Meeting Minutes
April 27, 2015

Meeting called to order at 1:00 PM.

Roll call:

Dr. Tom Coon, Dean and Vice President, Agriculture
Dr. Jeff Edwards, Plant and Soil Science (chair)
Dr. Eric Rebek, Entomology and Plant Pathology (secretary)
Dr. Randy Taylor, Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering (chair of CASNR RPT Committee)
Dr. Dan Storm, Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering
Dr. Gopal Kakani, Plant and Soil Science
Dr. Sam Fuhlendorf, Natural Resource Ecology and Management
Dr. Mike Smith, Horticulture and Landscape Architecture
Dr. Ranjith Ramanathan, Animal Science
Dr. Chris Richards, Animal Science
Dr. Ulrich Melcher, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Dr. Max Melstrom, Agricultural Economics
Dr. Scott Frazier, Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering
Dr. Gina Peek, Design, Housing, and Merchandising
Dr. Astri Wayadande, Entomology and Plant Pathology
Dr. Jon Ramsey, Agricultural Education, Communications and Leadership

Questions for Dr. Coon, Dean, Vice President, and Director of DASNR (Dr. Coon's responses are in italics below each question submitted by faculty and staff):

1. My question for CASNR is that many of the non-tenure track faculty in the college are in positions that are promotable, or temporary and require renewal. What are the policy guidelines of the college with respect to annual review, job renewal and promotion involving the college RPT committee and Dean's office review?

DASNR (and therefore, the college) follow the policies of the OSU Board of Regents regarding annual review. A review of faculty (regardless of rank or tenure status) is conducted annually for every faculty member. Guidelines for conducting this review are provided in policy letter 2-0112.

Academic Affairs provides a listing each year of tenure track faculty who are scheduled to be reviewed during that year's RPT process. To my knowledge there is no such "listing" provided for non-tenure track positions nor is there a period of review indicated for non-tenure track positions. The faculty handbook does provide some guidance on length of appointments for Research Associates and Teaching Associates, but not for other non-tenure track employees. DASNR uses some Cooperative Extension titles for non-tenure track faculty (Extension Specialist, Associate Extension Specialist, Assistant Extension Specialist) which are not addressed by the faculty handbook, but our practice has been to treat these by the same policies established for research professors, research scientists, and research professionals.

The Faculty Handbook provides definitions for Research Professor, Research Professional, and Research Associate. Promotion to new ranks are possible for Research Assistant and Associate Professors as well as Assistant and Associate Research Professionals. The promotion process for these non-tenure system positions begins in the department with a committee making a recommendation to the Unit Head. The Unit Head makes the ultimate decision on whether to approve a promotion or not, based on faculty input. Although the OSU Faculty Handbook does not indicate a role for the Dean in the decision process, our practice has been to have the Dean's approval solicited for promotions of non-tenure system faculty positions.

The College RPT committee was explicitly established to weigh in on tenure system reappointment, promotion and tenure decisions. If it were to be expanded to include non-tenure system decisions, that would be a matter for Ag Faculty Council to consider and act upon.

2. Why were changes in the RPT process regarding promotion from Associate to Full Professor not communicated earlier? Candidates, departmental committees, and external reviewers spent a great deal of time preparing these materials and could have better used the time elsewhere if an across the board policy of no early promotion was going to be instituted.

There are not new guidelines at the university level other than a College-Level review committee. Departments have different guidelines. You should plan on the regular path for promotion unless there is an extraordinary circumstance. If a faculty member is considering early promotion, I recommend a frank conversation with your department head and mentors. To warrant early promotion, there must be evidence of extraordinary performance which exceeds the normal requirements for promotion.

3. Some of us also believe that the College level RPT committee should provide more input than just procedural problems. However, those additional responsibilities should be in place after two years, allowing sufficient time for everyone to be fully aware of that added RPT judgment prior to going up for RPT.

This is something that would require a change in the DASNR faculty council's governing document. If the faculty opt to have the college committee review RPT cases and provide input on the merit of the case, I will work with the committee to incorporate their input into our decision process.

4. It is my understanding that the Title Nine training is to be completed shortly for all faculty and staff at OSU. What are the plans being taken by the administration to ensure such training opportunities are provided to everyone?

DASNR administration strongly supports Title VII & Title IX training. OSU's emphasis has been on student training in order to meet the goal of having all students go through Title IX training prior to Fall Semester, 2014. Currently, training for faculty and staff is offered at least once per month via a "live" training session through OSU's Training program. Any individual can enroll in one of these sessions through Online Training/Human Resources. The next session is scheduled for May 12. Supervisors can require this training if desired. However, as a whole,

we will not require the training until online tools are available to facilitate the process. The target date provided by OSU is Fall 2015. When on-line training is available, we will depend upon our unit administrators, district directors and other supervisors to use the new learning management system and assign this training to employees with a deadline for completion.

5. Does Dr. Coon have any input for the entire faculty related to how we address human resources issues into the future? We have an expectation that if we are achieving true EEO constraints when hiring, that all faculty and staff search processes will meet INS and other state/federal expectations. Does he believe that all those guidelines are being met at this time?

We strive to continue to improve our ability to recruit diverse pools of candidates for positions. Towards this end, all Faculty/Staff positions are automatically advertised on the OSU jobs site as well as Higher Ed Jobs, Faculty for the Future, Association of public and Land Grant Universities, The Registry (Minority publication), Oklahoma Employment Commission. We also distribute via email to American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education and Southern Region Education Board, Military pipeline, Ability Links, and various Classified Ads.

If we have candidates who are not US citizens or foreign nationals with permanent status, we work with the candidate to discern their pathway to legal status that would allow them to be employed by OSU if they are the preferred candidate. Ultimately, this is a responsibility of the candidate, but often the employer can provide valuable assistance. If the candidate is our preferred choice and if there is a pathway to legal status as a US resident, we will work with them to facilitate their visa and immigration status review. The OSU International Students and Scholars office can be helpful to candidates and employees as well.

6. Why is there not greater transparency and communication regarding the current situation? Faculty might have a better idea than administrators regarding areas that could provide cost savings. Also, how will departments provide essential services with the increasing segregation and limitations for money from teaching, research, and Extension?

   It's not clear what current situation is being referred to, but I interpret it to mean the current budget situation, in which OSU's state appropriation and the appropriations for our two agencies may face a reduction in the next year. Certainly there's value in individual employees feeling empowered to share their thoughts and recommendations on cost savings and efficiencies and I encourage individuals to share their perspectives with their supervisor, unit head or associate director, associate dean or the dean.

7. Why doesn't DASNR administration submit written performance evaluations (with defined metrics) of the various units/offices under their control to the faculty? Units/offices would include groups like Field and Research Service Unit, District and County Extension offices, … Defined metrics would be something like number of research projects conducted during a specific year, number of research faculty served, estimated dollars spent to keep a station opened/faculty served or /research project, … These types of metrics could be used by faculty to determine DASNR resources are underutilized and could be used to advance their research or extension programs.

The university requires that all unit administrators, including the associate and assistant directors of OAES and OCES, the associate and assistant deans, academic unit heads, heads of other units, and district directors, be evaluated annually. For the first 3 years they are in an

administrative position and every third year thereafter, each administrator receives input from a survey process available for faculty and staff input. Many of you participated in that process this year via the online evaluation.

With regard to the number of projects on each station and other metrics for Research and Extension services – I am very supportive of providing metrics if they would be useful and am willing to hear how we would use such information. We do not publish personal evaluations on faculty or other employees.

Two other factors are worth noting: 1) we have a general need for a better system for reporting annual accomplishments of faculty and administrative units. Academic Analytics and other software solutions are available. I'm not aware of OSU planning to move in this direction, but if the administration chooses to implement an information system of this type, I would be very supportive. 2) OSU's Academic Ledger information system is unique and one of the more transparent systems I've encountered. In that respect, OSU is a leader in transparency.

8. Why are so many clerical / overhead tasks being pushed down to faculty via online systems…., (i.e., time & effort reporting, grad school applications, student advising STAR system, radiation/laser/hazmat lab safety, etc.). These online systems require more faculty time to accomplish than the old paper systems. It seems that all these tasks are designed to make the back-end processing easier for administrators with little regard to the faculty time consumed.

Much of this is not in our hands. However, there may be some tasks that could be handled by staff and I recommend working with your department head. Time and Effort reporting must be performed by the PI. Systems like STAR for scheduling student advising will require a shift in the way things are handled. PIs are ultimately responsible for making sure all lab personnel have the required safety protocol training and I don't expect this to change. Invariably, adoption of new information systems can go through a period of difficulty in adapting to the system and adapting the system to our institution. But once we've gone through an initial change process, information systems should help reduce tedious work actions and improve the quality of information available for making administrative decisions.

9. Concerning a request for change in appointment from 11 to 9 month at equivalent annual salary and assuming a faculty member were to receive a job offer from another institution, how long would it take DASNR administration to respond to the appointment change request?

It depends. If a job offer is in-hand for a highly productive faculty member in a critical field of study, we will have a conversation on the possibility of retaining that faculty member. This conversation could take a few days to arrange, but normally we can expedite this to be responsive in less time. It helps to know if someone is considering a move in advance so we can do our best to prepare for a response with a possible counter-offer. If we decide to proceed, the options of a salary adjustment or other adjustment in appointment will be determined, based in part on the individual faculty member's requests. If the arrangement is accepted by the faculty member, any change in appointment (from 9 to 11 months or from 11 to 9 months) would not be implemented until the beginning of the next appointment period (July 1). Changes in operating support for research or teaching or Extension may go into effect immediately. Changes in salary and/or appointment period require Board of Regents approval.

10. I have the following question for the VP, Dean, & Director:
    a. Why (especially since the privatization of custodial services) are the hallways much cleaner in Whitehurst than in Ag Hall?
    b. Why are the stairwells much cleaner in Whitehurst than in Ag Hall?
    c. Why are the rest rooms much cleaner in Whitehurst than in Ag Hall?
    d. Why do the rest rooms in Whitehurst have continuous forced air circulation whereas the rest rooms in Ag Hall do not?
    e. Why do some rest rooms in Ag Hall have sealed windows?

Whitehurst is not a classroom building with hundreds of students passing through it every day. Ag Hall has a high volume of student traffic which creates a greater demand for custodial services. At present, there are 8 custodians in Ag Hall. However, the standards of operation dictate we should have 10 for this building. We hope to have 2 people during the day shift during the fall semester, rather than one. The OSU Facilities Management group and GCA, the contractor providing custodial support for OSU, are fine tuning communications.

Discussion of RPT and Cumulative Review Process:

Per Randy Taylor, the process of college-level review went well overall, despite it being the first such review for CASNR. Members of the RPT Committee did have some initial confusion about the process, and they were operating under a very short time frame to complete the review process. However, the RPT Committee felt comfortable with being tasked to review whether departmental RPT policies and procedures were followed. They reviewed a total of 20 packets submitted across the college, and they reviewed them by dividing and conquering, much like a grant review panel. That is, each member was assigned a different subset of the total packets, which were then discussed as a larger group. Again, Randy thought the process went well, but there is some concern as to what more the RPT Committee can or should be doing. As a reminder, Randy stressed that the RPT Committee's role is not to make a decision as to whether or not to grant promotion and tenure. They only review each packet as to whether departmental policy and procedure were followed.

Some feel the Committee should be reviewing merit of each candidate. Others are a little hesitant about this, given that the missions and mixture of assignments of other administrative units are so different. For example, Extension is unique to our college, but not everyone has a working idea of what Extension is. How could Extension be objectively reviewed by Committee members not having any Extension assignment nor experience?

Randy mentioned that the Committee may become involved with reviewing each department's RPT guidelines, but this would not be done at the same time packets are reviewed. NOTE: departmental guidelines were reviewed one year prior to college RPT Committee formation.

Ulrich Melcher asked how the packets were made available to the Committee. Packets were available in the Dean's office for committee access and review. Security appears to be

sufficient through this process, in terms of protecting confidentiality of faculty candidates for promotion and tenure.

The discussion moved to how other colleges (e.g., Arts and Science) are conducting RPT and perhaps we should be adopting some of those procedures that are applicable to CASNR.

The Committee would like to see more standardization in terms of organization of packets submitted for review. Each department could follow organizational steps to help streamline the review process. Standardization across the college could also help individual faculty in putting together a high-quality, concise packet. NOTE: Dr. Coon said it's no longer the role of administrative support from the Dean's office to force the departments to fix items from packets that were submitted in error (e.g., times, dates, typos, etc.). The Committee should now be calling those shots and the departments and faculty candidates should be submitting the best possible packet.

A side discussion developed regarding promotion of non-tenure track faculty (see Question 1 from Questions for the Dean above). A subcommittee was formed from Ag. Faculty Council to review university and departmental policies focusing on this issue. Astri Wayadande, Chris Richards, and Jon Ramsey agreed to serve on this subcommittee.

Discussion of DASNR Faculty Council Bylaws:

Jeff asked if AFC folks have looked at the new changes made since the last revision. Most changes and edits are straightforward.

Jeff Edwards mentioned there was a request that we provide the agenda for all AFC Meetings to all CASNR faculty prior to an upcoming meeting. Jeff asked the group if we need to provide meeting agendas ahead of time. The general consensus is "no" because minutes are posted soon after conclusion of each meeting and faculty are made aware of upcoming meetings via solicitation of questions for Dean Coon.

With no further changes to the Bylaws required, AFC members signed off on approval and passage of the new Bylaws. Jeff needs a total of 20 signatures, so he will solicit additional signatures from non-AFC member faculty since we only had 15 faculty in attendance.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.