

Agenda
Agricultural Faculty Council
April 1, 2008

Members attending:

Kevin Allen, Doug Hamilton, Steven Marek, Michael Massiah, Derrell Peel, Kellie Raper, Hailing Zhang, Haobo Jiang, Penny Weeks

Questions for VP Whitson:

1. Previous state law which prohibits the use of public fund to support OSU employees to apply for green card was changed a year ago (check Regina Henry for details). Why doesn't Ag administration support the application for labor certificates of our new faculty members? (Note: labor certification is one approach and one step of green card application. This approach is becoming the major channel for PR application.) As more of our new assistant professors (not mentioning postdocs) come from foreign countries, the current situation is really holding us back. Several faculty members left OSU partly because of this problem, are you aware of any case like that in DASNR?

The issue revolves mostly around the use of the H1B temporary worker visas which are a convenient way to bring in foreign workers. The visa limit of 3 years with a 3 year extension coincides with our RPT process. If the person is in the process of citizenship, further extensions are possible. However, at that point the university must readvertise the position to verify that no qualified domestic worker is available for the position and the university must pay immigration legal fees. With permanent worker positions, the worker pays the legal fees but there is less risk to the worker since they will not, in effect, have to reapply for the position at the end of the H1B period. Bottom line is that a guest worker visa may be easier in the beginning but more risky later on and not in the best interests of the faculty member. Dave Henneberry and Sue Bonner are studying the procedure. Policy is being developed with university legal folks and will be distributed to department heads. The Division will provide letters of support for visa applications. At the current time DASNR has 8 departments with 20 faculty that represent 11 different countries. The Division does not in any way discourage international scholars from applying for positions.

2. What is the official OSU College of Agriculture policy on hiring foreign nationals to the division? It appears that the division is actively discouraging international scholars from applying to the division. Is this the official policy of the division? If so, should we be up front with the leading applicants to our positions that are internationals not to bother with applying?

See above

3. The new president has expressed his wishes to be the main contact with the legislators of the state. Basically my interpretation or concern is this: Does this mean Extension will be limited on our abilities to seek funding for our programs directly with the legislature since the desire is for all the funding to come through the university and not earmarked

for Extension which has been done in the past? If this is the case, is Dean Whitson looking at the formula funds or an equitable way to receive state funds?

VP Whitson has spoken to President Hargis about this. The VP has previously represented DASNR directly at the legislature. President Hargis supports these efforts and no change is anticipated. There have been frustrating issues with the way higher education funds have been allocated through the higher regents and VP Whitson will continue to work directly on those issues. This was followed by a discussion of the way higher education allocations are made.

4. I would like to know the status of revamping the DASNR Sponsored Programs office. Particularly the origin of routing sheets and steps for obtaining signatures.

There are 4 candidates for the sponsored programs director. AFC will be asked for input regarding those candidates. The VP is interested and considering adding more personnel to support grant proposal development and applications. DASNR would have to fund additional resources internally; university overhead will not increase share to DASNR. VP solicits suggestions for expanding sponsored programs office. The VP is willing to set up a task force to work with Bob Klein to streamline G and C procedures.

5. The current model for the DASNR grants and contracts is primarily serving for tracking and administering grants and contracts. Would there be potential to expand the capabilities of the unit to aid in grant preparation and submission?

See above

6. There is a proposal for providing wireless internet for the Noble Research Center. DASNR has provided it to the Stillwater Farm but NRC has yet to be incorporated into this network. I do support this proposal and I think it should be given careful consideration especially since there are multiple DASNR programs with labs and offices in the NRC.

The student technology fee committee makes decisions about technology upgrades. AFC should work with that committee to raise NRC as a priority for upgrade.

7. DASNR has funded the installation and commissioning of wireless network towers to outlying division farms. These are a great luxury but would only be used by a limited number of people. B and C wing of the Noble Research Center which houses research/teaching faculty and graduate students from several departments of the division (EPP, ANSI, PASS and NREM) remains one of the last major buildings on campus with out wireless internet access. Although Student tech fees have paid for wireless internet access to various other divisional buildings, NRC was not included due to relatively smaller number of undergraduate students serviced from the building. Installing an additional internet jack (hardwired) in a laboratory or an office would cost upwards of \$200 per jack and the building does not have any extra ports available. The current estimate to install wireless internet access to the building is less than \$20,000. Would

DASNR pay for it? What was the cost for installation of wireless towers for surrounding farm land?

DASNR might consider sharing the cost with the student tech fee. VP suggests a proposal to the tech fee committee.

8. What is the status of the DASNR led water center?

DASNR is moving forward with a proposal to establish a water center in DASNR. Early attempts to move an existing center from another college have failed.

9. With the emphasis of team initiatives in DASNR, how is it being assured that appropriate credit for significant input (particularly for younger faculty) into multi investigator projects is given to those not listed as lead investigators or corresponding authors?

VP Whitson emphasized that departments must clarify how team efforts will be recognized and rewarded, especially with respect to departmental RPT procedures.

10. Could you please comment on the new greenhouse use (rental) policy that is about to be implemented by FRSU?

- a. The proposed rental fee of \$100/bench/month will likely reduce greenhouse-based research.
- b. How will greenhouse space used for teaching purposes be rented? Will CASNR pay bench fees as well?
- c. Is there any way that this implementation could be delayed so that graduate students who must complete research requiring greenhouse space could finish their projects (anticipated need for space until October 2008)?

11. Would you consider entering into a discussion for plans to create DASNR greenhouse space that is affordable to both researchers and FRSU? Will the new Range Rd greenhouses be affordable replacements for the "USDA greenhouses" on Western Rd, scheduled for demolition? How can DASNR afford to *build* new greenhouses if it cannot afford to *maintain* current greenhouses?

12. What is the overall plan for FRSU (i.e. what will it look like in five years)? Will all DASNR facilities and research stations eventually be maintained and rented through the FRSU?

13. Many of the farm facilities have been or are being considered for placement under direct control of FRSU. Could you comment on the benefits and negatives from the perspective of DASNR, FSRU, and individual departments?

10-13 : Rates are used to charge operational costs of non-DASNR units and because of federal grants. However, you cannot charge non-uniform rates to different units. Some facilities will be in a common management pool run by DASNR. Previously, individual units managed greenhouses with o&m allocations but there were problems with facilities not being maintained

for replacement. There is considerable inefficiency in use and maintenance of some facilities at this time. There are examples of facilities with excessive deferred maintenance or where a facility is incurring large operating costs when only a small part of the facilities is in use. Idea is to create a management pool and rent out facilities to individual units. This will help use facilities efficiently and reduce operation costs. A question was raised about how maintenance in the non-pool facilities would be impacted; would it be done by the FRSU or some other way. There are still some issues to be finalized. Rates have not been set and departments and faculty will have input.

14. Is there any way that administration can somehow either mine all the information we send them for their reports or can they come up with a once-a-year format that will keep us from sending them one report after another?

The VP acknowledged that repetition in information requests does occur and he will ask the associates to review policies to minimize this.

Minutes of the December meeting approved with change that Michael Massiah is chair of the Gand C committee. Penny Weeks moved, Haobo Jiang seconded.

Old Business

Grants and contracts committee

Will meet with VP

RPT committee

New Business

Submitted: Derrell Peel, Secretary