

**Department of Earth and Space
Sciences Meeting of the Faculty
Friday, 6/5/2026, 2:30 pm in JHN 170**

OPEN Minutes

[Attendance: Buick, Catling, Crider, Duvall, Huntington, Krissansen-Totton, Lipovsky, Mehra, Muth, Roe, Schmidt, Steig, Stone, Tobin, Walters, Waddington, Winebrenner; Bernard-Kingsley, Dakins, Lui, Lloyd, Johnson, Christoferson, Ortiz (College), Ottiger (College)]

Call to Order - Open Session (2:35 PM)

Announcements

- Department printing (Lui) - Given that printing costs have increased and eSITS will not provide assistance in printing, ESS will soon sunset the departmental poster printers. Going forward, users can send poster jobs to [UW Creative Communications](#) (e.g., for 36x48 poster = \$48 for 3-day turn-around period, but usually 1-1.5 days, GR# required).
- Dr. Crider summarized the Okanogan Metamorphic Core Complex field trip. The trip was successful, possible, and repeatable by others.

Accolades:

- Congrats to Paul Morgan who won the 3-minute Thesis Competition! (UW-wide)
- Congrats to Marine Denolle and Cailey Condit, who both had recent NSF proposals funded.
- Mike McCarthy & Bob Holzworth had a successful NASA rocket launch that included two of their EM instruments.
- Dave Montgomery was co-author on a recent Science article.
- David Catling was elected as Fellow of the Royal Society, and he will be inducted during a July ceremony in London.

Standing Committees Announcements

- Undergraduate Program (Duvall)
 - 60 walking in graduation this year, up from post-pandemic years.
 - Undergraduate degree change update: BA has been approved; course changes approved. There will need to be moderate modifications for BS to get approved for Winter 2027.
- Graduate Program (Schmidt)
 - Knut, Noell, and David are working on a Satisfactory Progress document and TA / Instructor Roles & Responsibilities document for graduate students. Will be shared broadly for feedback in the autumn.
- Admissions (Bernard-Kingsley)

- The committee reviewed 142 applicants, made 13 offers of admission, 5 accepted and admitted to the program. Compared to last year, the total applicants were lower with 36 fewer applications this year. A cohort of 5 students is smaller than anticipated, but in line with the goal to reduce the incoming cohort size (given budgetary constraints).
 - Committee is requesting feedback on the application process. Do faculty think they are getting the information they need / want from the personal statements? Send feedback to Noell and Drew. Important to note that changes to the application require a long lead time – any changes submitted now would take effect for the 2028 cycle.
- Advancement & Engagement (Schmidt, Caton)
 - Committee has been working on a number of items: Narrowed the scope of the advisory board charge. Identifying new membership to replace cycling off members. Made recommendations for alumni awardees. Planning alumni events for next year (e.g., Geology Wine Night). Have networking/community building events.
- Astrobiology Admissions & Steering (Buick)
 - David Catling is interim director for Astrobiology. No new AB students for the 26/27 academic year in ESS.
- College Council (Roe, Montgomery)
 - Major activities for the past year included review of promotion and tenure cases. Interviewed Dean candidates and provided feedback. Units are being asked to update P&T guidelines by the Provost. There is a push to include community-engaged scholarship—expanding what counts towards professional work products. Draft of P&T guidelines from the College will be shared soon.
- Colloquium (Huntington)
 - A lot of the fall is filled, including a talk by our emerging leader alumni awardee.
- Computing (Mehra)
 - The committee has been focused on the transition from in-house computer to eSITS. Still a lot of work to ensure a smooth transition with regard to scientific computing. Surveys have been really helpful in understanding what is and is not working.
- Curriculum (Denolle) - No report.
- Executive (Schmidt) - Met earlier this week.
- Faculty Senate (Walters)
 - Slide deck available. Class A legislation—faculty code has been ambiguous for faculty councils, who votes, and setting bylaws (which currently contradict each other). Class B legislation—UW has officially set forth a paid parental leave policy expansion, allowing returning students to register for period 1 registration. Discussion of FOIA requests for course materials—instructors do

not have to submit course materials for these requests and can redact what is needed to preserve academic freedom. Action plan for UW Sustainability. Concerns raised by the moving of retirement management uniformly to TIAA.

- GeoClub (Stone)
 - Spring Break trip partially funded by the department. Members interested in learning how to use the rock maps. Struggling to work out how to re-engage the club with the department, given that less than half the students are ESS majors. Instructors should encourage students in class to engage with GeoClub and consider taking on leadership/elected officer positions. GeoClub BBQ today. (Johnson) invited graduate student talks, new board is reaching out to ESS majors.
- Honors & Recognition (Huntington, Catling)
 - Created a database that generates searchable characteristics to help figure out what one is eligible for, generates a priority nominations list. Includes an email template for the communication process. Goal: identify nominees, recruit champions, and notify people who are eligible. Start thinking about matching faculty with potential awards—maybe in coordination with merit—to see who is eligible for an award.
- Inclusive Excellence (Tobin)
 - Mostly dormant this year for a few reasons. Churn in guidance from UW and the federal government. Participated in CoENV-level conversations/events via Asso. Dean Garza. Connection to College's undergrads.
 - Would be happy to hear about what folks would like to see prioritized for next year.
- Merit (Steig, Catling)
 - The committee recommends that we use an external form next year, rather than an online form. Will draft a proposal for updating the process this summer, revisit in autumn for implementing the next FAR cycle.
- Policy (Montgomery) - No report.
- Prelim Exams (Christianson, Muth)
 - Great round of prelims. Thank you to everyone who volunteered time. Just wrapped up ESS 594.
- Safety and Lab Facilities (Schmidt)
 - Working on shelves for the ATG basement. Order has been made and the completion date is sooner than later.
- Scholarships and Awards (Mehra)
 - The committee was impressed with excellence in the department. The committee is considering updates for next year's cycle (e.g., alternative pathway for publication/travel funds). Will be working on this in the fall.

Business

Federal Update (Schmidt)

- The Federal Office of Management and Budget has issued proposed changes for federal awards requirements. Last year there was concern about a financial cliff; now there is concern concerned that science will be impacted by the administration of grants. Some proposed changes include:
 - Senior agency review of proposals to ensure they (1) are consistent with law, agency priorities, and national interests; (2) advance the HWs priorities; (3) preference to proposals with lower IDC rates; (4) must include benchmarks for measuring success; (5) prioritize institutions with prior success in implementing “Gold Standard Science”.
 - Other: Peer panel review recommendations are advisory. New policies for risk assessment. Purchases cannot be made from a prohibited country list. Requires institutions to use E-Verify to confirm employment eligibility. Federal agency can terminate or suspend a grant at any time.
 - UW is currently deliberating on how to respond to all of this.
 - OMB is accepting public comment through July 13th. UW is preparing a response (one allowed per organization). Employees are welcome to send a response, but it **needs to be done as a private citizen**. Submit comments at www.regulations.gov and search for “OMB-2026-0034”; click the link for “Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance”
- UW is also addressing issues/requirements related to research security.
 - Research security training has been updated. Recently released risk assessment tools and checkers. Expect more guidance soon.

Faculty Hiring Plan

- There was group discussion about the process for updating faculty hiring plan. While we have a prioritized list, we do not currently have a ranked list of fields we want to hire in. Should we? Should this be a goal for next year?
 - Several faculty advocated for having a prioritized list that is part of a strategic plan, particularly if/when an unexpected opportunity arises.
 - It would be helpful to start with the needs of the department, consider department values, and go from there.
 - It is important to consider the evolving federal landscape. Hiring has long-term impacts—should consider what fields will be sustained through the current federal landscape and beyond.
 - Since there is no hiring in the short-term future, this gives faculty the opportunity to think about this process in a deeper way.
- This will be a topic we revisit next academic year.

Adjourn to Executive Session (3:53PM)