

Ag Faculty Council Meeting
Minutes - Sept. 18, 2009

A. Response by Dean Whitson to questions submitted by faculty.

1/2/3/7. Any updates on the proposed faculty & staff furlough plan? Early retirement options? Contingency plan to deal with decreased funding? Budget update?

The decision on implementing a furlough plan at OSU will be a decision made at the university level. At this point, no decision has been reached. However, the discussion that has taken place proposes an income based system that will outline the number of furlough days for an employee of OSU based on their salary:

Under \$30,000 – 0 days

\$30-50,000 – 1 day

\$50-75,000 – 2 days

\$75-100,000 – 3 days

\$100-150,000 – 4 days

\$150,000 or more – 5 days

The current proposal outlines that an employee will not be allowed to, nor will be mandated to take two days in one pay period. Discussion has also taken place to close OSU on a certain day(s) to save energy costs.

Discussions have started regarding early retirement. When considering early retirement programs, we have to consider health insurance implications as well as ability/need to refill those positions. And, we must be fair – as a Division, we will not let someone that retires miss early retirement incentives. Specifics of early retirement must be approved through the University system and by the lawyers and will not be discussed in detail until the plan is approved at all levels.

On July 1, we started a new fiscal year. The budget was put on a monthly basis at the beginning of the fiscal year (total budget/12). The Division reduced the August budget was reduced by 5% and did the same for September. As such, the Division distributed 95% of the monthly budget to each department. Overall, 85-90% of the Division budget is tied up in salary. Overall for this fiscal year, maintenance money is 80% of last year. To meet these budget restrictions, several things will be/have been done to meet this budget shortcoming. There is a soft hiring freeze in place. This means that we are holding positions open a little longer than normal and slowing down the requests for filling positions. There are some reserves in Extension, some reserves in Research, no reserves in Teaching.

4. How can we compete with Ag Hall to keep our financial bookkeepers? It seems that once trained and efficient, they are hired away, with no transition period for training a new hire. This seems counter to the productivity of the division.

Ag Hall does not go after people. If there is a job opening, the job is posted and if a staff member wants to move, they are given the opportunity. Our goal, overall, is to hire the best qualified people and to allow employees opportunities for personal growth.

5. Why can't PI's get a simplified account activity report on their various accounts? It seems as though the reporting system is way too complicated for a PI to be able to keep up with managing multiple accounts. Why can't we get an accounting that looks much like a check-book register or a credit card statement? We don't need to know the sub-codes and encumbrances, which just confuse us, what we do need to know are the facts, the simple facts. I am hoping not to hear "I can't change the system" or "That's Whitehurst" as an answer because that doesn't solve the problems involved with being good stewards of our accounts.

In the Division, there are over 1500 research accounts and 800 extension accounts. While the reports are difficult to use in some cases, we do have some restrictions imposed by the university system. If a financial officer has a suggestion for improvement, please pass it on to Bob Klein. There is a desire to make it simple, but we must stay within the university system.

6. What is the status (expected completion date, etc) of the OSU Biofuels Center (I don't know the official name) at Ardmore? How many OSU scientists will be located at the center?

The Ardmore facility is officially known as the Institute for Agricultural Biosciences. This center will be a full service center; there is an increase cost of this, but we will try not to pull money from the campus budget for the Center. Dr. Whitson is planning a tour around the state to interact with constituents, asking them what OSU needs to be doing in research, extension and teaching.

B. Election of Officers

The following elections were held:

Chair – Tom Royer

Vice Chair – Bob Kropp

Secretary – Deb VanOverbeke

Tom Royer expressed thanks, on behalf of Ag Faculty Council, to Doug Hamilton for serving as last year's Chair of the AFC.

C. Old Business - None

D. New Business

1. Distance Learning Education – Associate Dean Ed Miller is establishing a committee with representation of Ag Council, faculty and department heads to develop a set of guidelines for the development of Distance Education courses in the College of Ag. Shane Robinson will serve as the representative from Ag Faculty Council. There is a \$3000 incentive to develop an on-line course (ITLE grant). The ITLE also has \$1500 grants for conducting research in the classroom.

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