

FACULTY COUNCIL MEETING

JANUARY 11, 2024

Members present: Andrew Newman, John Klein, Victor Figueroa, Christopher Trentacosta, Eric Kessell, Pramod Khosla, Alina Cherry, Jaime Goodrich, Sarah Swider, Chuanzhu Fan, Edward Golenberg, Robert Harr, Shelly Jo Kraft, Zachary Brewster, Ty Partridge, Hien Nguyen, Fernando Charro, Yuson Jung.

Attending: Stephanie Hartwell, Paul Clemens, Claudio Verani, Caroline Brzuchowski, Jennifer Wareham, Lori Pile, Marcus Wolf.

Absent with notice:

The meeting was called to order at 9:00.

The minutes of the Dec. 7, 2023 meeting were approved.

Pramod Khosla asked for volunteers for the CLAS election committee.

Jennifer Wareham discussed the proposed changes (distributed to council) to Article VII of the CLAS Bylaws, which concerns the constitution of the college P&T committee. Those changes, concerning the inclusion of professors of teaching on the committee, were approved.

Marcus Wolf, the CLAS business affairs officer, provided updates on the college budget. He noted that the college had a \$650,000 deficit, which he was able to cover with one-time funds, but that such one-time money is finite and cannot be counted on to run operations.

The budget discussion segued into the issue of GTA funding, which John Klein had raised over e-mail to the council in December. The Dean's Office had informed CLAS chairs that it was reducing pledged funding for GTAs from five years to four. Wolf said that such a move, by itself, would save over \$1 million per year, and that the college continues to look for ways to reduce costs without impacting students' educational experiences.

Dean Hartwell asked for council's assistance in thinking about this issue and others related to the budget. She noted that she has been talking to deans at other state of Michigan campuses about Ph.D. student support and the numbers of Ph.D. students admitted. She expressed ethical concerns about producing Ph.Ds. into a shrinking hiring market.

Zach Brewster noted that cutting support to four years does not solve that ethical issue and suggested that cutting GTA lines altogether, rather than reducing the years of support, is the better conversation to have. The question should be: what is the ideal size of our Ph.D. programs?

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John Klein reiterated that Faculty Council was not informed about the December email to CLAS chairs regarding the reduced years of support. Jennifer Wareham said that there has been considerable discussion of this topic over the years with various groups and that it is a matter that should be presented to the CLAS Budget Committee, not necessarily Faculty Council. She stated.

CLAS will be assembling an ad hoc committee to explore graduate student funding and support options further and will present these options to the dean and the Budget Advisory Committee. Marcus Wolf repeated that the status quo is not sustainable; that there is a need for immediate budgetary action; that any low-hanging fruit has already been cut; and that the college is trying to be transparent.

The dean and Wareham noted that the college promotion and tenure process is wrapping up and that it was the first time through the process with teaching faculty cases.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30.