

**LSU AgCenter
Faculty Council Meeting
September 28, 2007
Sullivan Conference Room**

Members Present: David Blouin, Miles Brashier, Denyse Cummins, Wayne Gauthier, Mary Grodner, Mike Hebert, William Hogan, Collins Kimbeng, Joan King, Donna Lee, Donnie Miller, Ken McMillin, Phillip Stouffer, Rich Vlosky, and Jerry Whatley.

Members Absent: Roberto Barbosa, James Hendrix, Clayton Hollier, Dale Pollet, Markaye Russell, and Cynthia Stephens.

Call to Order

Chairman Vlosky called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. on September 28, 2007 and recognized Chancellor Richardson, Ms. Ann Coulon and Ms. Torri Freeman. Following their presentations, Chairman Vlosky turned the duties of the chair over to the vice-chairman, Jerry Whatley, and left.

Ann Coulon

Ms. Coulon wishes to inaugurate a program, Best Practices Series, with input from the

<p style="text-align:center">New HRM Initiative: “Best Practices Series”</p>

AgCenter Faculty Council (Council). The objective of the Best Practices Series would be to provide AgCenter employees with training on rules and regulations and good practices for accomplishing their assigned missions. Effectively using electronic resources is an example of such training. Her intention would be to have various agricultural center employees share ideas amongst themselves on how they do what they do. There was agreement that employees could benefit from hearing from their fellow employees about

lessons that had been learned from both their successful and non-successful activities. Vlosky indicated the Council was planning to conduct a poll of the faculty to determine what items or issues they wanted to hear or learn more about. Vlosky indicated that a section on training could be incorporated into the planned survey.

“Faculty Survey Coming”

The discussion that evolved suggested that a core problem for the employee AgCenter (LSUAC) revolved around the question of how do you train and disseminate information internally to people who have the duty and responsibility to create and disseminate information externally to varied clientele groups. A related question was how do you keep the agency looking good while communicating within the organization? It was recognized that the idea was too preliminary to discuss the mechanics of training, information dissemination through such mediums as distance education and identification of areas of operational procedures about which to dialogue. Grodner observed that this program would probably be valuable and that it was the type of program where you’ve got to try it to see if it will work rather than speculate about its effectiveness and efficiency in the absence of its implementation.

Whatley said a committee needed to be formed and that a void had been created in the

**Problem:
Absence of
In-Service
Agent Training**

reas of subject matter training for agents. He attributed the void to the introduction and increased utilization of electronic technology into the practices of agents which had the effect of distancing them from personal interactions with seasoned agents through whom much tacit understanding and appreciation for accomplishing their assigned tasks within the traditions of the institution was acquired. The consequence is a new employee with subject matter knowledge whose potential for good work is diminished by ignorance of context and an absence of focus.

Cummins observed that greater progress was now being made in the use of technology relative to the progress experienced under the previous structure. She observed, however, that while family and consumer sciences had specialist positions, current incumbents had no training. It was observed that some agricultural commodity groups receive more information than other groups and that youth agents get no training in such subject matter areas as character building, one of the key attributes expected to be instilled in youth via the 4-H program. Agents are missing the in-service training critical to the effective performance of their jobs. McMillin identified the need to call attention to these problem areas as one of the functions of the ACE groups.

Coulon requested that a group of people be identified to work with Human Resources Management (HRM) to create a program that would facilitate training and the sharing of best practices between and within the units of LSU Agricultural Center. It was agreed that an agenda item for the next meeting of the Council would be to identify topics to initiate the process for implementing Ms. Coulon’s request.

**New Agenda
Item**

Ms. Coulon announced that a new EEO policy had been approved that waives the requirement to advertise for positions in which former employees are being brought back into the organization for the explicit purpose of completing a project.

**EEO
Policy
Exemption**

Ms. Coulon also announced that the LSU System wants HRM to be involved in

**HRM:
Our
CSI**

investigations of individuals employed by the LSU AgCenter.

Ms. Coulon requested that members of the Council review the “NEW EEO POLICY”.

Ms. Coulon indicated that the LSUAC was getting ready to appoint a committee to look into its advertisement policies and practices as some of its advertisement has not been effective. The objective is to create a permanent AgCenter regulation for managing

**Managing
AgCenter
Advertisements**

advertisement.

Hebert asked whether the portfolios that are being required to be created couldn't also be used for the multiple promotion, performance assessment and other plethora of administrative action requirements. As an example, he cited the forms required to be filled out in an Edminston award application. Note was taken of how very time consuming it is to fill out multiple forms during a year duplicating information that is readily available in a portfolio. The ensuing discussion suggested that the requirement to submit forms duplicating information was probably responsible for the absence of applications from deserving people for many of the awards currently available to them. Ann Coulon agreed to convey the concerns of the Council regarding the completion of forms to the vice-chancellors and to report their responses to the Council.

**Multiple Portfolio
Uses**

Ms. Tori Freeman

Ms. Tori Freeman was introduced as the Director of the LSUAC's Office of Diversity. Ms. Freeman's classifies the majority of her responsibilities as issues and concerns addressing diversity, employee relations, and equity.

**Diversity
Training**

The Diversity Program under Valorie Maurice was a one-day training program. Now, it is a half-day training program conducted on-site. Varied aspects of diversity training and awareness is presently being incorporated into the training provided to AgCenter supervisors. Some of the various subject matter materials being incorporated into diversity training includes the multi-generational work force and disability awareness. Ms. Freeman indicated that there is a need for agricultural center employees to be sensitive to people with special needs such as physical disabilities and language barriers. There is also a need to cultivate a sensitivity amongst agricultural center employees for religious and cultural differences between people.

Actions will be taken to establish split appointment positions at the regional level for people to serve as EEO Coordinators.

It was observed that a diversity committee exists within the Council. Observation suggest that reactivating CONFERENCE would be a good thing to do. Hebert asked how much effort should be made at the parish level, where there are no resources, to reach the Spanish attendees in the audience. Ms. Freeman indicated that she should be called and she, in turn, would work with the vice-chancellors to find the necessary resources to help reach that segment of the population. It was observed that Louisiana farmers were employing more H2 workers who only spoke Spanish in row crop, nursery and animal production. Louisiana farmers need to provide these workers with training under the Worker Protection Program if they are going to be able to obtain and maintain insurance, provide instructions for the proper operation of their equipment and the proper use of chemicals. It was suggested that, to the extent possible, agents could use dual language video tapes. Brashier observed that language training to Spanish workers was being provided by a junior college at an old trade school. He suggested that creating an interface with the technical schools to provide language training to farmers and Spanish workers might be a worthy activity for the AgCenter to pursue with our vocational technical schools.

**Overcoming Spanish
Language Barriers: Problem
or Potential AgCenter
Initiative?**

Chancellor Richardson

The budget for 2007-2008 is now in place. At the present time, additional monies appear to be available for spending in the 2008 session. The availability of these monies is not being driven by hurricane recovery. Oil prices which are now in excess of \$80 per barrel

Positive State 2008-09 Budget Outlook

is contributing to this optimistic outlook.

Chancellor Richardson is not quite sure of the extent to which changes are likely to occur under President Lombardi. The chancellor senses that Lombardi doesn't back down if he believes in something. Lombardi is starting to get out to visit throughout the state. He will likely include visits to various AgCenter stations and offices on his travel agendas. He has scheduled visits to the Burden Research Center as well as to LSU-A and LSU-E. On his travels to LSU-A, he will probably include a visit to the Dean Lee Research Station. Money, both public and private, is part of Lombardi's agenda. The issue of campus consolidation is probably not on his agenda. Lombardi's agenda appears to be shared by Mr. Shea, Chairman of the LSU Board of Supervisors. President Lombardi and Mr. Shea are likely to be actively involved with the LSU Foundation. Fund raising is part of the landscape.

President Lombardi: Unknown Changes, Likely Visits, and Fund Raising

Chancellor Richardson updated the Council on the status of the Animal Sciences complex. Although the project was included in the capital outlay budget, it still requires funding approval by the state bond commission. Initially, the bond commission was operating on a formula that devoted 60% of the money to be bonded to state-wide projects and 40% to local projects. Governor Blanco requested that the commission reverse the allocations to 40% state-wide projects and 60% local projects. As a consequence, Chancellor Richardson had to respond to additional questions about the Animal Sciences complex.

Animal Sciences Complex: Far From Reality

Chancellor Richardson remains supportive of the ombudsperson position. However, he is not settled in on the creation of two ombudsperson positions, one for North Louisiana and

Ombudsperson or Ombudsperson(s)?

one for South Louisiana.

Chancellor Richardson underscored the value to AgCenter employees of exercising common sense and good judgment as evidenced by (1) not sending e-mail messages that one would not want to see in the newspaper and (2) not using one's computer to look at unsightly websites.

**Don't Do
Stupid !**

Chancellor Richardson observed that the LSU AgCenter is an apolitical organization. Its employees are not to post campaign signs in their yards. He observed that we need to work with elected officials, not to elect officials.

**Work With, Not To
Elect, Public Officials**

OLD BUSINESS

Whatley assumed the duties of the chairperson for Vlosky.

LSU AgCenter Faculty Council Elections. Anyone can see all who have been nominated. Voting for the seats that are open and will become available in January is set for Oct 5-19, 2007. In identifying potential candidates, it was observed that Joshua Detre is on-campus and thus he cannot be a representative for off-campus employees. The circumstances associated with Detre's candidacy will be investigated by Hogan and Watley.

Faculty Elections

The varied accomplishments of the LSU AgCenter Faculty Council got posted by Hogan's efforts. McMillin observed that the perceptions that people get from reading the minutes of the Council's meeting is that not much is being accomplished. Thus, there is a need to create, within the minutes, a section that highlights "Activities and Accomplishments" of the LSU AgCenter Faculty Council. Whatley directed Gauthier, as secretary, to undertake that task.

**Need to Document that
AgCenter Faculty Council
Does More Than Meet and
Eat**

McMillin and Grodner reported on their assessment of the situation with frequently absent AgCenter Council faculty representatives and identified two categories of proxies.

There was an extended discussion on how best to amend the Faculty Council's bylaws to provide for representation of all agricultural center employees at its meetings. Blouin observed that some proxy don't have a history of what went on when the elected person makes the decision of who will serve as their proxy. McMillin moved to add the following "section 4 to Article II to the Faculty Council's by-laws":

<p>Addressing Faculty Council Absences</p>

4. If a member of the Council fails to attend three (3) meetings in any year without giving prior notification with good cause to the Chair of the Council, the Council shall notify that member that such non-attendance constitutes grounds for removal from the Council. Following such notice, if the member fails by or at the next Council meeting to explain such absences, the Council shall declare the position vacant and the vacancy shall be filled as prescribed in Article VIII Section 5. However, for good cause shown, this provision may be waived by a majority vote of the Council.

Grodner moved to amend the bylaws by adding a section 5 to article II providing for a "proxy vote" to the by-laws. An amendment was offered by Hogan providing that a voting proxy shall be another sitting member of the LSU Ag Center Council member and notification of proxy must be given to the Chair prior to the meeting. The amendment, passed on voice vote, reads as follows:

5. A Council member who is unable to attend a meeting can identify another Council member as a voting proxy with prior written notification to the Council Chair.

Grodner observed that the next meeting's agenda needed to include a vote on the above amendments.

Approval of Old Minutes

Hogan moved to accept the minutes of August 24, 2007 as written and with its noted additions. The motion was seconded by Miller and passed by voice vote.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved by voice vote at 1:30 p.m. on September 28, 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne M. Gauthier
Secretary