

**Science Chair's Council**  
**Summary of the 8th Meeting – April 13, 2010**  
**KGL 101**

**Attending:**

*Chairs:* David Bercovici, Menachem Elimelech, Jeff Kenney, Scott Miller, Tom Pollard, Rick Prum, Mark Saltzman, Mitch Smooke, Douglas Stone, Meg Urry

*Divisional Director:* Bill Jorgensen

*Provosts:* Steve Girvin, Tim O'Connor, Frances McCall Rosenbluth, Stephanie Spangler

*Guests:* Michael Donoghue

**I. West Campus** (Michael Donoghue, Stephanie Spangler, Steve Girvin):

Donoghue described the recent Yale Corporation meeting held at West Campus "as highly useful to our cause" of promoting Yale science to the Corporation members. The corporation members were impressed with the core facilities and interdisciplinary centers at the West campus. Whereas the Corporation had previously considered Science Hill projects to be in "stall mode", there is now a healthy dialogue in the Corporation over the relative priorities of the new residential colleges project and the West Campus/Science Hill projects. President Levin expressed some desire to get going on Science Hill projects.

Donoghue described the junior faculty searches now being conducted by the interdisciplinary institutes on the West Campus. Each institute has 14 committee members, with many departments represented. The faculty positions are defined by the institute governing committee together with the relevant department(s). Each candidate meets with relevant departments, and must be supported both by the department and the institute. They are now making at least two junior faculty appointments. While he described the current process, Donoghue invited comments on how to proceed in the future.

Meg Urry questioned the lack of Physics Department input, and the WC-related faculty hiring despite a general hiring freeze. Donoghue agreed that there has been an initial focus on biomedical science, but they now trying to involve the physical science departments and engineering.

Dave Bercovici described the Geology Department's input to a recent WC-related faculty search. The Geology Dept reviewed the applications of two candidates (in fields related to Geomicrobiology) and became excited.

Scott Miller said that whole fields missing from the Chemistry Department and the WC provides opportunities to cover fields away from the core. Two-thirds of the chemistry faculty are excited about an energy/nano-tech focus at WC, since otherwise Yale Chemistry is not participating in a revolution.

Girvin has told the principle people that they need to involve the departments. Donoghue agreed it would be good for him to visit the departments for WC discussions. The departments should invite Donoghue and Spangler.

There is a new broader committee for the WC, with 14 members selected by Donoghue. (We can add to the committee -- send suggestions to Donoghue.) It is currently facing questions such as: How to structure the energy institute, and how does anything on WC relate to the rest of campus?

One good effect of this new broader committee is bringing together some Yale scientists across disciplines. However, the members of this committee haven't yet "reached out" enough. We discuss whether the committee members should be responsible for representing departments. We decide that they should at least be responsible for communicating WC issues to their departments.

There is an official opening for cores on May 4, and an updated website w/video clips. WC is currently a "ghost town" in some parts, but active in others. A landscape study is underway for the science building areas. Among the relevant issues is whether WC is a good environment for grad students.

#### **Action Items:**

1. (Science Chairs and Michael Donoghue) Departments should invite Donoghue and Spangler for WC discussions and Donoghue should also approach the departments
2. (WC Committee Members) Communicate WC issues with their departments.

#### **II. Diversifying the Faculty (Meg Urry, Frances Rosenbluth):**

Rosenbluth gave us an update on the status of the Yale's faculty diversity initiative, and reviewed some statistics on promotion and retention. In general all schools are doing better than in the past, but it is hard to know if this trend will continue. Presently, the fraction of the Yale's senior faculty that are women are ~30%, 20%, 15%, and 10% for Humanities, Social Sciences, Biological Sciences, and the Physical Sciences, respectively. Statistics suggest that a larger fraction of untenured women leave Yale (for any of several reasons) than men.

Tom Pollard reported a recent MCDB faculty search with 400 applicants but only 100 women. Rosenbluth reported studies showing that women apply to fewer jobs as they are more selective and "men apply to anything". In general, women are:

1. More selective since they put great weight on their partner's interests, and
2. less likely to apply for good positions, since they are less confident/overconfident.

We don't know tenure rates by gender at Yale, but Doug Stone said that in his ~10 years on PSAC, all women were eventually promoted. A big unknown is people who didn't come up for tenure (for whatever reason). WFF was interested in pursuing this, but due to confidentiality concerns, it needs to be done by OIR.

We discussed what are women NOT getting at Yale? One major factor is that the child care facilities are not good enough. High quality day care is available in New Haven, but people want the best day care and they want it subsidized. There are plans for a Yale day care facility, but they are neither finalized nor funded. Any Yale facility must be available to the staff as well as the faculty, making it a larger endeavor. Finding a site is an obstacle. There is a child care facility on West Campus, but a shuttle bus is needed. The need for better daycare at Yale has been clear for a long time, so the group is urged to keep pressure on the Yale Corp, the Provost, and HR.

Urry wondered whether faculty search committees were sufficiently aware of the unconscious bias against women candidates, or the measurable difference in evaluations for men and women. She recommended that the entire search committee be trained and not just a diversity rep.

Urry reported that for junior faculty women recently mentored by sr. faculty women, there was a higher success rates for grants. She urged chairs and/or mentors to sit down with junior faculty & their FARs and give advice.

**Action Items:**

1. (Science Chairs) Keep up pressure on key Yale entities (HR and provost and Yale Corp) to improve child care at Yale.
2. (Science Chairs) Each dept should review their mentoring plan. Chairs are urged to review FARs with junior faculty if they do not already do so.

**III. Fate of Applied Physics Department (Doug Stone):**

Stone summarized developments concerning the fate of the Applied Physics Department. Due to reorganization within Yale Engineering, the Applied Physics Department will probably no longer be part of Yale Engineering. This has triggered questions about the fate of the department. Stone emphasized that our discussion was informational, and that he is not asking the Science Chairs Council for any action.

Stone reported unhappiness over the very limited discussions between the Dean of Engineering and the faculty and chairs within Engineering about the restructuring plans. It was claimed that the engineering ad hoc committee was not fully representative and didn't discuss reorganization. Stone expressed the view that "viable, successful departments should not be restructured from above". The Applied Physics Department has a ~20-year history with much success, including four faculty with recent Packard fellowships. Their faculty voted unanimously against restructuring.

The Applied Physics Department is now happy with the fair hearings it is getting with the President and Provost, and its current input into the planning. The Department sees advantages in merging with Physics, and now both Physics and Applied Physics are positive about merging, although space issues are not resolved.

In the category of "lessons learned", future reorganizational planning should include an earlier input of relevant departments in the process, and shouldn't start with a proposal showing a department disappearing.

**IV. Update on Unproductive Faculty (Tom Pollard):**

Pollard reported that the provost's office received only four requests this year for the "zero" raise option for unproductive faculty (three from Pollard's department, and one other). Pollard is concerned that since we are not making broad use of this option, we haven't made sufficient headway on the issue of appropriate compensation for unproductive faculty. Some chairs said they were aware of the option, but thought their faculty were sufficiently productive to merit raises.

*Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 11, 12 – 1:30 pm –KGL 101*