

## **DASNR Faculty Council Meeting Minutes February 21, 2003**

**Members Present:** Brian Adam, Steve Hallgren, Mike Kizer, Mark Longtine, Nathan Walker, Nurham Dunford, Greg Bell, Marcia Tilley, Tom Royer, Dwayne Cartmell, Steve Cooper, Joyce Jones, Mike Kizer, Clint Krehbiel

**Members Absent:** Dennis Martin, Nick Basta

**Non-members Present:** Mary Anne Gularte, Don Murray, Tom Phillips, Dean David Foster, Dean Ed Miller, Dean DC Coston

**Ex-officio Members Present:** Sam Curl, Dean & Director

**1. Call to Order:** 8:05 call to order by Brian Adam, additional agenda items, agenda approved.

**2. Approval of Minutes:** Accepted as read by Greg Bell.

**3. Announcements:**

a. Next meeting April 18, 2003 in 102 Ag Hall.

b. Don Murray– Faculty who have graduate students should watch for changes in the Graduate Student Health Insurance Policy. Improvements have been made and will be announced soon.

c. Mary Anne Gularte – The Sunup television program will change to a half hour broadcast from 7-7:30 a.m. on Saturdays beginning March 1 on OETA.

**4. Committee Reports:**

Reappointment, Promotion & Tenure Committee

Marcia Tilley, AFC-RPT Committee Chair, reported that on Dec. 16, 2003 the AFC-RPT Committee and other AFC members (Brian Adam, Tom Royer, Dwayne Cartmell, Bob Wetteman, Tom Phillips, Greg Bell, Mark Longtine, and Marcia Tilley) met with Deans Sam Curl, D.C. Coston and David Foster to discuss a proposal by the Division regarding revision of position descriptions and the appraisal process for new and recent faculty hires. Following this meeting, the AFC-RPT Committee developed the attached draft recommendations ([Appendix A](#)) for Dean Curl.

CASNR Curriculum & Academic Standards Committee

Dwayne Cartmell discussed the committee's most recent meeting and the approved course action requests ([Appendix B](#)). The Report was approved.

OSU Faculty Council

Don Murray provided a report. The Report was approved.

## **5. New Business:**

### **a. Consideration of AFC-RPT**

Chair Brian Adam called for discussion and consideration of the draft AFC-RPT Recommendations Concerning Position Description Revisions and the Appraisal Process ([Appendix A](#)). Discussion followed. The Recommendations of the RPT Committee were approved for submission to the Dean's office.

### **b. Questions for the Deans:**

**Question #1:** President Schmidly is obviously placing a great deal of emphasis on strategic planning, and apparently will be launching a campus-wide process early in his tenure as President. Some time ago, the units in DASNR undertook a fairly extensive process of "unit action planning" that was tied into the Division's strategic plan. The results of that unit action planning were submitted to the Dean's office, but we have heard little or nothing since then. Is it filed on the shelf? Was this activity primarily undertaken for use at the unit level? Can it be resurrected to help meet the strategic planning desires of the new President?

**Response by the Deans:** The DASNR administration is also anticipating the initiation of a campus-wide strategic planning process. The recent completion of an assessment report by DASNR ([Appendix C](#)) attached), as well as various other units of the University, was a preliminary step in the planning process. We feel that our DASNR report provided a good first impression of the Division and our primary strengths and concerns. The strategic planning we have already accomplished in DASNR will give us a good head start with respect to the University-wide process.

The status of unit action plans has been discussed at our agriculture administrative planning group meetings. Unit managers are also appropriately concerned that the efforts of faculty and staff to create the unit action plans yield beneficial returns.

While the unit action plans have not been compiled into a single integrated document for the Division, the Associates and I have used the plans individually. The unit plans provide a good understanding of the priorities in research, extension and instruction from the unit perspective. They also provide a valuable base document for discussion at unit management sessions. Engagement in unit planning activity is of considerable benefit in terms of faculty, staff and unit managers coming to an agreement on the primary goals of the unit and the strategy for reaching those goals.

The DASNR administration had hoped to compile the plans for general distribution and discussion by this time. The budget crisis and our efforts to cope with it have slowed the completion of the process. DASNR's budget planning meetings with higher administration have also had to focus on our response to the budget shortfalls. Normally budget-planning sessions focus on program priorities and finding the resources to address those priorities. Our recent unit management sessions with DASNR Unit Administrators have likewise focused largely on responses to the budget shortfall, and only to a lesser extent on the new initiatives and priorities as outlined in unit action plans.

The unit action plans and the DASNR Strategic Plan should be invaluable in any larger planning activity. If President Schmidly were to adopt a strategy of shrinking OSU to fit the budget, our plans would likely have to be revisited as they were not developed around a shrinking budget framework. It would appear that Dr. Schmidly wants OSU to grow out of its budget crisis to the extent possible. That outlook is more compatible with the framework set for our unit action plans.

**Question #2:** How do you see the plans of President Schmidly affecting DASNR faculty and the future of DASNR?

**Response by the Deans:** I view Dr. Schmidly's service as our President in a very positive light. I have known him for many years and was pleased as a member of the Presidential Search Committee to strongly endorse his candidacy. He understands and is deeply committed to the mission of the Land-Grant University. He is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, and extension. He is a very hard worker and has "hit the ground running." He is beginning his Presidency at what is obviously a most difficult time because of the state's financial problems. I believe he will be an outstanding President.

**Question #3:** Regarding 11-month appointments, where can we find written documentation that a faculty member is covered by workmen's compensation during the 12<sup>th</sup> month? (By the way, there seems to be several concerns/questions about the 11-month appointments, many of which were addressed by you and Mary Anne Gularte in our last meeting. There may be a need for more, and perhaps more formal, communication to faculty about these appointments. Ag Faculty Council reps could communicate that back to faculty, but there may be a better way to do it.)

Support Comments by Mary Anne Gularte: Faculty concerned about workers compensation during their off-months may visit the web site addressing statutory benefits at:  
[http://www.okstate.edu/osu\\_per/benefits/bystator.htm](http://www.okstate.edu/osu_per/benefits/bystator.htm)

**Response by the Deans:** Workers' Compensation is mandated by State law and covers all OSU employees who are on the payroll (except those who have Federal Workers' Compensation coverage). Faculty who hold a 9-, 10-, or 11-month appointment are considered to be on the payroll during their off-month/s. This is because their continuous employment date is not interrupted. Thus, those faculty who engage in official work during their "off-month" are covered by Workers' Compensation. Information regarding Workers' Compensation and other statutory benefits can be found on the OSU Human Resources' website  
[www.okstate.edu/osu\\_per/benefits/bystator.htm](http://www.okstate.edu/osu_per/benefits/bystator.htm).

**Note:** General information used at the time 11-month appointments were implemented was reviewed briefly during our February 21 meeting. These materials have been provided to the AFC Chair as pdf documents. DASNR administration has offered to develop a similar document once AFC members have had an opportunity to review previous informational materials and provide suggestions as to what information would be useful for new faculty.

**Question #4:** What is the Division doing to identify research initiatives and work toward development of infrastructure and implementation of these initiatives?

Certainly the research initiatives in areas of sensor research and homeland security have recently received (and continue to receive) most of the publicity and focus by the central administration. Nothing wrong with this, but what is going on to identify research initiatives in DASNR? The Food and Ag Processing Center is an old initiative -- it is time to identify new ones.

**Response by the Deans:** Several years ago OAES articulated four focal areas (agricultural systems, value-added processing, environment, and fundamental understandings) for emphasis. Under girding these emphases was the approach of working in interdisciplinary teams. Through use of TRIP and other incentives, as well as greater emphasis in recognizing successful team efforts in annual appraisal and RPT considerations, our faculty have moved forward in addressing complex opportunities. We have seen extramural support grow dramatically as these programs have prospered.

Because of the greater engagement with those whom we serve, the Division has developed the concept of “healthy communities” as a unifying thrust for the next several years. Based on our faculty’s experiences, as well as literature review, a “healthy community” is characterized by three attributes: (1) a diverse, resilient economy; (2) an effective, efficient infrastructure; (3) and committed, empowered local leadership. If any of these are missing, a community will not, in the long run, be successful.

Time here does not permit a full explanation for each of the above attributes, nor the scope of our programs that address them. We refer you to the upcoming issue of *Ag at OSU* (expected the third week of March), especially the second article that lays out the “healthy communities” framework more fully and includes some examples of how OAES program thrusts are integral to its success. Research programs in agricultural production, molecular biology, sensors, value-added products, biobased economy, new product development, multiple uses of land that consider traditional enterprises in conjunction with wildlife, health care system analyses, improved marketing throughout the chain of products, development of new models for venture financing, and improved leadership programs are all vital parts of this effort.

Our constituents have encouraged the Division to push this agenda forward aggressively and to continue to think about communities and how we assist them, most directly through Extension, as we seek to improve what we do. This agenda is resonating with community, industry, and political leadership very well.

As part of the thrust related to economic improvement, OAES has taken a lead role in moving modern life sciences research to a high level in the University agenda. Many of our faculty have played lead roles in helping develop infrastructure (e.g. core facility, hybridoma facility, electron microscopy, etc.) that supports faculty throughout campus.

We have been successful in recruiting a number of outstanding scientists with molecular biology skills throughout DASNR. A recently completed biocontained greenhouse is supporting work under an NSF genome program.

The Homeland Security funds provided through State Legislature action last year are a great opportunity for OSU. We have pushed the notion that wise investment of these funds will allow OSU's stature and reputation in research to grow, thus benefiting the entire institution. To this end, OAES, in collaboration with Veterinary Medicine and Arts & Sciences, has worked to obtain a commitment to further enhance infrastructure campus-wide for biological research through investment of some of these funds. There is a consensus list of equipment and facilities that has been forwarded that will continue to improve OSU's competitiveness. After getting faculty and department head input, this list was put together by Associate Deans of Research. A project already funded under this effort is a biocontained greenhouse facility which will be located at the southwest corner of the Noble Research Center, a space identified in the initial plans for that building.

Because of financial uncertainty and stresses on State coffers, we are entering a new era of funding. For OAES to have the breadth and depth of programs that Oklahoma's citizens need and deserve, it is incumbent on all of us to seek significant extramural support. This support must come with the ability to earn indirect costs and salary support that allow the University and OAES to have the infrastructure, both physical and human capacity, to be able to conduct research. We continue to look for any opportunities to secure additional funding for programs and infrastructure improvements.

We believe that OSU's greatest competitive advantages are that our researchers know each other, like each other as people, respect each other as colleagues, genuinely enjoy working with each other, and thus are able to bring a myriad of skills and capacities to undertake complex and difficult issues and problems. We have marketed these advantages effectively and believe that such an approach will continue to be successful.

**Question #5:** What is the proposed plan to offer retirement incentives for some Extension personnel and why has information about the plan not been disseminated on campus? If, as rumor suggests, some/all of these people will have opportunities to continue working even after they "retire", what is the point of the plan?

**Response by the Deans:** All of the factual information regarding the early retirement incentive for eligible Cooperative Extension personnel has been released via *Extension News*. *Extension News* is distributed electronically to all persons holding Extension appointments and is posted on the Intranet web site at <http://intranet.okstate.edu/newsletter>. To date we have announced:

- That we have requested through CSREES authorization to offer early retirement to qualified federal civil service appointees and that we will announce that authorization when it is granted.
- That the A & M Regents have approved an incentive payment of \$20,000 for those individuals who elect to retire under the federal civil service early retirement option should it be approved.

We will continue to communicate with the community via *Extension News* as the facts become known. Should we receive federal approval to offer early retirement, the DASNR personnel office will also contact all eligible employees by letter. In addition, Sue Bonner has prepared a self-help packet and is planning a workshop for those who are eligible.

The Extension administration has been approached by individual faculty members who contemplate taking federal retirement, while continuing to work for the Division in some modified capacity. Because the farm bill language eliminating "Schedule A" appointments is new we have asked for a legal interpretation. When the legal ramifications of the question are understood and when approval for the federal early retirement is received, we will communicate directly with all eligible individuals, both on and off campus.

The early retirement authority and incentive has been sought as one avenue for dealing with the current budget crisis in state government. While allowing eligible individuals to take federal retirement and continue to work may or may not be advantageous to Extension, any decision to do so will be based on what is best for the organization as mitigated by any legal considerations.

**Question #6:** In tight budget times, why are new positions being created in extension?

**Response by the Deans:** The last time Extension created a new position, other than temporary grant funded positions, was when the half-time appointment as Director of the Oklahoma Agriculture Leadership Program was combined with funds available through the Initiative for the Future of Rural Oklahoma (IFRO). That was in January 2002. The first reduction in the higher education budget occurred in July 2002.

**Additional Comments by Dean Curl:**

Budget announcement: We are operating under a 6.98% cut for the Ag Experiment Station and the Cooperative Extension Service as well as with 6% less for the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. Faculty were told to prepare for an additional 2.5% cut before July 1, 2003.

6. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted Using Notes Taken by Representative Greg Bell

Dennis Martin  
AFC Secretary