

Faculty Advisory Committee to the Dean Meeting
October 20, 2009
9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Room 118, Agricultural Science and Industries

In Attendance: Jill Findeis, Matthew Kaplan, Jason Kaye, Kathleen Kelley, Martin McGann, Troy Ott, Eileen Wheeler, Eric Zenner

Unable to Attend: Mary Barbercheck, John Coupland, Liwang Cui, Bhashan Jayarao, Timothy McNellis, Ramesh Ramachandran

Opening Remarks:

Chair Martin McGann called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Minutes from September 23rd meeting were approved. After introductions of committee members in attendance, Martin McGann requested Matt Kaplan to report on the Social Science integration issue, i.e., whether there is a need for more communication/collaboration between social scientists and other scientists in the college. Kaplan referred to relevant content from two documents – the *Social Sciences Study Group* report (2004) and the *CAS Stakeholder Survey for Improved Strategic Priorities* (2009). Several ideas emerged from the discussion, including using a “virtual institute” model to link people within the college, organizing forums to highlight successful collaborative endeavors, organizing “speed dating” type sessions to facilitate the exchange of ideas and contact information, and providing incentives to stimulate new collaborative activity. Kaplan summarized that he sees three aspects to the integration issue: raising awareness (of each other’s work), promoting/strengthening an inclusive sense of community, and promoting collaborative initiatives where feasible. After discussion, it was agreed that the main concern does not just involve integration of social science which is addressed in the strategic plan, but the need to have mechanisms developed to provide better communication and collaboration between the departments. McGann proposed the committee revisit the issue next month but to keep the subject to developing better communication between units.

At 10:00 a.m., Dean McPheron joined the meeting and distributed to the committee members a copy of the article titled, *U.S. Research Policy: Agricultural Science Gets More Money, New Faces* from **Science Magazine** (www.sciencemag.org). Discussed how USDA’s new research chief, Rajiv Shah, plans to raise the department’s visibility by focusing research on five broad areas that align with Administration priorities: climate change, bioenergy, food safety, obesity, and overseas hunger and how COAS is working in these areas.

Question: How can this committee be better utilized by the Dean to address distinct issues?

This committee provides increased communication to both the dean and the faculty members to alleviate the bottle neck that sometimes occurs at the unit leader level. The committee is also more democratically represented and provides a helpful additional perspective on various issues. Possible issues for the committee to provide input to the Dean in relation to learning outcome assessment and determining what is the relative time spent in extension versus resident education.

Question: How is the college responding to the Provost initiative to homogenize teaching loads?

A Provost meeting is scheduled next Tuesday. Dean McPheron is waiting to hear from the Provost on the plan and if there possibly will be a University level mandate. Guidance from the Provost is needed to determine what issues are important. Once a timetable is determined and details available, the dean plans to pass along this information to the committee and request input from college personnel.

Provide an update on results of survey that was initiated this summer

Out of 1,235 surveys sent out, 457 responses were received in the two-week timeframe with 40% response rate. Of the responses received, 30% were from faculty. Some of the cost saving measures received: reduce travel by offering electronic media and if travelling only claim real expenses, not per diem for meals; annual extension conference being held as a virtual meeting; scholarship banquet cut 30% of expenses; extension exploring possibility of generating new revenue by charging nominal fees; ban group meals if only PSU employees are involved; and cellular telephone expense are no longer paid by university funds.

Question: What is the status of the budget and hiring freeze? Will the Dean be addressing Unit Leaders and disseminating information through them?

Budget information was shared live last Thursday afternoon via Webinar and the recording is available to view online. (<https://breeze.psu.edu/p86979132/>)

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Teeters

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Next FACD Meeting: Wednesday, November 18, 2009, 9-11:00 AM, at new location: **221 Henning Building**