

Minutes of the 7 October 2005 LSU AgCenter Faculty Council meeting

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

Members present: Donald Boquet, Denyse Cummins, Steve Harrison, Allen Hogan, Clayton Hollier, Linda Hooper-Bui, Joan King, Brian Leblanc, Debbie Melvin, Troy Menard, Krishna Paudel, Paul Wilson.

Members absent: Bill Branch, Kurt Guidry, Becky Kelly, Ken McMillin, Markaye Russell, Todd Shupe, Cynthia Stephens, Jerry Whatley.

Chancellor Richardson's update on the state of the AgCenter after Hurricane Katrina and Rita.

The AgCenter is working to get some clarification of and relief from the Governor's Executive Order limiting spending because the AgCenter is heavily involved in providing services for hurricane victims.

A special session of the Legislature will be called in November and again in January after the Revenue Estimating Committee has estimated the loss of revenues to address budget issues.

The devastation in Orleans, St. Bernard and Plaquemines parishes is actually worse than news media show. There is nothing to salvage.

No one has any idea of what the budget will be like in the spring. We will have budgets cuts. Figures from 5 to 25% are being bandied about. The AgCenter administration has no desire to use furloughs to save money. No one knows how much help will come from Washington. The AgCenter is working with the congressional delegation to obtain assistance for Louisiana farmers and with FEMA and State Risk Management for AgCenter losses. Losses of the AgCenter are minor compared with the Charity Hospital System in New Orleans and with UNO.

The Citrus Station experienced 8 to 10 feet of flood water and is badly damaged. The buildings are standing. We are trying to get trailers in for RAs to live in to help with security. The river levee south of the station is in bad shape. The Orleans Parish offices were completely destroyed and may be moved to UNO. St. Bernard Parish offices, located on a second floor, were not directly damaged but these will probably be lost to the AgCenter use and used to house other parish agencies.

Franklinton had lots of tree damage at Lee Memorial Forest. An agreement has been reached for trees to be harvested by Cleco.

The AgCenter is being allowed to sell property at the Hammond Research Station (which is located at Robert) and will be able to keep the money.

In the SW part of the state, the Cameron offices were destroyed; Calcasieu is OK and will reopen Monday 10 October. Rice and Dean Lee had wind damage. Five AgCenter employees lost homes in SW Louisiana.

All AgCenter employees are back to work – being accommodated in various office spaces. Many have been reassigned to hurricane related work.

The Chancellor and vice chancellors have been asked by the mayor of Lake Charles to meet with him to help with recovery efforts and work with parish governments.

Joan King asked how the Chancellor perceived the AgCenter handling budget cuts? Would financial exigency be declared?

A. That depends on the size of the cuts – 3 to 4 % would be manageable; higher levels would be difficult.

Krishna Paudel asked about reports of LSU cutting 5000 positions?

A. This is in New Orleans. Most of these people have not reported in. Most are Civil Service.

Allen Hogan commented that he had heard that the federal government would put a lot of money into Louisiana.

A. FEMA will not help with lost revenue. The Medical Science Center will be bankrupt by spring. Something will have to happen soon.

Linda Hooper-Bui commented that New Orleans is a safety issue. There is a disconnect between what local officials are saying and what citizens can do.

Brian Leblanc asked what will happen to parish contributions to Extension in the affected areas?

A. We will have to make it up. Orleans was not contributing anyway. Sales tax collections will be higher, which should help.

Steve Harrison asked what proportion of the AgCenter budget is subject to cuts?

A. About \$80,000,000 or about 66%. If we are cut 5%, this would be \$4,000,000.

Linda Hooper-Bui commented that the AgCenter has had a large presence in the hurricane recovery effort and this may help when budgets are cut.

Steve Harrison asked what relief will be available for sugarcane and cattle farmers?

A. We are looking at what Mississippi does and we will do the same to try to benefit from the experience of their congressional delegation.

Allen Hogan inquired about losses of the cattle farmers?

A. Paul Coreil answered that many cows were dead but hidden under grasses or have floated offshore.

Chancellor Richardson commented that he had toured with the Secretary of Agriculture, but we should not expect much help from him. Subsidence of the marsh is causing more of a problem. The long term impact is beyond imagination.

Troy Menard asked how we getting out the message we are playing a major role in recovery so that we can benefit in budget issues?

A. We email directly to legislators, ag leadership and Board of Supervisor and spend a lot of time on the phone. The AgCenter took out a full page ad in newspapers. Paul (Coreil) will email the Faculty Council on what is being done.

Steve Harrison asked what the Faculty Council could do to help?

A. The Faculty Council will be involved in budget issues and prioritization will be more important –the role of the FC will be to advise and counsel.

Steve Harrison asked how we will address faculty concerns about financial issues and morale?

A. Until we know the extent of what we are dealing with, I cannot answer this. We will keep the AgCenter functioning. The happiness of the faculty is not priority.

Denyse Cummins asked whether faculty members getting promotions would receive raises.

A. I don't know. They may not.

Joan King asked when the New Orleans area universities would reopen.

A. UNO will try to reopen in the spring.

Linda Hooper-Bui stated there are no places for students to live in New Orleans, which will be the largest problem.

Continued comments by Chancellor Richardson.

The AgCenter manages more than 20,000 acres across the state. The Div. of Adm. knows this and is looking at these holding for use after Katrina. Technically, the AgCenter does not own land. The Board of Supervisors can use it as it want.

We are in the top 3 or 4 in funding in the South. We are better funded than AR and MS, but not funded as well as TX, NC and FL. The Div. of Adm. and Regents uses these statistics as a reason to reduce funding of the AgCenter.

Paul Coreil stated at some point our help in hurricane recovery will help us. We have a large presence with expert teams out surveying problems. Everything has changed and the AgCenter has responded. Hopefully, we will not take a disproportionate cut.

We don't want people above us making decisions for us, without consulting with us. Cuts above 5% will cause us to look at financial exigency.

We have thus far collected \$55,000 for the AgCenter Relief Fund. This money is being distributed to AgCenter employees in need.

The AgCenter sheltered more than 1300 animals, we still have about 200. Most had owners who helped care for their animals. The National Guard helped with ownerless animals.

Joan King asked what President Jenkins response has been to the disasters?

A. He is working with governments, boards to save people.

Allen Hogan inquired whether Lamar-Dixon will be able to handle livestock shows?

A. Yes, the facility will be ready, barring more hurricanes.

Joan King asked if we were going to ask for exemption from the budget freeze?

A. Yes and LSU will also.

END of session with Chancellor Richardson and Vice Chancellor Coreil

Old Business

Allen Hogan moved to accept the minutes of the 7 October meeting as distributed. The motion was seconded by Clayton Hollier. The minutes were approved.

Discussion of Faculty Council Nominations and Voting Procedures for upcoming elections (with Fred Piazza and Sarah Johnston from IT).

Steve Harrison noted that concerns have been expressed that a faculty member loses the right to nominate a candidate if they nominate someone who is not eligible for election. It would be good to be able to see who has been nominated and who has declined nomination.

Allen Hogan and Clayton Hollier suggested an online system in which all faculty members' names and status for nomination were obvious.

Sarah Johnston said this was possible and agreed to modify the elections page so nominators will know who is eligible for nomination and who has accepted and declined nomination.

Faculty Senate report – Paul Wilson.

There are 2700-3000 new students and an unknown number of displaced faculty members added to the main campus.

The Chancellor has proposed hiring 3 new assistant vice chancellors for public relations. The Senate voted to oppose the creation of new positions at this time.

The semester calendar has been moved back one week as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

The library will survey research faculty with popup questions to find out how to best direct library money.

LSU meeting to help Katrina victims.

Steve Harrison reported that the agenda was basically how to get FEMA money.

It was noted that this would have been a good opportunity to promote AgCenter activities but no one was there to do so.

Board of Supervisors report – Steve Harrison.

Each campus gave an overview of the impact of hurricanes and their responses to the problems.

Business Cards

Steve Harrison distributed a handout on what information can be on an AgCenter business card. Currently, cards cannot have separate professional web site addresses. Steve said this appears to be mostly a communication problem that can be easily resolved.

Krishna Paudel stated that faculty members should be able to put their professional web site address and other information in addition to the AgCenter address.

After discussion, Steve Harrison and Krishna Paudel volunteered to draft a recommendation letter and send it by email to FC members for comments.

AgCenter guidelines for assistantship stipends - Allen Hogan.

Allen reported that he contacted Ann Coulon, who said the guidelines on stipend amounts were not HRM policy and no guidelines could be found in HRM.

The guidelines are from Accounting Services under 'Compensation' and were written in 1999. It applies to all assistantships, state and grant funded.

Steve Harrison noted that LSU has no upper limit on assistantships and the AgCenter policy is being enforced, causing departments to be at a disadvantage in recruiting.

Allen suggested the Council recommend increasing stipends.

Steve Harrison appointed a committee to draft a recommendation statement. The committee members are Krishna Paudel, Linda Hooper-Bui, Joan King, Allen Hogan, and Ken McMillin.

The Council adjourned at 1:30p.

The next meeting is scheduled for 28 October.