

## **LSU AgCenter Faculty Council Meeting Minutes for March 23, 2007**

Attendees: Joan M. King, Rich Vlosky, Jerry Whatley, Dale Pollet, Markaye Russell, Cynthia Stephens, Allen Hogan, Donnie Miller, Donna Lee, David Blouin, Collins Kimbeng, Mary Grodner, Phil Stouffer, James Hendrix, Mike Hebert

Absent: Denyse Cummins, Wayne M. Gauthier, Miles Brashier, Ken McMillin, Roberto Barbosa

1. The meeting was called to order at 9:34 AM by Chairman Rich Vlosky.
2. The February 23, 2007 minutes were approved with correction on page 8 and a request to separate the minutes into sections.
3. International Programs with Lakshman Velupillai

A handout was provided that explained the mission, vision, strategic directions and role of the LSU AgCenter International Programs' office. The mission is to implement the LSU AgCenter's international research, education and outreach programs through overseas development projects, feasibility studies, intra- and inter- collaborations with universities, U.S. government agencies and private sector entities, and active contributions to U.S. foreign assistance programs. The Foreign Assistance Act resulted in universities engaging internationally through colleges of agriculture. Title 12 formalized the program so there were grant funds available for program support which provided for faculty development, travel, and language training. The LSU AgCenter provided money for exchanges with other countries. Funds are no longer available for this purpose. All funding for International Programs is now obtained through competitive grant programs administered through USAID. Less than 1.5% of the Gross Domestic Product, \$12 billion, from the U.S. government is used to help foreign countries.

Aquaculture areas are sensitive issues so heads and directors are consulted before work is done. The IRRI (International Rice Research Institute) originally put in \$3 to 4 million, which resulted in a 100-fold benefit to the U.S. rice industry. Sub-grants are given to U.S. universities in collaboration with foreign countries. Food safety issues are a current topic in LSU AgCenter International Programs, which has experience in specific regions of the world. Our programs has strategic partnerships with the U.S. private sector and overseas partners.

Lakshman covered program implementation. The office has two program professional assistants. The International Programs Office can help with faculty development. It brings together people from various disciplines within the AgCenter to address project issues. This provides a good potential for publications. There is a 45 day response time in which to bid on a project and sometimes negotiations have to be done directly with a foreign country. Accounting services checks with International Programs for overseas per diem rates, so this is why they must check the travel information for anyone going overseas from the AgCenter. Cynthia asked why faculty are not currently recruited. Lakshman said that currently faculty development money is not available.

Jerry asked about the length of assignments. Lakshman said that the typical length of assignment for an international trip is three weeks. International Programs are moving away from six month to one year assignments. The LSU AgCenter now tries to open offices overseas. Collins asked if International Programs was a topic that was covered in employee orientation. Ann and Lakshman said it could be included within the first six months of orientation. Lakshman said he could do it anytime if it is not included in the orientation program. Collins asked about advisory committee meetings for International Programs. Lakshman said he will check with the chairperson, Greg Lutz, and ask him to call a meeting. Cynthia said she was also on the advisory committee along with Collins.

#### 4. Comments by Chancellor Richardson

The Governor's executive budget requests \$33 million in mandated costs, i.e. civil service merit raises, insurance, etc, \$30 million in raises (5%), and \$115 million of enhanced operational funding for higher education. Additional monies of this magnitude means that the funding of all state universities would be increased to 100% of formula funding and every campus' funding would be equal to the regional average. Non-formula campuses like the LSU AgCenter would get a 3% (\$2 to 3 million) increase in its budget. Ten million dollars would be given to hurricane affected universities to retain faculty. Two million would be given to community colleges for accreditation. Seven and a half million would be given for library and equipment purchases. Three million would be given to the Pennington Biomedical Center. LSU A&M would get \$34 million in new funding, ULL would get \$19.7 million in new funding, LaTech, \$12 million, SE University, \$22.4 million, etc. There is a question as to how much money of the \$3 billion in the state budget could be used for recurring expenses. Once divided, some will go to capital outlay projects.

The question is why is the LSU AgCenter getting only a 3% increase? The AgCenter was asked to give a proposal to the legislature in April for the budget and how to get the money. During Governor Foster's two terms, the AgCenter's budget was 23% of the LSU System's budget. In the 2005 - 2006 budget year, the AgCenter lost about \$8 million reducing it to 20% of the LSU System's budget. The AgCenter requests its faculty's support with local legislators. Southern University was not happy with the plan. The LSU AgCenter is working with the legislative committee to try to improve our situation. The race is shaping up for Commissioner of Agriculture.

The U.S. government did away with earmarked funds, although we received \$200,000 more without earmarked type funds. Our state does not have seniority anymore on U.S. legislative committees. Rich asked if the LSU AgCenter's budget went down, who gained? Chancellor Richardson said that Leo Guidry tried to look at the issue and found that two institutions moved, the AgCenter went down and ULL moved up. Allen asked who Bob Odom's competition was and Chancellor Richardson said Mike Strain and Spider Carter.

#### 5. HRM Updates with Ann Coulon

There is no longer a requirement that agents have to live in their home parishes because agents now have multiple parish assignments. Allen mentioned the PS-7 override statement.

Ann presented a handout on the unit head evaluation system. Unit heads will be asked to provide a list of accomplishments so faculty can react to their statements. The evaluation will be electronic and will be anonymous. Faculty committees in each department or region will be appointed to write a summary report of the comments made. The committee members will be chosen from a list developed from faculty council suggestions, regional and departmental head suggestions and administrator's suggestions. Rich asked if goals will be included by the supervisor and Ann said yes. Very few instructions will be given to the committees and they should feel free to put whatever they wish relative to the comments in the report. Rich suggested that the person being evaluated should discuss their goals and achievements. Ann said that the committee could meet with the individual being evaluated if they so desire. Rich said the persons being evaluated should write their achievements relative to how well those achievements met their goals for the unit or department. David asked how a unit head who is on joint appointment with LSU A&M and the AgCenter would be handled when there is only one faculty member within the AgCenter. Ann said that the one person can get input from other staff and other faculty even if they are not associated with the AgCenter. Ann said that confidentiality was the key. Ann said the committee can get input from the staff members. Kimble asked about combined departments. Ann said the committee will include persons representative of the combined areas so that all individuals in that unit or department are represented. Rich asked if interim department heads would be evaluated. Ann said that the issue needs to be addressed, but probably not. Kimble asked why only senior faculty can be on the committee and that they may not look at the same issues as Assistant Professors. Ann said that senior faculty may see these issues. Jerry asked what happens in those departments heavily weighted with senior faculty which exclude comments from younger faculty. Jerry said the raw comments should be made available to the Vice-Chancellors and the Chancellor upon request. Ann said that raw comments can be made available to the VCs and Chancellor, but that if they get to see them, then everyone has to see them. Rich asked why the units do not choose the committee themselves. Ann said that this is to insure a diverse representation on the committee.

The LSU AgCenter Faculty Council voted to endorse the Performance Appraisal of Departments Heads and Regional Directors by faculty.

Ann mentioned that the Board of Regents is helping to push the new leave policy through the legislature.

## 6. Old Business

Rich wondered why International Programs (IP) had to evaluate travel vouchers for faculty who traveled overseas and now he knows that IP feels they have expertise in the area and can help check the amounts for appropriate expenditures and reimbursements.

Joan said that the Chancellor last stated that he wanted the LSU AgCenter to have an ombudsperson of our own, so a committee had been established to look into the issue. A

report will be forthcoming as the committee had plans to investigate the current position at LSU A&M for information. Rich said we need to figure out how to implement an ombudsperson position for the AgCenter and that we needed to work quickly.

Allen discussed his committee's recommendations for Service Unit Advisory Committees operations and provided a handout. In the handout, administrator means department head, unit head or regional director. The advisory committees will meet at least once per year. The advisory committee chairperson or service unit head will report to the Faculty Council and Chancellor following each meeting. The advisory committees will have nine faculty members, one support staff member, one administrator (as defined above) and one service unit head, chosen by the AgCenter Faculty Council, Vice-Chancellors and the Service Unit Head equally.

Jerry discussed the LSU A&M financial exigency document review. The review introduced specific changes including incorporation of AAUP guidelines and a requirement for certification by an outside consultant or auditor confirming the existence of an exigency situation. He stated that force majeure has no time limit unlike exigency. The LSU A&M Faculty Senate wants a letter of support from the LSU AgCenter Faculty Council for adopting those changes. Allen asked whether the request for an outside agency to concur that exigency actions are warranted was in addition to AAUP guidelines or provided by the LSU A&M Faculty Senate. Jerry said he thought that it was an addition. Donnie said an auditor would be chosen by the University so the process is not necessarily impartial. The motion to support the LSU A&M changes was approved by the LSU AgCenter Faculty Council. Rich will send a letter affirming the support of the LSU Ag Center Faculty Council to the LSU A&M Faculty Senate.

Rich said that the Promotion and Tenure templates process was moving along and templates for the documents were being prepared.

## 7. New Business

Mary Baronet wants to place the LSU Ag Center's staff website on the public external AgCenter's website. Jerry said that this may be because they are civil service employees belonging to a professional organization. If their site is public, other civil service employees not affiliated with the LSU AgCenter may wish to join their organization. Rich said he will write back to her and will be interested to see their results. Faculty Council voted not to have our site made public through the LSU AgCenter's website.

Allen stated Bill Brach's opinion, at his request, of AgCenter's Faculty Council representation on the Accounting Advisory Committee. Bill says that faculty do not need to be on the committee because they do not know all the accounting rules and regulations and they may not be listened to when they give suggestions. John Barnett said he sees a need to have faculty on the committee and others in his office also believe that faculty representatives need to be present at meetings of the Accounting Advisory Committee. Rich said that it is tough to make a contribution in areas that are not fully understood.

Bill's suggestion not to have faculty on the Accounting Advisory Committee was not supported by the LSU AgCenter Faculty Council.

Rich suggested that International Programs not have an advisory committee since he does not perceive them to be a service unit. Collins said he believed that the program impacts faculty and that it could create new opportunities for faculty. Rich said he believes faculty cannot change what IP is currently doing because it is supported by outside grants and contracts. Cynthia said that she would like to see more information given out to bring faculty in to participate. Phil said that this area can affect people across the AgCenter. Rich said that if we feel that the area should be expanded we should tell the Chancellor, not have Lakshman ask the Chancellor through the committee. Jerry said the International Programs unit can affect all other areas in the AgCenter and that the advisory committee can help the unit. Joan said if there was more faculty involvement then they could possibly help increase the grant funds being awarded to Intellectual Programs. James agreed with Rich that International Programs was not a service unit and made a motion to remove IP from the service unit advisory list, but keep a separate international programs committee. Motion failed.

#### Board of Supervisors Report by Jerry Whatley

Jerry said that the low health care ranking for the state was due to the information that comes from the Medicaid system. The Hospital Charity system (HCS) is getting the healthcare system going again with clinics near to where people live. The system was delayed by New Orleans in coming back due to approvals needed and electrical and other utilities hookups required. The HCS has a service mission but also trains medical students. The state is debating on whether to rebuild in New Orleans or move. The first and second year students are okay for now. There is an issue with the provision of training for third and fourth year students. If the HCS does not move together with the Veterans Administration, then the LSU Medical School will move to Baton Rouge so that third and fourth year students can work with patients. Cynthia asked what is being said about the charity hospital in Monroe as some people want to close it. Jerry said some private pay hospitals claim that there are not enough patients to support a charity hospital in the Monroe area. At the same time, however, private pay hospitals might not want non paying patients. The LSU system is not discussing this issue.

Jerry said there is no timeline for the LSU System President search. Nothing is being reported about the search. There is a lot of competition out there.

There are no advisory committee reports at this time.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:26 PM.

#### 9. Meeting Dates

Meetings time will be 9:30 AM approximately every 4th Friday of each month in the Sullivan Conference room. The next meeting is scheduled for May 25, 2007. The April 28, 2007 meeting was cancelled.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joan King,  
Substitute Secretary