

Minutes of the 25 February 2005 Faculty Council meeting

The meeting was called to order at 10:00a by Chairman Steve Harrison.

Members Present: Don Boquet, Bill Branch, Denyse Cummins, Kurt Guidry, Steve Harrison, Allen Hogan, Clayton Hollier, Linda Hooper-Bui, Becky Kelly, Joan King, Brian Leblanc, Debbie Melvin, Troy Menard, Krishna Paudel, Todd Shupe, Cynthia Stephens, Markaye Russell, Jerry Whatley, Paul Wilson.

Members absent: Ken McMillan.

Comments and Questions with Chancellor Richardson

Comments from Chancellor Richardson

Chancellor Richardson requested recommendations on procedures to replace members on the Service Unit Advisory Committees when members resigned or terms expired, and also guidelines for operational procedures of the committees.

On budget issues, there was a “voluntary” 1.75% reduction in the 2004-2005 state funding. Next year there is a proposed 3.5% cut in state funding and probably no funding for mandates that would require 2.5 million dollars, plus increases in health care premiums. The 3.5% cut may be reduced to 1.75% with funding allocation decided within the higher ed system. On the revenue side, the governor will try to raise taxes on tobacco and alcohol for teacher pay raises. Higher ed may not get in on this.

There is widespread support for a declaration of financial exigency by the AgCenter but not in March. The AgCenter will not ask the Board of Supervisors for permission at the March meeting, which will allow more time for planning how the AgCenter will reduce spending.

The Board of Regents does not support any increase in AgCenter funding. They think we are more than adequately supported based on per capita funding.

The Chancellor will meet with the ACE committee chairs and with the Service Unit Advisory Committee chairs in coming weeks to identify areas for cost savings.

Lamar-Dixon Situation: A group in Ascension parish is trying to buy the facilities for 7.5 million dollars. We are studying the situation and will do something and will have a livestock show somewhere, probably at Lamar-Dixon. Calcasieu Parish is a good option if needed.

Questions and Answer Session with the Chancellor

Clayton Hollier. When will you go to the Board of Supervisors with a plan for exigency?
Chancellor. The earliest would be the July meeting.

Allen Hogan. How has the mid-year cut been handled?

Chancellor. Three ways. 1) Each unit was asked to cut 3% from their operating budget. 2) Savings from retirements and vacant positions, and 3) Use of one-time monies.

Steve Harrison. Is the March meeting for ACE chairs and Unit heads still on?

Chancellor. Yes, for planning cuts.

Steve Harrison. What about discussions on areas that need strengthening?

Chancellor. We don't know what we can do until we know what the budget will be. If we are cut 3-4 million dollars, we should go beyond that and produce a pool of money for priority projects.

Allen Hogan. Is there anything we can do to keep our fate out of the hands of the Board of Regents.

Chancellor. Our battle is to educate the Board members and their staff. The staff has a lot to say about what the board does by what they recommend to the Board, moreso than with the Board of Supervisors, whose members have a better understanding of the AgCenter mission.

Todd Shupe. Would furloughs be the easiest way to deal with funding cuts?

Chancellor. This will not occur while I am the Chancellor.

Kurt Guidry. If we don't have exigency, what is the other choice?

Chancellor. We will have to have exigency if we have a 2.5 million dollar budget cut. We won't have any problem getting it.

Steve Harrison. Should the Service Unit Advisory Committees have an elected recorder?

Chancellor. No problem, we will do that. The minutes of the meetings also need to be posted.

End of Session with Chancellor Richardson

Old Business

Minutes from the 18 January meeting were approved.

Steve Harrison reported that, at the request of the Chancellor, two members were added to the Executive Council to represent 4-H and FCS. New members are Markaye Russell and Cynthia Stephens.

Diversity Committee Advisory Committee

Becky Kelly and Bobby Blackmon resigned from the committee. The Chancellors Office recommended Glen Daniels and Sharman Charles as replacements. The Council approved the replacements.

Procedures for replacing Service Unit Advisory Committee members

Steve Harrison recommended that the Council develop a procedure to recommend to the Chancellor.

Denyse Cummins said we needed to have two Council members on each committee.

After discussion, the FC decided it would nominate and vote to replace FC members on the Advisory Committees as needed. Immediate replacements and additions that were approved were: Paul Wilson to replace David Lanclos on the IT Committee, Todd Shupe to replace Chris Clark on the Sponsored Programs Committee, Bill Branch added to the Accounting Services Committee, Jerry Whatley added to the IT committee, Denyse Cummins added to International Programs.

Joan King suggested that rather than have individual advisory committee for each service unit, the Council should serve as a single advisory committee for all units.

Allen Hogan and Jerry Whatley noted that we were too far into the present system, which the Faculty Council debated and approved at previous meetings, to make that change. The present system is a good one because it educates the faculty as to the mission of each service unit, which was unknown to many in the past.

Steve Harrison suggested that advisory committee members serve three-year terms except for Council members who go on and off as elected to the FC and appointed by the FC.

Debbie Melvin suggested that advisory committees have a quorum to conduct business.

Steve Harrison added that a quorum should be required to adopt any formal recommendations to the administration and that the committees should establish a set of bylaws to function by.

A quorum should be five members not including the unit head and the unit head cannot vote on matters before the committee.

Jerry Whatley recommended that the Council draft recommendations with a letter to the Chancellor suggesting that these were needed to make the committees function better.

Steve Harrison agreed to draft a set of operational procedures and send the to the FC members by 2/28/05 for comments with the final version going to the Chancellor by 3/01/05.

Faculty Senate Update

Paul Wilson, FC representative to the Senate, reported that a Parking and Traffic Forum will be held at 4:00p on 4/01/05. Linda Hooper-Bui added that this is a safety issue for faculty and students who are being forced to walk across campus from distant parking lots and faculty should make this known to administration.

PS36 was approved by the Senate.

A faculty member brought up the issue of supplemental pay being excluded from retirement benefits. Steve Harrison pointed out that no payment is made to Teachers Retirement so no benefit should be expected as is the case with endowed chairs.

The issue of the professor at Colorado State possibly being fired for making statements about the 911 victims was discussed and debated by the Senate. Was this a freedom of speech and/or academic freedom issue? The Senate tabled any resolution until the next meeting.

The new Chancellor is housed in the Communication Department as a full professor.

Board of Supervisors Meeting Update

Jerry Whatley, FC representative to the Board, reported that Chancellor Richardson gave the Board a notice of intent to file for financial exigency to feel out the support or lack of support by Board members. The Board seemed to have a good opinion of the AgCenter for planning future downsizing to fit budget constraints. The AgCenter would have support for exigency from the Board. It is somewhat difficult for the Board to understand the broad mission of the AgCenter. Two new members were appointed to the Board by the governor, and there are still two vacancies.

Linda Hooper-Bui questioned what the Chancellor could do under exigency?
Steve Harrison said he could void contracts, eliminate programs and reduce size of programs under guidelines provided by the American Association of University Professors.
Linda commented that research associates are concerned about their jobs and new faculty must have research associates.

Meeting with Ann Coulon

Ann reported that there will be a rate increase in medical premiums, the amount unknown at present. Definity was purchased by United Health Care and should be improved financially.

Criteria for promotion of agents will be added to PS 42 – An assistant must have 15 hours toward an MS within 7 years to be promoted to associate. A full agent must have an MS degree.
Allen asked if an agent could use years of service as an alternative to an MS.
Ann said that Paul Coreil wants agents to have an MS.

Steve Harrison noted that something needed to be done on time intervals for promotion. There are too many early promotions as a routine matter.
Ann replied that this should be handled by declarations from the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors to the department heads. Further the Campus Promotion and Tenure Committee could act on this.

A workshop will be scheduled on promotion and tenure for faculty members going up for promotion/tenure to get everyone to do a better job in focusing their Promotion Request.

The Staff Council is now active and getting more energized -- they have a fraternity for professional self-improvement.
Allen Hogan questioned whether they elect representatives?
Ann said no, they are appointed. Staff members are reluctant to get involved and they don't have the opportunity to associate and get to know one another as well as do the faculty members.

Paul Wilson asked if the proposed changes to be made to PS 42 will be approved by the FC. Ann noted that the proposed changes are just reorganization but she will run it by the FC.

Jerry Whatley asked if we have found out anything about Federal Civil Service retirement? Ann responded that there is an early our retirement for people with 25 years at any age and 20 years at age 50. There is a reduction in benefits. However, there does not seem to be much interest.

Jerry said that people don't know about it and are waiting for information but there is a lot of interest.

Ann replied that the information is on the AgCenter web page.

End of Question and Answer with Ann Coulon

Compensatory Time/Flex time

Denyse Cummins reported that the committee kept coming up with excessive levels of bureaucracy, policies and paperwork to formalize a flextime policy. The lack of flextime seems to only be a communication problem between supervisors and upper administration. The AgCenter wants 40-hour workweeks from employees. The supervisors have the flexibility after the 40 hours are met to allow time off. They need to be informed of this.

Ann Coulon indicated this will be part of supervisor training in the future. We don't want to become clock watchers. The expectation is that the system will be fair. Insurance is an issue – whether a person is on clock or off clock. A signout procedure is needed for Risk Management and Workman's comp.

Brian Leblanc added that supervisors in the field fear what administration in Efferson Hall will do, so a clear policy is needed.

Denyse Cummins questioned what administration needs to do to inform supervisors what is acceptable?

Ann Coulon said that training meetings can be used to inform supervisors. Staff employees also need to be educated that there are two different systems and there are benefits in both systems.

Service Unit Survey

Kurt Guidry reported that the survey will go forward. Michael Dunn and Richard Vlosky (although reluctantly, not having the Diversity/Loyalty Survey results) will have a draft ready in March, assuming funding from the Chancellor. Steve Harrison will contact the Chancellor regarding funding.

Attendance at FC meetings

Bill Branch distributed a summary of attendance figures for member attendance for all FC meetings in 2003-2004 through September 2004. Some past and present members have attended most meetings and some past members attended few meetings.

Joan King stated that the FC members should have proxies when they could not attend.

Steve Harrison said we had a proxy policy but it has not been added to the bylaws.

Todd Shupe said the record of attendance should be placed on the FC web page.

Debbie Melvin noted that lack of planning the meeting schedule in 2004 caused some members to have conflicts such that they could not attend some FC meetings. Scheduling ahead will result in better attendance.

Jerry Whatley thought that we will do better with attendance as the FC gains experience with Council business and there is no need to go back and look at attendance records.

Bill Branch noted that IT has some computer equipment and cameras for video meetings that we could try out as early as April, or we could use distance ed sites for meetings.

No decisions were made on an attendance policy or on posting attendance on the web site.

Bill Branch will update attendance through January 2005 for the March meeting.

Publicizing Faculty Council meetings

Steve Harrison volunteered to notify all faculty of future FC meeting times and agendas through allagcenter email.

Faculty Council Bylaws

Bill Branch volunteered to update the FC bylaws on the FC web page.

Election Opportunity

Bill Branch brought up a complaint from an off campus faculty member who thought that off campus research faculty had little opportunity to be elected to the FC because of the much larger number of extension faculty. He questioned if we should consider dedicating at least one off campus FC position to research faculty to ensure a representative for the off campus research faculty?

The FC consensus was that this was not a problem at this time as two off campus scientists had been elected.

The Meeting was adjourned at 1:30p