

## **Fall 2022 EESB Meeting Minutes**

*Earth and Environmental Sciences Department Alumni Advisory Board*

October 28, 2022

Trowbridge 27 and via Zoom

### **In Attendance**

*EES Faculty:* Brad Cramer, Emily Finzel, David Peate (DEO), and Kate Tierney (faculty liaison to alumni board)

*EES Graduate Student Liaison to Faculty:* Sam Hudziak

*UI Center for Advancement:* Adam Blind

*EESB Members:* Rob Decker, Richard Denne, Rhawn Denniston (EESB secretary), Melissa Evans, Jim Eagan, Liz Maas, Lee Phillips (EESB chair), Todd Ririe, Noah Sterne, Amy Sullivan, Aaron Suzuki

*Alumni/Emeriti:* Dick Baker, Mike Burkart, Ray Anderson, Dana Kolpin (2022 distinguished alumnus award winner)

*Guest:* Andrew Forbes (Dept. of Biology)

*New EESB Members:* Brian Hartman, Luan Heywood, and Tim Stroope joined the meeting at 9:40 am.

### **Introductions**

The meeting was called to order by chair Lee Phillips at 9:05 am.

Attendees introduced themselves, and Rhawn reviewed the April 2022 Minutes and Actions. The minutes were approved without comment.

### **EESB Membership**

Liz led a discussion of the new nominees to the Board: Brian Hartman, Luan Heywood, and Tim Stroope. Kate noted that she had spoken to nominees at a variety of events and made clear that the Board valued their expertise and perspective. Brian, Luan, and Tim were voted unanimously to the Board.

Terms for four EESB members will expire in 2023 (Melissa, Noah, Rhawn and Rob) and terms for six board members will expire in 2024 (Aaron, Jim, Lee, Liz, Richard, and Todd). We also still need a chair elect for the Board. Amy suggested that those whose terms are about to end should reach out to Lee to let him know their intentions. Board members are limited to two terms.

### **Fundraising Committee**

Adam updated the Board on the university's fund-raising campaign. The campaign remains in the quiet phase but will go public in about a year from now with a goal of ~\$3 billion (for context, the previous campaign, which closed in 2016, raised ~\$2 billion). Once the campaign goes public in fall 2023, it extends for another 4 years. The majority of these funds will support students, faculty, research, and the broader Iowa community over bricks and mortar.

EES continues to be well positioned for the upcoming campaign. The department raised \$1.13 million last year, with CLAS raising a total of \$25.5 million. A total of \$437 million was received by the university, much of which came in large gifts (the hospital received gifts of \$70

million and \$20 million, and the library received \$40 in art and poetry). The university is on track to receive a total of \$300 million in the current fiscal year.

EES has already received \$2.5 million of its \$5 million goal for the upcoming campaign, and Adam thinks it's likely we will exceed this goal. Amy noted that the EES campaign started in 2019. All contributions include cash as well as deferred gifts (estate planning). EES giving so far has been half in cash, half in planned gift commitments. Advancement and EES will make it clear that the department has immediate needs and will encourage "planned gift activation" (i.e., giving cash now). David noted that these immediate needs include research expenses, named chairs in EES, and fieldtrip support (primarily costs of field-related equipment). CLAS used to pay for field camp vehicles but no longer does so the department covers these costs from 1Day4Iowa and foundation funds. 1Day4Iowa focuses on supporting field courses but the field course fund is open for donations all year long.

The "thank you" video (currently including clips from Kate's field course students, Amy, and Rhawn) was shown and discussed. The Board agreed with Adam that this video should be sent to donors immediately upon receiving their gift. Adam had spliced the videos together, and Emily volunteered her video editing skills for future clips. Other board members are encouraged to submit similar videos. Todd suggests that students specifically mention fieldtrip support from EESB.

The next 1Day4Iowa is March 29, 2023. Board members are encouraged to donate soon so that their funds can be used for matching challenges.

### **UI Environment Review Committee**

Andrew Forbes, professor of biology and coordinator/advisor of the Environmental Sciences program, spoke to the Board about the work he, Emily, and others are doing on the committee tasked by CLAS to investigate changes to the structure of programs related to the environment, climate, and sustainability. Motivations for making these changes include the \$15 million/year budget deficit in CLAS, but also that "environment" is seen as a key area of growth. Administrators want to emphasize areas of strength and future growth (new faculty, new students, student retention) and cut back on majors and programs that are dwindling. Ideas focus on the following:

- Communications, rhetoric, and journalism (possibly combining depts)
- Health, Human Physiology, and Sports Studies (segregate Sports Studies)
- World languages (improve equity: students from underfunded districts regularly aren't offered the requisite 4 years of foreign language in high school)
- Social and cultural analysis (many small departments would be merged)
- Student support centers (these exist in many depts and would be centralized)
- Integrating environment, climate, and sustainability across disciplines

Because the biology department has little to do with ecology, the primary departments involved in this discussion are EES and Geographical and Sustainability Sciences. David noted that the CLAS dean is concerned by the fact that new students are confused by the multitude of majors and tracks across departments.

### **Department Updates**

David reports that departmental operations are almost back to normal. Valerie Payré, who was hired through a Space Physics initiative, is teaching Mineralogy now that Mark Reagan has retired. The next faculty line being targeted is environmental geophysics.

A new university rule precludes fieldtrips outside of course sessions (spring, fall, summer). Thus, fieldtrips may no longer be offered the week after the spring semester or the week before the fall semester.

Analytical facilities are being improved with the acquisition of a new ICP-MS and laser and field emission SEM, as well as instructional equipment for classrooms.

Mark Reagan was made a GSA Fellow, and Emily received a teaching award from CLAS. The department will host an NSF-funded workshop on heavy minerals over Thanksgiving.

The number of majors for geology has risen to 50, close to the long-term average, after dipping to 37 during the heart of the pandemic.

There are 185 environmental science majors. The department is trying to establish a master's program in applied environmental science. Emily updated the department website so that it is much easier to navigate to the environmental science component of the EES website.

Brad presented a slideshow on enrollment and employment trends for the last decade, which are summarized as follows:

- Based on a post-graduation survey, 100% of geology alumni respondents claimed employment in a geology-related field.
- EES is doing an excellent job of retaining geology students but is weak on recruitment.
- Iowa EES is highest in the Big 10 based on the number of majors per faculty and the number of majors per total undergraduate enrollment.
- At Iowa, 11% of all students take an EES course (2<sup>nd</sup> highest in Big 10).
- There has been a 40% increase in the number of students applying to the UI for environmental science in the last year.
- Ashton Prairie Living Laboratory is almost fully deployed and is the center piece of EES. A large and diverse suite of introductory courses are conducting labs at Ashton. The program recently purchased a NOAA-designed Pandora system (real time atmospheric composition of CO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, formaldehyde, etc.). Brad led us through the web-based APIS (Ashton Prairie Information System).
- Aaron asked how we can better reach out to high school students to advertise EES. Emily is taking a group of high school science teachers to the Black Hills next summer as part of geoscience training. Brad recently finished an NSF grant to help provide earth science education certification in Iowa and notes that less than 3% of science teachers in Iowa have this certification. Iowa is one of 2 states in the country where earth science is not required for high school graduation.

### **Mentoring Committee**

Todd held a meeting of the Mentoring Committee in August, and reports substantial improvements to the mentoring program. Aaron created a GoogleSheet with mentees' names, backgrounds, interests, and mentors. Lee will distribute the link. Anyone can update the spreadsheet. David and other faculty continue to promote this mentoring project in their classes.

Geography students continue to reach out to EES faculty/alumni for mentoring. Kate will email Geography faculty (the student will be copied on the email) with requests from particular students so that they can identify a suitable mentor (this student will be listed in the GoogleSheet as "referred to Geography Dept"). Todd encourages mentors to remain in touch with their mentee(s) after they graduate and suggested EESB members should reach out to alums at GSA to see if they'll mentor students.

## **Alumni Outreach**

Rob suggested that each subcommittee chair create an operations manual for their subcommittee.

Nominations for the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award may be made through the end of the year, and voting will occur in February. We still have four nominees in our pool from previous years as well as three candidates (Laura Strickland at USGS, Mary Carman at WHOI, and Marcus Johnson) who have been nominated but whose materials haven't yet been provided in full.

## **Other Business**

Rhawn listed the following action items:

1. 1Day4Iowa
  - a. "Thank you" video for this year and future years; Board members are encouraged to submit a clip to Adam and Emily;
  - b. Consider giving soon to the department so that these funds can be used for matching.
2. Review the new mentoring GoogleSheet (to be distributed by Lee) and consider serving as a mentor.
3. With the departure of four Board members next year and six in the following year, we need to identify future board members; these 10 board members should let Lee know whether they intend to remain on the Board for an additional term.
4. We still need a chair-elect for EESB.
5. Subcommittee chairs are encouraged to meet more regularly and to work with Lee to identify the ideal dates for these meetings.
6. The big (once per semester) newsletters are sent to all EES and Environmental Science alumni, and so we should use this as a platform to ask alums to donate to the program and inform them of any matching challenges. This information should also be included in Facebook and Instagram accounts. The newsletter should also include a list of action items that the Board is focusing on. All materials need to be submitted to Emily by Nov. 15 for the fall newsletter and by April 1 for the spring newsletter.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 pm.

Rhawn Denniston, secretary