

Minutes of the 18 November 2005 Faculty Council Meeting

Meeting was called to order at 10:00a by Chairman Steve Harrison;

Members present: Don Boquet, Bill Branch, Steve Harrison, Linda Hooper-Bui, Joan King, Allen Hogan, Todd Shupe, Cynthia Stephens, Markaye Russell, Brian LeBlanc, Krishna Paudel, Debbie Melvin, Clayton Hollier, Becky Kelley, Ken McMillan, Jerry Whatley, Denyse Cummins.

Members absent: Kurt Guidry, Troy Menard.

Newly elected 2006 members present: Dale Pollet, Wayne Gauthier, Richard Vlosky, Miles Brashier.

Old Business

Senate Faculty Meeting reported by Ken McMillan.

The Provost spoke on the financial and personnel situation for the Baton Rouge campus. The campus will be able to take up the budget rescissions and hope the budget for next year will approach last years. There are no layoffs of personnel – budgets reductions will be made up with cuts and with tuition increases. The campus non-academic programs have given up 6% and academic programs 2 to 5%. The new chief information officer presented his plans for cooperating with faculty on IT matters. PM-35 The Faculty Senate is evaluating it and proposed revisions to decouple evaluations from disciplinary actions.

Steve Harrison said that Bill Davis has asked the Faculty Council to endorse the Senate recommendations. Jerry Whatley noted that PM-35 revisions were was important for AgCenter faculty with split appointments.

Wayne Gauthier commented that parking was to be paid by student fees and other assessed parking fees. Ken McMillan inquired if AgCenter employees would have to pay parking fees. Steve Harrison responded that we needed to have clarification on parking fees.

Board of Supervisors Meeting reported by Jerry Whatley.

The BOS is dealing with hurricane adjustments. A&M is not greatly affected, losing about 2 1/2%. Pennington state funded budget was reduced 11% but this was not a lot because they are grant funded and don't get a lot of state monies.

The AgCenter was cut about 6%.

The System Office budget was cut 16% or about \$900,000.00

Each campus will be presenting individual plans for cuts – will have to follow due process rigidly – it is against the law to pay state employees for work not performed. Closed campuses had to furlough or terminate employees.

Two or three campuses will probably ask for financial exigency.

The AgCenter is not exempt from cuts – none of us has a lock on a job. We are not in favor with administration and face an uphill battle. The AgCenter faculty needs to get involved in developing positive solutions.

Steve Harrison noted that Chancellor Richardson has said he has all the information he needs to make priority changes.

Allen Hogan added that Paul Coreil has made the same inferences to agents.

Steve Harrison stated that the Citrus Station will probably become a wetlands/fisheries and termite center using FEMA money at the Plaquemines and other locations.

Jerry Whatley inquired as to whether the Chancellor will bring the plan back to the Faculty Council.

Steve Harrison answered Yes.

Allen Hogan added the Chancellor has always said he would run priority plans by the Faculty Council before going to the BOS.

Brian LeBlanc said that his impression from the Chancellor's comments at the October Council meeting was that cuts in the 5-6% range would not be a significant problem.

Steve Harrison said that 5% was more likely the "line in the sand" that would trigger exigency.

Jerry Whatley said he thought exigency would be an intelligent approach.

Allen Hogan added that without exigency only agents and research associates could be terminated.

Wayne Gauthier asked for discussion on what the faculty could do to help address financial problems?

Jerry Whatley said we need to be involved, but our job is not to run the university. We have job responsibilities and need to take care of those.

Steve Harrison noted that, as a Faculty Council, we have been largely reactive. The future Council should be proactive.

Don Boquet added that we were proactive this year and last year through the priority reports. The Chancellor informed the Faculty Council at the October meeting that he had enough information on hand to proceed with prioritization planning.

Joan King asked if the Board of Regents discussed closing some universities.

Jerry Whatley replied that this was too political and won't get off the ground.

Elections of Faculty Council members for 2006 reported by Bill Branch.

Bill distributed a handout of the election results. New members are Richard Vlosky, Wayne Gauthier, Donnie Miller, Miles Brashier, Dale Pollet and Roberto Barbosa. Jerry Whatley was reelected to another 3-year term.

Bill reported that a total of 270 people voted, which was about 50% participation. The new software used by IT ran smoothly enough but he suggested the Council may want to look into voting procedures for future elections.

Steve Harrison noted that the Council might want to encourage IT to set up a mailing list to be used by the Faculty Council. And the Council should have someone in IT to go to with Council needs and problems.

After further discussion, it was agreed that a better system for elections and communication was needed. Linda Hooper-Bui suggested this be taken up by the IT Advisory Committee. Jerry Whatley represents the Council on the committee and will place this on the Advisory Committee agenda.

Steve Harrison brought up for discussion the representation ratios among different elements of the AgCenter. There is a lack of representation for branch stations (only one representative) for what is a very important part of the AgCenter. The Council will be largely represented by the Extension side of Off-Campus faculty with little or no representation by Off-Campus research. There may be a need to address this issue and also the breakdown of ranks – there may be a need to ensure representation for Off-Campus research and not necessarily from assistant, associate and full ranks.

Linda Hooper-Bui pointed out that the proportions who voted seemed to be correct ratios and the values of the assistant professors needs to be represented.

Allen commented that we don't seem to have enough young faculty members with interest in participating. They need to be trained in the importance of participating in organizations like the Faculty Council.

The Council did not see the representation ratios as a problem needing attention at this time.

Outside Consulting reported by Kenneth McMillan

Ken reported that the committee could not make any progress until it could get information on what outside employment activities have been approved by the AgCenter and other campuses. This baseline information is needed to make recommendations for AgCenter policy.

Steve Harrison commented that the Council could send a letter to appropriate AgCenter and Campus HRM services requesting the information on outside employment activities requested by and approved for faculty.

Jerry Whatley pointed out that the AgCenter had the most encompassing criteria for reporting outside activities but some campuses may not send everything forward for approval.

Allen Hogan stated that the perception in the AgCenter is that everything has to be reported.

Ken McMillan said it appeared we are being held to a higher standard of reporting than other universities.

Richard Vlosky noted that we have to take annual leave for consulting.

Jerry Whatley commented that people supported by state funds have to be accountable to the state. Some Extension agents have been paid for what should be free as part of their jobs.

Richard Vlosky replied that this is why consulting jobs should be limited to out of state.

Jerry said the Council should discuss the policy with Ann Coulon. Steve Harrison added she could also provide the Council with the list of outside employment requests.

David Boethel commented the policy was designed to ensure employees have the time to pursue planned outside employment activities such that there will not be interference with job responsibilities and that the planned activities are outside normal responsibilities of their appointment.

Research Associate Policy and Graduate Stipends discussed with Vice Chancellor David Boethel.

Dr. Boethel reported that the AgCenter has a heavy investment in RAs. They have only 90-day guarantee of employment and are an area where personnel can be quickly reduced. Faculty have already been reduced more than RAs. Other universities have moved to soft money RAs.

Administration has talked with departments and regions to begin transition to less hard money RAs. Reductions in hard money RAs will be 10% this year and an additional 15% beginning July 1. For 2006 there will be a 25% reduction in RA hard money.

Paul Wilson inquired if new faculty will still receive a supplement to help with startup?

A. Yes, there will be a pool of money maintained for startups.

Todd Shupe asked if the reduced RA money will stay in the units?

A. No, the money will come to the vice chancellor for the RA pool.

Steve Harrison asked how much money was involved?

A. \$250,000.00

Linda Hooper-Bui asked if the currently frozen RA position would have to return the 10%?

A. Yes. It is difficult to justify hard money RAs when we have positions opened in faculty ranks. Another source of funding for RAs will be refunds to programs of indirect costs.

Steve Harrison asked about funding for Instructors?

A. There are not enough instructor positions to be concerned with.

Linda Hooper-Bui asked about funding for post-docs?

A. They are in the hiring freeze but not in the 10% funding cut.

Ken McMillan asked if loss in a faculty member's productivity due to RA loss would be considered in annual evaluations.

A. In the short term, this would be given consideration.

Paul Wilson asked if there was a way to convert RAs to civil service positions?

A. Yes, and we have done this to some extent.

Steve Harrison asked at what point we have to look at total AgCenter programs for prioritization, since we have had cuts in many areas already.

A. We are getting close to that point.

Graduate Stipends

On paper these are ½ time employees. There are equity issues with salaries approaching post docs and RA salaries. Still, stipend amounts are usually approved as long as they are on grants.

Todd Shupe inquired as to the future of the Citrus Station.

A. Plans are being made but nothing is definitive yet. It will not operate as a typical station with a director. It would not be prudent to rebuild as a citrus station until we see how the industry responds to the storm. We will continue to have a presence on the citrus station land, which belongs to the parish. We need to have a contract with the citizens there.

End of Session with Vice Chancellor Boethel

AgCenter Business Cards

Steve Harrison reported that we have not heard anything from the Chancellor on the Council recommendations. There is no resolution as of today.

Krishna Paudel said he had been allowed to add information on his specialization to his business card but not anything else.

Promotion and Tenure – Ann Coulon

On the question of the present PS 42 policy which states that the unit head evaluations go into the P and T packet. Does the Council want to recommend prohibiting unit head evaluations in packets?

Steve Harrison said the policy needs to be clear as to whether it is to be included.

Ann said the unit heads and vice chancellors do not have a preference for inclusion and asked if the Baton Rouge Campus required inclusion?

Linda Hooper-Bui replied they are not required.

Joan King said they do not need to be included but need to be available.

Linda Hooper-Bui said that faculty member responses also have to be included if the evaluations are included.

Ken McMillan questioned whether the unit head evaluations should be part of the promotion packet.

Steve Harrison stated he would rather not have it included.

Todd Shupe called for a vote on the question to recommend that unit head evaluations not be included in promotion packets.

Seconded by Allen Hogan.

The motion passed with a unanimous vote. The Faculty Council will recommend to the AgCenter to change PS 42 so that unit head evaluations will not be required in promotion packets.

Ann reported that a new policy on the use of IT resources is almost ready to be sent to the Council.

She reported that there are 21 P and T requests this year.

The Staff Council lost its records in New Orleans and the person keeping the records has retired. The Staff Council will start to meet again in January.

Todd Shupe asked, Of the 21 P and T requests, how many have pulled their requests?

A. None but 7 were not completed after submitting a letter. Three candidates did not meet criteria set in PS 42.

Jerry Whatley stated that the individuals not meeting criteria should be identified to the Campus P and T committee.

Ken McMillan said PS 42 should be provided to P and T committee members to read.

Ann agreed.

Administrative Update by Chancellor Richardson

As of noon today, the Governor has issued an executive order for funding cuts. The Board of Regents has given the Board of Supervisors cuts of \$66,000,000.00. The LSU System portion is \$27,000,000.00.

The LSU AgCenter portion is \$4,397,000.00, or 5.8% of the state funded budget. Further reductions were \$125,000.00 from the tobacco funding, which may increase. What we are currently looking at is a 5.8% cut to the general operating fund plus \$125,000.00, or a total of a 6% reduction in state funding. We are at a tipping point (above 5% cut) so we have to look at the possibility of financial exigency to deal with lots of issues – contracts and tenure.

The next meeting of the BOS is 9 December. The Revenue Estimating Committee will meet again this year and in January. Some action will be taken based on revenue estimations. There will be a legislative special session in January.

The BOS approved a lay off procedure for Health Sciences but not for UNO. The AgCenter would go before the BOS as a separate campus not as direct effect of the hurricanes, but as secondary effect – loss of income.

Richard Vlosky asked if the 5.8% cut included the original 5%?

A. Yes, it is not cumulative. Our problem is the formula funding. We are funded at 120% of implementation, whereas LSU Baton Rouge is funded at 83%. Campuses above the average formula funding of 92% were cut more.

Steve Harrison asked if the vice chancellors would make the decisions on budgets cuts?

A. We will have to take to the BOS a business plan with a lot of specificity. They will not allow the chancellors to come in with a broad plan. This will not be business as usual. We will have to show what we will do differently. We are looking at retirement issues. There may be a possibility to retire and work half-time. We will be looking at regionalization of Extension and viability of research stations.

Joan King asked if the BOS wants details so they can have their input?

A. No. They are doing things differently because that is how they are now doing business.

Todd Shupe inquired if the chancellor will make 7 to 8 % cuts to some areas to free up money for other areas?

A. Yes. We could have money for priority programs.

Richard Vlosky asked how this would affect tenure programs?

A. We will look at how we use existing resources. At some point we have to get into programs.

Joan King asked about hiring people to deal with the hurricane aftermath?

A. This is not a problem except we have to deal with budget cuts. There is no hiring freeze for higher education. It is a difficult time to hire administrators, who would have to face immediate budget cuts.

Todd Shupe asked if budgets cuts will be different across campuses.

Yes. But I don't think ours will change. The Hospital System is a big problem for the state. For UNO, SUNO, Delgado, it depends on how many of their students return. There is no talk of closing campuses. AgCenter departments will not be cut the same across the board.

Steve Harrison asked if the Chancellor anticipated a need for a Faculty Council meeting before 9 December?

A. Yes, maybe before 9 December.

Wayne asked how financial exigency worked?

A. The BOS has a policy on how this is done. We have to develop a logical plan on how to deal with peoples and programs.

Denyse Cummins asked if the Chancellor was considering furloughs?

A. No.

Miles Brashier asked if agents would be moved into regional offices?

Yes. There will be fewer people doing things.

End of Session with Chancellor Richardson

New Business

Discussion of Distance Ed sites for Faculty Council meetings.

Cynthia Stephens said she would like to see the distance ed system used for Council meetings, which would be better than traveling from north Louisiana for a 10 o'clock meeting in Baton Rouge.

Don Boquet pointed out that the system seldom works without some type of problem in accessing and maintaining connections and would need to have constant help from site personnel to keep it working.

Steve Harrison said he was concerned about the loss of interaction among members.

Linda Hooper-Bui said the Council should try and see how it worked.

Steve Harrison suggested starting the next meeting earlier at 9:00a to allow members traveling long distances to return home earlier. The use of Distance Ed can be decided by the new Council at the January meeting.

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for 2 December 2005 at Chancellor Richardson's request but will be postponed if there is no need to meet to discuss budget issues.

Ken McMillan moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Clayton Hollier. The meeting was adjourned at 1:30.

