

**AQS Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**5:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 13, 2019**  
**Room 245 OCCC**

**Present:** Matt Hawkyard, Sid Stetson, Sage Butts, Colleen Hill, Alyssa Squiers, Trevor Erdmann, Jim Burke, Larry Boles, Jen Krajcik, Blaine Schoolfield, Cinamon Moffett, Clare Hansen, Xin Liu, Grace

- Jim began the meeting at 5:33 p.m. and asked all in attendance to introduce themselves.
- Jim provided a quick explanation of the LAC to new members, as well as our (not so) new Program Director Larry Boles. Props and thanks to Larry for the pizza and soda!
- Larry said that there are currently 20 students enrolled in the Program, largely due to a smaller-than-usual incoming cohort this past fall.
- He said that he learned recently that some at the College would like to see as many as 32 students enrolled. However, the limited number of seats in classrooms, Practicum mentors, Teaching Aquarium staff and local housing could all be encumbrances to that goal.
- Larry plans to continue to focus on recruitment to raise enrollment and provide more competition for slots in each incoming cohort. He is also looking for any common themes as to why some students leave the Program early, so that those can be addressed.
- There are currently 9 prospective students for next year's cohort that have turned in all their documentation and another 3 that are in the process of gathering these documents.
- Review of the applicants and their materials will begin sometime on May.
- Program staff has stepped up social marketing efforts through Facebook to raise the profile of the program, attract new students, etc.
- Larry noticed a trend that fewer students from the Pacific Northwest are in this year's cohort. The reason for this has not yet been determined.
- Larry mentioned that the College has budgeted a bit more money for travel this fiscal year. He used some of it to make a trip to New England this past fall to visit high schools with aquatic programs and a few public aquariums for networking, recruiting and raise the profile of the Program in the region.

- The Program had a presence at MACNA (Marine Aquarium Conference of North America) this past September for the first time. Flyers and posters were distributed, networking was conducted, and Sid Stetson led a round table discussion/information session about the Program, which also attracted representatives from similar programs at Roger Williams University and Orange Coast College. Larry, Dr. Tim Miller-Morgan and Sid Stetson attended the conference.
- Jim asked about the current state of the College's independent accreditation process. Larry said that the College plans to submit their final information packet of the application this coming fall.
- Jim asked Larry how his first year at the helm of the Program has gone. Larry said that most of the past year's challenges have involved student academic performance and teaching the concepts of professionalism to some of the students.
- The Program's budget is in good shape so far this fiscal year but some administration officials have warned that there could be budget cuts as high as 10% next year due to state funding cuts. Larry is making moves in anticipation of this but is hopeful that the cuts won't be that severe.
- Larry and a colleague at Western Oregon University have been exploring the possibility of offering a type of "3+1" program, where students would attend WOU for the first three years and spend the 4<sup>th</sup> year at OCCC earning an AQS certificate, along with a Bachelor's degree. He mentioned that WOU officials are interested in the development of this program but would prefer an option for students who wanted to stay and finish their fourth year at WOU. Much of the coursework the last year would involve business courses, which could be advantageous for those moving into management over the course of their careers.
- Larry mentioned that there is currently a bill in the Oregon legislature that could allow community colleges to issue Applied Bachelor's degrees if approved.
- Larry told the LAC that the Program is looking for an interim instructor(s) for this fall's AQS 100 (Intro to Aquarium Science) and AQS 215 (Biology of Captive Fishes.) Alyssa Squiers usually teaches these classes but will be on maternity leave this fall.
- Sage expressed interest in teaching AQS 100.
- Jim asked if there had been any interest from anyone for AQS 215. Larry said that as this is a 200-level course, the instructor would almost certainly have to have a Master's Degree to qualify. Many in the room looked at Matt, who remained reticent and laughter ensued.

- Larry mentioned that College administration would prefer that he limited his time teaching, as 15% of his position involves responsibilities outside the Program, STEM, etc.
- Jim asked about preparations for the upcoming National Visiting Committee (NVC) visit. Larry mentioned that there would be 8 members on this year's committee. A few of the annual NVC members and sponsoring institutions have professional and scheduling conflicts, which will prevent their participation this year.
- Former NVC member Steve Vogel, Curator at The Living Planet Aquarium in Utah, will be around to render assistance if needed and plans to participate in some events this year but is sending Chelsea Wake, Curator of Saltwater and Quarantine, to represent his facility.
- Larry does not expect that the fewer than usual number of NVC members will cause any difficulties this year but invited LAC members to participate by conducting mock interviews with students, if they would like. He also mentioned that he planned to invite potential NVC members from new facilities next year.
- Matt noted that there are no representatives from research or aquaculture facilities on this year's NVC, a niche that the Program will need in the future and a niche that Program leadership and LAC members have been interested in for some time.
- Larry said that College administration would like to see more grant writing used to underwrite the Program and help it grow. He said that he'd like to explore the possibility of a grant-writing work group within the LAC to help make this happen.
- Dr.. Tim Miller-Morgan has stepped down as Chair of the LAC. His busy travel schedule and numerous professional obligations prevent him from providing the level of communication and meeting scheduling that he would prefer.
- Jim notes that Sage has expressed interest in the position recently and in the past and nominated her to chair the LAC. This was seconded by Trevor. Jim agreed to remain co-chair of the committee.
- Sage would like to see and plans to bring about more frequent Program updates to the LAC about emerging issues and opportunities and have the committee meet more frequently.
- To that end, Sage proposed that the next LAC meeting occur sometime in May or June and asked about potential scheduling conflicts.
- The next Local Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 21, at 5:30 p.m. Location will be determined at a later date.

- Larry mentioned that College administration remains very interested in exploring possibilities for the Teaching Aquarium during the summer months, when there are few or no students in the building, only staff. Summer programs such as continuing education for professional aquarists, workshops and other ideas have been floated in the past but have not come together as yet due to a number of different factors. Affordable, convenient and nearby housing for these programs remains one of the primary hurdles to overcome.
- Cinamon said that new Oregon State University dorms might be an option but those are 4 years from becoming a reality at the very earliest.
- Clare told the LAC that her colleagues Grace and Rose have been a delight to work with as mentors for the students and Program staff. They are consistently available for students and skilled at passing their knowledge and professionalism to them.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.