

Committee Advocating for Staff Interests
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
September 17, 2025, 12:00pm-1:00pm
473 Moore Hall

Attendees: Brian Asen, Josh Blaydes, Shyanna Brickson, Tom Browne, Tom Bryan, Nancy Esser, Amber Haroldson, Emily Laabs, Tara Larowe, Veronica Law, Weiya Li, Ally Magnin Harvey, Sandy Peterson, Brandon Prochaska, Megan Sippel, Liza Chang, Glenda Gillaspy

Not present: Aaron Crandall, Marie Gilbertson

Minutes by: Ally McCann

MINUTES

This meeting was called to order by Amber Haroldson at 12:02pm.

1. Review agenda

No changes to the agenda.

2. Consent agenda

Minutes from the May 21, 2025 meeting were approved and will be posted on the CALS CASI website.

3. Office of Student Engagement

Tom Browne and Liza Chang presented on the Office of Student Engagement. They are a dedicated team to elevate student engagement efforts. They aim to increase belonging and engagement for students. The office can support students in areas including mental health, addressing under-involvement issues, student organizations, check-ins throughout the year, developing information sessions and networking sessions. The office will develop a roadmap to help guide students on what to engage in and the timing involved, with a soft launch in spring and full launch next fall.

There are undergraduate engagement events already planned for this fall. Graduate students and postdocs will have a networking event, website resources, and email communications. There is a plan for a CALS first year seminar instructor gathering and more to come.

The CALS Equity and Diversity Committee will be working with the climate survey results to create an action plan.

4. College updates and questions from the committee

CASI 2024-25 meeting materials are in Box at: <https://uwmadison.box.com/s/tdhl6l6mm6y6n1jq3dxih5y8u8szmjf9>
APC agenda and minutes can be found here: <https://apc.cals.wisc.edu/meetings/>
ASEC meeting materials can be found here: <https://kb.wisc.edu/acstaff/>

Veronica Law, HR Director, discussed the implementation of Workday. There are still details to figure out as time goes on. Feedback is welcome and CALS HR can relay it to campus. The Dean gets a weekly update from campus on Workday and they are interested in getting feedback. Benefits enrollment will be in the My Wisconsin portal this year.

5. Updates from the Dean

Dean Gillaspie is happy to attend CASI meetings and uses CASI and APC (the two formal governance committees) to get formal and informal feedback for the college. Information from committees should travel back to departments and vice versa.

Government update: *The worst scenario that could've happened for federal funded research didn't happen, but a large decrease did. Indirect costs being lowered are a big reason why there was a 5% budget cut for the university. Dean Gillaspie could come back and present on the college budget for transparency if that is wanted. The student experience, Varsity Meats, and Babcock were protected. Cuts came from other places. A small amount of 101 funded employees were cut, about 55 research employees (not 101 funded) were cut, seven unit positions will not be filled, and some tenure track retirements will not be filled. A memo will be sent to the college about the budget by the end of the month. Bridge funding is in place for graduate student funding.*

The USDA has some requests for proposals, which is a good sign. The end of the government fiscal year is September 30. There will likely be a government shutdown. A continuing resolution could happen, or they could tweak a continuing resolution. We have a great government relations team that will continue to give updates on this.

UW-Madison had a tuition increase which doesn't completely make up for what we lost in funding but helps. 101 funds are spent on a lot of different things and Dean Gillaspie leads the process on how 101 is spent at the college level. Almost all departments have some other source of funding that they use to support themselves too. Dean Gillaspie has confidence in Bascom leadership throughout this process.

Questions:

-Do we know more about the teaching load policy and what number of credits would be required?

The legislature has said 12 credit teaching workload minimum for 9-month appointments and 15 for 12-month appointments. It would be impossible to function this way as a research enterprise. The Joint Committee on Employment Relations (JCOER) holds the power to make exceptions to the policy. A campus task force with CALS representation is working on this. The latest we'll know more will be December/January with fall 2026 implementation. The task force is looking at if individualized instruction will count towards credit hours. This could be a legal process given the complexities of the Wisconsin legislature adding this to state law.

-What is the college supported TA landscape pre and post budget cut?

There is not a huge impact. It's still a priority to get a handle on TA's. Many gift dollars support grad students, and it is a choice to not have them to teach. Campus recognizes there is an unfair distribution of TA's across campus.

-With the admin cap becoming permanent, will positions cut due to budget cuts be in jeopardy in future?

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When we cut something from budget it never comes back. The admin cap is separate, and we are currently under it. We could fill an opening if we had the money to do it.

6. Subcommittee updates

a. Awards and professional development

The subcommittee will talk about a staff welcome event, and if it will happen in fall or spring.

b. Communications

Website access will be given to the new subcommittee members.

c. Nominations and mentoring

No updates from the subcommittee.

d. Personnel procedures, compensation and governance

No updates from the subcommittee.

7. Chair updates

CASI chair Amber Haroldson and Chair elect Josh Blaydes can send an email for any guest speakers to come to CASI.

8. Academic Planning Council report and discussion

Tara Larowe mentioned that APC had also discussed student belonging. They will aim at addressing low awarding programs in the next five years and taking next steps for improvement.

9. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:59 pm.