

Minutes of the Physics Department Meeting, Friday, 22 September 2006
Called to order by Susan Coppersmith, 12.15 p.m., Chamberlin 5310
Minutes by Lynn Rettig, Chair's Assistant.

No Policy Actions.

1. Announcements:

- a. Jean Buehlman has organized the Physics Community Building Fund, meant to eventually replace the Department Checkbook. All contributions are tax-deductible. The address for making donations is: University of Wisconsin Foundation, US Bank Lockbox, P. O. Box 78807, Milwaukee, WI, 53278-0807, the fund number is: #12694622. The contact person is: Chris Glueck, and he can be reached at: chris.glueck@uwfoundation.wisc.edu or ring him on: 265-9952.
- b. Political Activities: Don't do them on University time or equipment. Check the policies out at: <http://www.wisc.edu/legal/political.pdf> if you have any questions.
- c. Interviews for the new Student Services Coordinator position will take place in the next two weeks, if anyone wishes to be on the screening committee.
- d. B. Durand has a 3' x 5' meeting table in her office that she would like to go away once the office remodeling has been completed. Notify her if you are interested, or if you know of any group that might be interested.
- e. Grant deadlines and reference URL's: See agenda handout.

2. Building Updates:

- a. Power will be out in the 1st floor remodeled areas (with possible spillover into non-remodeled areas) from 3 – 7 AM **during the following days: ?**
- b. Windows: The large crane will be removed, blocking the driveway for 1 – 3 days, on ??, and will be replaced by a mobile cherry-picker type of mechanism. If you cut through the courtyard during this period, watch your head. The current approximate finish date for all windows to be replaced is now mid-November. A question was raised re the final finish work between the floors: Would that mess up the offices as much as the actual window replacement? The answer was, "I don't know." It was pointed out that dust and sawdust from the replacement process that had gotten into the hallways was now migrating into labs. It was requested that the workers try to be as clean as possible.
- c. Physical Plant will be posting large signs (similar to others around campus) about energy conservation around the buildings over the course of the next year or so. They will also be replacing the large roof fans for more efficient ones, and changing old thermostats out for new ones on a room-by-room basis, making sure the occupants of said rooms are comfortable in the proper usage of the new thermostats.

3. Discussions:

a. Enrollment Report: Results of the classroom survey showed that of those who responded chose the following buildings for the third classroom (?): Bascom, Chemistry, Social Science, and Grainger (listed in order of preference). Discussion centered on specific classes (or lack thereof), due to not being offered, or the possibility of being combined, cancelled, or dropped completely. Those classes were 205, 241, 244, 247, 248, and 249. The point was made that these classes had mostly been taught by faculty members who have since retired, and that there currently was a lack of faculty available to teach them. S. Coppersmith pointed out that the department is short two people to teach in the Spring semester, and that Dave ?? is officially off. The question was raised re the difference between the classes as they all have either the same title, or a title so similar as to not make any difference, specifically to the distinction between 241 and 244. It was pointed out that 244 had much more of an engineering slant, and that if cancellation was being considered, consultation with the Engineering Department was recommended. Currently, no short-term staff is available to teach these classes. Enrollment numbers for these classes usually show that spring enrollment is higher than fall enrollment. For 623, there had been a switch from being listed in the Fall semester to the Spring semester, and then back again the Fall. It was pointed out that once the schedule settled down, the enrollment numbers would go back up.

b. Committee on Scientists Report: Three handouts were provided, see website or Lynn in 2320. Summary: The Committee on Scientists was appointed in April 2006 to assess the role of the scientist in the department, and to consider how the title of "Research Professor" should be employed. Surveys were conducted informally at other major universities, followed by meetings to discuss the various issues raised. Currently, within the department, there are 30 scientists, excluding those connected with Ice Cube, at all levels of involvement. The national and international ranking of the department is somewhat based/dependent on the work of the scientists. The committee felt that all their recommendations were beneficial to the department, and that there were no bad trade-offs to be seen. Overall, all of their recommendations were being done at various institutions somewhere, but no-one was doing all of them at any one institution. In this, if all recommendations were implemented, the department would become a model for other institutions (again!). The major areas covered in the recommendations were: Thesis advising; Governance and integration; Scientist review procedures; Job security; and the Research professor role and responsibilities. Discussion centered on a variety of issues. Baha noted that he holds a similar position with the University of Washington, and that they make a distinction between the Research Prof. position, which is UWA funded, and the Affiliated Prof. position, which is not UWA funded. He also suggests a fixed duration for such appointments, with departmental review at specific intervals. Other comments and questions: 30 years ago when this issue first came up, UW-wide policies were adopted in regard to the Associate Scientist. Department approval for continued funding, guaranteed by the UW for 3 – 4 months; for longer term appointments (such as a 10-year appointment), notice of up to 12 months is required. "Research Professor" is a working title, not a budgetary title. Is there a plan on how to implement the recommendations? B. Durand: Can an Emeritus be a Major Prof.? Probably not. Other issues re Research Profs.: Funding bring-ins, access to departmental resources, separate competition for capital funds, space. The suggestion was made to add a statement to say that scientists should be held to same/similar standards for research and funding. The major difference between faculty and research profs. is that of tenure

and teaching. Possible establishment of an independent research program? Group grants broken down to specific people. Finite terms with some oversight and review.

A motion was made to approve the proposal in its' entirety in principle, with a procedure for implementation to be set up. Seconded, and passed.

c. Qualifier exams: The committee reports that overall the results were what was expected. Approximately half of the most recent group passed, with four students who must re-take in February. Current policy is for grad students to have a total of three chances to take qualifier exam, 1 each in spring and fall: the first time, if student does not pass, no penalty is attached. The next two attempts are for real: if student does not pass second attempt, only one chance left, and student is required to re-take at earliest opportunity. The student has to pass a qualifier exam by the end of their second year. Further discussion of results and policy sent to the Grad Program Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.