

DASNR Faculty Council Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2007

Members Present: Dan Tilley, Kevin Allen, Lou Anella, John Caddel, Scott Carter, Renee Daugherty, Doug Hamilton, Gerald Horn, Haobo Jiang, Mike Kizer, Michael Massiah, Steven Marek, William McGlynn, Derrell Peel, Chris Richards, Larry Talent, Bill Weeks (for Penny Weeks), Yanqi Wu, Hailin Zhang

Members Absent: Jim Criswell, Ramamurthy Mahalingham

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

Call to Order: Chair Dan Tilley called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

Derrell Peel moved and Gerald Horn seconded that the minutes of the April 6, 2007 meeting of the Council be approved as submitted. The motion passed.

Questions for Vice President/Dean Whitson:

Question 1: Office space and other space seem to be an increasing concern. Space is needed for the NREM Department and for new faculty being added in other departments. Can the Dean share any near-term action that may be taken to deal with the space issues? How, for example, should we be planning for the needs of research assistants and teaching assistants?

Long-term plans to alleviate our space issues call for new buildings devoted to the Division in the Campus Master Plan. However, none of those are even included in the 5-year plan. Iba Hall has been vacated as a dormitory and will be converted to other uses. Because of its location within the new "Ag Corridor" we are trying to claim all of the building for our use. It would not have facilities for laboratories, but would make good office space for graduate students, research assistants, and even faculty. There are many groups on campus vying for that space, but we hope to acquire at least half of the building for our use. Our plan shows one or two departments moving to Iba Hall. Geography is now housed in Scott Hall, which was formerly a dormitory, and it seems to work well for them. The Iba Hall plan is our only near-term plan related to space. Of course, we are always reviewing space use in Ag Hall to see how to best utilize it. Graduate student numbers are up this semester and our faculty numbers are back up to about 2002 levels. Our first priority for office space will always be for faculty. Quality space is important in recruiting graduate students, but it is probably much more important in recruiting new faculty.

Question 2: The Governor seems to continue to violate the state constitution by selecting non-farmers to the board of regents (majority are supposed to have primary income from agriculture). Does the Dean have a public opinion on this?

The VP of Agriculture at OSU has no input on who becomes a Regent. During my tenure at OSU the Regents have been very supportive of our programs in DASNR. Perhaps our job selling the importance of our work here in the Division would be a bit easier if more of the

Regents were more closely connected with agricultural production. There has been some discussion about considering a broader definition of agriculture to allow the inclusion of people engaged in agribusiness. But the Division administration has no “official” opinion on the matter.

Question 3: What’s the status on a center/institute for water?

We have received the report with the recommendations of the task force that looked into the formation of a DASNR Water Center and we are looking at what we can do along those lines. We need to focus our efforts more in the water area. The center will be interdisciplinary, because we have several units in the Division doing important work on water issues. But the Center will allow us to pull our resources together better and should help with the development of grants to work on critical water-related issues.

Question 4: Does DASNR have a policy on 9 or 10 month appointments? Where does the Dean stand on this?

The only real options for faculty appointments at OSU are either 9 months or 11 months. Most DASNR appointments are 11 months for good reason. The nature of our work in the Experiment Station and in Extension doesn’t lend itself well to 9-month appointments.

Question 5: Does DASNR have a policy with respect to protection of faculty and extension field staff who become involved in controversial issues?

If people are carrying out their assigned official duties and are providing science-based information, OSU/DASNR will support them. A lawsuit request should require that a subpoena be issued by the court. If you are under subpoena you are appearing at the request of the court you need only testify to facts that are unbiased and supported by sound science. If you serve as a volunteer or consultant in a lawsuit, employees must not utilize “official time” to respond to the lawsuit; i.e. do this as an individual, not as a faculty member.

Question 6: Is the “Reward, Restore and Grow the Faculty” program still in play? If so, when does the Dean expect to move to the “reward” phase?

The Division has tried hard to give the largest merit raises possible. For example: Extension field staff are not considered faculty and were not considered for merit increases in FY07. However, DASNR requested that raises for field staff be merit-based this year. The Division, this last year, required that unit heads use 55% of their merit raise funds for the top 1/3 of the faculty, whereas the bottom 1/3 got 15% of the funds.

A related question was asked about the availability of funding to address salary compression/salary inversion issues in faculty compensation.

This year there were no funds available to specifically address salary compression or inversion issues. We know that this problem exists at OSU because we are farther from the average salary of our Big-12 peer institutions at the rank of professor than at the assistant or associate professor levels.

Another raise-related question asked if DASNR administration had any input to evaluations for raises or if these were direct from the department head.

Definitions for excellence in faculty performance come from the departments and should be defined by the faculty. At the Division level all we do is look at the pool of money available for raises and decide how it should be divided between across-the-board and merit-based raises. The unit heads have to make the decisions about who are the top performers within their departments. The head and the faculty should have defined some objective criteria for faculty performance so that everyone knows the rules. These annual performance reviews need to be accurate to avoid serious problems when it comes time for promotion and tenure decisions.

Dr. Whitson closed his comments by saying that the Fall DASNR faculty meeting will be coming up soon. At that time there will be updates on budgets, staffing, enrollment and other issues. Right now it looks like the Division's undergraduate enrollment is up 6% and the graduate enrollment is up 6-7%. We are the only college in the University to experience an enrollment increase this year. That increase is entirely due to the great work done by the faculty and I look forward to another productive year working with you.

Officer Election:

The council members who will continue in service this year held elections of new officers. The officers for the 2007-2008 academic year are:

Chair: Chris Richards, Animal Science

Vice Chair: Doug Hamilton, Biosystems & Agricultural Engineering

Secretary: Derrell Peel, Agricultural Economics

RPT Committee Chair-Elect: Lou Anella, Horticulture & Landscape Architecture

Meeting Schedule

The next meeting will be scheduled for December 14 at 10 AM, pending a check with Dr. Whitson's calendar. The meeting site TBA.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael Kizer, DASNRFC Secretary