

LSU Agriculture Faculty Council Meeting
9:30 am, February 19, 2016
Room 212, Efferson Hall



In Attendance:

Naveen Adusumilli, Mandy Armentor, Dorin Boldor, Ed Bush, Margo Castro(proxy Kori Myers), Chris Clark, Cynthia Clifton, Adriana Drusini, Kiki Fontenot, Bruce Garner, Ken Guidry (proxy Kori Myers), Kurt Guidry, Denise Holston-West, Joan King, Ken McMillin, Kori Myers, Ioan Negulescu, Gerald Roberts, Diane Sasser, Gary Stockton (proxy Kiki Fontenot), John Westra.

Absent: Joe Chang, Jeff Davis, Andrew Granger, Chuck Monlezun

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Council Chair Ken McMillin at 9:30 am.

Vice President and Dean's Report: Dr. William B. Richardson

The first week of the special legislative session is complete. A joint budget committee meeting was held this past Saturday thru Monday (2/13-2/15). Television and newspaper media reports are very accurate in the budget shortfall numbers being reported to the public. The severity of the budget is very much a reality. In December of 2015, the legislature discovered they had a 428 million dollar shortfall which they remedied with one time funds and 28 million dollars from the rainy day fund. Higher education was exempt from a cut in December. Our new governor, John Bel Edwards took office in January and announced to the public that the budget shortfall of 750 million was real and not a scare tactic. The plunging oil prices are a huge factor in this shortfall. Our state has paid out more in tax credits than these large oil companies have paid in. The plan of the legislature to solve the actual 980 million dollar shortfall during special session is cap the amount of tax credits large oil companies can receive and increase sales tax. Additional plans to remedy the 980 million dollar shortfall are to use 128 million from the rainy day funds and use 200 million of BP dollars. The 1 cent sales tax will go up for vote on Monday (2/22) by Ways and Means committee; if it passes, it will proceed to the house for a vote. If the sales tax passes, the legislature would still be 200 million dollars short in closing the 980 million dollar shortfall. The passing of the 1 cent sales tax is critical for this year and creating revenue for the coming year as well. If passed, the sales tax generates 200 million dollars of income for April –June and 900 million for July 1, 2016-June 30th, 2017. The legislature also will discuss increasing taxes on alcohol and tobacco as well. Republicans are reluctant to vote for the tax increases unless they get something in return. Some parishes across the state are working towards passing their own penny sales tax and it brings concern that some legislatures will not support the passing of the state penny sales tax.

The budget cuts to the LSU Ag Center could be anywhere from 32% to 5%. It could always be worse than 32% or we could escape with no cut at all. A 5% cut to the LSU AgCenter = \$370,000. A cut of 5% or 10% at this point would be impossible to deal with between April and June. The Vice President was asked how he would handle a 32% cut for April, May and June at his point; it would mean he would file for financial exigency, close parish offices, close research stations and employees would be laid off. He is not interested in furloughs and the possible cut backs are all possibilities until he has the final budget number at the close of the legislative session. The Vice President was also asked how he handles a 5%

cut to the College of Agriculture and it would mean closing 3 departments. They are not trying to scare anyone, but they are just facing reality. We are facing a cash flow problem. If solutions are not reached during this special session in mid-April, there is not enough money to make payroll or pay the bills for the LSU AgCenter. The Vice President is continuing to fight to keep the 5 million that is in the executive budget. We use all the revenue we get. We finished last year with 65,000 in our account when normally it's 2 million. The Federal Budget is fine at this point.

The LSU AgCenter began our legislative campaign on Monday (2/15) to contact our legislatures and ask for their continued support of the Ag Center. The main campus is beginning their campaign today. The Ag Center is working to inform the freshman legislators who are in their first session and not familiar with the work of the LSU AgCenter. Commodity groups are being contacted as well. They are working towards reducing operations at the Southeast, Northeast, Hill Farm, Iberia and Pecan Research Stations. Our Southeast station is located in the home parish of our new governor and our Iberia Station is located in the home parish of the speaker of house so the LSU AgCenter may face opposition from our legislature in reducing operations at these two stations. We currently lease out property at the Red River Station. They are currently looking to lease property to dock barges at the Sugar Station as well.

The special legislative session currently underway is dealing with the budget shortfall for the remainder of this year only. The legislature will handle the budget shortfall for 2016-2017 during their regular session. Higher education is exempt from a hiring freeze; we are proceeding with caution in filling vacant positions. The LSU AgCenter is highly recognized, which will help us through this budget crisis. They are still planning to conduct unit head evaluations this year. He will keep Ken informed and up to date on the situation. We will have final budget numbers on March 10th; the legislature session will end on March 9th.

Business:

Minutes Approval: The minutes from our January 22, 2016 meeting were approved. Ioan Negulescu made the motion for approval, Motion was seconded by Mandy Armentor, motion was approved.

Update from Chair: Ken McMillin encouraged all faculty council members to contact our legislators and ensure they are in support of the LSU AgCenter and will do their best to ensure the cuts to LSU AgCenter are minimal at most. We are encouraged to continue to market the LSU AgCenter. Ken stressed that until the legislature makes a decision during this special session, our Vice President does not know how severe of a cut the Ag Center is facing.

Graduate School Council Representative- Ken McMillin requested that Kiki Fontenot, Doran Boldor, Joan King and Ioan Negulescu as well as other on campus faculty recruit individuals who would be willing to serve as a Graduate Council representative for the College of Agriculture. Ken requested the names be submitted to him by the end of February. Ken explained the importance of this representative in working towards increasing graduate enrollment. The Graduate Council will take on a larger role in working to better support graduate students and ensuring agriculture is well represented. The first meeting for this council is March 2nd, 2016. Serving as representative is a 3 to 5 year commitment. This Graduate Council and the representative that will be selected play a critical role in working to support and recruit graduate students.

AEEE Faculty Council Representative: Currently the AEEE Department has no associate or full professor faculty in their department. Faculty Council has a vacancy from that department for an associate or full professor. Dorin Boldor made the motion to suspend the current rule of the faculty council and to allow an assistant professor to represent the AEE Department on Faculty

Council. Motion was seconded by Ioan Negulescu, motion was approved. Dr. Melissa Cater is an Assistant Professor in the AEEE Department that will be going up for promotion soon. Kiki Fontenot made the motion to fill the AEEE Department vacancy on faculty council with Dr. Melissa Cater. Mandy Armentor seconded the motion, motion was approved. Dr. Michael Burnette is the current interim chair for the AEE Department.

Reports:

Board of Supervisors meeting, next meeting March 18

Council of Faculty Advisors, next meeting March 18

Association of Louisiana Faculty Senates, next meeting February 20

Louisiana Statewide Colleagues Collaborative Summit Meeting (Alexandria) next meeting February 20 (agenda below)

Keynote presentation – Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph C. Rallo

A cross-cultural comparison of European and American university systems - Dominique Homberger, Olivier Moreteau

Amplifying role of women in faculty governance - Sonya Hester, Joslin Pickens, Harolyn Wilson

Upgrading of system-wide faculty advisory councils - Leslie Bary and Lewis Deaton

Two-year colleges - Ramona Olvera

Commercialization of education - James Kirylo

Announcements:

March 11 meeting in room 214 Efferson Hall, after the special session ends on March 5th and before Board of Supervisors meeting on March 18th

Discussion Items

Ad-Hoc Mentoring Committee - Kiki Fontenot (checklist template), Jeff Davis (previous presentation), Kurt Guidry (Ag Econ process), [Becky White] (ODE advisory committee information). Mariah Simoneaux worked with Bruce Garner to develop a yearly calendar of events for newly hired agriculture agents. Diane Sasser is working with Cynthia Clifton and a FCS Regional Coordinator on developing a same type calendar for the FCS Agents. Ken asked if the Council members who are 4-H agents can begin working on something similar for 4-H agents as well. We will work to formalize the documents as they are being developed to be used as mentoring tools for newly hired agents. Council members will work to have this more formalized for the end of March. In addition to the calendar, a FAQ document will be developed. It will be taken into consideration of how much campus faculty relies on field agents to assist with grants. It was noted that our field faculty is lacking in grant management skills. Jeff Davis, Kiki Fontenot, Kurt Guidry and Bruce Garner will work to finalize the ag agent calendar.

Unit Head Evaluation Committee – Ken McMillin, Diane Sasser, [Mariah Simoneaux], Ioan Negulescu, Kori Myers, Gerald Roberts, [Dave Picha], Kevin Brady, Christopher Green, Vinny Moreira, Lanette Hebert, Ann Coulon. Ken will follow up with Ann Coulon on this. Unit Head Evaluations need to be conducted before May of this year. This task can be handled by Faculty Council if we can be granted access to the website or Council can conduct the evaluation independently of Ag Center resources.

Faculty Council representation review – Adriana Drusini, Mandy Armentor

A review needs to be conducted. There are more on campus faculty serving on Council than off campus faculty members so there is not equal representation of the numbers and locations of faculty members. We have more agent representation than research station representation. Our agent representation is not divided equal amongst the regions. We have 11 on campus

departments represented. The funds to cover Faculty Council travel now may not be available in the future. People are nominated and once they accept, then they are made aware that they have travel funds available. The current voting policy is that faculty members vote for candidates in their same location (on or off campus) and rank, except on campus full and associate faculty members vote for one representative from their on campus department or school. The committee will review and report back to us.

P&T and PS-42 review- Jennifer Duhon], Kurt Guidry, Adriana Drusini, Mandy Armentor They have received no information. Ken will contact Ann Coulon and Kevin Brady. We need more defined changes to be made. Last summer, we were given documents that were not definite and still need changes. The policy does not define a procedure for due process to appeal a personnel decision, which is not fair and needs to be changed. Committee on campus is tackling PS-36 T before they tackle PS-36 NT. Ken and Joan are waiting to hear back to see what step they will take next. They are working to make these documents more inclusive. Once PS-36 is complete, Council can review it and work to align PS-42 to match PS-36. We also need to work towards changing agents from a one year contract to more years to provide more security. In most parish agent job descriptions, the last duty is "any other duties as assigned." This statement should be removed from agent job descriptions or more definitive criteria be specified. An agent job description should be agreed upon by the agent before any changes are made. PS 42 needs to include how job descriptions are written and who approves them. Promotion raises are currently 4% of the salary plus a fixed increment amount that differs with rank. It is not believed that formal notices have been sent out for promotions to candidates. Among the agents who submitted promotion packets, some received feedback and some did not so clarification is needed for this discrepancy. The committee will be convened, recommend changes to Council and then bring to the Vice President.

Ag Center Awards Program: The program was held in December. The program was unorganized, not well attended, and award winners did not receive notification to attend till the last minute. The program did not adequately recognize award sponsors during the award presentation. In past years, the awards or money were never received by the award winners who did not attend. Emails to faculty encouraging people to apply should be supplemented by emails to unit heads. We need to work to have this event better organized with more sponsor recognition and more notification to award winners.

Service Unit Advisory Committees: Joan has met with the HR Advisory Committee. Joan highlighted the details of the meeting and minutes were provided to Council. Each unit should be updating their personnel directory, but only Human Resources can make job title changes. Safety training needs to be done quarterly, drug free training should be done every 5 years, unit head evaluations need to be done between January and May of each year. If you have a license and take the defensive driving program plus have a good driving record you can drive Ag Center vehicles. Budget numbers will change and codes will change when Workday software is implemented this summer. The IT committee has been meeting. The International Committee has not been meeting. Ken will try to get a listing of all Service Unit Advisory Committee rosters from Ann and/or Kevin.

Additional Items Discussed:

Email: Employees of the LSU Ag Center who leave cannot keep their email address unless they are a Professor Emeritus. Employees who have requested to keep their email have been denied and must submit an alternative email to receive information from the Ag Center. The reasoning behind

this rule presumably is a server size issue. Ken will visit with IT to see we can work to allow those who retire to keep their email address.

Funds: With the recent incident a couple of months ago of misuse of funds and external auditors reviewing Ag Center financial transactions, there has been greater scrutiny of finances. This is being taken as a precaution measure to prevent similar incidences from occurring.

Meeting via Lync: Ken will visit David Stout in IT to see if the option of allowing our members to connect to Faculty Council meetings via Lync is a possibility. Using Skype to connect remotely was also listed as a possibility. Ken will report to us.

Proxy Voting: State law allows an alternate representative to vote, but does not allow a proxy from the same body to vote so we need to consider changing our bylaws in regards to this. Options are a Council member can represent another unit but not vote or a faculty member in that rank from the same unit can attend the meeting and vote for that unit.

Parish Funding: Parish funded agents are completely parish funded. Parishes are billed for agents that are no longer working for up to two years after those agents have left and parish officials are asking why. Questions being asked are: where is this money going if the position is not filled? Why am I paying for an agent I don't have? These questions have been asked to Regional Directors and they cannot answer. If this billing process continues will begin to affect MOU with parishes and parish support. This billing process needs clarification with defined rules for MOU and parish support.

New Website: The new system is streamlined and more user friendly so the Ag Center activities will be much more visible. Faculty members will need to more proactive and more training needs to be provided.

Adjournment:

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Ioan Negulescu. Chris Clark seconded the motion. Motion was approved. Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm.