

MINUTES
LSU AgCenter Faculty Council Meeting
May 18, 2012
Sullivan Conference Room
9:30 a.m.



Members Present: Layne Arceneaux-Langley, Lisa Benoit, Esther Coco Boe, Edward Bush, Hallie Dozier, Allen Hogan, Clayton Hollier, Joan King, Robin Landry, Nikki LeMaire, Ken McMillin, Donnie Miller, Ross Pruitt, Diane Sasser, Michael Stout, Rich Vlosky

Members Absent: Quincy Cheek

Proxies: Esther Coco Boe for Tina Goebel; Layne Arceneaux-Langley for Sharman Charles; Clayton Hollier for Boyd Padgett; Ross Pruitt for Josh Detre, Jason Holmes, and John Westra.

Guests: Ms. Ann Coulon, Director, Human Resource Management

Chancellor's Report postponed until June meeting

1. Chancellor Richardson was not present at the May meeting due to being in Monroe to discuss a possible memorandum of understanding between the LSU AgCenter and the University of Louisiana-Monroe's (ULM) pharmacy school. ULM has expressed interest in re-starting an agricultural program and the chancellor was present to discuss that possibility.
2. As the legislature was still in session at the time of the May Faculty Council (FC) meeting, the budget situation for the 2012/13 fiscal year was still uncertain and very fluid in nature.

Guest – Ms. Ann Coulon, Director, Human Resource Management

3. Unit head evaluations are administered every other year and will be conducted in 2012. Human Resource Management (HRM) has added ended non-open questions to the unit head evaluation process to help improve participation. There was a response rate of 29% in the last evaluation of unit heads. The unit head evaluation process will close at the end of July.
4. Four questions on leadership, vision and goals, management of resources, and internal/external relationships are still present, but sub-parts to each question have been added.
5. The unit head evaluation process is completely confidential. Unit heads and the vice-chancellors will see the feedback. Sarah Johnston in Information Technology (IT) does analyze feedback t, but comments cannot be traced to an individual evaluator.
6. Members of the FC asked if the vice-chancellors will meet with faculty members of each unit. Ms. Coulon stated that Chancellor Richardson already meets with faculty and staff of an entire region.
7. Concerns were raised by FC members that the unit head evaluation process would result in the unit head being blamed for things not of their control, i.e. budget cuts. HRM has worked to put more efforts into the evaluation process to minimize unit heads from being victims of circumstance, but are balancing that need with reporting of responses to keep the evaluation process meaningful.
8. Faculty and staff responses on the unit head evaluation process are kept separate.
9. Due to the low response rate, the Faculty Council discussed ways to increase the response rate for the upcoming evaluation process. Some members asked if a joint pre-evaluation email from Chancellor Richardson and FC Chair McMillin would increase the response rate.

10. HRM is currently in the process of revising classified personnel evaluations.
11. Ms. Coulon reminded those present to complete the state mandated ethics training as soon as possible. There are plans to do some supplemental education by HRM due to questions raised as a result of the training. However, the state legislature provided no additional funding for ethics training. The law firm of Taylor, Porter, and Brooks advises the LSU AgCenter on ethics issues.

Business

12. The minutes from the April 2012 Faculty Council meeting were approved with corrections and will be posted on the LSU AgCenter Faculty Council website.
13. The May 2012 Faculty Council meeting was Allen Hogan's final meeting as an employee of the LSU AgCenter. His services as a three-term member of the FC were recognized with wishes for a wonderful retirement.

Reports

14. A recap of the contentious dismissal of LSU System President John Lombardi by the Board of Supervisors can be found in the media.
15. Most of the information presented at the Council of Faculty Advisors focused on the system leadership changes, an ongoing survey of faculty and administrator salaries in the LSU System, and legislative budget and retirement bills.
16. Chair McMillin had previously sent his notes on the May 12 Louisiana Statewide Colleagues Collaborative Summit and Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates (ALFS) meeting in Alexandria to the Council members.
17. Chair McMillin made a presentation at the May 12 ALFS meeting on the economic importance of agriculture to the state. This includes the education efforts of Family Consumer Science and coastal Extension agents. The LSU AgCenter may not be an academic campus (that has students), but those in attendance were informed of the education and research activities in the LSU AgCenter.

Discussion

18. Members of the FC expressed concern that those that rely on the efforts of the LSU AgCenter have not begun to feel the effects of state budget cuts. This is due to the increased efforts of parish Extension agents who have increased their work effort, recruitment of volunteers, and seeking out grant funds. Grant funding, through the efforts of agents and tenure-track faculty, has increased in recent years which has offset the lost in state funding. The work ethic of AgCenter employees is delaying negative impacts of budget cuts for Louisiana stakeholders.
19. Questions were raised about what would *really change* if the LSU AgCenter was merged with the LSU A&M Baton Rouge campus. Some FC members wondered if the current efforts to strengthen the AgCenter's effectiveness would be stronger by being aligned with the LSU A&M Baton Rouge campus. At this time, however, the reasons for a separate LSU AgCenter have not changed. In addition, with the increasing importance of F&A funds to maintain programming, a merger with the LSU A&M Baton Rouge campus may result in loss of F&A funds to the investigators/faculty members.
20. Concern was expressed about a growing credibility gap that the LSU AgCenter is facing due to its "crying wolf" every time a budget cut is imminent even though there has been no apparent decrease in AgCenter employee productivity.
21. There was discussion on whether LSU AgCenter administration would consider providing salary "bonuses" from F&A funds to increase grantsmanship when budget difficulties result in no salary adjustments. Other institutions currently use this model. A cost-benefit analysis of this idea will be proposed to the LSU AgCenter administration.

22. Lakshman Velupillai has retired as head of international programs. A search will take place for his replacement.
23. The Chancellor has asked that the budget oversight committee be re-activated to advise LSU AgCenter administration on pending budget changes and the existing business plan.
24. Due to Boyd Padgett becoming Director for the Central Region, a need was expressed to fill his vacancy on the AgCenter Faculty Council Executive Committee as an at-large member. Donnie Miller was nominated to fill this position. Donnie Miller moved that this vacancy be filled with Robin Landry seconding the motion. The motion passed. Donnie Miller was nominated to fill the vacant position. Allen Hogan moved that nominations be closed with Clayton Hollier seconding the motion. Motion passed and Donnie Miller was elected to at-large member of the AgCenter Faculty Council Executive Committee by acclamation.
25. Vacancies within service unit advisory committees were discussed. There is a strong desire that these committees meet during the summer due to the possibility of additional budget cuts. Further discussion on this issue focused on individuals to fill existing vacancies on these advisory committees.
26. There was no additional information on retirement legislation as of the meeting.
27. A proposal on tuition waivers was sent electronically to FC members. The proposed waivers would allow for reduced or full tuition waivers at Louisiana colleges and universities for faculty and their families. Peer institutions in other states as well as other institutions of higher education in Louisiana already have versions of this type of tuition waiver. The amount of the waivers would depend on years of service to the state. This could be an important recruiting tool for new faculty and a non-monetary “raise” for existing faculty members. Ross Pruitt moved that the LSU AgCenter Faculty Council endorse this proposal and the motion was seconded by Allen Hogan. The suggestion now moves to Jim Robinson of ALFS and allows for Ms. Coulon to determine the cost to the LSU AgCenter if implemented.
28. Discussion on the restructuring of ACE groups occurred. A need for data to support any movement on by the FC on this issue is needed. Rich Vlosky volunteered to craft a questionnaire during the summer months for dissemination this fall.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:19 AM, May 18, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Ross Pruitt