DASNR Faculty Council Meeting Minutes

August 29, 2017

Meeting held in Room 106 Ag Hall

Meeting called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Dr. Shelley Mitchell, Chairwoman.

Dean Coon and 20 faculty members in attendance

1. Elect new AFC Secretary for 2017-2018 term
   1. Tyson Ochsner was nominated and elected as secretary for 2017-2018
2. Faculty questions for Dean Coon, with his responses in blue.
3. With recent thefts from offices and vandalism in a hallway, are there any plans to install security cameras in the hallways of Ag Hall?

Some spaces are under surveillance in Ag Hall and other DASNR buildings at this time, at the expense of the individual unit. Cameras have been effective in some instances at capturing images of those who have damaged or stolen property of the university. We have not conducted a comprehensive security study of DASNR spaces, but I will take this under consideration and work with Dr. Randy Raper and Dwayne Hunter to determine estimates for such an endeavor. Meanwhile, if a department has a specific need for enhanced security, I suggest working through the OSU police chief and our FM zone 1 manager for recommendations and estimates.

1. Faculty and staff annually submit evaluations of Ag administrators, but it is not clear how these are used by the Dean.  Could you explain how you use the evaluations when you conduct annual appraisals with administrators?  Additionally, if an administrator consistently receives poor evaluations from faculty and staff, what recourse do you normally take to correct poor performance?

The input received on administrative reviews is taken into consideration as part of the overall review of an administrator in DASNR. Training, goal setting and mentoring techniques are used to mitigate issues that have been gleaned by the dean through conversations, observation and through the administrative evaluations submitted by faculty, staff and peers. Please continue to be frank in appraisals of administrators. Summative information is shared with the administrators, but direct quotes and individual statements are not so as to avoid the subject being able to ascertain who submitted the statements. This information is important in learning about the leadership abilities, strengths and weaknesses of administrators in DASNR.

The Faculty Council, Deans Council and Provost have put forward a series of changes in the policy for annual appraisals of academic administrators and it will be reviewed and acted upon by the OSU/A&M Board of Regents at their September 8 meeting. A summary is attached.

1. When will the DASNR faculty be given additional details about the vision and corresponding details related to the new DASNR Lab Building?  
   We’ve been informed that meetings will be held, but only a few faculty will be selected to participate.

The Agricultural Hall Phase I (Laboratory Building) project is underway, as described in response to question number 5. The architects met with representatives from each of the departments whose laboratories are currently in Agricultural Hall on August 23 and 24. We asked the department head of each of those departments to invite a subgroup of 6-8 people (faculty and or technicians) from their department to participate in the discussions to ensure that we address all of the needs and considerations of each department. Representatives of the other departments were included as well to ensure that perspectives from across the Division are available to the designers.

1. Why are we building a new lab building when we are either not replacing faculty positions, or converting tenured faculty slots to non-tenure track? Who will be left to use the space when completed?

The funding reductions we have absorbed are severe and disconcerting. At the same time, we still receive $42 million per year from the state of Oklahoma to support our research and Extension efforts and I do not expect that investment to be eliminated. Furthermore, we receive $11.6 million in federal appropriations to support our research and Extension agencies. If we’re going to be relevant and have a strong case for ongoing support for our operations and mission, we will need to have modern and economical facilities to support our research, teaching and Extension work.

Capital facilities require funding different from our operating funds. We can attract one-time funds to help finance capital improvements through philanthropy, through federal funding opportunities, through state funding opportunities, through debt and through fee revenues. We are pursuing funding on all fronts to support our capital improvements. To date we have financed a new equine teaching center, a new dairy barn and student living quarters and a new field station at Lahoma primarily through philanthropic gifts. Our ability to attract those funds and to fulfill the expectations of donors with the facilities we have built and are building helps to build momentum for other philanthropic gifts in support of our facilities. We have strong supporters who may want to cap their legacy with a capital investment in our facilities. I am happy to provide them opportunities to do that in something that would have the kind of impact that modern teaching and research facilities can support.

1. Can you provide any update on the plans for a new "Ag Hall" and has there been any progress in fund raising for the new building yet? Is the planning for a capital campaign underway?

Our capital campaign is in its formative stages. Over the past nine months, we have worked with VP Weaver’s offices and the OSU/A&M Regents to contract with architects to assist in the needs assessment and concept design phase of most of our projects. The four projects include:

* 1. Agricultural Hall – phases I (laboratory building) and II (office/classroom building) – we have contracted with Studio Architecture to lead us through the program planning and needs assessment process for the Phase I project. The first session was held on Aug. 23 and 24, with representation from each of the affected departments included in the process. Departments who are not expected to have laboratories in this building have been represented as well, such as Agricultural Economics and Animal Sciences and Entomology and Plant Pathology.
  2. Teaching Greenhouse – we have contracted with KKT Architects to conduct the needs assessment and then to develop the design plan. We have an initial financing plan, but will be doing fund-raising along the way to help address some of the financial needs.
  3. Animal Nutrition Physiology Building – the Regents will select the architect for this project at the September board meeting and they will begin the program planning and needs assessment shortly thereafter
  4. Agronomy/Virginia Avenue farm project – the Regents will select an architect to walk us through the needs assessment and program planning process for this project at the September Regents meeting.

We have made preliminary inquiries and presentations on these projects and will be developing a capital campaign for these projects over the next nine months. Once we have conceptual designs for the Agricultural Hall Phase I Project, we will integrate these with a case statement that we will use in a feasibility study to determine a rough projection of our fundraising capacity for these projects. We have some promising initial reactions, but we want to study this very carefully so we can have an efficient and effective campaign.

In addition to philanthropy, we are pursuing opportunities for federal funding through collaboration with the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities in making the case for federal funding that would match state or private funds in financing projects whose purpose is to modernize research facilities at public universities for food, agriculture and natural resource research needs.

1. Dean’s comments:
   1. State and federal funding for DASNR: We lost another 6.1% of our budget in this fiscal year. The state also faces an additional revenue shortfall because of the recent court ruling on the cigarette tax/fee. Federal funding looks to be flat. The Trump administration has proposed eliminating F&A costs in federal grants, but that proposal seems unlikely to pass.
   2. Infrastructure initiative: APLU study two years ago assessed status of facilities at agricultural colleges nationwide. They found many of the facilities were in poor shape with outdated building standards and delayed maintenance. About 60% of the facilities were more than 25 years old. They estimated $8.4 billion dollars in deferred maintenance. The replacement value of the same facilities was $29 billion dollars. Recommendations were to adopt best management practices for maintenance and to replace a substantial portion of the outdated infrastructure. They recommended a peer-reviewed federal program with matching fund requirement; one for small projects and one for large projects. There is some interest in infrastructure programs at the federal level. Some private groups have identified agricultural research infrastructure as a top priority. Dean Coon was called to present these needs to Congress this summer, and the presentation was well received. Dean Coon just learned that agricultural research was not included in the President’s infrastructure program which is to be announced soon. Another possible funding source is the Farm Bill, but that seems unlikely because the Farm Bill is facing cuts already. Currently, Oklahoma does not service bonds for higher education infrastructure, but some states do. Dean Coon will continue to pursue avenues for public funding.
   3. Faculty positions: Five positions to be filled this year: 2 in ag econ, 1 in NREM, 1 in Horticulture, and 1 in BAE. There may be potential to fill a few more, but somewhat unlikely.
   4. OCES Associate VP position: Dr. Jeff Edwards is the chair of the committee, which has 20 members. Goal is to identify finalists by beginning of November, interview in early December. We need to invite and encourage applicants to get a deep and diverse pool of candidates. Strong leadership will be key because of major changes coming to OCES and the way it operates.
2. Old Business
   1. ~~Approval of previous minutes~~ (no minutes from June 2017 meeting; see Dean Coon’s Q&A)
   2. Update on progress of previously approved AFC bylaw changes – Rodney Jones
      1. Rodney Jones proposed some further changes regarding:
         1. number of representatives from Family and Consumer Sciences Extension (2)
         2. having a DASNR liaison from OSU Faculty Council if necessary
         3. having a representative or liaison to/from the DASNR RPT Committee
      2. Jon Ramsey suggested some other minor changes.
      3. Drs. Jones and Ramsey will work out the draft text and circulate it to the council for approval prior to distribution to all DASNR faculty for a vote.
3. New Business
   1. Election of Vice-Chair: Shane Robinson nominated and elected.
   2. Elect OSU Faculty Council representative or liaison: Jon Ramsey nominated and elected.
   3. Elect Curriculum and Academic Standards representative or liaison: Udaya DeSilva nominated and elected.
   4. Elect DASNR RPT Committee representative or liaison: Sam Fuhlendorf nominated and elected.
4. Meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

*Meeting minutes prepared and submitted by Tyson Ochsner, August 31, 2017.*