

Meeting Minutes
Executive Committee of the AFSE
March 3, 2023

Present: Xiao Wang (chair), Dianne Hansford (secretary),
Brian Atkinson, Daniel Aukes, Nancy Cooke, Heather Emady, Shenghan Guo, Vikram
Kodibagkar, Pitu Mirchandani, Guoliang Xue, Yanchao Zhang, Yong-Hang Zhang

Absent: Rosa Krajmalnik-Brown, Anthony Lamanna, Hyunglae Lee

Guest: Kyle Squires, Kelli Haren

1. Approval of minutes

Motion: Approve minutes from February 3, 2023. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Dean's Dissertation Award

The EC reviewed the Sharepoint site with the applications, the spreadsheet for evaluation, and the process for evaluation.

Motion: We define conflict of interest as follows.

Individuals directly involved in an individual's nomination, or the dissertation being considered, shall recuse themselves from considering that individual for the Dean's Dissertation Award. Examples of reasons to recuse oneself will include nominator, committee chair, committee member, co-authoring papers, nomination letter writer, funded by and EC member's grant which contributes to the dissertation, or any other potential conflicting situation which might draw concern or criticism of the award or the award process.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Final recommendation must be completed by the April 7 meeting. Every nominee will be reviewed by 5 EC members, thus each EC member will review 3 – 4 applications. Assignments will be made by Dianne and Xiao.

As an exception this round, SCAI was allowed two nominations rather than one because of the change in the rules.

3. Dean's Distinguished Lecture (feedback)

The EC lunch with Prof. Han went well. It would have been nice to have a larger audience at the talk. Several EC members thought that the talk was too technical and not visionary in style. However, several attendees of the talk, who are knowledgeable in the area, communicated to Kyle that the talk was excellent.

What can we do to make sure a speaker's talk appeals to a broad audience? Heather suggested looking at a sample talk to be sure the person can give the type of talk we want, like a TED talk. Daniel reported that looking at examples of Prof. Han's talks online, they are very similar to the one he gave.

Brian: In the invitation to the speaker, we should be clear about our expectations for the talk. Yong-Hang suggested that we pick an area that is broader, for example automobile design, that involves many engineering areas. Narrow down the topic and then look for a speaker. Kyle: A higher level talk might be a better. We can explore speakers like the Director National Intelligence, Director of the NSF, or Director at DARPA. I can work networks and outreach and get speaker set up now. Please send Kyle an email with brainstorming ideas.

Rosy communication by email: We should have a discussion about having posters, presented by the graduate students that win the dissertation award, in combination with the Dean's Lecture. This will bring more people and diversity to the talk.

4. Ph.D. student salaries

Kyle has committed to funding all new first year Ph.D. students in the Fall at \$35K for a 12-month stipend for a full (50%) GRA. (These students will be called Fulton Fellows, and it is replacing the Dean's Fellows program.)

Yong-Hang asked the following questions. i) Are faculty members expected to maintain such a salary for the entire PhD study? ii) This rate is substantially higher than the current recommended rate of ~25K. How should we handle the difference between this new rate and the existing that for the students in the program?

EC members commented that this will be helpful for recruitment, and that this type of program exists with our aspirational peers, thus this is a good move to compete.

Pitu: Will this include students who are already here? We have salary levels based on the student's progress in the program. Will we need to modify this tier structure? Kyle: No need to change tiered pay structure. This is a broadening of the Dean's Fellows. We are trying to keep it simple to begin with, adapt it, then learn how to engage all doctoral students. The purpose of this program is to help grow research in the FSE by helping faculty with research.

Daniel: Are Fulton Fellows recruited for one year? When selecting students for these fellowships, they need to be matched with faculty. (That is, there needs to be at least one faculty who is interested in this student.) Yong-Hang shared the EE scenario: students apply to faculty. The student is allowed to explore these interested faculty in their first semesters.

Yong-Hang: Every year we have 200 new Ph.D. students in the Fall and 50 in the Spring. We will use this to set the threshold that we fund.

Pitu We need TAs, so if this program takes away TAs, how should we get them? Kyle: We will have to find TAs and work out these issues. The best thing we can do with this is to engage with it. We need to get feedback on positive impacts of this new program.

ACTION ITEMS

- EC members should review their Dissertation Award assignments, and they should be completed by the April 7 meeting.
- EC members should communicate Dean's Lecture speaker ideas to Kyle. We are looking for someone at the Director level, who can give a talk that is appealing to a broad audience.

Next Meeting

Friday, April 7, 2023

12:00 - 1:00pm in BYENG 660