

Science Division Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2008

(send corrections to coahranm@grinnell.edu)

New faculty introductions

Several new faculty members were introduced to the division:

- Greg Ruthig and Gregg Whitworth in biology,
- Corey Ortiz and Heriberto Hernandez-Soto (Consortium for Faculty Diversity) in chemistry,
- Jerod Weinman (EKL expansion position) in computer science,
- Nirav Mehta in physics, and
- Julia Bauder (data services) and Liz Rodrigues in Burling Library.

Introduction of ITS staff (Bill Francis)

Bill Francis introduced our current Curricular Technologies Specialists (CTS):

- Mike Conner: He has been working with computer-assisted language learning at Grinnell for several years.
- Joseph Kerkman: His recent background is in the fine arts, but as a pre-engineering undergraduate he took many courses in the sciences as well.

There is also one open position, and an on-going search, for a CTS member to replace Fred Hagemeister. Until the position is filled, Mike and Joseph will work together to provide CTS support for the sciences.

We were also reminded that ITS (Information Technology Services) consists of five “desktop support teams”, and that the team supporting the Science Division is the “green team.” The green team consists of:

- Karen McRitchie, Green Team Leader,
- Nate Monaghan, Green Support Specialist, and
- Chad Zinn, Green Support Specialist and Grinnell College graduate ('07)

Churchill Scholarship (Doug Cutchins)

Doug Cutchins, Director of Service and Social Commitment (Student Affairs) brought our attention to the Churchill Scholarship and encouraged us to encourage our students to apply.

This scholarship provides an opportunity for students to reside and study in Churchill College in Cambridge (U.K.) for one year following their graduation from Grinnell. The on-campus deadline for student applications is October 13. Subsequently, two students will be nominated from the Grinnell applicant pool, and their applications will be forwarded to the national competition in mid-November.

Application criteria:

- Applicants must be 19-26 years old and in their 3rd or 4th year of undergraduate work to apply. They must also apply separately for admission to Cambridge, and they must be admitted in order to receive the scholarship. They must also graduate from Grinnell

before going to Cambridge.

- The stated minimum GPA is 3.7; however, to be nominated for the national competition, a student's GPA will probably need to be a point or two higher than that.
- The committee also considers GRE scores, but note that students do not need to have taken the GRE before submitting their scholarship application.
- Finally, the committee will consider leadership and service as indicators that the applicants have “outstanding personal qualities.”

Further information can be found at: www.winstonchurchillfoundation.org/Scholarships.html

Last year there were 75 nominees nationwide and 13 scholarships awarded, so the competition is tough but not impossible. The year before, there were 12 scholarships awarded, and the hope is to increase the number to 15 soon.

Last year we nominated Sandra King and Katrina Koenigs for the scholarship. Sadly, neither were awarded the scholarship; however, but both were admitted to Cambridge, and they are both studying in Cambridge now. Given that neither of them would probably have considered studying in Cambridge if it weren't for this scholarship process, we can consider this a win regardless.

Lab equipment replacement – 5 year plan (Elaine Marzluff)

Concern: Large equipment used in many of our labs gets old or breaks and needs to be replaced. These items are too expensive to replace within a department's annual budget, and there is currently no plan in place for replacing this equipment.

Potential solution: We would like to consider budgeting for this type of expense at the division level. This should help amortize the expense over departments (different departments will need to replace equipment in different years), and we can also make larger budget requests as a division than we could as a department.

Note that this solution is intended to increase the total level of funding available for large equipment. It is not meant to replace the funds currently available for “Academic Equipment” purchases.

Elaine (et al) are currently gathering data from departments that will help determine an appropriate size for this contingency fund. Each department is asked to consider their large equipment and produce:

- a list of equipment that may need to be replaced in each of the next 5 years,
- the funds needed for each replacement, and
- a priority ranking for these items.

Please send the lists to Elaine by next week, so the committee can continue to make progress.

Questions/answers:

We do not need to include classroom A/V equipment or desktop computers, but we should include more expensive network server computers. Essentially, we should include any

equipment items that are not already replaced on a regular basis.

Science building dedication (Clark Lindgren)

A draft schedule for the event (Friday and Saturday, October 3-4) was provided and reviewed. The Friday evening events are mostly celebratory. The Saturday morning schedule includes various lab tours and activities as follows.

Event attendees will be met as they enter the building and directed to “zones” within the building that roughly correspond with departments. Each department should provide some sort of tour of, or activity involving, the facilities within their zone. Departments may also want to ask students to be on hand to present research posters. There will also be organized building tours and a dedication ceremony. The speaker for the dedication has not yet been finalized.

New this year: **Kidzone**

Attendees (and faculty) can drop their children off in a specified play area, rather than bringing them through the labs. There will be adult supervision and ID bracelets to help each parent leave with the same children they brought.

Advice from past experience:

- Keep the lab demonstrations simple. Attendees may not be as excited about the fine details of your research as you are.
- Participating in short activities that make use of lab equipment may be more fun for attendees than watching more complex demonstrations. (The goal is to give visitors a feel for our space, not to provide a detailed education about our research.)

Action item: If there is space you **don't** want people to be in, let Clark know. Signs can be posted to that effect.

Action item: Chairs were asked to name students who can help with whole-building tours.

HHMI grant / HHMI Retreat (Mark Levandoski)

Mark reviewed the purpose of grant (supporting interdisciplinary science) and gave an overview of the types of activities it supports as follows.

Speaker series (6 speakers per year):

- Ideally, the speakers should address interdisciplinary topics. However, in past years we have not always brought 6 speakers to campus, so consider asking for funding for your speaker even if the topic does not fit the ideal.
- Consider using these funds for speakers who need to travel from the coasts. (Closer speakers and international speakers can be covered by other sources.)
- Send the names of speakers you would like to invite to Mark. However, once the speaker has been approved, responsibility for scheduling and travel arrangements bounces back to the host department.

Liberal Arts College Association for Faculty Inclusion (LACAFI):

- The HHMI grant provides funds for us to send representatives to meetings for the purposes of recruiting new faculty members that would increase our faculty diversity.
- We are currently seeking a volunteer for a trip to Salt Lake City on October 9-12. The task is to promote small liberal arts colleges, talk about your experiences here, and hand out materials regarding open positions at Grinnell and other liberal arts colleges.
- If you can't make this particular meeting, consider going to another later in the year. (It's almost free travel, after all!)

HHMI Faculty Retreat:

- The retreat will be held this Friday and Saturday (Sept 12-13). RSVP's should go to Marna Montgomery by the end of the day.
- Goal: Participate in a discussion about teaching interdisciplinary science at Grinnell.
- Stipend: \$350

Action item: Send your ideas for spending some of this money to Mark Levandoski. Remember, the funds are available to all departments in the science division.

NITLE (Leslie Gregg-Jolly)

NITLE (pronounced "nightly") is an organization dedicated to the use of technology in undergraduate teaching.

Leslie also has money to send folk to meetings, but we were out of time... See the NITLE website to learn more: www.NITLE.org

Last call for other business

Liz Queathem recently went to a faculty lunch discussing ways human rights issues can be incorporated into our courses. Unfortunately, she was the only scientist there. She encourages us to consider how we can incorporate human rights into our courses.

Meeting adjourned.