

Meeting Minutes
Executive Committee of the AFSE
May 5, 2023

Present: Xiao Wang (chair), Dianne Hansford (secretary),
Brian Atkinson, Daniel Aukes, Rosa Krajmalnik-Brown, Shenghan Guo, Vikram
Kodibagkar, Anthony Lamanna, Hyunglae Lee, Pitu Mirchandani, Guoliang Xue, Yanchao
Zhang, Yong-Hang Zhang

Absent: Nancy Cooke, Heather Emady

Guest: Kyle Squires, Kelli Haren

1. Approval of minutes

Motion: Approve minutes from April 7, 2023. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Dean's Dissertation Award

Kyle chose for awards the top five nominees recommended by the EC. The "count top rank (CTR)" was helpful.

3. Recruiting PhD and doctoral program students

The EC addressed ways to improve the quality and quantity of applicants. Kyle asked the EC: What is scale? What are we not doing that we should be doing?

One problem the EC identified is that we are losing students to places with higher stipends. The new Dean's Fellowship will help; however, this results in a new problem: we will be paying new students more than the existing students.

We should invite top students for a site visit well before graduation. For example, we could reach out to our top 1% undergraduates in their junior year. FURI students are a good pool of students to target. This is another good reason to support these students. Of all undergraduates, they might be the ones who are most likely to be interested in a PhD program. Typically, students get involved with FURI when they are juniors; this is a good time to inform them of the possibility of a PhD. Keeping our top students is a good idea because they are very good. The new fellowship advances this solution by recruiting students not only from outside, but also current ASU students.

We could target 4+1 students as well. As ASU's ranking increases, these students will tend to choose ASU rather than leave to start a PhD elsewhere. Another idea, but a rather expensive one, is to target Arizona high school students who went to another university.

Why students should choose ASU needs to be well-defined in terms of money, mentorship, labs, and general student-life environment. To answer these questions, we need to know what our competitors are offering. One excellent method for showing students why they should choose

ASU is the open house event that allows students to see the labs.

If we adopted the practice of allowing students to work with several faculty rather than immediately assigning them to one faculty, this could be a tool for recruiting. (Yong-Hang reported on positive outcomes from this practice in the April meeting.) Another benefit of this would be that junior faculty would have more opportunities attract students.

We should consider the difference between recruiting US students versus international students. ASU's #1 in innovation and entrepreneurial programs should be promoted.

How do we make getting a PhD attractive? We should communicate that academia is not the only career path, but it is possible to go into industry. This might make a PhD more appealing to more students. We can use the open house event for top students to inform them of the PhD program.

Highlighting distinguished alumni could be a good recruiting tool.

4. Next year's agenda

Kyle: Let us consider an initiative that benefits the faculty. For example, if a researcher's career becomes less robust, how to we support pathways to invigorate them? Supply bridge money? If money is given, then clear metrics need to be defined. At the Schools level, we could look for patterns as to why this is happening. Recruiting can be helpful for these people.

5. Post pandemic international travel policies

Provost's office makes this policy.

6. School shooting preparedness

Currently, the University of Arizona is dealing with a tragic event in the death of a faculty member that might be attributed to poor communication or preparedness. How do we avoid this type of event at ASU/FSE?

Kyle informed the EC that we have threat assessment teams. Faculty need to reach out to these teams to allow them to possibly help the person who is displaying threatening behavior. Faculty are not trained to deal with these issues, so they should communicate these problems to the academic advisors. Faculty are obligated to report issues.

Next Meeting

Friday, August TBD 2023

12:00 - 1:00pm in TBD

