

Ag Faculty Council Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2015

AFC members in attendance:

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. Mike Smith, Horticulture and Landscape Architecture
Dr. Ranjith Ramanathan, Animal Science
Dr. Craig Davis, Natural Resource Ecology and Management
Dr. Sam Fuhlendorf, Natural Resource Ecology and Management
Dr. Rodney Jones, Agricultural Economics
Dr. Chris Richards, Animal Science
Dr. Max Melstrom, Agricultural Economics (in lieu of Dr. Brian Whitacre)
Dr. Dan Storm, Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering
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
Dr. Gopal Kakani, Plant and Soil Science

The meeting began with questions for Dr. Coon, submitted to Ag Faculty Council members by members of their respective departments. Responses from Dr. Coon are italicized:

1. This is a follow up on a question that I saw in the last council meeting minutes. I personally know that there is precedence for faculty going from an 11-month appointment to 9 month with the same salary, no salary adjustment/reduction. I was told that this happened because the faculty brought a job offer letter from another institution to negotiate the outcome. Similar requests without supporting job offer letters were denied. I also know that in the past salary adjustments/raises have been given to the individuals who brought job offer letters from other institutions. I would like to know the new administrators' approach to the issue.

Faculty appointments are 11-month, particularly when the position is supported in part by agency funds (OAES, OCES) to ensure access to their expertise throughout the year and beyond the academic year. When a position is created, we give careful consideration to whether the position's expertise will be needed in service to the needs of the agency/agencies during the normal off-duty period for those with 9-month appointments. So generally we are reticent to convert these positions to 9 month positions out of concern that we would lose access to the person's expertise. Furthermore, funding a position for an 11-month appointment allows faculty members to focus on seeking funding for the operational expenses of their research or other scholarly activities. By fully funding faculty

positions, DASNR ensures that the faculty member can direct grant seeking efforts to cover the other non-salary expenses of their scholarly work.

If we agree to converting a position from 11-month to 9-month, a conversion without any reduction in annual salary or a reduction in annual salary less than 18.2% (2/11) of the annual salary (or an increase in the monthly salary) qualifies as a salary increase. Salary increases outside the normal salary raise program process requires careful consideration and approval of the Provost's office with thorough justification. There is not a policy to automatically convert from 11-month to 9-month without a reduction in annual salary.

With regard to negotiating job offers/counter offers, administration has, on occasion, negotiated to keep a person at OSU and not accept a competing offer. The terms of those agreements vary, dependent in part on the interests of the individual and the need of DASNR to retain their expertise.

2. What are the funding sources to support raises over the next 2 years?

The funding sources for salary increases will continue to be the sources with which we pay current salaries: funds from OSU for teaching and related academic responsibilities, funds from OAES for Experiment station appointments, and funds from OCES for Cooperative Extension appointments. OSU funds originate from the state appropriations to OSU and student tuition. OAES funds include federal appropriations (Hatch funds) and state appropriation (OAES Agency appropriations). OCES funds include federal appropriations (Smith-Lever funds) and state appropriations (OCES Agency appropriations. Funding raises for academic appointments is provided by OSU administration. Funding for raises to OAES and OCES appointments in an environment with no increases in federal or state appropriations means we will have fewer positions and fewer faculty FTE funded by these sources.

As our faculty numbers and FTE decline, we must create efficiencies in our approaches to curriculum and delivery of coursework, to research activities and to Extension activities so as to maintain balance in what we offer and what we can deliver. Hiring decisions will continue to be handled carefully, particularly in light of the current funding restrictions.

3. Measuring impact of extension programming can be very difficult for extension specialists, and reporting that impact often is inadequate without the expertise of formally trained evaluation specialists. Why is there no formal DASNR support (i.e., in the form of hired evaluation specialists) to provide on-going training and assistance with evaluations for extension programs?

There are several ways to tackle this. We can bring experts to campus to assist – Dr. Doye recently provided faculty development by doing this. We invite faculty and staff to suggest other experts from on-campus and off-campus to provide additional professional development with regards to evaluations. When funding is available, we will seek to hire an

evaluation and reporting specialist to provide leadership in this domain. For now, we need to be creative with our resources and tap those near and far who can contribute to improving and expediting our impact assessment and reporting.

4. Advising workloads in College of Agricultural Sciences. The national average of undergraduate students assigned to an advisor in the US is 250. This is also the recommended advisee load by the National Academic Advising Association. The maximum number of advisees allocated to a professional advisor in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Engineering etc. at Oklahoma State University is 300. Advising 300 undergraduate students is considered a full-time workload for a professional advisor in those colleges.

Academic advising in CASNR is handled by teaching faculty and ours is considered one of the best advising programs based on student satisfaction and retention rates. In fact, the aspired average retention rate for Oklahoma State University is below that of the current retention rate of CASNR. However, the FTE allocated to advising at CASNR is much less than rest of the university. In the Department of Animal Science faculty are allocated .01 FTE for every 6 advisees and advising FTE is capped at .15. Faculty with over 100 advisees only receive .15 FTE worth of teaching credit while we probably spend much more time per student than a professional advisor and numbers indicate that we probably do a better job as well.

What is the rationale for depriving faculty advisors the credit they deserve for a job well-done?

There is a philosophical aspect to this question which we need to continue to explore: there are tradeoffs between having faculty provide academic advising vs. having professional staff provide academic advising. The benefits of faculty advising are particularly notable in the quality of the student experience in developing their academic program and building a relationship with a faculty member who will track their progress through OSU. At the same time, time spent advising is time not spent in other important faculty activities including classroom instruction, curriculum development and design, etc. I encourage continued dialogue among faculty about the strengths of these alternative approaches to advising.

For the system we use currently, Dr. Clary has reviewed the allocation of funds and FTE for faculty work in academic advising and through some adjustments, has achieved equitable distribution of FTE for faculty advising among departments. However within some departments, redistribution of advising assignments may be needed to avoid assigning some faculty members with advising numbers that make it difficult to maintain a high quality of advising and ample time for other faculty duties.

5. I would like to know if there is any data/stats in terms of diversity in DASNR, specifically pay equity among male and female faculty at the same rank and the leadership and endowed chair positions held by male and female faculty, where DASNR stands among the other colleges within OSU and other peer institutions, etc.

I have asked for a report showing this data and will report back to you at a future meeting.

6. Can you provide an update on the searches for Horticulture and Plant and Soil Sciences Department Heads? What about the Associate Dean for Research?

All three searches are progressing. We will be calling candidates to interview in the very near future for Hort/LA and for OAES. Those interviews will be conducted in March and April. The Plant & Soil position is only slightly behind those and I suspect interviews will be conducted prior to the end of the spring semester.

7. My question would be related to spousal hires and if the University is going to seriously consider instituting a policy to better accommodate spouses of faculty. Depending on what the spouse's profession is, a smaller community like Stillwater can be a tough place for a person to find work that both pays well and is fulfilling. I think across the campus, providing better options could help attract great faculty and retain them here.

This is something that should be handled at the university level and perhaps working with the university faculty council could be effective. In DASNR, we have assisted with faculty hires where possible. I am not aware of a university policy or practice that goes beyond encouraging colleges to collaborate on these needs. There does not seem to be a central resource to assist in connecting spouses of potential faculty hires with opportunities in the greater Stillwater community, though often the Provost's office and other Dean's offices do assist.

8. There were several questions/comments submitted regarding the proposed new rule for 6% balances in Hatch accounts:

a. What accounts are going to be affected by the proposed "sweep"? Accounts are not being swept. I have attached a memo that was sent to department heads in early January describing the actions being requested by the Dean's office. In particular, the assignment is to develop plans for funds that are proposed to be carried forward from one fiscal year to the next. For those accounts that receive an automatic annual allocation or budget, I have set the threshold of 6%. If the department head wishes to carry forward funds beyond 6% of the base budget, they are asked to justify and provide a plan for how the funds will be used. If they propose to carry forward less than 6% of the base budget allocation, they need not submit a plan. This applies only to Block and M&O accounts for AB (OAES) and AC (OCES) accounts. For other accounts, I have asked department heads to share their plan for use of any funds carried forward in these accounts. I have attached a copy of the memo that went to Department Heads.

- i. Conference accounts should remain untouched because often they contain seed money for the next meeting. Conference accounts are considered "other". See memorandum from Dr. Coon at the end of these Meeting Minutes.*
- ii. In some cases, these meetings are national meetings which can have large deficits if registration is not accurately predicted, so these funds protect the faculty member organizing the event and also the department and division by having some cushion*

in that conference budget. *Correct. These are “other” accounts and we will need to understand the plan for the funds as outlined in the attached memo.*

b. What is the proposed level of the sweep? *Accounts are not being swept. Please read the memorandum (below) that describes what was asked of department heads.*

- i. 6% of the current total was proposed to keep levels down, but this is not only a moving target each year that provides no stability, but also rewards the people who have caused the problem to begin with (since they end up with larger amounts of money at the end of the year) and severely hampers research and program maintenance efforts of everyone else, especially new faculty that haven't had the same opportunity to build their program yet
- ii. Would be more equitable to require no more than a certain flat rate in hatch accounts each year (maybe \$10,000 or \$5,000 at the least) and affects everyone across the board
- iii. IDC returns for grant proposals should be untouched for life of grant +3 yrs afterwards (to ensure all publications get out and there's money to pay those publication fees) because they are the only (potentially) sizable source of funds to account for any overages in the budget caused by changes in cost or under-budgeting. Even small changes in pricing on big-ticket items on large grants can add up really quickly and it will affect the ability of that faculty member and the institution to continue to get grant funds from that agency if proposals cannot be effectively completed as written. *IDC accounts are considered “other” accounts. There will need to be a plan for the funds.*
- iv. Start-up should be unaffected, even if it has been moved into hatch accounts. *Start-up is specifically designated to new faculty with a plan for the expenditure in mind. We would like to have that documented. However, our practice has been and will continue to be that we will recover funds from start-up accounts only if they are not used in the specified length of time unless a request for extension, paired with a plan for use is approved.*

c. What about funds from donations, or outside sources (private industry or commodity groups) that are in Hatch accounts? If the Experiment Station (or wherever the funds are going) is justifying taking the funds to a central account because they are taxpayer dollars, what about the funds in those accounts that aren't taxpayer dollars? Private donations are not in Hatch accounts and should be used for the purpose for which they were donated. *A plan for the way these funds are to be used should be in place pursuant to the donor's intent. However, if a deliverable is expected, we may need to work with Bob Klein to determine if the funds are in the correct type of account.*

d. If it is the case that taxpayer funds and private funds in the same account will need to be tracked separately, as each will be subjected to different rules, doesn't this just add to the overhead of the University in the time that staff and faculty will need to spend just tracking these funds? *Taxpayer funds and private funds are not in the same account. If*

you believe this has happened, please speak with Bob Klein so that it can be sorted out.

- e. Where are the funds going and what is the justification that they will be better used in that location (i.e. provide a great return with regard to the land grant mission) as compared to staying in researchers accounts? *It is hoped that you will use the funds for the purpose for which they have been designated. See the memorandum (below) for explanation.*
- 9. There were multiple questions / complaints regarding parking. They are posted below, but the common threads seem to be discontent regarding the number of spaces available, questions regarding the number of reserved spots, and concern regarding the approval process for a reserved parking space. *Please see comments following section 9.c.*
 - a. You probably heard about this from others, but you might want to ask the Dean what his plan is to address our current parking problem (?). Administration might not see this as an issue, as they have ample parking. As I counted last time, the number of reserved parking lot was over 20 around this building, and it keeps growing. Are there any plans to improve our parking problem, (2) who are the people who have the reserved parking spaces around AGH, and (3) what are the justifications of granting the reserved parking space to these people? I think we need some level of clarity here.
 - b. I know the DASNR Faculty Council probably does not have much influence on the wider University or the Administration at OSU, but I have to wonder if the Ag Faculty Council should go on record to ask for consideration for a new parking scheme around this part of campus. When OSU closed the lot south of Ag Hall they put a lot of pressure on all the other lots around here and many of us are having to hunt and park a lot farther away than the student lots that are right across from our building.

The lot immediately west of Animal Science was pretty reliable until they closed the lot south of Ag Hall. The next lot west, which is north of the student health center used to be for commuter students which meant there were openings off and on during the day so if you got to campus fairly early you could park there, but now it is dorm students so the cars sit there all day and there is very little chance that anyone coming to work in the morning is going to find a parking spot there. It seems to some of us that OSU needs to address the need for student parking to be some place other than in the heart of campus so the parking nearest to faculty offices are reserved for faculty and staff. In the past three years they have doubled the cost of parking without adding anything other than parking towers and the cost there is even higher.

Unfortunately, as dean, I don't have much authority over parking. I have asked for this to be addressed through University administration and it is appropriate for the AFC to pursue it through channels you find helpful, including Faculty Council. If you would like, I

am willing to invite Vice President Weaver or other university officials to meet with you if you feel this would be helpful.

The meeting moved into discussion about the DASNR RPT Committee:

Dr. Sam Fuhlendorf mentioned that there is nothing new to report regarding the status of the division-wide RPT committee, which met for the first time as a functioning body in spring 2015. He did say that there was a very short turnaround of approximately one week in reviewing departmental RPT decisions/procedures and reporting to the Dean. Two separate aspects of the committee are reviewing content of RPT packets and making sure each department followed their established procedure for reviewing RPT packets. Dr. Fuhlendorf stressed that the committee only has the authority to state whether or not departmental procedure was followed, withholding all judgment of whether the procedure influenced the final RPT decision.

Dr. Edwards opened the floor for discussion of amending Ag Faculty Council by-laws:

Dr. Edwards made suggested changes to the AFC by-laws and is soliciting comment from all AFC members. Some questions raised included the role of AFC in evaluating administrators. Also, what about an outside entity being appointed to collecting evaluations, organizing responses, and reporting them to the administrators? In effect, this would protect faculty who fear repercussions for speaking out about poor performance by their administrators. It was decided that there is the possibility of AFC being involved in the evaluation process, but this will not be part of the by-laws changes at this time.

Other changes in the by-laws document involved mostly semantics. There may be issues with Article 8. Dr. Edwards will make these changes and send out for comment from AFC. He requested that comments be sent to him by late February to have all suggested changes available to Faculty Council for their spring meeting.

Doodle poll will be sent for a second meeting of spring 2015 soon.

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm.

Memorandum from Dr. Coon continues on next page (see question list above).



Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

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9 January 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: DASNR Unit Heads
FROM: Tom Coon
SUBJECT: Carry forward planning

As we discussed at the October Unit Heads meeting, I think it is important for us to have plans for how we will use our carry forward funds, both at the unit level and at the college and agency level. My intention is to show good stewardship of the resources for which we are responsible, and to make the most effective use of these in carrying out our strategic objectives with regards to staffing, equipment, facilities, and operating expenses.

There is often an implicit assumption by those at higher administrative levels that carry forward funds are not “good” funds because they are interpreted as funds meant for something that apparently wasn’t needed, and so the funds should return to those who have “better” ideas of how to use them. I want to assure you that I’m not starting with an assumption that the Vice President or Associates know better how to use carry forward funds than you do. I trust that each of you DOES know how to manage these well and my preference is for you to use and manage the funds allocated to your unit without excessive questioning. At the same time, we are expected to exercise prudent oversight of the use of public funds for their intended purpose. So my preference is to operate in a system that is based on careful planning and accountability. And I want to be ready to defend the use of our funds that we carry over into a new fiscal year if we are challenged, and I want to do the best we can to protect our funds from indiscriminant “capture” by decision makers who may operate from a different perspective.

Ultimately, what I am asking for is that you plan your unit’s use of carry forward funds and that you share those plans with me and the associates for accountability. One of the realities we must face is that University Administration views a reasonable carry forward limit to be 6% of unit base funding. For that reason, I am asking each unit head to do two things: 1) plan for use of funds carried forward between fiscal years and share that plan with DASNR administration and 2) provide justification for funds carried forward in base accounts (i.e., those that receive a recurring allocation each year, M&O and Block accounts) in excess of 6% of the base allocation.

This process will be most relevant as we near the end of the fiscal year. In April, Assistant VP Klein will distribute a summary of your account balances as of March 31, 2015. We will ask you to provide a summary of your plan for how you will use the carry-forward funds you anticipate having in each of your budget lines (AA, AB, AC) based on the March 31 balances. You may plan to use the funds for faculty salaries, staff support, student employees or assistantships, scholarships, operating expenses, or equipment and technology. And you may plan to carry some of what you have in the current year forward for future years. For example, if you anticipate filling a faculty position this year, you may wish to carry forward funds for each of the next two years as part of the individual’s start-up funding. All I ask

is that you explain your plans and account for the total amount of funding in each of your carry-forward pools. We will provide a worksheet to assist you in preparing your report.

The 6% target of carry forward balance in Block and M&O accounts will be based on the amount of your annual allocation from the agencies. In other words, if you plan to carry forward more than 6% of your base allocation in those accounts for any of the agencies, you will need to provide information on your plan for using that carry forward. If you anticipate carrying forward 6% or less of your base allocation in a Block or M&O account, you do not need to request justification for use of the carry forward funds. If you plan to carry forward more than 6% of your base allocation in this account, you will need to submit a plan for how you will use the full amount that you propose to carry forward (including the first 6%), and request approval for exceeding the 6% threshold. This will not apply to faculty start-up accounts or chair and professorship accounts.

For other accounts (F&A, RSC), I ask that you provide a summary of your plan for use of these funds. Your plan only needs to explain plans at the account level but not at the subaccount level, and we simply ask for a description of how it will be used, but not detailed information on the amounts to be budgeted for each use.

Please submit your responses to bob.klein@okstate.edu on or before May 27th. Thanks for your assistance with this effort. I am confident that it will help us manage more effectively, more strategically and with better justification if we ever are challenged for the funds we choose to extend beyond the fiscal year in which they were granted.