

Neuroscience Faculty Advisory Committee
Giltner Hall, Room 101
October 19, 2018

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

Old Business

1. Action Item: Approve minutes from FAC meeting minutes from September 14, 2018
 - Motion to Approve: Michelle Mazei-Robison
 - Second: Alexa Veenema
 - Motion passes

New Business

1. Discussion Item: NSP Retreat Timing Survey Results

A survey was sent out inquiring a date in August that would work best for the annual Neuroscience Retreat next year. There was a preference for the last Friday in August before classes start, which this coming year will be August 23, 2019. All seemed in favor of this date without discussion or objection.

Action Item:

- Our next NSP Retreat will be held on August 23, 2019.

2. Discussion Item: Feedback on NSP Students on NSP Seminars

Krishna Yelleswarapu (student representative) gathered Neuroscience student feedback regarding seminar. Krishna brought up concern of students feeling “over-seminared”; students are requested to attend several talks and lectures from different programs, some in which are over-lapping.

Discussion followed on how to make seminar talks more valuable. Greg Swain stated that seminars are the glue that hold the program together, and that these lectures are great opportunities to discover other research and to see what else is out there. Swain added that faculty permeate students to attend, and the purpose of seminar is defeated if students miss due to lack of interest. Krishna mentioned that students may not always attend due to studies taking president.

Several suggestions were given on how increase attendance, including an equity system for good attendance, incentivizing seminar, and making the requirements more clear. Alexa Veenema made the point that expectations of attendance are laid out clearly in the handbook. Gina Leininger added that timing is a key element to this problem, as Physiology has a conflict with the current seminar time. Jim commented that the program has tried to make the expectation clear, and that some conflict will naturally take place. At this time, no decisions were made to change the time or attendance policy of seminar.

Caryl Sortwell suggested to better prepare the seminar speaker for a more valuable experience. Discussion followed that the speakers could use a little more direction; some topics seem too

specific or not tailored to the audience, making information difficult to absorb. Marc Breedlove suggested that this might be based on how slots are filled: first come, first serve. Marc added that he was in favor of faculty and students inviting speakers but agreed that content could be more accessible. Caryl also shared an idea of preselecting a few specific talks that are relevant to students/faculty, and pepper them throughout the academic year.

Action Items:

- Greg or Jim will send out an email to NSP members reminding students of the attendance policy for NSP seminars
- Greg or Jim will send out an email to faculty hosting seminar speakers suggesting that they encourage the speaker to make sure that their presentation is accessible to a general Neuroscience audience.
- Caryl volunteered to investigate whether there was interest in a couple of method-focused seminars that may be useful for a wide arrange of NSP members.

3. Discussion Item: Update from the Graduate Advisory Committee (Greg Swain)

Greg Swain discussed the process of recruitment; done in part by Greg, in part by the Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC). Greg spoke on the continued advancement in diversity programs with Latino students and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). Last year, applications were divided up to decide on students to invite to recruitment – there were 16 students in January 2018 that came to campus. Greg stated that GPA, letters of rec, research, lab fit, numerical data, interviews and personal interactions, ethics, gender and diversity. Who students want to work with is considered as well, as junior faculty build their teams and become more established. There is a primary list of students to extent offers too, and a wait-list. The program is trying to get the numbers up and would like to focus on more local recruitment.

There was discussion that the new building will help with numbers and interviews. There was a suggestion to conduct a Zoom meeting with prospective students for face-to-face interaction before bringing them on campus. Alexa had a concern that postdocs have conducted interviewing in the past because faculty couldn't make it; there was agreement that faculty need to be present.

Marc expressed concern over the process of recruitment. The Breedlove/Jordan lab was eager to work with prospective student Brandon Johnson. Marc had averaged prospective and accepted student GPAs; Brandon's GPA was higher than the average, but he wasn't admitted. There was a question as to why he was not chosen. Caryl opened the floor for feedback and considerations. Greg stated that candidates were ranked by the data that was available, and that Brandon had fallen to second list. Marc question why assistant/associate faculty should get higher preference over established Neuroscience faculty, and that more transparency is needed in this process.

A discussion ensued about what is most important when picking a student, faculty agreed that the match was extremely important. Alexa stated that it's nice to have a mix of those who want to work with junior and senior faculty. Krishna said some students want to work with established faculty, and that it comes down to research. Jim said that Greg did the best he could, and that by the time they reached out to Brandon he had decided on his second school.

Michelle commented that match is important, but she was surprised by people that were chosen by their interviews this year. Michelle said that she had never served on GAC, but it seemed unclear why these decisions were made and the factors that weighed in.

4. Tabled for Next Time:

Two discussion items will be held for the next time due to time limitation. The

GRE Requirements and NSP Website redesign will be discussed at the next meeting.

5. New Business:

New Natural Science Dean Phillip Duxbury would like a strategic plan from each unit. He would like the plans to be one page in length. Jim Galligan is writing the plan, and would like input from the FAC.

The next FAC meeting is Friday, November 16 at 10:30am.

The next NSP Faculty Meeting is Thursday, December 6 at 12:30pm.

6. No Old Business

Meeting Adjourned: 11:46am