Questions for Dean Coon from AFC, June, 2017

1. Why are endowed chair/professorships moving to 3 year renewal terms even though Hatch projects, Extension Plans of work, and post-tenure reviews are still on 5 year terms?

At the outset of the Branding Success campaign, university administration asked all colleges, in coordination with the OSU Foundation, to create new chairs/professorships as 3 year terms and to convert existing chairs/professorships, if possible, to 3 year terms. In DASNR, we also changed our practice of filling chairs and professorships throughout the year, to a July 1 begin date, with rare exceptions.

1. Given the budget shortfall, which we have heard is being offset largely through attrition, has DASNR leadership identified priority areas or strategic issues that it will use to determine program funding/positions to be filled? Or, alternatively, will DASNR programming in the near future reflect primarily the programs currently in place supported with existing staff and faculty (i.e. maintain the status quo)?

The basic strategy has been to use reserves to fund shortfalls until attrition due to retirements and resignations cut the budget by the needed amount.  In addition, we have reduced operating costs throughout the organization and have sought to leverage university-provided services as much as possible. This strategy has resulted in vacancies in some areas of expertise that we will need to continue to serve. In the short term, we have worked with the units affected to develop ways of serving these needs with current staffing. In the longer term, we will invest back into core programmatic needs as funds become available from vacancies in other programs and other cost savings.

We will invest back into positions gradually, based on funds being available from cost-savings and vacancies and based on much further reduction we face in state and federal funding. We made limited investments back into positions in the current academic year, and even with the additional 6.1% reduction in state funding for FY2018, we anticipate making further investments back into core faculty positions.

As for what constitutes a core faculty position, we rely on academic department heads to make the case for programmatic and expertise needs in line with the department’s academic program, research and Extension needs. We evaluate these needs in the context of the eleven Drivers of Change articulated in the [Division’s planning document](http://www.dasnr.okstate.edu/vision).

1. What is the status of the college-led strategic planning activity?

The planning effort was put on hold after the budget cuts of FY2017. I look forward to restarting the process with Faculty Council and unit administrator advice and participation in fall semester, 2017.

1. When addressing next year’s budget you referred to use of funds to “transition to a smaller and more focused research expertise and delivery system”. Is that referring to research / extension in general or also referring to academic departments?

The specific intent of that statement was to highlight the fact that it is our Extension and Experiment Station agencies that have been most severely affected by the nature of the state budget cuts to higher education. And so these cuts affect our ability to maintain as many research and Extension centers as we have, to employ as many research-support staff as we have, to hire as many faculty research and Extension FTE, and to hire as many Extension educators and area specialists. They may eventually limit the number of county Extension offices we can staff as well. So the statement was specific to research and Extension.

However, DASNR is a Division that integrates teaching with research and Extension. In particular, many faculty who teach courses in CASNR also have some support from OAES and/or OCES. Therefore even though university support for CASNR has not been cut as severely as state support for OAES and OCES, the fact that we are reducing the number of faculty with expertise in particular areas means we will lose some of that expertise for our academic programs as well.

1. How is DASNR using F&A funds?

F&A are also known as indirect costs, or IDCs. F&As represents the university’s cost for the sponsored project in providing shared services, facilities, and administrative infrastructure needed to support all projects and thus cannot easily be attributed to a specific sponsored project, program, or research grant.

F&A income is a reimbursement for expenses already incurred by Oklahoma State University in support of sponsored projects.  Oklahoma State University DOES NOT get a check for F&A costs when the project is funded.  In fact, we do not receive this funding until after the direct costs (costs assigned to a sponsored project relatively easily and with a high degree of accuracy) are actually expended.

A portion of the indirect costs are returned to DASNR **(45%)**, also for the purpose of providing shared services, facilities, and administrative infrastructure. F&A distributions from OSU occur twice yearly (July and January) for the previous 6-month period. University policy requires that some of the returned F&A must go to the PI **(at least 10% of the amount returned to DASNR, equaling 4.5% of the total)** for use in supporting their facility, equipment and support needs. A portion is then returned to the department **(50% of the funds returned to DASNR, or 22.5% of the total)**, and the remainder (40% of the amount returned to DASNR) goes to OAES and OCES for use in addressing infrastructure and administrative support needs in the agencies. Each department handles the distribution of returned F&A funds based on the relative needs of departmental support and individual or team research efforts.

The following table was provided to department heads in October for the purpose of sharing with faculty in the units.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Example** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Percentage of |
| **IDC generated** | $10,000 |  | Total F&A | DASNR F&A |
| **OSU Admin** | 55% | $5,500 | 55.00% |  |
| **Returned to OAES** | 45% | $4,500 | 45.00% |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Returned to PI** |  | $450 | 4.50% | 10.00% |
| **remainder** |  | $4,050 |  |  |
| **Retained by OAES** |  | $1,823 | 18.23% | 40.50% |
| **Departmental** |  | $2,228 | 22.28% | 49.50% |
|  |  |  |  |  |

It is policy (OSU Policies 1-0112, 1-0113, 4-0105) that all grants, contracts, and other sponsored agreements accepted by Oklahoma State University be charged the maximum allowable federally negotiated F&A rate.

Royalties

OSU policy prescribes the distribution of royalty returns. 50% is returned to the inventor(s), 30% to the University, and 20% to the college or division. The funds received by DASNR are retained in the OAES Associate VP office and are used to purchase equipment or facilities for the program generating the royalties. The royalties are not evenly distributed to research programs across OAES but are used to strengthen the programs generating those royalties.

Policy stipulates:

The college's(s') share of income under section 5.01(b) shall be administered by the dean(s) of the college(s) and shall first be utilized to support the research program(s) of the inventor(s) as long as the inventor(s) remain(s) (an) employee(s) of the University. If the inventor(s) leave(s) the University, the funds shall be distributed at the discretion of the relevant  dean(s) for use in furtherance of said College's(s') research programs and goals.