IPIB Steering Committee Meeting
2013-2014
Wednesday, May 21, 2014, 1:00pm
179 Biochem Labs

MINUTES

Present: Dave Brow, Margaret Clagett-Dame, Jim Keck, Ann Palmenberg, Mike Sheets, Ivan Rayment

Absent: Mike Cox, Shruti Waghray

1. IPIB Handbook / Policies

   a. Discussion on whether to make attendance at the Monday afternoon Biochemistry seminar / colloquium mandatory for IPIB graduate students – Brow

   Mr. Brow opened the discussion by stating that Tricia Kiley observed that graduate student attendance at the Biochemistry colloquia is really low, even though the colloquia are a major source of education for dissertators who are interested in non-academic careers. Requiring attendance would ensure that they take advantage of the opportunity, but would require a tracking system.

   Ms. Palmenberg suggested that it would be better to set a quota (ten, for example), and leave it to the student and his or her thesis committee advisor to pick which seminars are most suitable for the student. Requiring attendance at every colloquium would be too burdensome on the student, since they already are required to maintain continuous seminar enrollment and attend group meetings. Some students are also required to attend training grant and other financial support-related meetings. Setting a minimum attendance level would still allow students to benefit from the breadth of topics available, and expose them to alternative careers and different communication styles. A requirement would also support the students who want to attend the colloquia but whose thesis advisors may not want them to be out of the lab.

   The group agreed that it should consider making some unburdensome rules to encourage student attendance. It was suggested that a form could be designed and used by the student and thesis advisor to select which colloquia the student should attend in a given semester. The completed forms would be shared with the student’s committee at the annual thesis committee meeting. It was further suggested that the colloquia are treated like courses and that students sign up for them.

   Ultimately, the group decided that the matter should be the subject of discussion among the Biochemistry and Biomolecular Chemistry faculties. Mr. Rayment offered to present it to the Biochemistry faculty; Mr. Brow, to the Biomolecular Chemistry faculty. Once feedback is gathered, the matter will be brought back to the Steering Committee for discussion and a formal motion at the next meeting, which will be on Wednesday, August 20, 2014.
b. **Discussion on thesis committee members’ attendance at key meetings in a graduate student’s career** – Brow (attachment)

Recent events involving the Examination and Certification Committee (ECC) brought to light that thesis committee members (especially those from outside of IPiB) need to be reminded of what is expected from their commitment to serve – in particular, annual committee meetings, the preliminary exam, and the final defense. If a meeting needs to be rescheduled or an alternate needs to be found, the group agreed that the student should involve his or her thesis advisor in seeking resolution. It was also suggested, and agreed to, that the Graduate Student Services Coordinator should confirm IPiB’s expectations (the handbook language) with committee members once the ECC approves the committee.

The revised handbook language – prepared by Mr. Brow and reviewed by the Steering Committee – is attached. (Language deleted from Mr. Brow’s original proposal is represented as strike-through; new language is in green.) The Committee further agreed that faculty approval of the revised language is not necessary.

c. **Revisit IPiB policy toward “strongly recommending” versus “requiring” research experience of graduate school applicants** – Rayment

The committee discussed what the impact of revising this policy would be on student applicants. Since it agreed that such a requirement would negatively affect direct admits, the committee decided to continue to “strongly recommend” research experience for graduate student applicants.

2. **IPiB Admissions and Recruiting Committee(s) - Keck**

a. **Results of Biochemistry and Biomolecular Chemistry faculty meeting discussions of proposal to separate admissions and recruiting functions**

Both faculties approved of the separation of the IPiB admissions and recruiting functions

b. **Next steps**

The group discussed its concerns about maintaining good communications between the two committees. It was agreed that the same student services coordinator (currently Elyse Meuer) should continue to serve both committees. Mr. Keck’s revised proposal, following committee discussion is attached with the new language highlighted in red.

The department chairs will assign chairs for the two committees, to be effective July 1.

3. **Other business?**

There was no other business.

Mr. Rayment adjourned the meeting.

The first meeting of the 2014-15 academic year will be held on Wednesday, August 20.