



## Meeting Minutes

October 17, 2011

342 Food Science Building, 1:30 - 2:45 p.m.

**Members:** Sara Ashcraft, Heather Besecker, Terri Cravener, Nadine Davitt, Keith Diehl, Bruce Grinder, Scott Harkcom, Tara Homan, Tiffany Hoy, Glenn Myers, John Pecchia, Tiffany Rainey, and Kim Ripka.

Chairwoman: Kimberly Ripka called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

### Old Business:

#### Fall College-wide Meeting:

The fall meeting is on Wednesday, October 26 from 2:30-4:00 p.m. in 101 ASI Building. The room will be available at 2:15 to set-up for the webinar. The meeting will include a short presentation on the SACD, announcement on the University Faculty and Staff Achievement Awards, presentation of the Ella Reagle staff assistant award, and College updates from Dean McPheron.

#### Pre-Meeting with the Dean

The committee held a pre-meeting at 12:30 p.m. prior to meeting with Dean McPheron at 1:30 p.m. Previously on Thursday, October 6, the committee met with Ms. Susan Basso and Mr. Robert Maney from Human Resources in order to gain a better understanding of the University's layoff process and options available to those being affected by a lay off. However, there are a few lingering layoff questions that the committee would like to discuss with Dean McPheron.

In general, there are questions being raised about how many additional layoffs the College is anticipating during the upcoming year. It is not clear approximately much the College still needs to cover with the State budget shortfall and whether the College will need to cut additional positions in order to provide for possible salary increases in 2012. In addition, the committee has been receiving ongoing questions about the selection process for determining which staff members will be laid off and whether this selection process will continue to be used in all future layoffs or if other options might be available.

Finally, the committee has received concerns from staff members regarding the College's current day-to-day operational structure and the impact that staff reduction (either through layoffs or attrition) is having on the units. Coupled with that, there are growing concerns with how the centralization of duties will further impact our ability to meet expectations at the unit

level. The general sense is that there are ongoing issues and negativity with the current operational structure that are not being resolved and concerns as to how the restructuring, additional layoffs, and/or centralization impact or improve the current operating system.

### **New Business:**

#### **Meeting with Dean McPheron:**

The committee welcomed and thanked Dr. McPheron for meeting with us to discuss some questions and concerns surrounding the recent layoff process and budget deficit. Below is a summary of the discussion:

Since July 2011, the College has had:

- 25 layoffs which consisted of 19 extension educators and 6 staff at University Park (3 central administration and 3 from within the units)
- 17 fixed-term appointments not being renewed (extension educators and non-tenure track faculty). The college has been working over the last several months on not renewing these appointments.
- In addition, they are also looking at approximately 22 positions (largely standing appointments, research technicians) and trying to transition them from General dollars to research dollars. Generally the way these positions are treated across the university is that they are supported by faculty resources. They are providing a transition time up to June 2013 to allow faculty time to write these salaries into their grants where the college will currently contribute 50% of their salaries through June 2013. Beyond June 2013, they need to be 100% supported by faculty grants or contracts. However, some department heads may not have funding capabilities to pick up the other 50% through June 2013 and might be implementing a shorter timeframe within their units.
- All of the changes above help the College meet the State budget shortfall.

An additional \$1.5 Million is needed to refill key vacancies as a result of the voluntary retirements. The College has a short list of positions (some staff and some faculty) that are needed in order to help cover teaching/classroom loads and staff needs.

**Q.** How much is the College preparing to make additional cuts for the future?

**A.** None at this time. The university has written into their budget a 3% raise for next year and the College will have to find that money if that plays out. We do know the benefits cost will be the \$1.25 Million regardless of salary increases and we have budgeted for this cost. However, we are not doing salary increases at this time to fund salary increases in 2012.

Between now and next July the College is looking at changes in the academic structure and thinking about what support structure we need to have in place in those units. Instead of having each of the academic units make those independent decisions that may not be strategic thinking for the College structure, we are laying out a plan in all different directions to help the

college get to the other side of the transition process. Some of the areas that the College has been focusing on are:

- Extension – Making a number of changes, job actions resulting in fewer educators; dismissing all 56 extension administrators and replacing them with 19 district, multi-county administrators. The other 37 extension administrators will return as extension educators.
- IT – Working on a three-year timeframe to consolidate IT within the College.
- Communications & Marketing and web presence – Web is a strategic tool that we realize is important to communicating our goals and mission.
- Farms – challenged to look at the structure of our farms at Rock Springs and Dairy & Animal Science farms.
- Merges – The college is working with Bob Fantaske from HR's Management Engineering group on department staffing needs and making recommendations to the College. We probably have just about the right number of people but we need to protect that group to the extent that we can.
- Financial – Looking at alternate ways to efficiently process documents instead of department based accounting.

The Dean recognizes that he is not going to be able to make a decision that is universally beloved. The College is probably feeling the worst of the changes and different stress points right now during this period until they can move ahead with the restructuring once the Board has approved the restructuring plan in November.

The committee felt this information should be communicated by the Dean to the staff within the College at the upcoming College-wide staff meeting on October 26, 2011.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Ripka  
Chair, Staff Advisory Committee