

LSU AgCenter Faculty Council Meeting Minutes for September 22, 2006

Attendees: Joan M. King, Dale Pollet, Wayne M. Gauthier, Allen Hogan, Debbie Melvin, Clayton Hollier, Ken McMillin, Todd Shupe, Linda Hooper-Bui, Donnie Miller, Brian LeBlanc, Roberto Barbosa, Markaye Russell, Rich Vlosky, Denyse Cummins, Cynthia Stephens, Troy Menard

Absent: Miles Brashier, Jerry Whatley, Paul Wilson

1. Call to order at 9:34 AM

2. IT Update and CMS Discussion with Kappie Mumphrey

IT purchase guidelines are on the LSU AgCenter intranet website. A pre-approval form must be filled in for accounting. IT will let the person know if the equipment can be supported or not by IT, if the purchase is something not already on the list of regular AgCenter purchases. If you have an emergency purchase, Kappie will help you directly. Items not on the list can be added. Regional IT people can make decisions locally. New state regulations were sent to all IT people. Anyone can buy equipment not on the list as long as they understand IT may not be able to support it.

A usability study is being done for CMS and includes a survey of about 1300 random people from mailing lists. There will also be an in person usability study with about 12 people with help from the Department of Mass Communications. This study will provide information from an end users perspective. The results are expected by the end of October to the beginning of November, depending on the Department of Mass Communications.

Linda, Allen and Clayton brought up the issue with rapidly placing items on the website. Kappie said to contact her Fred or Frankie Gould directly if you need to post immediately, if a reviewer is not available. Normally you must have the reviewer read the information first before posting.

Clayton mentioned that he needed to have an article about soybean rust posted quickly and Linda and Frankie handled it. Kappie said they handle the information as news and a newsletter itself could get delayed for posting.

Clayton asked if he could directly update items or add a new article to save time. Kappie said the communications department wants to edit articles. Kappie said she can look into changing the work flow to only edit and publish.

Clayton was asked by Miles, who could not be at meeting, to bring up the issue of a Master Gardeners hours link into the website.

Annual Conference Cyber Café Comments

Kappie mentioned that new phones with data service available with Windows mobile 5 will be shown at the Cyber Café. The phones will automatically interface with the LSU AgCenter email system. The data plan is \$40 per month in addition to phone service costs.

IT will also show desk top video conferencing abilities that are available at no cost. It will be a visually interactive system.

Clayton asked if annual conference will be set up the same. Kappie said there will be a combined lunch this year and at the lunch, departments can sell items. The general session will be held at the Cox Center. A space closer to the Cox Center is being located for the reception. There are also tours of LA House being set up.

3. August 25, 2006 minutes were approved by council with wording corrections.

Ken moved that HRM develop and distribute guidelines and rules on how positions at any level are to be filled. This information should include which positions must be advertised in any way and which are not advertised. Rich seconded motion. Faculty Council approved motion.

4. Discussion with Ann Coulon

Clayton asked about Ken's motion topic. Ann said that most positions are advertised and there are no designations of positions that are not advertised. There are rules for advertising civil service positions.

Wayne said that there may be co-hiring of a spouse without advertising. Ann said faculty can be hired without advertising. Drs. Coreil and Boethel respect advertising.

Todd asked if state, LSU AgCenter, and system had any requirements that faculty positions be advertised. Ann said there are options to waive advertisement in certain cases. Ann is having a group discuss how the AgCenter advertises for positions. Ann covered the areas that the AgCenter advertises in.

Ann said agent position applications are held for one year so a person can apply for any opening. Denyse mentioned that it is always in-state people who apply for these positions.

Ann said advertising through MANNERS is helpful in recruiting minorities.

Rich asked if Dr. Coreil asked for a waiver to hire Dwight Landrineau without advertising. Ann said that we would have to ask Dr. Coreil, that there were factors that helped him decide to waive advertising.

Debbie asked why Dr. Coreil needed input from faculty council members to make a decision on hiring Dwight Landrineau. Ann said to ask Dr. Coreil.

Todd asked about the loyalty survey. Ann said they do not have the survey and do not know where it is. Joan asked if we could do another survey and Ann said we can if it is necessary. Ann said the data from the prior survey is too old, so it is not valid anymore, that a new one should be done if wanted.

Clayton brought up the reluctance by employees to answer the loyalty survey last time and that we need to preface certain questions with reasons for asking that question. Some people thought the survey was clandestine.

Rich said that the previous survey could be compared to a new survey to see changes in attitude. Joan said how people feel now is more important. Wayne agreed with Rich and said that people would be less likely to answer loyalty questions.

Donnie asked what the purpose of the survey would be. Rich said some questions in the national extension survey he is involved with are similar to those that were in the previous survey. He cannot break out the data for Louisiana though.

Rich said we do not know who initiated the survey in the first place. Ann said that it was initiated by Diversity. Todd said an outside company interjected loyalty questions into the survey and the company was supposed to analyze the data.

Todd made a motion to table the discussion about whether we need a new survey. Motion was seconded and passed by Faculty Council unanimously.

Rich said we need closure on the old survey, since the results are no longer available. Rich made a motion that the administration notify all employees that the loyalty survey results will never be available. Todd seconded the motion. Faculty Council approved the motion with a vote of 9 for and 7 against.

Ken read old minutes about raises in which it was stated that raises would be based on the previous two years performance because there was no raise last year. Ann said raises are done based on performance since the previous raise, but there is no strict rule. This was discussed with the supervisors.

Debbie asked if people are compared from the same position/same appointment statewide for performance raises. Comparing people against each other by region regardless of position seems to be what currently is being done, using a pool of money given to regional directors for raises. Ann said that people are not compared statewide by position, but that it is something to consider. HRM checks to make sure that people getting promotion raises are not penalized for performance raises.

Ann said more reporting to the Board of Supervisors did not allow time for a meeting with the supervisors as a group to discuss guidelines, but supervisors were informed individually. Drs. Boethel, Coreil, Morrison, Roberts and Bivin carefully reviewed all raises and made appropriate adjustments.

Todd said that the AgCenter gives a pot of money to departments and a new pot of money exists at the AgCenter, so some people could have gotten more and some less. Ann said yes, that it can go both ways.

Ann covered advertisement issues. There are new EEO policies from the system office which include marital status and sexual orientation. She will send it to us to look at. Campuses must have all policies in one document, which will include guidelines on the advertisement and waivers of advertisement. They will also include a complaint procedure. The new policy will be interim and when Tori comes back there will be a new version. The new policy will not change how we deal with agent positions.

Ann said social security numbers are being done away with and that the new policy says that identifiers will be developed. If an employee wants to keep their social security number, there will be a process for doing so. Social security numbers are being removed from documents and are only needed for IRS purposes, including student who show livestock and win money.

Markaye asked whether race can be asked on enrollment cards. Ann said she would check on it. Debbie says on the forms the race information is optional in a statement at the bottom of the form. Allen said 4-H can not enter students into the system without the social security number since it is required by the livestock show program. Debbie asked why there was a difference between the AgCenter and the state in needing social security numbers.

Ann said there will be informational seminars on retirement issues. The federal retirement system including insurance and financial issues would be covered Nov. 8th and 29th. A company wants to give a presentation on financial planning for the future at the next MAP. There are also plans for Health and Wellness seminars.

Ken asked if the information will be on the intranet. Ann said all MAPs are video streamed so you can look at them on the website at any time.

Linda made a request for annual evaluations of department heads and administrators because a department can go downhill fast in three years. Ann said department heads are reviewed annually but not in a 360 degree manner.

Ann asked for questions to be asked of reviewers of department heads. Linda, Allen and Clayton all volunteered to help.

The tenure and promotion meeting will be held the Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

Markaye asked about why Fair Credit Reports have to be filled in. She said one person refused to fill it out. Ann said the Fair Credit Reports are used to do background checks only, not credit checks. There is a certain ACT that requires background checks to be done.

5. Staffing Plans with Drs. Boethel and Coreil

Dr. Boethel said we are still \$2 million short of what we received from the state. Our budget is only up for pay raise reasons. They hope that a new raise will be coming this year to get salaries up again closer to where we need to be.

To make budgets cuts we lost some positions and did not fill some vacancies. Some positions can be filled now based on priority reports and such. Some positions have been advertised based on priority reports and administrative input.

The Reproductive Biology Center, RNR, Food Science and Sweet Potato Station all need new department heads. Some open positions are not going to be filled exactly as they were vacated. The position being filled may have a different focus than the previous person had.

The Coastal Plants program will be expanded at the Citrus Station now. Some other stations have worked on this due to salt issues with plants. Termite programs are already at the Citrus Station. No resident scientist will be at the Citrus Station.

The Rosepine Station faculty have moved out. The animal scientist will now cover both Dean Lee and Rosepine and be housed at Dean Lee. A forage agronomist will be moved to the Hill Farm and will help Rosepine and Red River.

Other stations with low numbers will be built back up with at least two scientists. No stations will be closed.

The dairy herd will be moved from the Hill Farm. This is taking time due to purchasing and bid laws. Wayne asked if the mastitis lab will stay open. Boethel said that poultry houses are being built at the Hill Farm as they want outreach to the poultry industry.

Dale asked about the citrus program and Boethel answered that it will not be expanded at this time.

At the Calhoun Station the peach program was eliminated and the scientist was moved to work on pecans and the industry is happy with the move. Two scientists are being added to study treated wood recycling and decontamination of wood products treated with preservatives. A plant breeder will continue working on southern peas and will also cover soybean variety development.

The horticulture and agronomy faculty are being combined so that teaching and research will be helped. The request will be made at the October Board of Supervisors meeting.

As of January 1, 2007 a new unit called the School of Plant, Soil and Environmental Sciences will exist.

Capital Outlay Projects

Two capital outlay projects made it to the end of the legislative session; a building for a biocontainment facility at Ben Hur was number 9 on the list and will be funded. The new office and laboratory building for the School of Animal Sciences and Department of Food Science was number 13 on the list and was not approved for funding yet. Dr. Boethel said it seems that in order to be approved the building must be in the top 10.

Joan asked how building projects are prioritized. Dr. Boethel said by the AgCenter, then the System, then the Board of Supervisors and then the legislature has to approve them because state funds are used to build them. Internal fund changes just need to be signed off on.

Priority Research Areas

Dr. Boethel said they want to push functional foods research and coastal plants research, and also biofuels research at Audubon Sugar which so far has been covered by federal grants.

Clayton asked if the biocontainment center was set up for plants too. Dr. Boethel said it was just for animals at this time.

The AgCenter is trying to get Ben Hur Road closed to public access at Central Station. A survey indicated that mainly AgCenter persons used the road, but due to development in the area, the city wants to use it. Preliminary approval was obtained from the Board of Supervisors to move ahead on the road closure.

The Campus Master Plan people thought about meshing similar areas together. They want to build a building to showcase the importance of Agriculture to the state and people.

Wayne asked about the cattle near campus and whether LSU will turn the field into athletic fields. Dr. Boethel said there were plans to move the Genex Company to St. Gabriel. Chancellor Richardson and Dr. Boethel asked Bertman if the athletic department would give money to help move Genex, but Bertman said to come back at the end of the season, that it depended on tickets sales.

Wayne asked about the business incubator near the coliseum. Dr. Boethel said the building was for any company who wanted to start up there. The LSU System owns the building and it is a regional center with legislature appropriated money. Dr. Day has his product in that building and the egg insulin company is also there.

Ken asked about the interdisciplinary push on cluster hires by LSU A&M and if the AgCenter can cooperate. Dr. Boethel said he had not discussed it with LSU A&M.

Extension Priority Areas with Dr. Coreil

Dr. Coreil said that one extension priority is to enhance outreach and extension work in coastal protection and restoration. The AgCenter is hiring an expert in coastal engineering to be housed in BAE to handle levee issues in conjunction with sea grant and the state. The AgCenter was approached to have a certification program to get people trained in the districts to handle levee issues.

A second extension priority is the LA House since it is related to hurricanes and tornadoes and building houses that are stronger and efficient with resistance to mold and termites. The AgCenter wants to build two additional houses and use one as an office building. Some agents were reassigned to the housing issue and a conservation person was added. The AgCenter is reaching out to LSU A&M departments like construction management to help address these issues.

A third priority for extension is FCS to address obesity and health related issues for consumers. A joint program is being run with Pennington Biomedical Center for nutrition education. Debbie said that there is need for an exercise physiology educator and a diabetes educator. It was mentioned that maybe the kinesiology department could help.

The 4th extension priority area is Youth. The AgCenter will start using Service Learning in 4-H. Dr. Janet Fox's work shows service learning helps children become more active. Students can meet during school time since 4-H is still in the school system. The majority of 4-H related activities are covered outside of school but 4-H can still go into schools unlike other states. The AgCenter is looking for 4-H agents in certain areas so they can still function.

Extension Funding

Extension funding comes from the USDA Smith-Lever Act (\$7 million), the state legislature and the local government. The local government covers offices and related costs as well as salary and benefits support for agents and staff.

There is a Local Support Initiative to update agreements with the local government and to make them aware that local government must provide monetary support. The parish or police jury of the area helps with monetary support. The AgCenter has tripled support from local governments to 10% of the budget. Seventy percent of the local governments are involved. The AgCenter is working on the last 30% to get assistance. The local governments are passing taxes to support extension. A critical mass of people is needed to serve the population.

Wayne asked if we will pull out of parishes not providing money. Dr. Coreil said that parishes that do not contribute fully will get less services. New Orleans has not contributed at all for several years.

Dr. Coreil said employment of agents is a problem and that starting salaries need to be reevaluated. The AgCenter is now looking at civil servants to help out in St. Mary's parish as paraprofessionals

Troy asked about the 4-H department head search. Dr. Coreil said there will be open seminars from the applicants. Steve Linscombe is the search committee chair. The 4-H Foundation Executive Chair position is also open. This person needs to raise funds and is paid for by the foundation.

6. Board of Supervisors Report by Allen Hogan for Jerry Whatley

The search for LSU System President is under way. The committee was formed and Laura Leach is the chair with Isaiah Warner as the Vice-Chair. There are three Board of Supervisor members on the search committee including Charles S. Weems, III, Jerry E. Shea, Jr and James P. Roy, several community persons, one LSU faculty and one staff person. The LSU Eunice representative shared that they had surveyed their faculty by asking what traits they would like to see in the new president and what single question would they want to ask all the candidates. They plan to send the results to the search committee.

Chancellor Richardson is applying for the LSU System President position.

7. Ombudsman Issue with Wayne Gauthier and Kirsten Schwehm

Wayne introduced Kirsten Schwehm who is the ombudsman for LSU A&M campus who gave a slide presentation about what an ombudsman does and doesn't do.

Wayne asked if she also covers the LSU AgCenter. Kirsten said usually no, but if there is a jointly appointed person she could but only for LSU A&M issues. Dr. Albert of LSU A&M said that if we want to add hours to Kirsten's time to cover system related issues then she can help us too.

Kirsten covered ombudsman duties concerning conflict resolution which is done confidentially and informally, unless there is potential for harm to a person. She acts as an alternative dispute resolution service to HRM and also covers individual services. She educates the university community about dispute resolution, acts as an advocate for fairness and equity and she will identify and report problem trends to the administration.

Kirsten as an ombudsman does NOT make decisions, give legal advice, take sides, breach confidentiality (unless requested by person or there is an imminent danger issue or there

is a child abuse issue) or record complaints on behalf of LSU. Records are protected and the courts have upheld this.

Quarterly reports will be done and she will meet with Chancellor O'Keefe once a semester. She will also have an annual report.

Kirsten mentioned that email is not confidential. An ombudsman should be proactive not reactive to prevent problems.

LSU A&M also has a student ombudsman.

Types of issues raised to the ombudsman include communication problems, challenging work environment issues, problems with supervisors, equity and fairness, and disability access.

An employee does not have to take time off to see her, but you need to let your supervisor know if you are going out of your workplace. Kirsten is in E314 Howe-Russell Building.

The Chancellor and Academic Affairs pays for the office and her position salary. Dr. Albert handles her personal work related issues only. Kirsten as ombudsman reports directly to Chancellor O'Keefe. There will be a website through the LSU Chancellor's office. There is an official organization for ombudsman with a website ombudsassociation.org. Kirsten serves 3,000 people including faculty and staff of LSU A&M.

Clayton asked if we need to have an ombudsman for the LSU AgCenter faculty and staff. Linda said just hiring a person will help morale. Clayton said people may be paranoid about the ombudsman reporting to the chancellor. Ken said it took 10 years for LSU A&M to get an ombudsman.

Wayne said in prior years President Jenkins suggested all campuses get an ombudsman. Wayne said Chancellor Richardson set up our Diversity Committee to cover these issues. Clayton said people did go to Valerie to talk about issues when she was here as head of Diversity, but now diversity is under HRM which creates a conflict of interest. HRM has to follow certain rules.

8. Faculty Council Elections

Clayton talked about Faculty Council elections at the MAP meeting. Names of eligible faculty will be placed on the intranet for nominations for Faculty Council. We need to provide dates for nominations and elections. Allen said there are problems with persons already on the council being nominated. The way the system works is if your name is not on the list you cannot vote. It was stated that number 6 under article 8 in the by-laws states that a person can serve no more than three full terms and no more than two consecutive terms. The person must skip three years before their third term.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 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: Nov. 17th and Dec 15th (cancelled).