

Minutes of the Physics Department Meeting, Friday, 13 October 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. Congratulations to Franz Himpfel for being awarded the Davisson-Germer Prize by the American Physical Society. The citation for his award reads *"For pioneering investigations of the electronic structure of surfaces, interfaces, adsorbates, and nanostructures."* A reception in his honour will be held on Monday, 23rd October, at noon, in the Museum Lobby.

b. Congratulations to John Sarff for being elected to be a Fellow of the American Physical Society. The citation for his fellowship reads *"For seminal contributions to the understanding and control of magnetic fluctuations and associated transport, to the understanding of magnetic self-organization, and to the advancement of the reversed field pinch fusion configuration."*

c. Faculty Absence Forms: University policy and faculty legislation require that faculty and other instructional academic staff who hold academic year appointments must request advance approval for absence from Madison during periods when they have instructional or other regular responsibilities. During the regular academic year (Fall and Spring terms), Department Chairs are empowered to approve requests when the absence will be for less than two weeks; Dean's approval is required for absences longer than two weeks. The Dean approves requests for the Department Chair to be absent, even if absences are less than two weeks. Requests are submitted using the form available from the Main Office (see Lynn).

d. Bike Lockers are available to rent: Bike Lockers are available on a rental basis. (See the link below.) The campus bike coordinator is currently working on a strategic plan for more bike parking in the underground campus parking lots and for some covered outdoor bike parking. He has been reminded that we lost our small covered parking in the courtyard. There is currently a wait list for the rental lockers but it can't hurt to request one to show demand for covered winter bike storage.

<http://www2.fpm.wisc.edu/trans/TDM/Bicycling/BikeLockers.htm>

e. Jane Schimmel has accepted the position of Student Services Coordinator. She will begin on 8th November 2006.

2. Building Updates:

a. For offices overlooking the courtyard, the window contractor estimates that that project will be completed by 15 November. A more realistic estimation from Dave Huber was that of 15 December. For offices overlooking Charter Street, the window project will begin sometime in the next few weeks (just in time for the cold and wet to come in the missing windows!), with a contractor-estimated completion time of 1- 2 weeks.

b. 1st floor: The estimated completion date is 1 April 2007 or later; the department must vacate that area of Sterling Hall by 1 June to allow for the remodeling in that portion of the department to commence.

c. Elevator work: Will begin after the 1st of the year; estimated time per elevator is 3 – 4 months; only one elevator will be done at a time.

3. Discussions:

a. Procedure for phone calls from a “disturbed person”: While not on the agenda, this item was brought up because the office had received a call from a person (who had been referred to us by the Medical School) who wished to speak with someone in the String Theory area. Unfortunately, it was not discovered that this person was not totally “in compos mentis” until after the appropriate phone numbers had been given out. That is completely my fault. I totally apologize for that. I had meant to call those professors to warn them that a call might be coming through, but the person beat me to them. So, Professors Everett and Shiu both had to deal with this person. The question of how to deal with a situation like that in the future was raised.

b. Van Vleck Graduate Supplements: Historically UW – Madison Physics TAs received lower stipends than at comparable schools, so they were brought up to par with the use of the Van Vleck Funds. The interest from the Van Vleck principal has been overspent. We have a current deficit of 81K with another 43K committed for next year. This gives us a deficit of 124K on 06/30/07. The fund is expected to earn ~43K/year. In 3 years we will be back to zero (~06/30/09). The earliest opportunity to use this fund again would then be for the Fall 2010 incoming class. Questions raised: Can the pain be shared upwards along the chain of command? How does Madison currently compare with other schools? Mary Anne Clarke, Sharon Joswiak, and Kristin Kopish will get the information and compare it, and report back at the earliest possible time. Would it be possible to earmark monies from other funds, such as the Newton or Snow funds, to cover the loss of the Van Vleck monies? Probably not. What about using Grant funding for rotations? Are the current TA stipend increases enough to cover losing the Van Vleck Fellowships?

4. Presentation on Grants.gov, by Linda Johnson, Assistant Dean, L&S Research

Programs: The Federal government is consolidating ALL grant submissions into an electronic format, called “Grants.gov”, all agencies are expected to mandatorily use grants.gov by the end of 2007. The most prevalent NSF Fastlane submission system will be kept on line for interim and final reports. Check each solicitation announcement to see if your proposal is to be submitted via grants.gov or via some other e-system. Grants.gov proposals need to be submitted BEFORE the normal submission deadline. If you have a proposal coming contact Aimee as soon as possible. She will assist you with all submissions. Copies of the handout provided are available from Lynn in 2320 or online.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.