

Minutes of faculty meeting, Department of Astronomy, 25 October 2010.

Present were Scott Gaudi, Andy Gould, Jennifer Johnson, Paul Martini, Smita Mathur, Sultana Nahar (non-voting), Jerry Newsom (non-voting), Brad Peterson (Chair), Rick Pogge, Anil Pradhan, Barbara Ryden, Kris Stanek, Gary Steigman, Todd Thompson, David Weinberg, and guests Dieter Wanner (Associate Provost for Global Strategies and International Affairs), Melinda McClimans (Assistant Director, Middle East Studies Center), and Enam Choudhury (staff scientist in the Physics laser lab).

The meeting was called to discuss a proposal by Sultana Nahar to establish a formal collaboration between OSU and the University of Cairo for research on laser applications. Sultana explained that the proposed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) would not obligate OSU in any way and would not require any expenditure. The MOA would allow the exchange of students and other researchers between the two universities and would facilitate obtaining external funding. Joseph Steinmetz, Executive Dean of Arts and Sciences, is supportive of the proposal.

Choudhury (physicist) reported that Egypt has funds to send Egyptian students and scientists to Ohio State and OSU would eventually send people to the University of Cairo. Laboratory Astrophysics is a likely area of research that could be done collaboratively.

Dieter Wanner said the MOA (the same as an MOU) sets up the formal arrangement that is usually needed to obtain funding by external sources. Any MOA needs formal approval of the relevant Dean (Steinmetz in this case) and OSU's Chief Financial Officer. Wanner displayed a sample boilerplate MOA on the OSU International Affairs web site; the MOA needs to state the purpose and expected outcomes of the MOA, and should describe previous experience of the parties that would indicate the agreement would work. Parties to the MOA agree to seek external financial support. Other colleges at OSU are interested in participating. OSU invites the visitors to campus, so we have control over the number of people from the University of Cairo who would come to campus. If an Egyptian student comes here, then an OSU student should go to Cairo, and each party would pay for its own student. Student visitors to OSU would be listed as visiting scholars, not as students, so they would not have to pay tuition to OSU. It is likely that each student would be responsible for obtaining his or her own health insurance.

Melinda McClimans discussed the advantages of the MOA would have for OSU.

David Weinberg moved that the Department support moving Sultana's proposal forward. After Sultana and the visitors left, the faculty discussed the proposal further. The faculty vote was 12 in favor and 0 against, with one abstention.

David then presented the proposal from the Curriculum Committee for the structure of the graduate curriculum under semesters. The present nine courses of ten weeks each meeting three times a week under the quarter system would be replaced with seven courses of fourteen weeks each meeting twice a week. Also, since the semester classes would be 55 minutes long instead of the current 48 minutes, there is a net increase of 20% in class contact minutes, and there was some concern over this increased contact time.