

**Meeting Minutes****October 11, 2010****443 Food Science Building, 1pm to 2:45pm**

Members: Sara Ashcraft, Heather Besecker, Terri Cravener, Nadine Davitt, Rhonda Demchak, Scott Harkcom, John Pecchia, Kim Ripka, Sam Steel, Cathy Walker

Chairwoman: Sara Ashcraft called the meeting to order at 1 pm. Cathy Walker handed out the new name tags.

Old Business:Fall College-wide Meeting:

The fall meeting will now be on November 29, 2010 from 2:30-4pm. We will have the room at 2:15 so we have time to set-up. Our presentations will include a short presentation on the SACD, presenting the Ella Reagle staff assistant award, a presentation by Bill Devlin from Human Resources, and a presentation by Dean McPheron.

Meeting with the Dean

Additional comments for the Dean:

Can the SACD become involved in the Smart Growth Initiative?

Future meetings with the Dean will be in January and April.

Spring College-wide meeting:

The Spring college-wide meeting will be May 11th from 2:30-4pm. We will have the room at 2:15 so we have time to set-up. We would like to have a representative of Highmark speak, so Sara will look into that.

Some questions we are interested in are:

What are the changes between 2010 and 2011?

Comparison

What are the options if an employee dropped the Penn State insurance and chose another one?

Explain and give an example of the flex plan.

New Business:Meeting with Dean McPheron:

The committee welcomed and thanked Dr. McPheron for meeting with us to discuss some questions and concerns surrounding recent changes. Below is a summary of the questions posed and responses:

Q: With the College's Smart Growth Initiative and subsequent Ag Futures process aimed to identify areas of strategic growth, how will the college be restructured and is there a way for the SACD to be involved in the process.

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A: We have tried to put as much of that information as we possibly can on the website about the Smart Growth Initiative and most recently, the Futures process (<http://agsci.psu.edu/budget>). The Futures process is to focus attention on future opportunities for the College as an impetus for change. By our best financial predictions, realistically we will be facing a \$4-5 billion dollar shortfall on state funds for the coming year at Penn State. Even though at the state level they are bringing in more tax dollars, there are other factors coming into play such as the SERS deficit kicking in this year and Pennsylvania owing the federal government money for unemployment compensation. As a result, in order to come to a balanced budget, we need to reduce our state budget in the months and years ahead. As a result we are trying to position the college in the best light. The University is currently evaluating all academic programs university wide and looking at various metrics to get a sense of what might make colleges more vibrant than they already are. They are really drilling into each college to come up with some recommendations. Once the University comes up with their recommendations, it is not certain whether there will be a mandate for colleges to implement their recommendations or not. The Ag Futures committee is trying to define golden opportunities for the next 20-30 years so that we can have a sustainable budget model while offering high quality educational programs and services.

- The staff members appointed to the Futures Committee all represent each of the support areas within the college. Each of the altogether 42 members, including department heads, are asked to do homework, gather data, etc. within their unit and bring shared information to the table.
- We encourage people to comment on the process. So far we have only received 35 responses. Of the webinars we have held, we usually have 150 sites logged in out of the 850 standing employees or 1,250 total standing and fixed-term employees we have within the college. One thing SACD could do is provide feedback on this to help identify topics they would like to have discussed or elements of the process that are not clear and need more clarification during one of the upcoming webinars.
- The goal is for sometime early in 2011 to have a blueprint for us to be able to make specific decisions. Last year the college extracted \$4.5 million and unfortunately had to give up 10 positions in that process. We are doing as much as we can to hold the line on hiring now and to not overwhelm the people we have. We are thinking very carefully about any permanent position commitments at this time.

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Q: The question was raised about the layoffs and whether there is a timeline for when people should be concerned about their positions.

A: Last year other colleges had larger layoffs than we had. If we are going to be looking at more layoffs, then it will be more clear after January 1. If we do have to move forward with this type of job action, it is best to notify people as soon as possible. Basically there are three ways to downsize:

- People leave/retire on their own
- Layoff people
- Move people to other sources of funding: off of permanent funds or merging with another funding source if possible

The College is trying to find ways to move positions to soft money or ‘rainy day funds within departments in order to prevent losing key people in key positions. Many departments are holding onto ‘rainy day’ funds. Right now it is pouring and we are trying to encourage departments to start using some of this money.

Q: With extension being a third of the mission of Penn State, are we meeting this goal within the College with all of the reporting systems in place and demands placed on extension personnel?

A: The new reporting system is merely replacing the old reporting system which was mandated by the federal government in order to receive current funding support. If we cannot demonstrate the impact of our programs, we are going to lose our funding support. The intent is to reduce the amount of time spent on reporting, which is a good thing. While we have not received a lot of feedback on the new reporting system, what feedback we have had feels reporting is going to be easier. We have a lot of extension faculty who want to teach. We also have a lot of teaching faculty who do a lot of extension work. Extension is teaching and education—it is not service but teaching. We are currently short of people in the counties, but we are using the Natural Work Groups to try to hit on the important issues. While extension is 1/3 of our mission, it makes up 55% of our budget.

Q: With the recent College centralization of several IT positions, is the College looking to centralize more administrative duties?

A: The recent centralization of the IT positions is a move to bring those positions in line with the overall university goal of delivering uniform services from the university to the colleges to the departments. Eventually all college IT staff will fall under the umbrella of Kevin Morooney, Vice Provost for Information Technology at Penn State. This is the first step in consolidating, standardizing and streamline IT services within the College before we migrate to the University’s direct oversight of IT services and systems.

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Q: Is the College still planning to move the greenhouses off campus?

A: The University's Master Plan is to move the greenhouses located behind Tyson Building to build a start-of-the-art replacement space for Fenske Lab. Dr. Christ along with folks from Biology and Physical Plant are looking at different operations. We do not know when this will happen. The initial proposal to relocate the greenhouses was looking at space near the Mushroom Testing and Demonstration Center in order to have shared support with the Office of Physical Plant's greenhouses, but nothing has been decided at this point. The College will continue to maintain the greenhouses near ASI Building and Buckhout Lab for shared teaching and instruction. The funding for the greenhouse project is coming from the University's capital budget where they will receive \$40 million/year for planning and building projects from the state (recently doubled to \$80 million where a large portion is going to the new children's hospital right now). A lot of new buildings are in the pipeline for our college such as Henning, Chemical Ecology, and Ag. Engineering as well as space the college will have in the new Millennium building for programs like the Center for Infectious Disease.

Other updates that Dean McPheron shared with the committee were:

- In the next week or so, Jeanne Price will be conducting a Supervisor Effectiveness Survey as a result of the recent climate survey (just sent yesterday to all staff).
- Class Scheduling – The University is concerned as to how we are scheduling our classes University-wide. The University is noticing that Friday is the least utilized day for scheduling classes. As a result, starting in spring 2012, the Registrar's office will not automatically roll over classes that are meeting during non-standard times (i.e., M-W-F for the standard time period or Tues/Thurs for 70 minutes). Instead, if faculty wishes to schedule these courses during a non-standard time, it will have to go through an approval process via the Dean's Office. However, Dean McPheron cautioned us not to wait until this policy is implemented to start looking ahead at this. The department heads have not been made aware of this just yet. They will be informed on Tuesday during their next unit leaders meeting. He indicated some of the reasons why this is creating a problem University-wide are:
 - Concern about if the students receiving enough class time
 - It makes it impossible to schedule rooms when classes are not meeting during the standard time slots

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- There have been clear studies which demonstrate a direct connection between having a lack of classes on Fridays and an increase in alcohol abuse from students—not just at Penn State, at other universities as well.

The meeting was closed at 2:45pm

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Ashcraft and Kimberly Ripka
Department of Entomology and Department of Food Science