

IFAS Faculty Council Meeting

July 11, 2006

Members present: Elizabeth Bolton, John Davis, Lochrane Gary, Jude Grosser, Lisa Guion (chair), Bob Hochmuth, Ed Jennings, Heather McAuslane, Jane Polston, Mike Sweat

Members absent: Martin Adjei, Gail Kauwell, Fritz Roka

Guests present: Dean Kirby Barrick, Curt Hannah, Bill Lindbergh, Vice President Ed Poppell, and Jim Selph.

Chair Lisa Guion called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. in room 102 of Animal Sciences Building 499. Senior Vice President Cheek was present.

Update and Comments from Senior Vice President Cheek.

1. Sr. VP Cheek will appoint two faculty members to the IFAS Faculty Council (FC) to round out the slate of four newly elected members. He will send out letters to those elected as well as those not elected, in this election and in the election for the Tenure, Promotion and Permanent Status Committee.
2. In response to a question from a FC member, Sr. VP Cheek said that UF/IFAS got no new money to upgrade computer facilities in classrooms. This is the Office of Instructional Resource's responsibility and computer upgrades need to be addressed.
3. A FC member asked who decides whether state employee raises are across the board or based on merit and how many years have raises been across the board? Sr. VP Cheek responded that the State Legislature makes that decision, and while raises are often across the board, they are not always. This year the raise is 3% across the board. The Legislature usually funds raises this way because many state agencies are not equipped to determine merit.

Graduate Student Health Insurance. VP Poppell arrived at 1:55. Both he and Sr. VP Cheek addressed the issue of graduate student health insurance in response to concerns raised by FC members and guests. A FC member was concerned that the first she had heard about a comprehensive new health insurance plan for graduate students was through an article in the Gainesville Sun. The insurance will cost \$1,400 per single student and substantially more for family coverage. Funding for this plan was requested from the Legislature this year but none was received. President Machen plans to use existing University of Florida money to pay for health insurance of graduate students funded on state money this year; however, faculty must use grant money to cover the health insurance of graduate students currently funded on grants. Several FC members mentioned that this plan is not fair because it penalizes faculty who have grants. FC members acknowledged that we cannot ignore our education mission and will continue to train graduate students but stated that post-doctoral scientists, who can be more productive because they do not have coursework, are now more cost-effective than are graduate students. Other FC members wanted to know why the health insurance plan had been negotiated between the University Administration and the Graduate Student Union without input from the Faculty Senate. VP Poppell replied that graduate student health insurance has been an issue for years. The fact that insurance will be provided without Legislature support indicates to graduate students that this university is serious about their well-being and is ready to sacrifice financially to ensure it.

Update on Fleet Management Initiative. VP Poppell reviewed the history and rationale behind the University's new Fleet Management Initiative. The University of Florida has 2000 vehicles around the state, of which 55% belong to IFAS. The goal is to have faculty critically assess their transportation needs and eliminate those vehicles that are not needed; this should not impact the ability of IFAS faculty to do their jobs. Vehicles could be replaced with ZipCar or FlexCar, taxis or rentals from Enterprise, which has more vans than does Avis. To reduce cars on campus, especially the 291 on central campus, owners would be charged \$3,000 per year per parking space. Because of the huge volume of concerns raised by IFAS faculty about this, Joe Joyce and Sr. VP Cheek are asking that a new plan be approved, allowing all peripheral campuses (RECs and Gainesville departments off the central campus) to have gated parking compounds for each building. VP Cheek and Joe Joyce are working hard to reduce the inventory of vehicles long past their prime and will arrange for towing and disposal of nonfunctioning IFAS vehicles from anywhere in the state. The mileage threshold for ownership of 3,000 miles per year was chosen as half the U.S. government's threshold but may be amended after evaluation of actual use of necessary IFAS vehicles. One FC member was concerned that this initiative was made policy without faculty input. It certainly served as a stimulus to reduce vehicle inventory, as was its stated intention.

Sr. VP Cheek and VP Poppell left at 2:45.

Report on IFAS Faculty Council Nominations and Election. Mike Sweat reported that the use of Survey Monkey software greatly facilitated the Faculty Council election and 220 votes were cast. Newly elected FC members are David Holmes (Extension), Steve Johnson (REC), and Mike Kane and Nick Place (State).

Update on Sharing FC Faculty Survey Recommendations with IFAS Administrative Council. John Davis presented the analysis of the 2005 Faculty Survey, prepared by Gail Kauwell and John, to the IFAS Administrative Council this morning. He focused on the divergent opinions of tenured and tenure-track faculty on a number of issues, suggesting that tenure-track faculty are not adequately informed about important issues and that the mentoring process may not be equally effective across all departments. It was suggested that the mentoring process be normalized within the College and that members of the mentoring committee have experience on the Tenure, Promotion and Permanent Status committee.

IFAS Shared Governance and Development of By-Laws. Bob Hochmuth facilitated this part of the meeting. The committee formed to address the task of writing IFAS by-laws/constitution consists of Dean Kirby Barrick, Elizabeth Bolton, Curt Hannah, Bill Lindberg, Jim Selph, and Mike Sweat. Jim Selph relayed that Danaya Wright, incoming Chair of the UF Faculty Senate, held a meeting to which all UF Senators were invited, discussing how to begin the process of developing shared governance. Several Colleges in UF are already well along in the process of crafting their constitution. The committee will consult those constitutions and also those of other high-ranking land grant universities (e.g., Wisconsin) to find language that we can modify for IFAS. Wright said that all units should have a representative group of faculty that serves as a policy-making council. IFAS currently does not have such a council. This council must ultimately ratify the Constitution of the unit. The FC discussed that the IFAS policy-making body should have elected representation (equal not proportional) from each department, REC, and district, forming an IFAS Senate. This would entail a group of at least 39 faculty, to ensure broad representation of the three components of IFAS: CALS, Cooperative Extension, and Florida Experiment Station. Within the one document, we must state the responsibilities of each component of IFAS. All departments, centers, districts and schools must be listed. The committee will meet before the next FC meeting on August 29 to develop a template for the by-laws/constitution. Sr. VP Cheek's office has promised 10 hours/month of secretarial support starting in September to assist this committee.

Future Meetings of the Faculty Council. The next meeting will be held on August 29 from 1:30 till 4:30 in room 1054 of Microbiology and Cell Science.

The minutes of the June meeting of the Faculty Council were approved. To facilitate communication with all IFAS faculty, it was decided that the Chair of the FC should send one email message per month to the entire faculty using the IFAS_ALL_L mailing list. This message will contain the draft agenda for the upcoming FC meeting, a PDF copy of the previous month's approved minutes, and a link to the FC web site.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather McAuslane (Secretary)