

**LSU AGRICULTURAL CENTER FACULTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
October 17, 2008**

Members Present: Mandy Armentor, Wayne M. Gauthier, Andy Granger, Mary Grodner, Mike Hebert, James Hendrix, Collins Kimbeng, Joan King, Richard Keim, Donna Lee, Donnie Miller, Dale Pollet, Diane Sasser, Jerry Whatley, and Deniese Zeringue.

Members Absent: Miles Brashier, Clayton Hollier, and Phillip Stouffer

Proxies: Wayne Gauthier for David Blouin; Mandy Armentor for Adrienne Vidrine, and Jerry Whatley for Rich Vlosky

Guests: Fred Piazza, Department Head, Information Technology; Sandy Fizer, Information Technology Manager; and Sarah Johnson, Information Technology Manager

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Election Process Detailed for Term Limited Council Members (2)**
- **LSUAC Vision Statement Anticipated (3)**
- **No Apparent Movement Underway on Ombudsperson Position (4)**
- **Piazza Accepts Invitation to Address Negative Impacts Associated with LSUAC Internet and Intranet Systems (5-11)**
- **Public Perceptions of LSUAC Diminished by Com Website (5)**
- **LSUAC Employees Use Alternative Search Engines to LSUAC's Intranet (5)**
- **Whatley Creates Council Internet and Intranet Committee Appoints Members (6)**
- **Recommendation: Specifically Assign Responsibility for Websites (7a)**
- **LSUAC News Archive Materials Clogging Its Intranet Creating Negative Public Perceptions & Internal Frustrations (7b)**
- **Specific Example of Why Public Not Likely to Use LSUAC com Website (7c)**
- **Priority LSUAC Website Needs To Be com (7d)**
- **Who "Sunsets" LSUAC Created Documents? (7e)**
- **Intranet System Requirements Recognized As A Two-Edged Sword (7f)**
- **Coreil Requested to Add Council Internet & Intranet Committee Member(s) to LSUAC Internet Task Force (8)**
- **IT Cannot Fix Personal Computer Property With Public Funds (9)**
- **Sarah Johnson Tasked to Upgrade LSUAC Intranet Technology (10)**
- **Expect Stronger Password Mandates (11)**
- **No Advisory Committee Reports Whatley Outlines Requirements (12)**
- **Election of BOS Chair-elect Postponed until December 2008 (13)**
- **Identification of Initiatives for Council to Pursue in 2009 (14)**
- **LSUAC Distance Education Technology Deemed Inadequate & Unreliable (14a)**
- **Need to Assess Council's Effectiveness Relative to Meeting Frequency (14b & c)**
- **Region Internships: An Issue for 2009 (14d)**
- **Council Needs to Identify A Constructive Function for Itself (14f)**
- **2007 Survey Findings Might Hold Council Initiatives for 2009 (14g)**

Call to Order

Vice-Chairman Whatley called the meeting of the LSU Agricultural Center Faculty Council (Council) to order at 9:30 a.m. on October 17, 2008 in the John M. Sullivan conference room.

1. Hebert moved and King seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2008 meeting. The motion was seconded and approved on a voice vote.

Old Business

2. Whatley explained that there had been a failure to e-mail the faculty that the nomination process for identifying nominees to fill the seats being vacated by term limited members had been activated. As a consequence, Whatley asked the guest Fred Piazza to activate the e-mail notification process and extended the nomination process to Monday, October 21, 2008. Whatley explained that all council members serve three year terms and that the current terms would expire on December 31, 2008 for the following individuals and (positions): Miles Brashier, (Full- Off Campus); Wayne Gauthier, (Associate- On Campus); Richard Keim (Assistant – On Campus); Donnie Miller (Associate – Off Campus); Dale Pollet (Full – On Campus), Jerry Whatley (Full – Off Campus) and Rich Vlosky (Full – On-Campus). The nomination and voting process is accomplishing using the LSUAC intranet. Sharon Saltzer identifies the list of individuals eligible for each position. Sarah Johnson does the necessary computer work. Whatley indicated that he was going to have the LSUAC send an e-mail to every LSUAC employee whose position was represented by an upcoming vacancy.

3. It was observed that the Council was still waiting for Chancellor Richardson's vision statement for the LSU Agricultural Center (LSUAC).

4. It was noted that the application packets for the ombudsperson position had been distributed, but that there had been no further information disseminated or meeting called to discuss the candidates. Whatley indicated that he would be contacting Human Resources Management (HRM) to ascertain the status of the ombudsperson search.

New Business

5. Whatley introduced Mr. Fred Piazza, Department Head of Information Technology, Ms. Sandy Fizer, Information Technology Manager; and Ms. Sarah Johnson, Information Technology Manager. These individuals had come in response to the Council's invitation to help resolve the hosts of problems outlined in paragraphs 36-30 of the September 19, 2008 minutes. The guests were well aware of the contents of paragraphs 36-39 of the September 19, 2008 minutes and of an extensive co-authored e-mail message by Donna Lee and others that detailed issues and problems associated with the LSUAC internet and intranet systems. Whatley made a distinction between the LSUAC's internet system that serves the general public under a dot com (.com) address and the intranet system that serves agricultural center employees under a dot net (.net) address. These are separate entities, but both are of interdependent concern to council members and the LSUAC employees that they represent. The public's perception of the LSUAC is heavily influenced by their experiences in accessing information at the .com address. The

LSUAC employees' effectiveness is influenced by their experiences in their searches with the .net address. Both members of the public and employees are reporting easier and speedier access to information from Google, other search engines and other institutional sites than from either the LSUAC internet or intranet.

6. Whatley indicated that he did not expect this meeting with Piazza and the IT personnel to result in the resolution of the host of problems associated with the agricultural center's internet and intranet. He was of the opinion that a small committee of Council members could work more effectively with Piazza and the Content Management System (CMS) to resolve identified problems within the LSUAC internet and intranet systems. To that end, he appointed a committee of Donna Lee (chairperson), Mandy Armentor, Mary Grodner, James Hendrix, and Adrienne Vidrine. Whatley indicated that the committee needed representation from multiple levels of the LSUAC; that is parish, region, campus, and research station.

7. A frank, open and cordial exchange between IT personnel and members of the Council identified bits of history and hosts of problems creating negative perceptions and potential liabilities for the LSUAC by the general public and the dissatisfactions with the communicative capacity of the LSUAC internet and intranet systems by its employees. Some of the bits of information surfacing during the interchange included:

- a. It was observed that IT employees, at an earlier time, had purposely concentrated their attention on the physical and technical details of internet and intranet operations leaving it up to LSUAC employees to update the contents of the technical materials that were being created and posted on the internet and intranet systems. To that end, committees of LSUAC employees had been created to review the content. The resulting problem is that the charge to review technical material does not equate to a charge to manage and maintain currency of the websites to which materials are posted. The ad hoc recommendation is to put somebody in charge with authority to act in fulfilling a defined set of responsibilities critical to website access, content and currency.
- b. One very frustrating experience that was reported is the excessive volume of LSUAC news archive releases that accompany the majority of searches. There was appreciation of the need for the LSUAC to enhance its visibility through self-promotion so as to foster a public perception that the institution is performing invaluable public service. However, the frustrations that are being experienced and reported by the volume of news articles appearing in searches for technical information are creating negative public perceptions. The retention of outdated recommendations creates liability concerns. It was observed that the news releases are date-driven and are archived. There is a sense that there should be some way of managing those news releases so that they don't clog internet and intranet searches for technical information.
- c. The discussion recognized the possibility of user errors. Rank and file members of the public seeking LSUAC information are probably not as frequent users of the internet as are LSUAC employees. Users favor websites in which they can access information with two or fewer keystrokes. Beyond four keystrokes, they are likely to abandon their search on a LSUAC website and proceed to Google or a neighboring state's website. Every

repeat experience reinforces the perception that the LSUAC is failing in its mission to support them. Hendrix related an experience in which the producer came with a request for the LSUAC's wheat variety recommendation. The recommendation could not be accessed using the LSUAC internet. Hendrix was able to access the information only by going to a departmental website and inputting a researcher's name. That process, however, requires tacit knowledge which is not reasonable to expect a non-LSUAC employee to possess.

- d. There was agreement that the dot com (.com) address needs to be the priority website because it is the public's website.
 - e. Reference was made to the sunset rule as being the only rule specified for posting LSUAC materials on the internet. No one present could identify who establishes and controls sunset dates. It was observed that a document that subsets stays within the system and is archived.
 - f. It was observed that the design of an intranet system needs to satisfy a number of requirements. Some of these requirements include the provision of user training and the posting of information specific to a parish, region, campus, commodity, topic, user group, etc. The management of content and insuring currency of a website is a double-edged sword. Designated managers need to appreciate that these sites are dynamic and thus are in need of frequent updates. Individual portals (crops and livestock) need to be minimized. There is a need to control the quantity of content on websites. There is an overriding requirement for streamlined applications; that is, users being able to access material through a set of menu-driven options requiring less than four keystrokes.
8. Discussion indicated that Vice-Chancellor Coreil was in the process of assembling an LSUAC task force to address the numerous problems and issues associated with the operation of the LSUAC's internet system. It was speculated that while Vice-Chancellor Boethel probably had as strong a desire for effective internet and intranet systems as Coreil, the latter had been most likely charged with making the current systems more effective. Members of the task force assembled by Coreil include individuals from Information Technology (IT) and Communications. The problems identified were not only compiled from the first-hand experiences and frustrations of Council members, but also from their interactions with individuals and clientele groups. In summary, the problems include an absence of webpage clarity and no sense of oversight responsibility having been assigned for maintenance, access and currency. **It was moved and seconded that "due to liability issues and public perception caused by some incorrect content on the LSUAC web site, the Faculty Council recommends that resolution of the content errors be a top priority by the LSUAC and that representatives from the faculty council be added to the LSUAC task force being formed to examine current web content". The motion passed by a clear majority on a voice-vote.**

9. Observations offered in response to an inquiry as to why IT personnel would not repair a non-LSUAC personal computer that had been brought in by a new hire who was using that computer in performing LSUAC related work included:

- a. Since it is personal property and doesn't belong to the LSUAC, it cannot be repaired with public funds;
- b. If the individual chooses to donate it to the LSUAC, then maybe it can be repaired by IT; and
- c. The individual should have negotiated for a new computer as a condition of employment.

10. Piazza observed that Ms. Sarah Johnson was the individual in charge of incorporating new technology into the LSUAC intranet system. Existing intranet technology is now seven years old which makes it obsolete in today's world.

11. Piazza reported that the office in charge of technology for the state of Louisiana was requiring the LSUAC to use more secure passwords. Therefore, the LSUAC community can expect to use more challenging passwords in the future.

Advisory Committees

12. There were no advisory committee reports. Whatley advised that the memberships of all LSUAC advisory committees were to include at least one Council member. He further advised the council that the memberships on all these committees were posted on the Council's website. He advised Council members who had not yet been summoned to an advisory committee meeting in 2008 to call the chairman of their advisory committee and advise them of the requirement for that committee to meet at least once annually.

LSU Board of Supervisors Meeting

13. Whatley reported that the members of the LSU Board of Supervisors postponed their vote for the second time until December 2008 as to whom they would select as chair-elect.

14. Identification of new initiatives for future meetings of the Council included:

- a. The use of distance education technology in the conduct of future meetings. Concern was expressed that the inadequacy and unreliability of the current distance education technology would not only make it difficult to take a complete set of minutes, but it would leave some employees without representation.
- b. The option of having six meetings per year versus monthly meeting was voiced without much discussion.
- c. The possibility of a web cam meeting was discussed with the suggestion that what we needed to do was have a test meeting using web cams. The

discussion closed on the note that the Council needed to evaluate whether it needed to meet monthly.

- d. An assessment of regional level internships should be an issue for discussion in 2009.
- e. There is a critical need to upgrade the technology being used in the LSUAC. Apparently, smaller state institutions are working with more advanced technology than some LSUAC units.
- f. It was noted that the Council needs to have a constructive function with which it could be identified such as the resolution of problems. It necessarily needs to have an expanded role beyond than of other faculty councils because of its expanded clientele group.
- g. The Council needs to look at its 2007 survey to determine if there are unresolved issues that need to be addressed in 2009.

15. The motion to adjourn was seconded and approved at noon on a voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne M. Gauthier
Secretary