

March 20, 2016 FES Coffee meeting notes – by Troy Hall

At the March 20 faculty coffee, we had a lively discussion about how to organize coffees in the future. Below are my notes summarizing the discussion and consensus reached by the group. I hope the principles and approach will be acceptable to everyone, but please don't hesitate to let me know if you have questions, comments or concerns.

Present: Bishaw, Campbell, Ganio, Hall, Hajjar, Howe, Krawchuk, Law, Munanura, Needham, Strauss

The topic for discussion was how best to organize faculty coffees in FES – what should be their purpose and structure, and who should organize them. In small groups, faculty discussed these questions, then we went around the room so everyone could present their thoughts. Everyone recognized the value in having some unstructured “social networking” time at each coffee, but most felt that there also needs to be a topic for discussion. We therefore settled on making future coffees more of a blend of networking and discussion.

There was considerable discussion about who should organize the coffees. Some thought it should be done by volunteers who want to bring a topic forward; others thought that it could rotate among lab groups. We also discussed appointing a standing committee. Ultimately, given (a) concerns about ensuring that topics are of broad enough interest to attract attendance, and (b) that relying on rotating volunteers could lead to insufficient advance planning, the group reached consensus that a small group of faculty should organize coffees in spring quarter. Steve Strauss, Mark Needham, and Matt Betts have volunteered to take on this responsibility.

The discussion surfaced these principles:

- Coffees are different from department meetings; e.g., governance matters will be dealt with in department meetings, not coffees.
- Coffees are owned by the faculty and should address topics that emerge from the faculty.
- Because departmental resources are used to provide food and drink, coffees will be open to anyone interested in the topic, except in the event that there are topics that should be addressed by a narrower group.
- The department head should attend coffees as a faculty member, rather than as a member of college administration.
- The committee recognizes its obligation to reach out to faculty for ideas about how to organize the coffees and what topics should be addressed.
- The structure of coffees may vary; there's no need to have a uniform approach all the time.