

**LSU Agriculture Faculty Council Meeting**  
**9:30 am, May 15, 2015**  
**Room 212, Efferson Hall**



**In Attendance:** Mandy Armentor (proxy Hilton Waits), Jeff Beasley, Margo Castro (proxy Hilton Waits), Cynthia Clifton, Thomas Dean, Adriana Drusini (proxy Kenneth Guidry), Jennifer Duhon (proxy Neely Walker), Andrew Granger (proxy Hilton Waits), Kenneth Guidry, Kurt Guidry, Joan King, Ken McMillin, Chuck Monlezun, Kori Myers (proxy Kenneth Guidry), Ioan Negulescu, Charles Overstreet (proxy Diane Sasser), Dave Picha, Diane Sasser, Mariah Simoneaux (proxy Neely Walker), Hilton Waits, Neely Walter, Becky White

**Absent:** Dorin Bolder, Jeff Davis, Kiki Fontenot, Gerald Roberts

**Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order by Chairman Ken McMillin. Ken mentioned that both guests (Dr. Richardson and Ms. Coulon) would be arriving later than planned due to other obligations. With that, we would move to other items on the agenda until they arrive.

**April Minutes:** A motion was made by Diane Sasser and seconded by Neely Walker to approve the April 17, 2015 meeting minutes with minor revisions. With no discussion, the motion was passed unanimously.

**Board of Supervisors Meeting:** Ken reported that the meeting was held on May 8, 2015. It was an extremely short meeting with nothing covered of significant substance. Ken did announce, however, that plans are for future Board of Supervisor meetings to be video streamed online live. The first attempt to live stream the meeting was the May 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. There were some technical difficulties that will hopefully be resolved before future meetings. Ken was not sure if plans were to have videos of past meetings available through some type of archived process.

**Council of Faculty Advisors:** Ken reported that the meeting was held on May 8, 2015. As with the Board of Supervisors meeting, there was nothing covered of significance at the May 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates:** Ken reported that the meeting was held on May 2, 2015. Some of the highlights from that meeting were:

- Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Rallo made a presentation that examined the state of higher education in the state over the past several years as well as looking forward into the future. Ken mentioned that he did not paint a very positive picture of what higher education in the state might look like in the future.
- One issue discussed was making sure that the university does what it can to assimilate students to campus. To this point, much of the focus has been on African-American and Hispanic students. More emphasis needs to be placed on trying to assimilate Asian, Eastern Europe, or students from other areas of the world.
- Updates were provided by other universities on activities on securing support for higher education. Both Southeastern Louisiana University and Southern University at Shreveport have held forums with legislators. McNeese State also held an event with legislators to try to increase support for higher education.
- Faculty Action Committee – Committee was formed to allow faculty be more visible in the debate for funding for higher education. The committee has started to develop material that could be provided to students and parents about the impact on cuts to higher education.

- A professor from Eastern Michigan University presented information on the budgets of all of the state's university systems. Based on the information presented, it was stated that the only system that would have difficulty if no state funds were provided was Southern. All others would be able to operate for a couple of years based on either the small percentage state funding makes up of their total budget and/or of reserves. The presentation showed that the LSU A&M campus only derived about 15% of its total budget from state funds.

**Discussion of Funding:** The discussion regarding the amount of LSU A&M's total budget coming from state funds lead to the question of the state funds dedicated for salary and benefits. While it wasn't known, it was mentioned that about 75% of the universities' costs were in salaries. However, of that number, only 55% were in faculty salaries. The remaining was in administration salaries (35%) and staff salaries (10%).

The question was asked because in many cases, extension personnel salaries are supported by grant funds (for example, EFNEP agents). This might lessen the impact of a reduction of state funds on faculty. It was also mentioned that, in many cases, federal research funds (Hatch Funds) had been moved to faculty salaries in an effort to protect those salaries as those funds are viewed as stable, reliable funds. This approach has generally not be taken with federal funding for forestry research (McIntire-Stennis funds). The general thought is that using McIntire-Stennis funds for salaries creates a situation where the institution does not have to show a significant financial commitment to the program. Also, using those funds on salaries reduces the amount of funds available for conducting research, purchasing research supplies, travel, etc.

**Graduate School Dean Search:** Ken mentioned that the search committee had identified 5 candidates from a total of 9. These 5 were interviewed by the search committee. From those interviews, the committee identified 3 that brought in for an open forum. Those open forums have been completed. The three candidates identified are:

- Michelle Masse' – Department of English
- Pam Monroe – School of Social Work
- William Clark – Department of Political Science

**Comments from Ann Coulon (Associate Vice Chancellor for Administration):** Items discussed with Ms. Coulon were:

- Technical changes to AgCenter's Promotion and Tenure Policy Statement – Changes were needed because now, the Vice President would be the last step in the review process for faculty with a 100% appointment in the AgCenter due to Board of Supervisors by laws changes. It would no longer have to go to the Board of Supervisors as part of the review process. Changes have to be made to the policy statement to reflect this new structure. After reviewing these changes, Neely Walker moved that the council accept these changes. The motion was seconded by Ioan Negulescu. The motion passed unanimously.
- Promotion and Tenure Advisory Committee – Ms. Coulon mentioned that the committee had met and made additional suggestions and changes for the P&T policy statement. These suggestions and changes have been made available to the project leaders for their comments. The next step is to make them available to the unit heads for their comments. Once that has been done, all of the information will be brought back to the committee to move forward.
- The discussion of the P&T Policy statement led to the question of how promotion would be handled for faculty with split appointments between the LSU AgCenter and LSU A&M. It was mentioned that if a faculty member had a majority appointment with LSU A&M that they would use A&M's policy for structuring the promotion packet. If the faculty member had a majority appointment with the LSU AgCenter, they would use the AgCenter's policy

for structuring the promotion packet. This is done so the faculty member does not have to develop two separate packages.

- Another question regarding promotion and tenure was what happens if there are conflicting reviews from the LSU AgCenter and LSU A&M for faculty with a split appointment. It was mentioned that there have been very few of those situations in the last twenty years. But if that situation happens, then the two campuses come together to discuss the issue. If one campus wants to keep the faculty member, then that campus commits to fund the entire position.
- Another question was if faculty are able to see the review of their promotion packets at each level of the review process. The answer was yes, but that at some levels, comments are only provided in the event that the package was not favorably reviewed. It was asked if there could be something to address this. Ms. Coulon said that the issue was addressed in the changes and suggestions made by the advisory committee.

**Comments from Dr. Richardson (Vice President and Dean):** Items discussed with Dr. Richardson were:

#### ***Budget Related***

- The situation with the budget is more positive than it was last month. The House has passed legislation that would result in funding for higher education remaining flat with the previous year. This was accomplished through eliminating some tax exemptions and raising taxes on cigarettes among others.
- The budget now goes to the Senate for consideration. There are also additional proposals in the Senate that would provide funding dedicated to the non-formula campuses (Pennington and the LSU AgCenter).
- There was a large grass roots effort to generate support for higher education funding. This was believed to be very effective. They have pulled back on this effort but will start again when appropriate as the Senate considers higher education funding.
- One issue that remains uncertain is in regard to state revenue. The Revenue Estimating Committee has not yet set their price projection for oil. This is an important factor as every \$1 per barrel reduction in oil prices results in a \$12 million reduction in state revenue.
- At this time, there is more hope for no significant budget cuts, particularly for the first half of the fiscal year. Beyond that there is still some uncertainty. We will have a new governor and could have significant change in the state legislature. So, there could be another fight to maintain funding for higher education in early 2016.
- President Alexander has contacted Dr. Richardson saying he wanted to help in maintaining funding for the LSU AgCenter. This is positive as this has not always been the case with past Presidents.
- The only negative feedback Dr. Richardson has received has been supporters questioning funding for the lazy river proposed for LSU that was recently in the news.

#### ***Other Legislation***

- Retirement Bill – Bill to allow LSU to buy out of the Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana. LSU would refinance its portion of the unfunded accrued liabilities (UAL). This could create significant savings for the system.
- Drones – There is a bill to address the use of drones in agriculture. Nicholls State and the University of Louisiana at Monroe have asked to be included in the bill.
- Beef Check-off – There is some debate regarding the beef check-off program. The issue is that the industry is divided in how those funds should be used. At this time, the LSU AgCenter is staying out of this debate.

### **Other Questions/Issues**

- Question was asked if there was any threat of the Governor of vetoing legislation to generate these additional funds for higher education. Most of the legislation was passed with or close to 2/3 in favor. While no one wants to have to override a veto, the votes show that there is enough support to make that happen and hopefully that would prevent the governor from vetoing.
- Question was asked if there was anything being done or could be done to address the heavy reliability of oil prices to state revenue. While nothing has been mentioned, oil revenue only accounts for about 13 – 14% of the state's budget.
- Question was asked about the impact to the LSU AgCenter of a small budget cut. It was mentioned that about 60 percent of the LSU AgCenter's budget were from state dollars. As such, a cut of 10%, even though smaller than originally feared, would still create significant difficulties for the AgCenter. The LSU AgCenter only has about \$1.5 million in reserves to address budget cuts. That is not sufficient enough to withstand any significant cuts.
- Other events to continue to build support for funding of the LSU AgCenter – La Fete on May 26, 2015 and 4-H Day at the Capital.
- Enrollment in the College of Agriculture was up during the previous academic year. Projections are another increase in enrollment (double the increase from the previous year) in the next academic year.
- College of Agriculture has hired two recruiters. One will be housed at the Red River Station and the other at Lamar-Dixon.
- The College of Agriculture has increased its efforts in raising funds for scholarships so that it can be more competitive in student recruiting.

**Additional Comments from Ann Coulon (Associate Vice Chancellor for Administration):** Ms. Coulon then finished her comments. Items discussed were:

- Committee for Unit Head Evaluations: Committee has not met yet. The system is moving to a new computer system for their financial and human resource functions. They are waiting until those new systems are in place before they move forward with the Unit Head Evaluation. The committee will meet to make recommendations, however, so that when the systems are in place, they can move forward quickly.
- Insurance for faculty who go on international trips: It has been approved that this additional insurance coverage will be made available for faculty who travel internationally. Traditional insurance coverage does not cover issues that might occur on this trip. This insurance would provide additional coverage. They are probably a month or so from this being in effect.
- Retirement legislation – this legislation continues to evolve. Legislation would allow LSU system to refinance its portion of the unfunded accrued liabilities (UAL). Originally, the thought would be to include all employees. Now, however, the legislation has been modified to include only addressing those employees under the ORP.

**College of Agricultural Name Change Committee:** Ken mentioned that if anyone had suggestions for potential names for the College of Agricultural to let him or Diane Sasser know. This is true also if there are suggestions to maintain the name. There is no mandate that the name has to be changed. However, with other name changes that have recently occurred, now is the time to change the name if it is going to happen. The only restriction that exists is that "Agriculture" must remain in the name somewhere.

**Adjourn:** A motion was made by Ioan Negulescu to adjourn. The motion was seconded by David Picha. With no discussion, the motion was passed unanimously.