

LSU AgCenter Faculty Council Meeting Minutes for June 30, 2006

Attendees: Joan M. King, Dale Pollet, Wayne M. Gauthier, Allen Hogan, Debbie Melvin, Clayton Hollier, Miles Brashier, Ken McMillin, Rich Vlosky, Todd Shupe, Linda Hooper-Bui, Jerry Whatley, Cynthia Stephens, Donnie Miller, Brian LeBlanc

Absent: Roberto Barbosa, Denyse Cummins, Markaye Russell, Paul Wilson, Troy Menard

1. Call to order at 9:43 AM
2. Comments by Chancellor Richardson

The LSU AgCenter requested \$70 million with the mid year budget cut taken into account and also asked for a \$6 million amendment, but only received \$1.3 million of the \$6 million. Health insurance is up 6.5% of which the \$1.3 million goes towards covering.

The budget is still at a \$2 million deficit. The 5% pay raise was passed by the legislature and usually the amount includes benefits. This year the LSU AgCenter expected to have extra money for benefits so the raises could actually be 5% on a salary basis. **Note from email from Dr. Richardson after meeting:** The full 5% was not able to be factored in since benefits had to be taken from the pool of money. The raises were planned to be anywhere from 0% to 10%. High performers could receive more than 5% and research associates were included.

Money could not be distributed across the board it had to be merit based. The raise would not be in the July checks and there will be a supplement added to our paycheck in August most likely. The Board of Supervisors has to approve raises. Civil service and retirement costs were all covered. So the overall budget included the 5% salary increase and \$2.6 million discretionary funds, which amounts to \$2 million less than last year for a total budget.

The LSU AgCenter will get the money to begin the Animal/Food Science Bldg. for priorities 2 and 5, including the facility at Ben Hur and the new lab building.

The Shaw group will build a diesel plant. There will be a lot of attention on synthetic fuels. Biofuel plants using soybeans now exist.

Exigency plans are continuing and will end by fall. There are no anticipated losses of existing tenured faculty or contracted people. Regular losses of contracted people can occur, if contracts are not renewed. This is just the typical ebb and flow of people.

Raises will be merit based and will be submitted at the August Board of Supervisors meeting. Ann Coulon said that she looks at the fairness of the raises, for example low raises for a good evaluation or high raises for a mediocre evaluation. Some counter

offers had to be made to retain certain people. Some good people left. Some institutions' countered the LSU AgCenter's offers.

At the time of this meeting, the governor had not yet signed the raise bill.

The LSU AgCenter is still looking into a long term solution to our budget situation, such as giving management boards more authority over tuition increases and fees for campuses. The chancellor is trying to get the LSU AgCenter into the money stream for so we get tuition money from the LSU A&M campus or we could get money at a similar increase to the tuition increase on campus. We need 70 votes in the legislature to have this approved.

In the Master Plan at Ben Hur, the road will become controlled access. The city wants to make Kenilworth pass through to River Road and the LSU AgCenter is trying to prevent this from happening due to the effect on the Aquaculture Center.

The LSU AgCenter is changing the scope and range of stations. Rose Pine scientists are moving, one to Dean Lee and one to Hill Farm. There will still be beef work at Rose Pine. Citrus work is stopping at the Citrus Station. There will be no resident scientist. Wood products will be the focus instead. There are no scientists at Calhoun Station. The state is trying to put a military cemetery there. It is Representative Rodney Alexander's district. They need to expand the cemetery because it will be full in 4 to 5 years

Wayne asked if the rosy outlook from the revenue estimating committee does not come to be, then would it be wise to keep the exigency plan. The chancellor answered that The LSU AgCenter budget was cut 1.75% last year and 6% this year. Funds will be held in contingency in case of another reduction. If the budget is cut, it will be for political reasons not economical reasons. The exigency plan automatically expires in June 2007.

Todd asked about the status of the letter to Chancellor O'Keefe concerning the promotion and tenure issue. Dr. Richardson said he was going to talk to Chancellor O'Keefe about the issue.

Clayton asked if there would be more reorganization of departments. Dr. Richardson said there will be additional changes for departments like mergers. Plant Pathology and Entomology will remain separate. Fifteen administrative positions will not be refilled and that issue does not have to have Board of Supervisors approval. In the next few months we will hear about administrative changes and there will be fewer administrators.

Allen said that \$2.5 million is a small amount of money. He said that the mileage rate has gone up, but the budgets for travel funds have not. He asked if there will be increases in travel funds for mileage. His boss is adamant in obtaining more funds for travel.

Linda asked what was happening as far as the research associate cuts and whether the 25% cut was still planned for this year. Faculty need to know if the plan is continuing, because they will not have enough time to plan for cuts and obtain funds from grants.

She suggested a year and ½ advanced notice. Richardson said the plan will be the same and would continue. He said he would speak with Dr. Boethel about it. Research Associates were included in the raises. Everyone should know about the plan. The LSU AgCenter is trying to get people to fund research associates with grants. Extension Associates were not included in the cut. They are seen differently than research associates, since they always get raises.

2. Human Resource Issues with Ann Coulon

The return to work legislation failed in the senate. The LAE and teachers testified against it. The LSU AgCenter wants more options for people to retire and come back part time. Some faculty want to do this to help graduate students finish a project. The LSU AgCenter will try again next to get legislation passed.

There was a general question about how the review committee was chosen for reviewing tenure and promotion packets. Ann explained the process for choosing the committee members. The tenure and promotion forms go to the AgCenter to make sure that all materials are included, so that they can go back to the department heads to make sure faculty informed of progress.

Jerry asked if packets are supposed to be looked at from the beginning. He says there have been various situations during the review process from departmental faculty reviews including mixed results; early approval, which should be an exemplary person; and a unanimous vote by department head and the faculty, which he wonders why the review committee has to look at the file of. The committee should be looking for errors or people being pushed through in this last situation.

Allen said the committee should not be used to stop clearly sailing people with unanimous votes. If the minimum criteria are met, the review committee should recommend a pass. Sometimes the meeting is slowed down by discussion about unanimous people.

Ann said the committee provides good feedback about the policy for promotion and tenure.

Jerry, Debbie and Allen mentioned that the newly suggested part of PS-42 regarding the role of the representative of the faculty going up for promotion should only include answering questions the committee may have about the request.

Allen said that the charges to the review committee need to be emphasized to them.

Brian suggested eliminating part 4.a. in the committee charges “provide an objective review and recommendation”, due to potential duplication by review committee if department faculty and head give a unanimous evaluation.

Jerry stated that there is some confusion about what the review committee does. If the department already approved the person then why would the committee vote against them. In the past there has been some detailed item picked out to vote against the person even though the person had a unanimous vote from the department. Why would people who know nothing about the person vote on them?

Rich said that there is an advantage to not knowing the person so they can be objectively reviewed. Linda agreed that there should be an objective review from people not knowing the person. The person should be able to prove that they are deserving.

Rich said he has been asked to answer questions for candidates from his department at the review committee meeting. The College committee instead asks the representatives to make a 5 minutes presentation about the persons under review. Both committees look at all activities of person going up.

Rich and Allen said that a person with 10% a research appointment is looked at the same as someone with a 100% research appointment.

Ann said that the committee is suppose to look at that kind of issue to make sure they are being fair.

Rich said that journal quality is an important issue, not just number of publications. Department faculty have the best knowledge about what person should do and be like.

Brian stated that extension professors have received split votes based on research and extension.

Linda said she was uncomfortable with only having part a. of insert B. regarding having the representative only be there to answer questions if needed. She is worried that if people are following the rules, they may not be reading the documents carefully.

Jerry and Dale said that people are reading the documents and seem to have predetermined decisions. If extension people do not have refereed publications some people voted no.

A vote was taken and Faculty Council approved insert B part a only regarding having the representative at the meetings only to answer questions.

Ann said that insert C provides an option for faculty to have a representative to make a presentation on their behalf at the department head review committee meeting.

A vote was taken and Faculty Council approved Insert C allowing faculty to choose to have a representative at the department head tenure and promotion review committee meeting to make a presentation on their behalf.

Todd said that he thinks it is inappropriate to discuss teaching at the LSU AgCenter review committee meetings because it is covered by the college and department faculty reviews.

Rich believes that the teaching portion is also important to the reviewers in the LSU AgCenter.

Ken argued for looking at the person as a whole rather than parts because for example some people who have no appointment in teaching do teach classes and those who are doing above and beyond work should get credit.

Todd thinks the college should only look at teaching and wants to encourage the college committee to focus on teaching only and LSU AgCenter to focus on research and extension only because that is their focus.

Ann said when the LSU AgCenter receives an application form, the administrators review them. An extension associate must have 3 years experience to go up for promotion. For faculty with less than 5 years experience, the administrators will call the faculty to discuss the issue and make sure the person is aware that even though the LSU AgCenter may approve their promotion, they may be turned down at the system office based on years of service. Just the for must be turned in by July 1st, not supporting documentation.

Debbie asked how merit raises were determined and that there seemed to be no consistency in the process of determining merit raises. Ann said that there is a finite pool of money for merit raises. It is a relatively small amount of money held back to cover greater needs for equity purposes and such. When the administrators make decisions they take into account the last two years, since there was no raise last year. Evaluations are subjective.

Debbie said in her region the parish chair ranks agent employees. Jerry said that is hard to do because of different program areas. Debbie suggested that perhaps agents should be compared within their programs areas to determine merit.

Ann said the regional director does raises and must consult with the parish chair. The upper raise may be 8 to 10%. The administrators have to decide the average raise. Merit raises and promotions are based on June 30 salaries. Ann checks to make sure that recently promoted people do not miss out on a merit raise.

Jerry said that raises are not really merit across the LSU AgCenter due to differences between how supervisors handle it.

Ann said every unit thinks their people are the best in the LSU AgCenter.

Jerry said that maybe the LSU AgCenter needs to hold a little more money back to adjust raises.

Ken said the administration should compare units on performance which should be built into raises.

Todd agrees with Ken that departments should be evaluated so different departments would get different amounts of money., for example one gets 7% and one gets 3% based on salaries. Then the money held back could be used to increase merit for individuals.

Wayne asked if the departments heads sit down with the administrators to defend the merit raises. The starting point is what the department head puts in. Ann said the unit heads have already discussed with the administrators these issues over time, so the administrators can use the extra money to add to raises.

Debbie asked if the money was given to regions/departments based on employee salaries at 5% of total. Ann said yes.

Ann said that the LSU AgCenter has more great performers than negative performers. With a curve the real raise should be a true average of 4.5% when 5% given by the state.

Allen said that for evaluation someone's job description was never referred to and also referred publications can not be distinguished from popular press articles.

Ann said evaluations were due June 9th and some may have still not been done.

Allen said that someone said PS-42 was hard to understand and follow. Ann said that new employees will be trained on tenure and promotion procedures. Some people said extension and research are treated differently, but not truly much different.

3. April 28, 2006 minutes were approved by council with wording corrections.

4. Annual Evaluation of Supervisors by Employees with Ken McMillin

Ken made a motion to have Clayton send forward to the chancellor a formal request to have annual evaluations of supervisors by employees. This includes all supervisors of any employees.

Rich asked who would get the information from the reviews. Ken said we can figure out who will get it once the system is in place.

Rich said we need to determine now who will get information from the review. Jerry said we need to determine who receives the information before the letter goes to the chancellor from Clayton.

Ken said evaluations should include administrators.

Debbie said some people say agents should evaluate specialists. Jerry said this review of specialists by agents does occur sometimes.

Allen said he thought this type of review started in animal sciences.

Jerry asked how the AgCenter directors would be handled in administration.

Brian asked if the discussion was about department heads and regional directors not AgCenter administrators. Ken said we need a method to notify the AgCenter administration if middle management is not doing their job.

Jerry said the priority is any input, not necessarily annually.

Rich said that we need to set up the system for how information would be distributed back to the person reviewed. He asked if employees would do a group review or do them individually.

Jerry said if the regional director evaluates the parish chair, they are instructed to get input from employees and relay it back.

Rich asked what exactly would be received from the faculty. Would it be forms? Would it be anonymous? Brian said maybe a survey format.

Ken said faculty need to know department direction from the department head. There could be an online evaluation or faculty could meet to evaluate their supervisor.

Rich said if it is done anonymously then the comments of the person doing the review can not be addressed.

Todd said the department head needs to fill in a form about goals and accomplishments that faculty receive and comment on online.

Rich said maybe there could be 5 questions that faculty would evaluate the person on. Ken and Todd liked Rich's idea.

Allen said we should suggest that unit heads and regional directors be evaluated annually by the AgCenter administration with input from faculty and that we should let the AgCenter administration develop the system. Ken said that we the faculty should develop the system.

Jerry said that supervisors would be evaluated by employees annually. He asked if we should wait to develop a mechanism or send a letter now requesting the annual evaluations of supervisors.

Ken said we could provide a list of suggestions of mechanisms.

Rich made a motion that the faculty council suggests that there be annual evaluations of regional directors and department heads and that if approved the faculty council will come up with the mechanisms for doing so. Council voted and approved motion.

5. Ethics Rules/Issues of Outside Consulting with Ken McMillin

Ken said that there are still ethics issues. The committee still has not yet met. There is still work that has to be done related to the area of consulting relating to how we define what we report or not.

6. General Discussion

Allen gave an update on the HRM advisory committee. Cynthia was there by satellite. HRM did not know terms of advisory committee members and how to decide chair.

The minutes of the meeting were not back yet.

Diversity merged with HRM, with Tori Freeman head of diversity with other duties also.

Faculty were asked for suggestions on diversity.

Faculty asked about the status of the loyalty survey and were told that HRM was still looking for the survey.

Allen was elected chair of the HRM advisory committee.

Ken asked what issues will come up in HRM.

Allen said Ann brings up issues. Current issues are dealing with classified people, students and visas and background checks.

Wayne brought up the ombudsman issue. Allen said he brought it up at the meeting, but there was no action.

Ken said the Faculty Senate at LSU A&M campus felt strongly about the ombudsman issue and wanted one for both the LSU AgCenter and the LSU A&M campus, but now LSU A&M wants one only for themselves. An individual was named as the ombudsman.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:37 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: Sept. 22nd and Oct. 27th.