve Matson):

Lauren Buckley will be visiting next week: Monday and Tuesday. She will visit Duke and State on Wednesday and Thursday. Faculty should work to entice her to accept her offer. She will meet with Bruce Carney.

Status on Alan Hurlbert: No 2nd position for an ecologist is available per Bruce Carney. If Hurlbert is our #1 priority for next year, a position for next year could be extended now. If we proceed and only have one position available next year, it will only go to Hurlbert. Status of the state budget is unknown for predicting the number of positions the department may receive.

Notes from Karin Pfennig and Joel Kingsolver (absent) strongly support Hurlbert.

General discussion ensues regarding the mechanism by which positions are allotted in the Arts and Sciences and what limits the number of positions (the state budget). The chair asks the Dean's office for specific positions and the Dean's office gives an okay or denies the request.

Jeff Dangl: Ecology is an area that needs reinforcing. Questions the pool of applicants if of the 5, 1 dropped and 2 were “no show”.

David Pfennig: Hurlbert was heavily liked by the department.

Seth Reice: Hurlbert is very different from Buckley.

Mark Peifer: Ecology is an important area that needs reinforcement in the department. It will be hard to recruit if we loose critical mass.

David Pfennig: Agrees with Mark Peifer. We have to decide if we want to support ecology. This is the first time in 12 years we've searched for ecology.

Robert Peet: We have had a shortage of ecologists.

Steve Matson: Seems to be enthusiasm for Hurlbert. Re-center the discussion: If we proceed, it is possible that there will be no search for a quantitative biologist next year.

Jason Lieb: What is the probability that Buckley is going to come here? (consensus: high).

Robert Peet: NCEAS postdocs get the best positions (pertains to Buckley & Hurlbert)

John Bruno: Candidates are young– next year they will have offers from Berkeley.

Jeff Dangl: Supports this in principle. It is time to gamble. Money is likely to come through for the quantitative biology search.

Steve Matson: 3 positions will be requested for quantitative biology next year.

John Bruno: Buckley and Hurlbert are blends of all aspects of EEOB

Ken Lohmann: Agrees with John Bruno.

Jeff Dangl: Need to tell both Buckley and Hurlbert the plan to entice both of them.

Steve Matson: Motion to extend offer to Hurlbert and that the position be counted against next year's number of available positions.

- All in favor: Opposed 0, Abstain: 2

V Undergraduate Quantitative Biology Major Track (Steve Matson):

The proposal has been approved by the undergraduate studies program. The major track will become formalized for Fall 2009.

- All in favor: All, Abstain: None.