

MINUTES  
LSU AG CENTER FACULTY COUNCIL  
July 27, 2007

Members Present: Miles Brashier, Denyse Cummins, Wayne Gauthier, Mary Grodner, Mike Hebert, William Hogan, Collins Kimbeng, Joan King, Donna Lee, Donnie Miller, Markaye Russell, Cynthia Stephens, Rich Vlosky and Jerry Whatley.

Members Absent: Roberto Barbosa, David Blouin, James Hendrix, Kenneth McMillin, Dale Pollet, and Phillip Stouffer.

Vlosky called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. on July 27, 2007 in the Sullivan Conference Room and recognized Chancellor Richardson who made the following remarks.

Chancellor Richardson

1. Raise recommendations have been completed and turned into the LSU System for their necessary actions and approval by the LSU Board of Supervisors. The expectation is that supplementary checks will be issued.
2. Some members of the state legislature have initiated actions to have a veto session for purposes of overriding Governor Blanco's vetoes of some tax bills. Chancellor Richardson observed that it would take a 2/3 vote to override her vetoes which is not likely. A veto session would likely hurt the Ag Center as the awarding of additional tax credits may mean budget reductions in other areas. Thus, it could hinder funding for the next phase of the Animal Science Complex. If elected, Jindal indicated that he would call for a veto session upon assuming office.
3. The federal funding situation with respect to all of American agriculture is not clear. There is a possibility that there will be no Farm Bill in 2007, but a continuing resolution. As a consequence, there will be further delays in achieving closure on the earmarks issue, no clear directions to guide administrators in allocating funds and a delay in the reorganization of the USDA. The concern with USDA's plan for reorganization is that it gives too much power to some entities.
4. The planned interstate highway exchange in North Louisiana would wipe out the Pecan Station. Contacts will be made with federal and state officials to try to reroute the exchange so as to preserve this unique research asset. It takes time to establish a grove of pecan trees.
5. Salaries of Agriculture Center employees are a matter of public record and may be found as part of the budget for the LSU Agricultural Center in the Hill Memorial library. As a matter of policy, Chancellor Richardson doesn't give out people's individual salaries except to his (Richardson's) superiors. The LSU System has stopped giving out information on salaries because of the Board of Regents' claim

that they don't have to provide such information. The rationale for their position can be linked to abuses related to that information that have occurred on other campuses. Chancellor Richardson appreciates the significance of a person's salary relative to the salaries of their peers and invites the employee to let his administration know if one senses that their salary is too low relative to their peer group. He indicated a willingness to assess such situations to determine if a salary adjustment might be warranted. Such assessments would necessarily entail contact with the person's supervisors.

6. Initiatives are underway to invite newly named LSU President Lombardi to speak at the 2007 annual Agricultural Center conference. Chancellor Richardson is also attempting to set up a meeting between President Lombardi and Mr. Ronnie Anderson, President of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation. The reports being received about President Lombardi's style of leadership and appreciation for the role of land grant institutions at both the University of Florida and the University of Massachusetts have been positive.

7. Chancellor Richardson remains supportive of the establishment of an ombudsperson position within the LSU Agricultural Center. It is his desire to minimize the amount of influence that the Office of the Chancellor would have in establishing and staffing that position. To that end, his expectation is that the LSU Ag Center Faculty Council will make the decisions and undertake the actions necessary to create and fill the position with minimum input from his office.

8. Chancellor Richardson will look into obtaining a set of LSU Traffic Control loaner sticks to be forwarded to parish and regional Agricultural Center offices for purposes of allowing Agricultural Center personnel at remote locations access to the LSU campus with minimum hassle.

9. The actions of the Louisiana legislature, including a specific allocation of \$2.0 million for the Agricultural Center, netted an increase of \$3.1 million dollars. There is some concern, however, that the Board of Regents may choose to reallocate their appropriations to the LSU Agriculture Center in a manner that would have the effect of reducing the \$3.1 million to a lower number.

10. Chancellor Richardson will initiate inquiries into the feasibility of hanging magnetic signage featuring the LSU Agriculture Center's logo on its vehicles.

11. The construction of a 4-H museum in Avoyelles Parish is underway on LA Highway 1 in Mansura, LA.

12. Site preparation work has begun on a 250,000 square foot all-climate controlled evacuation shelter at the Dean Lee station.

13. LSU Agricultural Center Chancellor Emeritus Rouse Caffey has been brought out of retirement to become interim chancellor of LSU-Alexandria.

14. Observations were made relative to actions being taken by Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry Commissioner Bob Odom to acquire Lamar Dixon in Gonzales and to construct a new facility in St. Landry parish. These actions have implications for the LSU Agricultural Center as Mr. Odom wants to use some of Southern University's monies to build the facility in Washington, LA and Southern wants the facility in Opelousas. In addition, the St. Landry parish police jury wants the facility to remain where it is currently situated and state politicians from the local area also wish to have input. The LSU Agricultural Center is involved because plans are to house parish extension personnel in the new facility wherever it may be located.

#### Approval of Minutes.

The minutes of the June 15, 2007 meeting recorded by acting secretary Joan King were accepted by voice vote on a motion by Allen and a second by King.

Fred Piazza, Chief Information Officer, LSU Agricultural Center introduced Michael T. Carl and Sam S. Razi. Mr. Carl is Director for Support, Infrastructure & Distance Education. Mr. Razi is an analyst with the unit.

1. SCOOP is an acronym that stands for "Safety and Continuity of Operations Plan".
2. Within the LSU Agricultural Center's Office of Information (OI), information technology (IT) specialties are organized into divisions. There are some 20 plus people in the field. These people man the distance education (DE) sites.
3. In response to Gauthier's question about the number of passwords one needs and the frequency with which they seem to change, Piazza observed that some of it is mandated by state and federal government regulations. He cited the annoyance of being on the internet, then going to the intranet and then needing to have to reenter one's password. Some of the sites within the intranet are not secure. The OI may, in the future, work with their LSU-BR counterpart on a joint project for wireless hookups. MYpassword was designed to overcome problems with passwords expiring over the weekend.
4. There is a new version of the intranet that should be coming out in the near future.
5. Mary Grodner took note of a problem associated with making a response to an inquiry only to receive the email for a second time requesting the same information provided in the initial response.
6. The Ag Center's OI is in the process of centralizing as much information as possible. The new Ag directory will contain an employee's identification, contact information and budget information. The objective is to have all departments talk to each other. Accounting Services is now on the intranet. Click on "Account Manager".

The information is now being updated on a nightly basis. It provides a way for a principal investigator to see the status of grants with options to export the information pertinent to that grant and place it on Excel. Fred to talk to Mark Legendre about coordinating the accounting records with the OI. Despite the centralization, private information is known only to the person, their unit head and the unit's administrative secretary.

7. Emergency contact information is now included in the Ag Directory. To access the information, go to the intranet and click on "Directory".

8. An electronic version of the publication tracking system, the blue sheet, is scheduled to appear next year. The idea is to have it automatically appear on the individual's performance review and to minimize repeat replications of the same information. With respect to publications, there is a need to distinguish between documents in submission, in-review and published.

9. The enhanced intranet will feature an e-commerce system for all AgCenter items that entail a charge. There is a need to keep track of these items so as to incorporate them into the bursar system. The Soil Lab test kits were cited as an example of a system for selling materials that people can download after paying for the product. Grodner observed the necessity of entering into a cost recovery mode for the products and services provided by the LSU Agricultural Center as public funds no longer are sufficient to cover the costs of those services. It was observed that the system needs to provide for credit card purchases at the parish office level. It could become possible to charge for workshops, symposiums, and meeting registrations that are already in the system. Presently, nothing is being done with LSU Foundation accounts because the AgCenter doesn't have control over the activities associated with these accounts. Credit cards would help facilitate training sessions, soil samples, and forage samples as they are now restricted to only checks or money orders and budget accounts at regional levels.

10. Microsoft is refreshing a lot of their material. VISTA is their new desktop. Rich uses VISTA and said the enhancements that it provides are well worth the time and trouble that will be involved in becoming competent in its use. For sending and receiving e-mails, people need to use Microsoft Outlook.

11. Rich advised Piazza that we needed a contact list for LSU-BR.

12. With respect to the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry's examination for pest control operators, there is a need to send the LDAF exam directly from the county agent's office so as to get a reply from LDAF as quickly as possible. This feature is not yet in place.

13. Mike Carl indicated that updates will be coming from MicroSoft. One of these is a process of searching and finding people's e-mail addresses. E-mail is considered to be a mission-essential function for AgCenter personnel.

14. New Microsoft Office. The LSU AgCenter's OI is supporting and working with their LSU-BR campus counterparts to make their respective offices operational throughout the two campuses. Carl indicated that there are differences between the Windows versions of Microsoft and the more recent New Microsoft Office. He issued a warning that there will be challenges with migration between the two versions. For example, on the older version of Windows, the word "doc" was appended in transmitting a document. The newer version uses "docx" for document transmission. If people don't have a 2003 or later version of Windows, they won't be able to send or receive "docx" documents. In response to the question of "will multiple accounts on the new server be available?" Carl answered No. However, the new version will provide for both home and travel use.

15. Rich said that using the VISTA operating system requires more capacity. Individuals can now start using Office 2007 at any time. The recommendation is to buy a new computer with VISTA installed. Microsoft is relying on DELL to insure that no incompatibility exists. Carl said that the Office 2007 system is backward compatible. Rich said that one would need drivers and fixers to be incorporated into their systems for VISTA to be most functional. AgCenter IT people are planning to hold training sessions on the VISTA and Office 2007 versions of Windows.

16. Links will be needed to provide for communication between personnel.

17. LONI is a \$40 million dollar statewide initiative designed to provide internet capability throughout the state. LONI is an acronym for Louisiana Optical Network Initiatives. It has grown slowly. Its first site was at CARS (Coastal Area Research Station), the former Citrus station. There, it goes through a POP (connection) at LSU-NO. All universities will soon be on it. It will provide more bandwidth and capacity thus increasing speed and reliability.

18. Distance Education Roadmap. New audio and video equipment will soon be available which will make high definition (HD) video conferencing possible between AG Center sites. It is now in place at the Calhoun station. Scheduling events has been a problem in the past as the video conferencing room at some sites was often needed for other activities. With the enhanced equipment, the rooms will still be available for functions other than DE (Distance Education). Scheduling the room will now be done via an electronic calendar rather than manually.

19. The capacity to sit at one's desk and participate in a Distance Education (DE) event is an anticipated part of our future.

20. Larger e-mail mailboxes are also coming.

21. The web is now up for visits to our web sites.

Human Resources Update: Ann Coulon

1. Ann distributed Revision 1 of AGCENTER PS-42. ER PS-42. The following changes to this living document were identified along with discussion from council members.
  - a. Page 5, Item A. 11. Unit head notification did not work in some cases. The recommendation was made to provide some type of receipt of having received the materials.
  - b. Page 6, Item #6. A representative from the unit of the individual under consideration should be at the committee meeting.
  - c. Page 7, Item B.8. Should be deleted.

#### Board of Supervisors Meeting Report by Jerry Whatley

1. The president of the LSU Faculty Senate is not attending all of the meetings.
2. Much of the discussions at the LSU Board of Supervisors meeting are about hospitals.
3. The newly named president of LSU is familiar with agricultural research and extension activities at a land grant institution. He appears to be direct and straight forward in his views and responses to questions.
4. The Council of Faculty Advisers can best be characterized as a mostly ineffective organization in addressing issues important to university faculties. Leadership in taking action on issues appears to be lacking.
5. There was a discussion about those people who are on the AgCenter Faculty Council who fail to attend meetings of the Council. It was noted that a by-law change had been made for proxies. It provided that one could give their proxy to someone not on the council, but the substitute could only vote on new matters. If a person can't make it to a meeting, the proxy should be given to another member of the Council. A provision needs to be made for a substitute for members of the Council who will be away from their home offices for six or more months. Rich is going to make a table to identify past attendance levels of council members and is going to send people with frequent absences a note soliciting either their attendance or identity of a replacement.

Gauthier was advised that John Barnett is the head of the accounting advisory committee.

Rich is to send materials relative to the ombudsperson's position to Ann Coulon with a carbon copy to Chancellor Richardson. Council members are to send their thoughts regarding the ombudsperson position to Rich.

Meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne M. Gauthier  
Secretary