

Committee Advocating for Staff Interests
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
March 18, 2026, 12:00pm-1:00pm
473 Moore Hall

Attendees: Brian Asen, Josh Blaydes, Tom Browne, Tom Bryan, Marie Gilbertson, Amber Haroldson, Emily Laabs, Veronica Law, Weiya Li, Ally Magnin Harvey, Sandy Peterson, Megan Sippel

Not present: Shyanna Brickson, Aaron Crandall, Nancy Esser, Tara Larowe, Brandon Prochaska

Minutes by: Ally McCann

MINUTES

This meeting was called to order by Amber Haroldson at 12:03pm.

1. Review agenda

No changes to the agenda.

2. Consent agenda

Minutes from the February 18, 2026, meeting were approved and will be posted on the CALS CASI website.

3. College updates and questions from the committee

Tom Browne, Assistant Dean for Student Belonging, reviewed the Equity & Diversity Committee progress on the climate survey. The committee developed five goals and each department will come up with at least one goal based on those or that they come up with independently. A timeline for how goals will be assessed will be developed. The EDC will continue to figure out how they help the college achieve those goals and support departments to achieve their goals.

Veronica Law, HR Director, gave updates on the CALS sponsored discretionary compensation exercise that Dean Gillaspay emailed the college about. It will address parity, compression issues, and take into account nominations from departments for employees with outstanding performance. The exercise is part of an ongoing process and won't be able to fix everything but will help with some disparities. There is also a campus-wide pay plan, effective June 28.

To be eligible for the compensation exercise, employees need to have mandatory training done and supervisors need to have performance reviews done. Initially, CALS HR wanted to have compensation reviews twice a year, but it would be very time-consuming. They just got the necessary tools from workday to be able to do this. More realistically, the review will be done once a year.

Chairs, directors and department administrators received information on the timeline and process. They will have a few weeks to submit information and then a two-week period they could schedule time with CALS admin. CALS will provide recommendations based on data, departments can give feedback and that will be taken into account. For performance increases, departments will provide a name and justification. HR will determine if a base or lump sum amount is justified. Compression addresses the gap between employees and supervisors (15%) as well as employees across the college doing the same things. If there are limited funds, raises are prioritized using a set of criteria including seniority. The last CCF addressed a lot of parity issues. It will take a while to get parity at a good level and can be hard to compare because every department is so different. HR is trying to establish ranges on where employees should be depending on years of service.

Soft money funded (research grant funding) employees who are identified for an increase have to be paid using their current funding. That can be limiting but having the data is helpful. Identified increases can be made if there is more funding later on.

A concern brought up is that instructional staff did reviews in pmdp and have not had reviews moved over to workday yet. It was also brought up what happens with the evaluations and if anyone reviews them. HR has to trust that supervisors are doing what they should and if there are issues, they encourage supervisors to reach out. They do check that employees who are identified for an increase are meeting expectations.

A future project goal for HR is working on a performance management plan for the college. Many supervisors could be helped with a general training covering setting goals for staff, making sure employees are successful in their position, and dealing with issues in a constructive manner. Evaluations should be meaningful and HR wants to know how people are exceeding/not meeting expectations. Supervisor should know monetary and non-monetary ways to recognize outstanding employees.

4. Subcommittee updates

a. Awards and professional development

The subcommittee has no new updates. Someone from the subcommittee will present at CALS awards.

b. Communications

The subcommittee will meet before the next CASI meeting to make a draft of website changes.

c. Nominations and mentoring

The subcommittee will work on the recruitment list for next year and see what wards may need additional recruitment.

d. Personnel procedures, compensation and governance

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/>

The subcommittee has no updates.

5. Chair updates

The budget request was approved for \$3,000 annually. The next step will be working with business services to create a new driver worktag. Funding will be used for employee recognition swag and events. CASI discussed swag to order in the future and having a template budget for each year. PPCG can change the by-laws to include something about budget approval.

6. Academic Planning Council report and discussion

Tom Bryan, APC Representative, shared that an academic staff seat will be up for election for next year. Proposed L&S academic program changes are supported by CALS APC.

7. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:46pm.