UC Merced, School of Natural Sciences
Faculty Meeting – September 28, 2010

Attendees: All Faculty Members

Prof. Colvin called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm with a hand out of the updated organizational chart. Erin Johnson was introduced as the new Chemistry Professor.

Positions Overview: 3 FTE's, 1 student instructional lab assistant, and 1 FTE for the Natural Sciences Purchasing team are open. There are currently 52 Natural Sciences Faculty members; and 150 faculty campus wide. This brings the current class sizes to 30 students per faculty member and could increase to 36 students per faculty member in future years.

The School is currently searching for 5 positions- JR FTE for Organic Chemistry, JR and SR Applied Math (new), SR Ecology (new), LPSOE Physics, JR Applied Math/Physics. There are still positions to fill from last year, along with the positions left open by Professors Sprague and Raymond. There are also Physiology and Health Disparities positions pending. The Health Disparities position will be housed in SSSHA.

Enrollment Overview: (see table handout) there are 978 anticipated Biology Majors, 155 anticipated Chemistry Majors, and 49 undecided majors. There area total of 1332 Natural Sciences Majors out of 43000 students.

There will be an option for professors to teach intense summer courses for teaching credit and additional funds. There could be some upper division courses offered during the summer and could shift by 6-8 weeks. We will be continuing to offer summer courses and could offer more in the coming sessions.

Student Eligibility Overview: The qualifications of student's enrolled need to be reviewed. This could result in the creation of "Pre-Majors." This could be a topic for the Curriculum Committee to discuss further. Students cannot go through a major with out meeting the requirements and at this point, there are 20% less students who don't meet the requirements.

There will be no other majors added to the current curriculum however; the school could offer assistance with majors outside of the School of Natural Sciences to help students meet their career goals.

By Law 55 Units/Faculty Involvement: Groups are currently being formed for By Law 55 Units within the School of Natural Sciences. These groups should be able to work with the Dean for guidance and growth of progress.

There has been a lack of faculty involvement regarding important issues such as recruitment, advancement and curriculum. The faculty must participate in votes as a whole, but this has been a problem for a few years. In the future the faculty should to come together on issues as a unit in order to help build programs.

Some faculty will find problems with joint appointments as part of multiple By Law 55 Units. This could result in certain grad programs such as Environmental Systems Science and Environmental Biology since these majors span multiple schools. However, a faculty member cannot be denied the right to vote in a Unit.

The prime function of By Law 55 Units is faculty appointments and promotions.

Faculty Governance: Faculty governance is in an unusual situation. The Committee Chairs have not been replaced. Many candidates are either focused on By Law 55 Units or other issues. Michael Colvin will stay on as the Chair Emeritus to make sure tasks move forward. The most critical tasks are filling positions, WASC accreditation and By Law 55 Units. All of these are in need of planning groups.

Space: There is not enough classroom space, faculty office space, or lab space (tutorial or dry). We are going to be able to occupy the 3rd floor classroom building space for dry labs, offices, computer labs and grad students once the new Academic office building opens. The space for the Science and Engineering 2 building has been devoted to Engineering. The School of Natural Sciences will occupy the Science and Engineering 1 building and will need to reorganize the space.

Currently new faculty will have office space at the Castle satellite building in Atwater. As we grow, faculty will need to compromise on their lab space, we will not be able to recruit new faculty otherwise. We need to be creative on how to leverage what we have. It would be a good idea to form a Space Committee, at this point there is no incentive for faculty to compromise on lab space. There should be a proposal put to the Provost regarding our space needs, incentives for sharing lab space and office space both on campus and at Castle.

-Meeting End 2:00pm