**Neuroscience Program**

**Faculty Advisory Committee**

**Meeting Agenda**

**April 17, 2020**

1. Approve March Minutes
2. Neuroscience Courses/Coronavirus Update Galligan
3. Neuroscience Program Budget Galligan
4. Neuroscience Seminar Program Galligan
5. Graduate Program Updates Swain
6. New Business
7. Old Business

**Neuroscience Faculty Advisory Committee**

**April 17, 2020 at 10:15am**

**Attendance via Zoom**

**Attendance**: Marc Breedlove, Gina Leinninger, Michelle Mazei-Robison, Wilmarie Morales-Soto (student rep), Greg Swain, Alexa Veenema, and Scott Counts

**New Business:**

1. Approve minutes from FAC meeting minutes from March 20, 2020

* Motion to Approve: Gina Leinninger
* Second: Greg Swain
* Motion passes

1. Neuroscience Courses/Coronavirus Update: Jim Galligan
   * Jim Galligan reported that in the middle of Spring semester, the Coronavirus pandemic shut down the University. This was half-way through courses NEU 803 (Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Neuroscience II) and NEU 805 (Systems and Behavioral Neuroscience II), and they were moved to online instruction. Jim said it went surprisingly well, and that he and Sue Barman were able to transition all lecture materials using Zoom. Jim also said the students adapted well to these changes. Jim stated we may have to prepare to teach Fall courses online, depending on if the University can open or not. Jim spoke with professors Bing and Lily, and they are prepared to teach online this Fall.
   * Jim reported that President Stanley sent out an e-mail this week regarding the budget concerns within the University. Jim said the e-mail stated that executive leaders throughout the University are taking pay cuts. Jim said he is not sure if the pay cuts will extend beyond top administrators, but that pay cuts and furloughs are a definite possibility. Jim said this should not impact tenured faculty, but departmental staff and part-time faculty may be at risk. Jim stated this is something to keep in mind, but to continue doing the best we can to keep our research and programs running.
2. Neuroscience Program Budget: Jim Galligan

* Jim stated he has been working with Shari Stockmeyer on the program budget. Jim reported that the program gets relatively little money directly from the Colleges. Jim said the total amount is about $60,000 from the Colleges that support the program. Jim reported most of our funding now comes from the Medical Neuroscience Certificate Program. Jim reported that this year, the certificate program will bring in $200,000. Jim stated some of this money will be used to pay our Neuroscience faculty that teach during the summer, but the remainder will go toward supporting our incoming graduate students. Jim reported that we have a large class this year of nine students who accepted our offer of admissions (only two students declined). Jim said this is wonderful news, but this puts pressure on our budget. Jim stated that Greg is going to attempt to get additional stipends from the Graduate School. Jim said we have three or four students that received Recruiting Fellowships, but the program will have to come up with stipends for five of the incoming students. Jim stated this is something he will have to grapple with to make sure we can support all incoming students for their first year. Jim said there probably will not be a lot of extra funding left in the budget after supporting the students, so we will have to be mindful of this in the coming year.

1. Neuroscience Seminar Program: Jim Galligan
   * Jim reported that with the program budget restraints, we will likely have to limit the seminar program. Jim stated the program will not have much funding for travel, airfare, hotel stays. Jim stated we will try to get local speakers, program faculty, and faculty in other departments with Neuroscience based research. Jim said at least for the Fall semester, we will have to try to keep the expenses down.
   * Jim asked for comments or suggestions about this?
   * Marc Breedlove commented that Jim should pat himself on the back for the foresight in getting the revenue stream going several years back. Marc said without this funding, the program would be in a terrible situation. Marc said his impression is that the certificate program may still growing. Marc added that it could be much worse.
   * Jim agreed with Marc, stating that the certificate program has really saved the program. Jim stated the dollar amount of the certificate program goes up every year, adding that it went up $40,000 compared to last year. Jim said the program can do quite a bit with that, and we do have some faculty obligations with that funding as well. Jim said the money will help in keeping the program going, but this coming year will be a little bit different than in the past years.
2. Graduate Program Updates: Greg Swain
   * Greg stated that he had sent around an e-mail with graduate program updates. Greg reported that we have nine incoming students joining the graduate program. Greg said he is now working on a plan for virtual lab rotations. The Early Start Fellowships must be used during the Summer of 2020, and he will have more details on this plan later.
   * Greg reported that we have four students taking the Comprehensive Exams next month. The exam questions are being prepared via e-mail for the three different topic areas.
   * Greg stated he is also working on revising the Graduate Student Handbook. Greg said he has been a bit delayed in doing this, but he is in the process of updating the handbook with new and corrected information.
   * Greg reported that there will be a Mentoring Workshop on May 5 from 9am – 11am. Greg stated he is working with Melissa McDaniels and Tony Nunez to figure out what to cover during the workshop. Greg said the workshop will be virtual instead of in-person.
   * Michelle Mazei-Robison had a question regarding the incoming students that usually start in the summer. Michelle asked if the Graduate School has made any decisions about what they are going to do regarding summer lab rotations, Early Start Fellowships, and so forth?
   * Greg said it is likely we will still be offline. Greg stated the Early Start Fellowships must be used during the Summer 2020. Greg said if we are still offline, the program will have to make any early start program that is virtual.
   * Jim asked why we would have to do a virtual rotation?
   * Greg responded we likely will not be back on campus to conduct in-person lab rotation. If the Early Start Fellowships are not used during the summer they are received, the program will lose that funding.
   * Michelle Mazei-Robison added that a virtual lab rotation is fine for student engagement, but the incoming students will probably have to do two in-person rotations once they can physically be in the lab.
   * Scott Counts agreed, adding that it is not the same experience.
   * Jim said the incoming students will have this Early Start funding for the summer, complete a virtual rotation, and then complete two additional lab rotations in the Fall and Spring.
   * Michelle asked if there is a possibility this could change if labs open this summer?
   * Jim said hopefully labs can open this summer, and students can complete the Early Starts the way it was meant to be. Jim said everyone that is teaching this summer is already prepared to do so remotely. Jim said maybe we will be allowed back on campus during the second half of the summer, but he doesn’t think anyone knows for sure right now.
   * Greg said it might be possible, but we need to be prepared to do the rotation virtually just in case.
   * Jim said we can be optimistic in hope that by the second half of the summer, we are back to at least close to normal. Jim said we will just have to wait and see.
   * Gina inquired about how the First Year students are doing with rotations. Gina said the students didn’t really get much of a second rotation. Gina asked if we were going to be flexible if they decide they need more time, or an additional rotation?
   * Scott asked which First Year students have not committed to a lab just yet?
   * Gina responded that she has a student rotating in her lab right now, but the student hadn’t gotten the chance to do much in the lab. Gina said she was not sure if the student has enough information to commit to anything. Gina wasn’t sure if other students were in a similar situation.
   * Jim said that Greg and himself will touch-base with the students about this and see what their thoughts are on the “half rotation” that they would have done during the Spring term.
   * Greg said he has been in touch with the First Year students regarding this, and the incoming students in regard to the Early Start.
3. No New Business
4. Old Business:

* Gina suggested that it be communicated to the Neuroscience community of the change in seminar arrangements. Gina added that she had invited someone from out of town and was considering rescheduling, but this needs to be conveyed so that people can plan accordingly.
* Jim said there is a Program Faculty Meeting a week from Monday, and he will be sure to bring it up.
* Wilmarie Morales-Soto had a question regarding the Student Mini Symposium, in which graduate students invite three seminar speakers. Wilmarie said this normally happens in the Spring but these seminars were cancelled, and the students were hoping to reschedule their speakers for Fall semester.
* Jim responded that hopefully the students can find local speakers to invite for the Student Mini Symposium.
* Scott asked Eleri to send out an update seminar schedule, including the open dates.
* Jim said we have new faculty that have joined the program, and he would like to have them give a seminar to showcase their work and introduce themselves.
* Gina asked if the key concept to inviting speakers is no overnight stays?
* Jim responded that he would like to minimize this as much as possible.
* Marc suggested to invite someone to do a virtual seminar, just to see if this is a feasible idea. Marc said this must be something that other departments are thinking about, considering we truly do not know how long this pandemic could last. This might be something the program wants to consider.
* Jim agreed this would be a good idea.
* Jim also wanted to thank Michelle Mazei-Robison and Alexa Veenema, as they are rotation off the FAC after serving a two-year term. Jim thanked both Michelle and Alexa for their time, effort, and service to the program.
* Michelle said she was happy to do so, and Alexa thanked the FAC for having her.

Meeting adjourned: 10:46am