DASNR Faculty Council Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2006

Members Present: Lynn Brandenberger, Cindy Blackwell (for Penny Pennington), Jim Criswell, Shiping Deng, Udaya Desilva, Steve Hallgren, Gerald Horn, Haobo Jiang, Mike Kizer, Ramamurthy Mahalingam, William McGlynn, Sissy Osteen, Chris Richards, Dan Tilley

Members Absent: Sam Fuhlendorf, Derrell Peel

Ex-Officio Members Present: Bob Whitson, Vice President, Dean and Director, DASNR

Call to Order: Chair Lynn Brandenberger called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM in Room 410 Ag. Hall.

Agenda:
Brandenberger asked if there were additions to the agenda. There being no additions Gerald Horn moved and Jim Criswell seconded the agenda be approved. The motion passed.

Minutes:
Brandenberger asked if there were any corrections to the minutes from the May 10, 2006 meeting. Steve Hallgren moved and Criswell seconded that the minutes be accepted as submitted. The motion passed.

New Member Introductions:
Haobo Jiang, Entomology & Plant Pathology
Penny Pennington, Ag. Education (absent, represented by Cindy Blackwell)
Lou Anella, Horticulture & Landscape Architecture (absent, announced by Brandenberger)
Chris Richards, Animal Science
New members from Ag. Economics and Plant & Soil Sciences not known at this time.

Officer Elections:
Officers for the 2006-2007 academic year were elected as follows:

Chair:	Dan Tilley
Vice-Chair:	William McGlynn
Secretary:	Mike Kizer
RPT Committee Chair-Elect:	Haobo Jiang
CAS Liaison:	Penny Pennington

Questions for the Dean /VP:

1. *At least one department in DASNR is busting at the seams, in terms of office space. About a month ago, the Dean's office (Dr. Westerman) collected data from each department on space usage. What are the plans for analyzing that data and acting on it? Is there any relief in sight for departments facing a space crunch?*
   Currently, there are no vacant offices in Ag. Hall. The Division has had a number of new hires, plus 5 faculty will be moving from Zoology to the new Natural Resources and Ecology Management department. In an effort to find a location to house all the faculty in the new

department in a single location, the Division has been looking at the entire building to evaluate the efficiency of space usage. We have new space in the old Printing Services Building which will be used mostly for laboratory spaces for Landscape Contracting, which had to move out of the old Dairy Building. Ag. Communications is also having to vacate the PIO Building and will be moving into the space in the Printing Services building. The Division will make every effort to keep the amount of disturbance to faculty and staff to a minimum, but in the interest of future productivity some short-term disturbance may be needed to come up with a workable arrangement.

2. *Will the Division still be able to fill some faculty positions this year, despite the fact that the $2.9 million of Second Century funds did not get appropriated?*
The increase in formula funds the Division received this year will allow us to fill some vacant positions. The Associates and unit heads are going to be looking at position priorities. We plan on looking position requests 4 times per year. We want to maintain an up-to-date list of position openings and priorities, and the current budget status of each of the Division's missions to determine which positions to fill at any given time. Because of changing priorities within the Division a vacancy in one department does not necessarily mean that particular position will be refilled in that department.

3. *Will the OAES be filling the vacant Assistant Director position soon?*
4. *What is the status of the Assistant Director of Agriculture Experiment Station position? Does Dr. Watson plan to fill the position? When will the position be advertised and will there be a nation-wide search*
A position description for the Assistant Director position is currently being drafted. Advertising will begin soon. While someone familiar with Oklahoma agriculture and the OSU system would obviously be a strong candidate, a national search for the position is planned.

5. *Please tell us more about your plans for the new round of TIP funding (submission timing, budget amounts, project focus areas, etc).*
6. *Faculty are often in a bit of a quandary regarding how to manage both soft and hard monies due to encouragement by administration to keep our accounts spent down. We understand to a certain degree why we are being asked to do this, but when we are budgeting for larger ticket items, obligations that have been previously made, and unexpected contingencies it is frustrating to be penalized for being frugal enough to save and carry over money from year to year for these purposes. Is there anything that administration can do to solve this?*
TIP funding will be discussed with the Associates this month. There will be a TIP program this year, and the program will require matching dollars from the departments. The match requirement is meant to encourage the spending of dollars that are being carried over at the department and PI level. This is not meant to encourage a "spend it or lose it" attitude, but the university administration has been looking at the balances in some of our accounts and questioning their size. We understand the need to accumulate funds occasionally to buy big-ticket items, and we can explain that to higher administration. We will continue to carry over some funds at the Division level to cover any unexpected contingencies. It is understood that it is not possible, nor necessarily good, to completely zero out accounts every year, but

departments and PIs are encouraged to keep year-end balances down to reasonable levels. Shiping Deng asked if this applied to multi-year grant accounts. Dr. Whitson replied that this applied only to accounts with appropriated funds, not soft money accounts.

7. *The university received a substantial amount of money from the state of Oklahoma this year. I read that it was the largest allocation ever made yet the faculty and staff only received an average 3% increase in pay and the students were burdened with a 7% increase in tuition. Where is all that money going and explain what could be a higher priority than the people who do the work of this university and the students who attend it?*
Higher Education received a good allocation from the legislature this year. OAES and OCES receive no benefit from a tuition increase. The actual faculty raise was actually 4.5% this year, not 3.0%. 3.0% of that was merit-based for which all faculty competed. An additional 1.5% was ear-marked to reward outstanding faculty. The definition of "outstanding" was not made clear, but within the Division that was generally determined to be the top 1/3 of the faculty in each department. Since DASNR has a lot of professional people who are not faculty and should be treated differently from support staff. We really need to consider our people in 3 categories: faculty, professional staff and support staff. The Division argued for the salary program for professional staff (such as OCES field staff) to be merit-based, and we were permitted to make our raises for off-campus people using similar criteria as for faculty. Our support staff are under-paid. We have some outstanding staff that deserved merit raises, but the university policy was that staff raises were 3.0% across-the-board. We need more teaching support within the Division from the Provost. We have only 50 FTE of teaching appointment in DASNR, yet we manage to put faculty with about 150 different specializations in front of our students in the classroom. We also have more courses taught by faculty than most colleges, since we only have the support of seven ½-time teaching assistants from the Provost. Any other TA's we have are GRA's who are pressed into service because we convince them they need classroom teaching experience.

8. *What is the current status of the Ardmore Ag Experiment Station? What are current plans? Who made them? Who is making further plans? What is faculty involvement in the process?*
The Ardmore experiment station is in the planning stage. The funding for it ($10M) will be allocated by the State Regents on September 14. A long-term lease (50 or 99 years) for the facility has been arranged with the Noble Research Foundation. Immediate plans are to focus on plant research. Biofuels is a priority of both DASNR and NRF. We want to select faculty to work there who complement the NRF staff expertise. We are working now to define the first faculty positions to be located there. The arrangement has to be a full partnership between OSU and NRF. The OSU Regents are very positive about the partnership. Deng asked if the faculty posted there would be 100% research. Dr. Whitson replied that they would probably be a research/extension split with a higher research appointment. There may also be an opportunity for the faculty there to do some teaching by distance education. The people would be posted at Ardmore but would be tenured in an academic department on campus, much like the FAPC model. Dan Tilley asked about faculty involvement in the planning of the station. Dr. Whitson replied that faculty were involved because of the disciplinary nature of the positions there. The departments were asked for input, mostly from the administrative heads. Faculty will make up the search committees for the positions added

there. Tilley asked if adjunct faculty appointments were appropriate for NRF staff. Dr. Whitson replied that was possible.

9. *What does he see as the impact of the Interdisciplinary Research Colaboratory that is currently being planned for the Dairy Building space? (I think I know but I think it important that others know too.)*
This question refers to the new $70M science building to be constructed across Monroe St. from Ag. Hall. DASNR is involved in the planning for this facility. Initially we were not, but now Dr. Ulrich Melcher represents DASNR interests in the planning of it. This facility will be a major investment by the university and we need to have access to it. Part of the facility funds will actually be used to modernize laboratory space in the Chemistry Department. Demolition of the Dairy Building has been delayed until Christmas break because of the danger of demolition work when students are on campus.

10. *Would he support the development of a Plant Bionet Center (multidepartmental, multicollege) to emerge from the current Plant Bionet group?*
If a center is needed to support an interdisciplinary group, the Division would support it. We will look at any proposal that is brought forward. Ramamurthy Mahalingam pointed out that the Plant Bionet group is a $1M/10-year program funded by Noble Research Foundation. It is currently in its 6th year and so far most of the funds have been used to support graduate students and to sponsor seminar speakers. NRF has been questioning the accomplishments to date. There has recently been a change in leadership of the program. Botany, Entomology & Plant Pathology, and Biochemistry & Molecular Biology are the main departments involved in the program.

11. *What is the current state of filling vacant departmental headships?*
The Animal Science search is on-going. Dr. Wagner will continue as head until it is completed. Dr. Elliott chairs the search committee. Biochemistry & Molecular Biology completed a search process but was unsuccessful in identifying a new head. Dr. Mitchell continues as interim head. We will be meeting soon to consider next steps in the process. The Ag. Economics search is underway. Dr. Schatzer is interim head, and Dr. Escoubas chairs the search committee. Dr. Maronek will chair the Plant & Soil Science search which will kickoff in the coming weeks. Dr. Stiegler will continue as head. The search for the new Natural Resources & Ecology Management department is underway. Dr. Hennessey is interim head and Dr. Edelson is the search committee chair.

New Business:
Tilley pointed out that the DASNR FC Bylaws name the Forestry department as having a representative on the Council. Since the department no longer exists and its faculty now reside in the new Natural Resources and Ecology Management department along with the Range Management faculty and some faculty from Zoology, the bylaws need to be amended to reflect the changes in the departments within the Division. Since it is more of a housekeeping matter than a functional change in the way the Council works, he proposed conducting an email vote of the faculty of the Division to adopt an amendment to the Bylaws which reflects the necessary changes in departmental names. The proposal was accepted by acclamation.

Announcements:
Tilley suggested that for the upcoming year the Council might form a committee to work with the DASNR Grants & Contracts Office on how to better assist Division faculty in developing proposal budgets. Having worked with CEAT faculty recently on a proposal, he was impressed with how helpful and responsive the CEAT Grants & Contracts office was. Dr. Whitson suggested getting together with Dr. Watson to discuss issues related to the office.

Adjournment:
Horn moved and Sissy Osteen seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael A. Kizer, Secretary
DASNR Faculty Council