

LSU AgCenter Faculty Council Meeting Minutes for April 28, 2006

Attendees: Joan M. King, Dale Pollet, Denyse Cummins, Wayne M. Gauthier, Allen Hogan, Debbie Melvin, Clayton Hollier, Miles Brashier, Ken McMillin, Rich Vlosky, Todd Shupe, Roberto Barbosa, Linda Hooper-Bui

Absent: Jerry Whatley, Markaye Russell, Cynthia Stephens, Donnie Miller, Paul Wilson, Brian LeBlanc, Troy Menard

1. Call to order at 9:30 AM by Clayton Hollier

2. Comments by Chancellor Richardson

The chancellor will meet Wednesday morning with members of the revenue estimating committee to get a handle on available monies. The LSU AgCenter's budget is currently 6% short. The LSU AgCenter is sending in amendments. The revenue estimating committee's estimate will drive the meaningful action for any LSU AgCenter changes. The current state budget includes a 5% salary increase for faculty. Real dollars for this will be 4.5% with the rest covering benefits. If the AgCenter is given discretion on these raises they will be merit based. The current budget also covers unfunded mandates, but leaves a \$4.5 million gap.

In the past week an ethanol bill was discussed which requires a 2% ethanol in gas mandate and which is a major sticking point. The plant would be in Lake Providence.

The amendments that the LSU AgCenter is asking for in the budget bill are: (1) to restore the 6% budget cut back of \$4.5 million which looks promising, and (2) to change the appropriations language to get permanent changes so that the LSU AgCenter's budget would be indexed in relation to what other campuses get for tuition. There are ongoing discussions with other campuses and boards.

Therefore there are both long and short term issues for the LSU AgCenter's budget. The LSU AgCenter will know how exigency will affect its short term future by June 19th.

The first exigency plan moves were approved by the Board of Supervisors. The Dairy Science area is being downsized. The advisory committee has met on the proposed administrative changes. There have been few negative reactions from clientele. The Animal Sciences department will become the School of Animal Sciences. The proposals for downsizing of administration will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors in June. A couple of other areas with downsizing potential are being decided upon for sending in June or not.

In the capital outlay area, the LSU AgCenter is trying to get the money earmarked for the Animal and Food Sciences Building, particularly the first phase for construction out at Ben Hur. There is an issue with restricting access to Ben Hur Road for security reasons and for safety as it pertains to tractors on road vs. cars.

Joan asked why Animal Sciences was becoming a school. The chancellor answered that a school designation would be helpful in attracting a head. The AgCenter is moving to a schools model instead of departments.

Denyse asked what the chancellor meant by administrative positions. The chancellor said there were 15 support positions eliminated, there is one less regional director and one less Associate Vice Chancellor in the Chancellor's office. Assistant and Associate Vice-Chancellor positions that become vacant may not be filled. The motor pools were combined. There may be other unit consolidations and there may be fewer regions. Dr. Boethel pulled \$200,000 from the BAE budget. The Ag leadership position was changed to half-time. A clerical position was cut in the Chancellor's office.

Ken asked the Chancellor to express to the faculty that the process is deliberate and diligent and to reassure people in monthly updates about exigency. The Chancellor said he likes to be sure about what is going to happen when he gives updates.

The Chancellor thinks that the tuition bills are dead in the legislature. The fee bill was also parked. Tax looking bills like fees are not of interest to the legislature. The legislature doesn't want to tax students. There is a long range tuition bill in the works with the LSU AgCenter written into it to give us flexibility.

Wayne asked whether there was not much opposition to the Dairy Science changes as they thought there would be. The Chancellor said that 600 cards, letters and phone calls were sent, but none to him. Only one person told the Chancellor that he did not like the changes. One person told the Chancellor he should have done this 5 years ago.

For the tuition issue, the LSU AgCenter wants some kind of index used so when LSU A&M gets a tuition increase then the AgCenter can get a proportion of the increase. The LSU AgCenter portion would come from general funds. Pennington and maybe other campuses are being included in the process. Chancellor O'Keefe is okay with the idea. The Commissioner of Higher Education is okay with the idea. Chancellor O'Keefe needs LSU AgCenter support to get a tuition increase.

Rich asked if unfunded mandates' are \$3 million vs. a tuition index of \$2 million what would happen. The Chancellor said we could still get unfunded mandates on the same playing field if budgets go up for other campuses.

Todd asked what happened to the universities being able to increase tuition up to 3% each year. The Chancellor said that option had expired. The university has to get 2/3 of the legislators approval for tuition increases.

Wayne asked if Savoie and the Board of Supervisors were giving the LSU AgCenter grief. The Chancellor said it hasn't gone away, but Savoie would support an index measure, but Savoie would love to see the LSU AgCenter go under the LSU campus. The LSU AgCenter pays LSU \$4.8 million for overhead. Savoie thinks the LSU

AgCenter would get the \$4.8 million if we went under LSU, but the LSU campus counts it as budget revenue to them and not to us. Savoie wants the Law School and AgCenter under LSU's budget and control. The Chancellor asked how Savoie can see the LSU AgCenter as having a budget funded at 120% compared to other states AgCenters when its faculty have the lowest salaries.

Miles asked if there were still discussions about the campus taking over some salary of faculty under the exigency plan. The Chancellor said that the LSU AgCenter does not want to have teaching programs and that there would be no change in salaries sources.

As far as the search for President of the LSU System, consultants are coming in to determine the best search method and to develop and profile of what to look for in a President. The Chancellor will be meeting with them. The Chancellor wants to make sure rumors about combining campuses do not go forward.

There will be seven new appointments to the Board of Supervisors and he is not sure how that will come out. Jerry Shay who is the V.P of the BOS is a good friend of the LSU AgCenter and is also close to the governor. The LSU AgCenter will not hear about appointments until maybe July or August.

Allen asked about the appointments of Mr. Anderson and Ms. Leach. The Chancellor said the rumors include Mr. Anderson. One of them will stay, but he is not sure which one. If only one or neither is appointed then the LSU AgCenter will ask that they appoint a person with an agricultural background.

3. Purchasing Issues with Mark Legendre and Jan Bernath

LaCarte card issues were covered like finding out who made purchases when companies send invoices.

Linda said that the emails we get about LaCarte card purchases are useless because they have no list of purchases. Mark said the number on the email is meaningful, since it relates to the purchase and the email is to make sure we know the charges are going through. If you do not receive the email directly you should ask the person in your area who receives them to forward the email to you. Also the department or area person can print out the invoices to see who bought what.

Clayton said he forwards the LaCarte emails to the accountant in his department. He said that sometimes people ask for receipts from the one email, but we don't know what item they need. Mark said every unit is different about how invoices are handled. Mark said individuals can get access to the system online if approved by the unit head. Some unit heads do not want to share the information.

Debbie said some fraudulent charges have been made by outsiders. Jan said to call the card people and cancel the account if this happens. The secretary of your unit should ask

for the receipts if they are not there. Then the incident has to be reported to the fraud unit. You are not liable for fraud unless there is personal misuse.

Debbie asked if the conference registration fee limit that can be charged on the LaCarte card could be increased up to \$1,000. Mark reminded us not to claim registrations paid on LaCarte cards on travel vouchers.

Mark has asked the system to change the rules to allow hotel and airline tickets to be purchased on LaCarte card instead of the corporate personal travel Visa cards, but it was not approved. A central billing account can be used for airline tickets. Linda said this would be good for international travel. Mark said he has a central billing account for airline travel if your unit doesn't already have one that be used.

Debbie asked if that if tickets are purchased through a Central Business account do they have to have a refundable provision. Mark said the decision is at the personal level, no matter how they are paid for. Mark said there is misinformation about having to use the state contracted flights. You can get the lowest fair, but you have to use Navigant Travel for flights. There are no exceptions. You can tell Navigant to use the lowest nonrefundable fair.

Linda said there are issues with students or research associates travel which is paid on the travel visa. The paperwork sits in the international travel office for transferring money and it takes six weeks to get reimbursed. Mark said that a group travel advance could be done or an international travel advanced or a basic travel advance to pay back the visa card.

Rich said the advance is limited \$25/day for driving. Mark said the state regulation hopefully will increase starting July 1. The LaCarte card can be used to buy gas for a university vehicle.

Rich asked why international travel had to go through the international programs office of the LSU AgCenter. Richard said he does all the calculations himself. Mark said he needs to look into the situation and possibly make changes.

Mark said there has been discussion about raising the LaCarte card daily limit to \$2,500 and also to allow travel, hotel and airfare expenses. They have discussed raising the limit for purchasing with three quotes up to \$5,000, equipment up to \$5,000 and the use of a LaCarte card for purchases up to \$5,000, but they went in with \$2,500. The Division of Administration is involved and there has to be a governor's executive order to change the rules.

Jan said that we can spend \$1,000 per vendor per day on LaCarte card purchases.

Linda said Office Depot purchases by her and her research associate sometimes are questioned because it looks like they are split. How closely are these tracked? Mark said

that data can be easily accessed and followed closely. It is looked at in units. Explanations can be written if this happens.

Debbie said we may not know the tax identification number for purchases at places like Wal-Mart. Mark said there is a handout about all these places for tax exempt numbers that they have themselves.

Linda asked if the petty cash maximum of \$100 could be increased. A person needs a check or cash to pay for purchases in small rural areas. They do not accept LaCarte cards, so these petty cash reimbursements have been going through the AgCenter. Mark said we can go to T. Boyd Hall for a cash advance.

Ken asked Mark to address the new vendor certification system. Mark said it is called EPro and has a vendor database. There is a website link that vendors must use to go into the system. Ken said it was an equipment company issue. Mark said they need the tax ID number and mailing address of the company so they know where to send the payment. Ken asked why the information about being required to be a registered vendor on EPro is not being sent to companies in the bid requests. Mark said that if there are vendors with a problem registering then tell Mark and he can work with them. Jan said LaCarte vendors do not need to be in EPro. Ken said he was told not to put different addresses and names other than the corporate office information on EPro. Jan said there are mailing, shipping and remit to addresses. The invoice goes to the shipping address. Jan said there can be three different addresses for a vendor. Mark said there are a lot of bugs in the EPro system.

Mark said he will put a handout of LaCarte card policies on the intranet LSU AgCenter intranet website. Clayton said he forgets specific information and gets different answers depending on whom he asks about LaCarte cards policies.

Linda says she rents rental cars for the whole summer and she gets in trouble with Baton Rouge, Hammond and New Orleans travel because she puts rental car gas on her LaCarte card. Mark and Jan said that the LSU AgCenter will approve accounts for long term lease of rental car gas purchases on LaCarte cards. The car must be termed as a state rental vehicle on the form and a purchase order must be paid directly to the company for the rental.

Debbie said that everyone in her area uses the parish chair's LaCarte card. Debbie applied for one but her card is sitting in the regional office because she can not get to a training session even though she has been using her parish chair's card. She attend a training at annual conference. Jan said that the regular training is detailed and is held once a month. Mark said at the training the person gets detailed handout about rules. They want to make sure employees know the seriousness of card use.

Wayne asked about the general policy for non-refundable airline tickets. If the employee can not take the trip, does the LSU AgCenter still take care of the costs still? Mark said that the AgCenter can cover the cost if it is a work related issue that causes a change in

plan or an out-of-control, issue such as the weather. You can get credit from the airline but you have to use it for business. If you have to pay a \$100 charge for changing a flight, the LSU AgCenter will pay it, if the unit head approves it. You must follow travels regulations.

Wayne asked how far ahead do travel advances and permission to travel internationally have to be obtained. Mark said two weeks ahead and the Chancellor has to approve it.

Ken said international programs will notify people if others from the LSU AgCenter are traveling to the same country so they are aware of each other.

Wayne said units have to live within their budgets and asked what happens if they do not. Mark said the head will get called into the Director's office or the head goes there to let the director know.

Linda said for long flights a person can travel business class if the flight is over 8 hours, but the amount that can be spent is limited. Mark said that he thought that 25% above coach price is allowed and travel miles can also be used to upgrade.

Todd asked about foundation account rules and whether they were more flexible relative to the purchase of first class tickets. Mark said it depends on the existence of discretionary funds and their identified uses. You can use discretionary funds for first class travel if unrestricted monies are used to pay for that travel.

Rich asked if we can pay with our own money to go up in class. Mark said we can use the travel visa card to cover the increased costs of an upgraded ticket, but we would only be reimbursed at a coach class rate. The difference would be paid with personal money.

Rich said we can only get upgrades for the last leg of the trip. Mark said you can obtain a coach class ticket quote through Navigant and then upgrade it.

4. Human Resource Issues with Ann Coulon

For tenure and promotion issues, Ann didn't see any policy changes suggested by us, just little wording changes. Ann will look at eligibility issues. A packet of information will be coming through.

Ann asked if there should be ranking on the form that has the review by unit faculty and supervisor information included. The faculty council said there is no need for ranking.

Ken asked what the status was between LSU and AgCenter documents. Ann said she and Dr. Boethel were looking at the issue.

Ann said there was a request for a unit level faculty review committee person to represent faculty going up. The faculty council said that was important to have a representative at the LSU AgCenter tenure and promotion decision committee meeting.

Ken asked when a person can add a letter addressing the unit committee vs. unit head results. Ann said there is no letter request.

Todd said some people do not get vote results or feedback from the unit head.

Linda said there should be a rebuttal opportunity for comments made at unit level.

Ann said training seems to help the process run more smoothly.

Todd suggested that an email be sent to candidate with a copy to the unit head asking that the results of the review be given to the person going up.

Rich and Dale said that comments that the candidate sees on summary forms should be verbatim.

Clayton said for the on-campus committee if there is a negative summary on the candidate the committee wants to see a rebuttal statement by the candidate.

Ann said that annual reviews will not be included in the packets. The Chancellor and Vice-Chancellors have access to annual evaluations. They look at them for raise purposes. Ann will check them too to make sure that the raise is not too high or too low based on the evaluation. They look at overall performance for raises not lean vs. good years.

Linda asked why faculty do not do unit head evaluations. Ann said we will do them in an online system which will be ready soon and they will be every other year.

Allen said that Faculty Council requested a few years back that annual evaluations of unit heads be done.

Miles said that there is input from many people on annual evaluations from those who do not know what the person in the field does. The regional coordinator has to give input without knowing what a 4-H agent really does. If they have to give input they should know what the person does and be required to attend events in which the agent is involved. 4-H coordinators are secondary evaluators; also FCS people are not required to choose evaluators. Supervisors and coordinators can send the evaluations to other people for comments.

Ann said that HRM is trying to do more training, for instance with staff. Also they want to do more faculty training and she asked the faculty for input on types of training needed. Ken said lab safety.

Ann said the Diversity program is coming under HRM and Tori Freeman will be the point person. She will ask faculty council for suggestions. One issue is international persons of which there are many in the LSU AgCenter.

Wayne brought up the question of the establishment of an ombudsman position. Denyse said this would be valuable for research associates.

Wayne asked about the survey done by the Diversity Unit from 3 years ago. Ann and Tori have been assigned to get the survey information.

Debbie said that the school board is working with a wellness organization to see what might be done to enhance the health of employees, which in turn would minimize employee absences. Is the AgCenter looking into this area? Debbie said people in her area can do tests to determine the health status of employees. It would have to be a voluntary process. It could save the LSU AgCenter insurance cost wise. It may result in lowering costs by lowering claims. Ann said it may fit into training our people using internal programs.

Ken said that when United Health bought Definity the paperwork became worse.

5. March 24, 2006 minutes were approved with wording corrections.

6. Board of Supervisors Meeting Update by Jerry Whatley through Email on 4/25/06

At the recent BOS meeting Bob Rasmussen told the CFA that a consulting team from the Association of Governing Board of Colleges and Universities (I think I have the title correct) will be on campus to meet with representatives from the various campus faculty senates/councils. They are charged with making a recommendation to the BOS regarding what criteria, qualities, expertise, etc. the BOS should look for in selecting the next president of the system. In their process they would like to get faculty input via meeting with the chair & vice chair of the different campuses. They will be in BR on Wednesday, May 3rd from 4:15-5:00pm at the new Emerging Technology building. Also at the CFA meeting we were informed that the national president of the AAUP met with faculty in New Orleans to hear their views of what has happened at LSU Health Sciences Center, Tulane, SUNO, UNO and Loyola. Each campus has terminated tenured faculty and classified staff since the hurricanes through forced majure or some method other than financial exigency and justified it on the basis of the hurricanes. The AAUP will call a Council of Inquiry and, to my understanding, has already notified the administrations of those campuses of their intention to gather the information needed for the inquiry. At the BOS meeting, the Ag Center's first presentation regarding the dairy program was approved without discussion. LSUNO was given approval to develop a plan for financial exigency after severe questioning by the board and a request to the BOS by a faculty member from SUNO who is a state officer of the state AAUP to deny the request. I would say that LSUNO will be under scrutiny from the BOS as they bring proposals forward. I will not be at the FC meeting Friday as my son is being recognized as the

outstanding senior from the COA at that time. They only want two representatives from each Faculty Senate to attend the meeting with the consultants.

7. General Discussion

Ken moved that there be annual evaluations of supervisors by employees. Motion passed unanimously.

Topics to Cover at Next Meeting:

Miles said that there needs to be a protocol for a specialist to come into a parish. They should let the area employees know they are coming.

Debbie said there needs to be a policy on it because right now it is a courtesy call.

Ken said the main campus consulting issue brought up ethic issues. Maybe we need ethics rules with all these issues included. Maybe we need to change his (Ken's) committee to cover this issue.

Debbie asked what was happening with exigency and all the pink slips people were supposed to get.

Clayton said the advisory committee doesn't always know ahead of time what is being brought to the committee. The issues are just brought there, reviewed and debated. The committee is looking at whether the process is fair. There has been no big picture for plans given to the committee. The committee is advisory only. Some opposition is stated by committee members. Members make lots of comments. They never discuss individuals by name. They are given a body of people in general and are asked about the downsizing of an area but no exact numbers are given for the downsize.

All said the changes depend on the budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:53 PM.

8. Meeting Dates

Meetings time will be 9:30 AM approximately every 4th Friday of each month in the Sullivan Conference room. Next meetings: June 30 and July 28.