

**Department of Earth and Space
Sciences Meeting of the Faculty
Friday, 3/6/2026, 2:30 pm in JHN 026**

OPEN Minutes

[Attendance: Buick, Cantine, Catling, Christianson, Crider, Denolle, Gorman-Lewis, Huntington, Journaux, Koutnik, Krissansen-Totton, Lipovsky, Mehra, Montgomery, Muth, Roe, Schmidt, Steig, Stone, Swanson, Tobin, Waddington; Bernard-Kingsley, Campese, Caton, Dakins, Lui, Manos, Jensen, Johnson, Lindquist, Cohen]

Call to Order - Open Session (2:30 PM)

Announcements

Update on Cold Lab/Freezer project (Steig, 2 min)

- Construction has started on the freezer for the ColdLab, adjacent to the PNSN in ATG.

Digital Accessibility Reminder (Schmidt, 2 min)

- Deadline April 24, 2026. Online materials must be >80% compliant. This includes canvas, department website, faculty websites (.edu), ~~theses & dissertations~~.
- **[Mar 11th Update:** Theses and dissertations do not have to be compliant until August 21st, 2026.]
- Online training videos, resources, tools exist at UW (links below).
 - <https://www.washington.edu/accessibility/digital/training/>
 - <https://www.washington.edu/accesstech/>

490/590 course visibility to students (Schmidt, 2 min)

- Undergraduates may be unaware of 490/590 offerings each quarter because students have to dig through the course schedule to find these offerings.
- Remember to advertise your 490/590 offerings. Advising can distribute flyers/notices. A best practice is to ask the instructor to share info in a related class the prior quarter.

Faculty Activity Reports due March 20th (Schmidt, 2 min)

- There are instructions in Alicia's email. You will also be asked to submit your committee preferences and 2-year teaching plan. Contact Alicia or David if you have difficulties.

Asset Tags (Schmidt, 2 min)

- When PI's buy equipment over \$5k, the department assigns a number (Asset Identifier) and registers the item in Workday. When UW converted to Workday, some

data were lost or scrambled. Staff are working with faculty to address this. We were prevented from making new equipment purchases by the College until this list was reduced. This has now been resolved, and equipment purchases can resume.

- See the [UW's Equipment Tagging Procedure](#) for more information.

Standing Committees Announcements

Admissions (Gorman-Lewis)

- 13 students were admitted. 11 attended the prospective visit. As of this morning, we are not aware of anyone accepting or declining offers. Incentives will be sent out on Monday afternoon. Advisors will be copied on those emails.
- It is still unknown when scholarships from graduate school are available. ESS is on the waitlist. It is likely there will be less available than in the past. Their website is out of date with last year's deadlines.

Advancement & Engagement (Schmidt, Caton)

- The committee met last week to discuss Alumni award applications. The committee will soon send their recommendations to the faculty.

Astrobiology Admissions & Steering (Buick)

- There is a lower number of applications than in past years. 6 applicants, admitted 4. One of whom was admitted from ESS pool (with Catling).

College Council (Roe, Montgomery)

- Candidates for the next College of the Environment Dean are ongoing. The College Council is meeting with each of the Dean candidates. If you have questions for the candidates, let Gerard know. There are public presentations for each of those candidates. Each presentation will be recorded and available online the day after.
- A large search committee will provide a recommendation to the Provost, who will ultimately make the decision.

Curriculum (Denolle)

- Marine provided an update on the undergraduate program revision, including history of previous faculty decisions on changes to the curriculum. All course changes have passed the CoEnv committee and are now being reviewed by the UW curriculum committee. Please contact the curriculum committee for more details..
- Marine shared some of the conversations on AI's role in the classroom, which is being explored by a University committee. Recently, the University held a "Teaching with AI" workshop that Denolle, Schmidt, and Mehra attended. The plenary presentation was given by the lead author of the book, *Teaching with AI* by Bowen and Watson.
- ESS faculty reflected on the information, and shared diverse perspectives on integrating AI into the classroom, ranging from reverting to traditional methods like

blue book exams to protect foundational writing skills, to the full embrace of AI tools as a core part of course design and grading. The discussion centered on finding a balance between using AI to enhance learning goals and digital literacy while maintaining critical thinking, ethical standards, and academic integrity. The conversation noted that the evolving role of AI in education is ongoing and will continue to be discussed amongst faculty and community.

- Graduate students asked how faculty are discussing with students the nuanced ethics and implications. Various faculty shared how they are discussing this topic directly with students in the classroom.
- Faculty also discussed the evolving requirements for publications in journals about disclosing AI use in research.

GeoClub (Stone)

- The spring break trip is still on! If you want to contribute by joining for a day at your favorite field site, contact John Stone. Going down the coast into OR, then back up into the Columbia gorge area.

Honors & Recognition (Huntington, Catling)

- No one has filled out the survey yet– you can also email Kate or David.

Policy (Montgomery)

- Faculty discussed a policy for affiliates that request an appointment to the graduate faculty and want to chair a graduate committee. The Policy Committee has proposed that affiliate faculty would need a departmental co-chair for student advising, aiming to improve accountability. Concerns were raised about unintended impacts on current partnerships with affiliates in APL and the USGS. Several changes to the proposed policy were put forward.
- The discussion was deferred for further review, with a decision to resume the conversation at a future faculty meeting or the upcoming faculty retreat.

Safety and Lab Facilities (Cantine, Journaux) - Rock Storage Space (10 min)

- ESS awarded funds in 2024 for rock storage. The goal was to address current rocks stored in the basement, encourage long-term storage solutions, and provide faculty with clear, efficient, organized space for their collections.
- **Most bang for buck option:** mobile shelving trollies that can accommodate our existing shelving. Adds ~50% more storage. Working on final quotes.

Scholarships and Awards (Montgomery, Gorman-Lewis)

- All deliberations are finished. Awards ceremony is May 8th.

Business

Faculty Retreat Date (Schmidt, 2 min)

- Two dates emerged as favored from previous poll, May 15 (also undergrad symposium) and May 29 (PhD dissertation on this day). Retreat will be on campus, hopefully in WAC.
- The Executive Committee proposed a third date - Monday June 8 (finals week).
- A new poll will be sent out.

Adjourn to Executive Session (4:04 PM)