Bren School Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) Report 2017-2018

To the Faculty Legislature, Santa Barbara Division:

According to Academic Senate Divisional Bylaws and Regulations, Appendix II, D1.93, the Executive Committee of the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management is a committee of the Academic Senate authorized as an organization through which the Faculty of the School can coordinate the academic affairs of the School. The Committee reports to, and is responsible to, the Academic Senate and its officers.

The Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) of the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management met eight times during the academic year. The following is a list of the major issues addressed by the FEC:

1. 2018-2019 FTE Plan

The FEC led the FTE planning process, producing the Bren School’s FTE Planning Report. As part of the FTE planning process, our faculty conducted thorough analyses of our current expertise, expected retirements, research strengths and trajectories, student demands, and linkages with other initiatives across campus. The faculty identified FTE priorities (in rank order) in the areas of (1) Business Sustainability, (2) Environmental Data Science 1, (3) Terrestrial Conservation Ecology, (4) Environmental Data Science 2, (5) Environmental Communication and (6) Global Change Ecology. We also have teaching and professional program needs in the areas of Eco-Entrepreneurship, Environmental Communication, Environmental Negotiation and Leadership, and Data Analysis and Visualization.

2. EDS and ecology positions defined

After the FTE planning retreat, there was a need to define the Environmental Data Science and Ecology positions in more detail. A second retreat was used to gather faculty input and generate more specific definitions of these four positions.

3. EDS focus approved

Some discussions related to our coverage of Environmental Data Science led to the definition of an “Environmental Data Science Focus”, which allows our MESM students to add this focus to their program of study and deepen their knowledge in this important area.

4. ESM 251/204 integration approved

For several years we required our MESM students to take two courses in environmental economics as part of the core courses. However, there were frequent comments that there was too much duplicity and that the core had too many courses. Therefore, after a discussion with all the faculty it was decided to integrate the two courses into one, and reduce the core course requirement by one course.

5. 2017-2018 budget oversight

The FEC reviewed the Bren School budget several times with the administrative staff, and provided feedback with regards to current levels of expenditure and the need to increase income through gifts, special fees and other means.
6. Expanded faculty meeting participation to lecturers

At the request of some lecturers, the faculty agreed to allow them to participate in faculty meetings, and to make sure they are invited when meeting topics are relevant.

7. Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition proposal to Planning and Budget

The Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition proposal, which had been developed by staff in 2016-17 and discussed by the faculty, was reviewed, modified and sent to Planning and Budget for comment. No written comments were received. Following consultation with the Graduate Division, the proposal will be revised in 2018-19 and resubmitted to Planning and Budget.

8. Reviewed committee appointment assignments for junior faculty

At the request of some faculty, the current committee appointment assignments for junior faculty were reduced, to allow them to focus on research and teaching.

9. Admissions pool

While the number of MESM students for 2018-2020 is within our expected range, there is a concern that the number of applicants has decreased consistently in the past few years. The FEC discussed with the Recruitment, Admissions and Support committee, as well as with staff, measures that could be taken to increase the number of applicants.

10. Mutual respect town hall

Due to an increased number of students indicating that micro-harassments occur at the Bren School, the FEC conducted two town halls on Mutual Respect, bringing experts from campus to help all of us address the issue. Feedback from students was positive, although there is a need to have a continuous conversation with all. Specific professional training on micro-aggression response was developed and tested with the MESM Class of 2018. The training will be modified for incoming students during orientation and will be added to new student orientation in September 2018.

Arturo Keller, Chair

Andrew Plantinga

James Salzman

Mark Buntaine