

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

Attendees: Josh Blaydes, Shyanna Brickson, Nancy Esser, Marie Gilbertson, Amber Haroldson, Tara Larowe, Ally Magnin Harvey, Sandy Peterson, Brandon Prochaska, Glenda Gillaspy

Not present: Brian Asen, Tom Browne, Tom Bryan, Aaron Crandall, Emily Laabs, Veronica Law, Weiya Li, Megan Sippel

Minutes by: Ally McCann

MINUTES

This meeting was called to order by Amber Haroldson at 12:01 pm.

1. Review agenda

No changes to the agenda.

2. Consent agenda

Minutes from the November 19, 2025 meeting were approved and will be posted on the CALS CASI website.

3. Dean updates and questions

Dean Gillaspy took questions from the CASI members:

-Are there any updates on the college budget since the last all college meeting?

-Funding changes discussed in the meeting have been made. Central campus is maybe not thinking of another budget cut. Funding problems of 2025 didn't end up being incredibly bad and were most severe for USDA funded labs. The impact of indirect funding cuts has also played a part.

-Do we know more specifics for the new budget model?

-We're currently in a shadow year for the new model. As a college, we are committed to an internal college second shadow year. We don't think it would be constructive to make many changes in FY26. We probably won't see big gains with the way the model is set up and current enrollment trends. Doing the right thing for students will remain a priority.

-On the research side, we'll see gains with stabilized research funding structures. Added incentive and action could reap benefits. We'll see how model plays out and CALS is not extremely worried at this time.

-Is there are trend of merging departments and if so, why? What are the benefits?

-Compared to our sister colleges at land grants, one other college has as many departments as we do. Ten is about the number of majors for most peers. It is inefficient and we have departments without critical load of faculty. We used to have 50 more faculty and those units used to be at “critical mass”. It can be problematic to push different units together if they don’t have enough similarities.

-Mergers make us more efficient and centralized units provide backups when people are out. People with expertise touch more units. It creates more of a community of practice, helps with career trajectory in CALS, and provides people to learn from and compare notes with. Mergers can be painful, but the hope is for added benefits. In CALS, the next merger is between Food Science and Nutritional Sciences.

-Act 15 Updates

-JCOER approved the Universities of WI plan for credit exceptions. The Board of Regents is the legal home of determining what and how we teach. We are waiting on their mandate on how we act on act 15. It’s possible that they ask each campus to write how they will address it and then campus would ask colleges to do the same.

-Most problems would lie with staff who wear many hats. One idea is a “land grant mission exception”. Those who serve in land grant mission would have a credit exception. They would write a hatch report or impact statement yearly for the exception. Full implementation by fall 2026 seems unlikely, but CALS will be following for updates.

-Course Credit Minimums

-The biggest weakness of act 15 is no differentiation between classes based on size.. Under-enrolled courses should look at flexibility in when it’s offered and if needed, if the course should be offered. At some point, we have to meet act 15 and do that while following our mission.

-Counting grad/undergrad mentoring towards requirements would fix a lot, the “land grant” exception would fix many more. New faculty have an exception for their first year, sabbaticals have exceptions, and some special cases have exceptions. There will be exceptions but not an abundance of them. Some individuals will have to teach more, but not everyone.

-Gen ed requirements

-This should be easy to deal with. The policy has to do with being able to transfer gen ed requirements between campuses, so students don’t have to retake them after transferring. Transfer students are really important and limiting this would decrease access. There could be an uptick in activity with dual enrollment, where high school students take college courses.

-Climate survey: *CALS Equity and Diversity Committee (EDC) is working with the office of strategic consulting to make an action plan and four working groups. The Dean tasked them with creating 3-5 broad goals for the college. These are expected in February. Then, each unit will be asked to think about one thing they can do to achieve one of the goals. This will be less specific and more broad than the action after the last climate survey. Hopefully talking about climate will help fix it. EDC is making progress on their purpose, mission statement, and name change.*

-Should CASI pursue creating a task force and what would that look like?

-Let’s wait on action from EDC and see how it relates and if it fits. In the past, voting rights were discussed but it’s not really about voting. It’s about staff having input on important issues and being

included. The Dean will write a charge letter if CASI has something they are excited about. It could be “what CASI is doing in response to climate survey results”.

4. Subcommittee updates

a. Awards and professional development

The subcommittee will rate new nominations that are in Box and give recommendations to The Dean.

b. Communications

The subcommittee will take lead on adding the recognition program information to the website and eCALs.

- email to supervisors and person who is nominated when form is submitted*
- update form on website, add standing part to eCALs, standing spot on eCALs to post people who have been recognized, communications collect names before meetings for drawing.*
- include photo, short blurb in eCALs, tweak it as needed.*

c. Nominations and mentoring

The college committee interest survey will go out in February. The subcommittee will look at open seats and recruitment in February/March.

d. Personnel procedures, compensation and governance

The subcommittee worked on the recognition program draft. A draft of the recognition program process is in Box.

5. Chair updates

CASI chair Amber Haroldson and Chair-elect Josh Blaydes discussed a proposal to have a line item in the budget as CASI. It would cover event expenses and swag for the recognition program. Some other CASI's have a budget line in their unit and kudos programs they are working on.

6. Academic Planning Council report and discussion

APC discussed data accessibility and how that is being rolled out in spring for ADA compliance. There should be an accessibility checker in Canvas. It will be an ongoing process towards compliance and the “university digital accessibility” website is a good resource. Seminars and workshops will be provided in the spring.

7. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:58 pm.

CASI 2025-26 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/>