

**Neuroscience Faculty Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes**

November 16, 2018

Giltner 101

Attendance: Gina Leinninger, Michelle Mazei-Robison, Marc Breedlove, Jim Galligan, Krishna Yelleswarapu (student rep), Galit Pelled, Alexa Veenema and Caryl Sortwell

Old Business

1. Michelle Mazei-Robison motioned for the approval of the October 19, 2018 minutes with the edits sent out prior to the meeting. Gina Leinninger seconded the motion. Everyone was in favor of the minutes with no one abstaining or in opposition of the minutes.
2. Caryl wanted to check in on previously discussed items to see what progress has occurred ensure nothing falls through the cracks.
 - a. Jim indicated students were sent out an email making them aware of the attendance policy for attending NSP seminars. Since the email, Jim has been tracking the attendance of seminars to ensure students are attending, as required.
 - b. Letters for Spring Semester 2019 seminar invites have not been sent out, Jim will provide wording in the invitation letters requesting the speaker provide a generation introduction to their topic and the methods use in their research. Further discussion will occur during new business item #5.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Jim will provide wording in the invitation letters requesting the speaker provide a generation introduction to their topic and the methods use in their research
 - c. Caryl indicate that Krishna did an excellent job surveying the graduate students regarding a method focused seminar.

New/Continued Business

1. **Proposal from Marc Breedlove - Statement for consideration: "No NSP applicant shall be denied admission because of the race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or age of the faculty mentor with whom they identify to work."**

Marc Breedlove initiated a discussion regarding the proposed statement, where he stated during the last recruitment cycle, a graduate candidate was not admitted due to expressing a desire to work with a senior faculty member rather than any junior faculty. Marc expressed during the previous meeting he pressed Greg Swain, the Graduate Program Director, for an explanation as to his rationale for not accepting the student. Rather Greg did not provide any additional explanation regarding the student being waitlisted rather than trying to help junior faculty, but Marc stated this was discourteous to senior faculty seeking new students and in the interest of transparency NSP faculty

should be aware of this practice.

Michelle mentioned two potential issues in regarding to senior faculty. When you refer to senior are you referring to age or seniority, since those two are not interdependent on one another. There can be a junior faculty member who starts later in life.

Caryl mentioned another consideration is funding. She went onto state Marc is correct that students should not be denied solely based on age of their mentor. The match and fit of the student within the NSP program should be a priority and not assisting junior faculty as mentioned in Greg's document.

Jim conveyed he will relay the sentiments from FAC to GAC regarding policy recommendations related to admissions.

Marc motioned this be moved to GAC, Caryl seconded the motion with no opposition or abstention

- **ACTION ITEM:** Jim will relay the sentiments from FAC to GAC regarding policy recommendations related to admissions.

2. Requests from Nat Sci regarding inclusion initiatives:

- a written policy statement on inclusion, equity, and diversity (IED) – see draft
- a tab or link on your website concerning IED
- a departmental diversity and inclusion committee
- a department/program contact person for IED issues

The College of Natural Science requested each unit put together an inclusion statement. Jim put together a draft of an inclusion statement and disseminated it to FAC for review. Marc proposed adding the statement “age discrimination” being added to the guiding principles under “*Neuroscience is an inclusive program.*” Gina and Michelle agreed “age discrimination” should be added to the inclusive program statement.

Marc asked for additional information where the collegial program statement derived from. Jim indicated he and Shari Stockmeyer researched IED statements from other units. They tailored the IED statement to fit the needs of the Neuroscience Program. Marc expressed the statement was a little top heavy on how faculty should act; however most intradepartmental faculty have more transparency in units.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the collegial paragraph, where the second sentence was changed to “The program encourages” from “The program is tolerant” the statement of tolerant does not encourage collegial behavior.

The discussion circled back to the first guiding principle of “Neuroscience is an inclusive program” where “age, seniority, and socio-economic status” should be added to the second sentence of the statement.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Jim will add the items the aforementioned items to the IED statement and re-circulate it, along with adding a shared governance paragraph.

Gina asked for consideration that the diversity and inclusion statement should be added to the NSP Graduate student handbook. It is good to be proactive to something coming down the pipeline opposed to being reactive.

Caryl asked about the remaining items from the Nat Sci inclusion initiative request. Michelle asked to table the remaining items until we go further clarification from the College regarding the statement. Gina seconded the motion.

3. **Proposed waiving of GRE requirement for NSP applicants**

GAC has requested the input of FAC regarding the waiver of the GRE requirement for this recruitment cycle. There is no minimum score, but data shows that it is not a predictor of student success. Michelle mentioned there was no requirement for grants to have GRE scores in the information submitted anymore.

Gina mentioned if schools are going away with the GRE scores, students may be less inclined to apply to MSU, if the GRE score is required. That should be taken into consideration when making this decision.

Marc voiced the sole dissent on this matter because there has been a correlation related to these types of tests and success. For example, the SAT is related to intelligence. He felt this was politically motivated.

Krishna Yelleswarapu raised an issue that would students be penalized if they did not report their GRE score over students who did report their GRE score.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Jim agreed he would communicate these concerns and issues to GAC.

4. **Redesign of NSP website to support grad program recruitment**

GAC asked if the website could be better to attract new students. Caryl asked Krishna to provide insight to his experience in navigating the website during his recruitment experience. Krishna indicated he did not use the website much, rather he directly contacted faculty members he was interested in working with. The website could be clearer, Krishna convey the first-year graduate students did not get a sense of who accepted students or had funding when they came for recruitment.

Caryl stated the website is the face of the program to the world, we need to revamp the site to better convey who we are. Jim indicated the first step is to work with CNS IT since they requested uniformity amongst all units in CNS.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Jim will initiate a conversation with CNS IT about scope and costs

related to NSP website redesign.

Caryl tabled the redesign discussion until we get further feedback from CNS IT on what we can do.

5. **Review of new NSP student feedback regarding NSP seminar topics (attached)**

Krishna conducted a survey from NSP graduate student regarding seminars, where he asked four questions regarding topics, location, timing, and technique talks. The student provided feedback on what techniques they were interested in.

Caryl proposed a microscopy expert to give a presentation on how it works and if they are available to collaborate. A few SME are available on campus. Erin Purcell, a NSP faculty member, was suggested to be a good starting point for this type of presentation.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Caryl will investigate in vivo two photon microscopy speaker possibilities.

6. **Other New Business**

Galit Pelled inquired why the undergraduate program was moving to Physiology and why we don't have a Neuroscience Department? Jim stated there was an effort to make the Neuroscience Program into a department, however it was met with resistance from the various College where NSP faculty are currently housed. The only support this proposal received was from the College of Natural Science. Because the lack of support, this matter was not moved forward on any level. It was not discussed with faculty since it was the exploratory stage and did not gain traction to move forward.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:43 am