

Faculty of Engineering  
Dean's Staff Advisory Committee  
Wednesday, May 18, 2011  
9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

## MINUTES

Present: Breean Doom, Linda Kenyon, Jonathan Woodcock, Bev Rodgers, Mike Hurst, Adel Sedra, Rina Salazar, Phil Bezaire, Robert Wagner, Carol Kendrick, Charlie Boyle, Sue Nelson (Secretary)

Regrets: Kristen Deckert, Bert Habicher, Tracie Wilkinson

Guest: Doug Dye, UW Staff Association

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### I. **Guest Speaker: Doug Dye, UW Staff Association**

- D. Dye spoke about the staff Special Initiatives Fund which is one component of the \$250,000 Staff Excellence Fund.
- The Special Initiative Fund was implemented in 2009 for a two year trial period with an annual budget of \$65,000.
- Applications are due by March 31 of each year. A subcommittee of PACSC considers the applications on the basis of overall merit, type of activity and who will benefit. Successful applicants are announced in May.
- To be considered for funding projects must enhance the working environment for staff, be implemented within one year, involve cooperation and collaboration across departments/faculties and cannot benefit employees financially.
- Projects can include, but are not limited, to those that enhance staff morale, cultural, athletic or recreational events, beautification projects, enhancement of staff wellness and any project that would enrich the working environment for staff.
- When considering applications the committee also looks to see if required approvals are in place if a necessary for a particular project, if there are matching funds available and generally, but not always, will give preference to new initiatives.
- This fund will not support projects that would be seen as a departmental responsibility.
- 43 applications were received for the 2011 deadline of which 25 were approved.
- It is likely that this program will continue.
- Information about the fund can be found on the web at:

<http://staffexcellence@uwaterloo.ca>

## **II. Report from the Dean**

- Vision 2015 department draft plans are due by the end of May. External assessor visits will be conducted in July and September for each department and then plans will be finalized based on the input received. The Faculty plan will be developed in parallel with the department plans and assessors for the faculty plan will visit in October. It is anticipated that the Vision 2015 plan will be complete by the end of December 2011.
- One of the key priorities of this planning process is quality of service. This is not an easy item to measure and without a measurement it is difficult to improve. The Dean would welcome feedback from staff on the quality of service provided by support units in particular as it is more difficult to capture information for non-academic units. Department planning committees should be addressing this issue.
- The admissions process for fall 2011 is complete and offers have been sent. Students are to confirm acceptance in early June and it is anticipated that targets will be met.
- We did not reach our targets for graduate students this year and as a result lost approximately \$500K in funding. Work is to be done to avoid this situation next year.
- Research funding increased by 12% to \$57million for 2010/11.
- E6 will be ready for occupancy beginning in June/July. The DWE c-wing renovations will start in August and will become Civil and Environmental Engineering space. Space continues to be an issue so our future plans include two more buildings: E7 and E8.

## **III. Outstanding Staff Performance Awards**

- Requests for nominations for the Staff Performance awards, one each for administrative and technical staff, are due by June 15, 2011. Chairs, department heads and managers are to be encouraged to nominate candidates. The nominations received will be considered at the June 23, 2011 DSAC meeting.

## **IV. Vision 2015 – Staff Issues**

- L. Kenyon has reviewed the draft department plans and has identified three common areas related to staff issues: Workload, Communication, Organizational/Structural Management.
- Workload: On the verge of becoming an issue as the growth that is anticipated is realized and as the effect of the downloading of responsibilities from central support units to departments continues. A common theme was the need to work more efficiently and to analyse how and why tasks are carried out in order to find a better way.
- Communication: Staff are concerned about transparency and not having a sense for the direction being taken by the faculty/departments. With changes it would be helpful for staff to know

the context in which change is required in order to better adapt to and understand it. Managers should be provided the support necessary in order for staff to deal with changes.

- Organizational/Structural Management: There is a concern that USG levels and compensation are not consistent with job responsibilities nor are they consistent across the university. There is a need for a long term plan to manage staff and staff roles need to be clarified. There are no clear career paths and in some instances obstacles are placed in the way.
- Human Resources is aware of the problems associated with the USG system and have hired Michelle Hollis who is responsible for all job re-classifications for the university. This will hopefully create more consistency across the campus.

#### **V. Guest Speakers for Fall 2011**

- Michelle Hollis, Human Resources for the topic of the USG Classification System.
- New Staff Orientation - L. Kenyon will make inquiries to determine if these sessions that were once offered still exist and who is responsible for coordinating them.

#### **VI. Other Business**

- R. Salazar commented that the interest in staff issues, their well being and level of support for staff in engineering is excellent.
- B. Doom asked for advice on recognizing service for long term employees above and beyond that provided by the University. Most departments recognize milestone dates internally with lunches, flowers, etc. It is best to keep practices consistent within the department. The annual staff appreciation lunch would be a good opportunity for the Dean to recognize milestone anniversaries.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00