

**Department of Earth and Space
Sciences Meeting of the Faculty
Friday, 4/3/2026, 2:30 pm in JHN 026**

OPEN Minutes

[Attendance: Buick, Cantine, Catling, Conway, Crider, Denolle, Duvall, Fudge, Huntington, Journaux, Lipovsky, Mehra, Muth, Roe, Schmidt, Stone, Swanson, Tobin, Walters, Waddington, Winebrenner; Bernard-Kingsley, Campese, Lui, Manos, Angell, Johnson]

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

Announcements

- The Microprobe has arrived. Congratulations to Cailey and Michelle!
- Congratulations to the ESS Gala award winners.
- Digital Accessibility update on Dissertations/Theses (Schmidt, 2 min)
 - The digital accessibility requirements will not be applied to dissertations and thesis manuscripts until **August**.
- Undergraduate Research Symposium poster printing (Lui, 3 min)
 - Poster printing by Henry is not permitted per eSITS contract. Printing will be done by Anton (student assistant) who is only here twice a week.
 - For the Undergraduate Research symposium (May 15th), **posters need to be submitted for printing by Wed 5/13, end of business**—but before that is better!
- eSITS update (Lui, 3 min)
 - A survey will be emailed early next week with seven questions about the eSITS transition for ESS computing (includes topics such as how has service changed for you, what is working, what more advanced computing support is needed). In mid-May, David Schmidt will be renegotiating the contract with eSITS for July 1 –so feedback is important for that process.
- Introducing new PNSN External Engagement Lead (Tobin, 1 min)
 - Elizabeth Angell is the new external engagement lead (taking over Bill Steele’s position) and is housed in ATG 140.
 - Congratulations to Renate Hartog whose 20th anniversary is today!
- Graduation Alumni Speaker solicitation (Bernard-Kingsley, 1 min)
 - Looking for a local alum to speak at graduation (local = driving distance to Seattle). **Please email Noell with your nominations.**
- TREQ announcement (Caton, 1 min)
 - Per new guidance from the College, travelers submitting a TREQ request should use the same TREQ request # for all travel expenses related to the same trip. For example, if you asked for an abstract fee reimbursement before the conference, and then are submitting a second reimbursement

request for lodging after the workshop, you need to use the same request # so that these expenses can be associated with the same trip.

Standing Committees Announcements

- **Undergraduate Program** (Duvall) - modular field camp update (Duvall, 5 min)
 - Transition into modular capstone/field capstone/experiential learning requirement for undergraduate degree options.
 - Currently meeting this requirement through ESS 401 (12 credits, summer only). ESS 401 will transition into two, 5-credit courses taught in sequence during summer quarters.
 - Identifying other coursework/future coursework that could be included as meeting capstone credit requirements (such as ESS 420 Field Methods in Remote Sensing or Drew's Environmental Geochemistry lab). Could include field methods or lab methods, etc. Doesn't have to necessarily be taught every year since 401 will continue to be taught in summers.
 - The Advisory Board is supportive of this new formatting and approach.
 - Please let Alison Duvall (Undergraduate Program Chair) know if you are teaching/planning to teach courses that could be identified as capstone credits.
 - Concerns expressed during discussion: will this impact enrollment to 401 if students have options during the academic year? Is there a risk of not having enough students to run ESS 401? More students will have the capstone requirement (currently PHYS option students do not have a capstone requirement and with our UG curricular updates PHYS option students will have a capstone requirement, so 401 may be serving more students than current).
 - UG students still express strong interest in summer capstone options.
- **Graduate Program** (Christianson) - update (Bernard-Kingsley)
 - **IDPs will be due May 15**—email was sent out today with the IDP document and process. Reminder that a conference between advisor/advisee is a necessary part of this process.
 - General exams should be taken sometime during the third year of PhD student and are due by the end of the 4th Autumn Quarter to remain in satisfactory academic progress standing. If an extension to the deadline is needed, committees should contact the GPC (Knut Christiansen, Graduate Program Chair) to request an extension.
- **Admissions** (Gorman-Lewis) - update (Bernard-Kingsley, 1 min)
 - Approaching the April 15 deadline where offers of funding and incentives can be changed for admitted students. Currently (official in slate):
 - 3 accepted, 4 declined, 5 unknown.

- There are some unofficial decisions being communicated, but please remind your prospective students to officially accept/decline the offer through their slate admissions portal.
- **Astrobiology Admissions & Steering** (Buick)
 - David Catling is the new interim director. Currently 18 months of funding remain for the Astrobiology program.
 - AB students may not have access to funding for international lab rotations due to budget. Looking for funding via Advancement.
 - Status of Astrobiology admissions unclear; have admitted about 6.
- **Colloquium** (Denolle, Caton)
 - Colloquiums for Spring quarter are lined up.
 - Please contact Kate Huntington if you have speakers for Autumn Quarter.
- **Computing** (Mehra) - eSITS survey will be sent out next week.
- **Curriculum** (Denolle) - 311 revision (Crider, 3 min)
 - ESS 311 course is listed as a pre-req for many ESS upper-division courses. If the foundation of ESS 311 is needed for the courses you teach, please be in touch with Juliet for discussion. 311 has also included an intro to programming using Matlab—considering shifting to python or shifting the learning goals away from programming altogether.
- **Executive** (Schmidt) - met this week to go over agenda for faculty meeting.
- **Faculty Senate** (Walters)
 - Digital accessibility came up at the last senate meeting with regard to some course materials (such as equations or hand-written materials) used in some departments that have been flagged as being not accessible.
 - UWIT is trying to address this and will perhaps flag certain types of material as exempt.
 - Continue to send feedback around digital accessibility.
 - There are calls for UW to provide AI tools to help convert course materials for digital accessibility compliance. Denolle has a trained agent that converts slides into an accessible HTML book and can share this information, however the formatting is not the best, but it is ADA compliant.
 - Updates to paid family leave at UW.
 - UW climate survey is published and was distributed via email.
 - Adjustment to UW Faculty Code for UW Bothell/Tacoma appointment and tenure process. In the past, this has exhibited some disparity due to the small numbers at UW B/T campuses. Proposed legislation is to align the process at UW B/T with the UW Seattle process—important to pay attention to this for equity between campuses. Please review when it comes through.
- **GeoClub** (Stone) - update Spring Break trip (Stone, 1 min)

- The local spring break trip was successful with a greater focus on geology over travel/sightseeing. 6 students attended, most are not ESS majors and the club has become more disconnected from ESS.
- Inclusive Excellence (Tobin)
 - Legal voiding of some Dept of Education DEI memos that had a chilling effect on DEI efforts at UW and elsewhere. Some have been rolled back so some work can continue so long as there are no barriers to participation—has to be open to all.
 - Funding from federal agencies for proposals that include DEI heavily is still slow to be funded.
- **Merit** (Steig, Catling) - FAR forms have been submitted by faculty – some bumps to resolve for next year.
- **Prelim Exams** (Christianson, Muth)
 - Crider and Muth teaching ESS 594 this quarter, faculty with first year graduate students will be asked to come and view talks in class.

Business

Federal Update (Schmidt, 3 min)

- (From College Associate Dean for Research)
 - Federal agencies continue to be slow at releasing grant funds
 - NASA is now starting to move money out the door.
 - For NSF, only 50% of Congressional funds are being allocated to program managers; the remainder is directed at White House priorities (National security, AI, critical minerals, safety, etc.).
 - USGS funding remains fairly stable.
 - DOE has more funding to direct to White House priorities.
 - Big implication: there is continued restriction on funding for research. ICR is going to shrink next year, which will negatively impact the department's operating budget.
 - NASA is funding lunar science—feel free to check in with Baptiste Journaux if you want to discuss how your area could be related to lunar science for access to funding.
 - Others noted that geothermal exploration and critical minerals are presenting new opportunities for funding.
 - UW Office of Research offering workshops that focus on getting funding by available resources/novel sources (e.g. industry).
- State Funding
 - 2nd half biennium State budget for UW appears to be net-neutral. Not expecting an explicit budget cut at the department level, however as ICR shrinks there will be an effective budget cut.

Adjourn to Executive Session (3:25 PM)