

Faculty Advisory Committee to the Dean Meeting
December 15, 2009, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Room 221, Henning Building

In Attendance: John Becker, John Coupland, Jill Findeis, Matthew Kaplan, Jason Kaye, Kathleen Kelley, Martin McGann, Troy Ott, Ramesh Ramachandran, Eileen Wheeler, and Eric Zenner

Unable to Attend: Mary Barbercheck, Liwang Cui, Bhashan Jayarao, and Timothy McNellis

Opening Remarks:

Jason Kaye called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and advised he was assisting as Acting Chair since Martin McGann was unable to attend the first hour of the meeting. He then gave the floor to John Becker, Chair-Elect of Faculty Organization for discussion about the roles of the Faculty Organization (FO).

John Becker advised that one purpose he and Mary Barbercheck, Chair- Faculty Organization, wanted to bring to FACD committee is that both FACD and Faculty Organization struggle with same problem of why the discussion of faculty issues and meeting attendance only appeal to 10% of faculty.

Becker asked FACD members how we could make ourselves more relevant to our college? We share a common mission, goal and need to take faculty organization out of traditional meeting and engage more than 10% of faculty on a much broader basis. FACD member suggested requesting the dean support the notion of faculty meetings having a social component to them. These events could be a possible wine and cheese event at the beginning of the semesters or tailgate at Blue & White game. It was suggested that the social component would take away from traditional meeting atmosphere and help to create interest, enthusiasm, and engage faculty. One reason for disinterest in meeting attendance was the sense of how many faculty members communicate directly to dean. It was advised that many faculty members just send email messages to the dean and skip the FACD or FO. A suggestion was made to present this question to the dean.

In response to low attendance at faculty meetings, a FACD member communicated that faculty members need to see value in attending the meetings, that it is not just a time to be introduced to new faculty. Value for time spent – perhaps the need for a social component provided in a more informal environment would help. Faculty meetings could offer networking opportunities and should provide new information that can't be released in an email. The meetings should at least provide ways to present new information and offer the faculty time to digest and contact committee members to voice their concerns. Suggestion was made to have new faculty members' information posted instead of formal introductions by department head or unit leaders.

Becker advised that the Faculty Organization's traditional role is to elect committee members for promotion and tenure, nomination process, and election. He added that the importance to having the FACD developed from the need for better communication as only having two all faculty meetings a year created frustration over issues that were developing that required better communication. The FACD enabled information to be shared with and from the administration before these 1-2 meetings a year. FACD is unique in that it also exchanges information within departments. It serves as an opportunity to share ideas, perspectives, to get a pulse of the college on any particular issue. Dean Steele relied on the FACD committee in the past to get input on faculty's reaction to issues.

One FACD member advised he sees the role that FACD could provide is in delivery of information if faculty are not agreeable with new policy set by the dean and can be used as having stronger communication to get the dean's reaction to various issues. FACD takes the solution and provides information of what isn't working well with faculty – not provide

the solution. Suggestion was made to have Mary Barbercheck and John Becker attend meetings as ex-officio members of FACD.

Becker communicated that one important issue Faculty Organization is following up on is the topic that the Provost has discussed regarding faculty assignments looking more like the rest of the university. The FO plan to develop a panel, obtain perspectives from other colleges, gather information to discuss teaching appointments and investigate the reorganization issue. Becker advised the FO intends to schedule a date in spring to address what is the College direction within the 10-year structure. They propose to use the web site to share information (e.g. introducing new faculty, posting reports on research, etc) rather than waiting for the one All Faculty meeting and hoping that everyone's schedule permits attendance.

Reorganization Questions:

- Never really had a serious discussion, is it possible?
- What are people thinking?
- What is Social Science potential?

At 11:00 a.m., Dean McPheron entered the meeting and began his discussion by advising he was scheduled to attend a meeting with the Provost is at 11:30 today to discuss three issues that were raised:

1. Are there too many departments?
2. What is the college doing in regard to faculty workload issues?
3. What are we doing with Extension?

Dean McPheron advised discussion is being held on these issues at various levels of college and asked: Are these being discussed within departments/units by FACD members?

One of the factors, inaugural versions of FACD, came about because faculty felt that they were not being heard and wanted more direct communication. The roles were never well defined of both organizations FACD & Faculty Organization. It is in the hands of the faculty, not the administration to determine usefulness of committees.

A FACD member raised a question regarding recurring issues mentioned at provost meetings. Is there information about the alternatives that are being discussed? Faculty cannot respond to issues that are not known. Cooperative Extension restructuring information has been shared, but not others. Another FACD member suggested sending information out to faculty to engage discussion and maybe consider faculty to vote on issues and provide options in presentation. Dean McPheron responded that the amount of information to share has both advantages and disadvantages. Decisions being made are not always something to carry a vote. The Dean's perception of the Faculty Organization is that the Faculty Organization can bring issues to discussion and vote on as recommendations for action to the Dean. He further advised that he takes the FACD and FO discussions to the deans' group in so doing letting others know of issues to allow their reaction. Largely, faculty own their own scholarship to move in different directions based on growth and change.

Of the three big issues – restructuring has not been discussed. Only brief discussions question if units are structured correctly – This was answered by avoiding. Another discussion is in Animal Sciences – Do we need a Poultry Science department when we have Animal Science already in place. Should we be designed by divisions? Are Entomologists plant or animal scientists? Consolidation, restructuring... What is the driving feature? The Provost doesn't say we have too many departments, but just that we have more than other colleges. Are we looking at educational programs that ensure they are effective? Are there too many majors?

FACD member asked the question: How could FACD function in being more productive, useful to the dean in making these decisions? Dean McPheron responded by stating he thinks the way FACD could be exceptionally effective with this issue or some other issue is compelling. FACD could focus entirely on this one issue and bring up recommendations at the end of the year. He continued his discussion by asking the following questions:

- Should the number of academic units be changed? Would this make sense?
- Does the college have the proper structure?
- There is a need to explore peer models, to understand the impetus, determine the metrics of success, and if there has been enough time to know if they did achieve something. In other words, is there something to be gained?
- What would the implications be for Resident Education?

Faculty workload is a second possibility in the University plan. The provost and academic deans will be talking about this topic next week. Written policies are requested and the College of Agricultural Sciences doesn't have one. There are interpretations, but no policy was written and agreed upon. Guidelines need to be developed and various elements need to be considered in determining faculty workload. The academic unit leaders are talking about this right now and again on January 5.

What are the metrics? Fernandez and Hoover reviewed an Excel spreadsheet from Nebraska – Colleges of agriculture everywhere have made this a complex project. With functional splits in Res. Ed., what does the percentage numbers mean? Teaching or not teaching? Does the variable of Cooperative Extension create the problem? What constitutes an acceptable workload? Extension is more nebulous and hard to define. Are there ways to simplify? Eventually can we just talk about being a faculty member as being in creative research, teaching in classroom, teaching outside classroom? Need to define what represents a reasonable workload. The workload issue done this academic year is an important priority.

The college is deep in the middle of restructuring Extension in natural working groups and we want to make sure it gets through to completion. The call for proposals to natural working groups to develop programs has been sent out. The dean wants to accomplish this and it is taking more time than he expected.

Dean McPheron will prepare a one-page white paper for FACD to use. FACD will hold meetings to get better sense of faculty concerns and recommendations regarding faculty workload. A one and one-half hour meeting will be scheduled by Faculty Organization. The FO will present to faculty and talk about:

- Defining what 25% means
- Defining what undergraduate advising, independent study, and graduate advising means
- Defining Program Coordinator
- Does it matter if a course is team taught? What is this worth?
- When both professors are in the classroom at same time?
- Teaching seminar course where students are doing work, Lab course (TAs are doing large section) what is this worth?
- What does it mean to fulfill teaching obligation?

FACD members need to have departmental meetings for discussion to provide good feedback, recommendations, to go back to faculty committee. If FACD takes ownership, it will need to organize effective ways to collect voices more broadly. Representatives need to take information back to faculty via department meetings and then bring information

back to FACD meetings. To aid in developing guidelines/policy, FACD will need to clarify expectations and have a shared understanding.

FACD member requested that a specific white paper be written to distribute in 4-5 weeks. It was suggested to include a bullet point listing on the white paper of the issues (similar to P& T issues, request for additional resources, decision making criteria and other factors brought into consideration). Suggestion was made to list the issues on Web site to allow faculty to write recommendations.

Discussion continued by Dean McPheron advising the main thrust is that there is a growing pressure from Provost about why undergraduate students are subsidizing research? Are faculty members buying out of too many classes? Expectations are not the same across the units as one professor teaches only one class and at another unit a professor teaches four classes. Other piece of pie: How along lines do percentage numbers change from initial hire? Teach and conduct research in some places are very specific. When there is buy down with research funding, how much time is spent in classroom? Concept: if faculty is involved in research grant, should a different model be used for buyout?

Dean McPheron continued that Extension Education is not a service – it is education (teaching). What does it mean to be a faculty member with an extension appointment? What are expectations? What are metrics used to demonstrate that this was achieved? Maybe this needs to be next year's problem.

The dean is advocating to administration about the need to give reframing process time to work. Need to identify critical issues that are statewide or region wide that require broader expertise.

The dean advised in six to eight months he needs to deliver. He could write something up but would much rather have the faculty provide first cut and refine this – to capture what needs to be done.

Dean McPheron advised the college is putting funds into broader seed funding. There are a lot of outstanding commitments and struggle with cash flow.

In closing, Dean McPheron responded to the question of how the college intends to support additional study abroad opportunities for students by advising short-term faculty are responding incredibly with 15-16 programs and he is looking for support from Development (Mark Sharer). He would like to make this a sustainable effort.

ACTION ITEMS FOR FACD:

Have Mary Barbercheck and John Becker attend next FACD meeting the first half of semester (timing important).

- Announce meeting first week of semester
- Need to have white paper and develop structure of meeting
- What would we like to get out of broader discussion?
- Set goals for this first meeting
- What are the other colleges doing?
- How different are we than other colleges?

Meeting notification will be sent using Doodle to determine meeting date and time during the third or fourth week of January. Meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Teeters