

UF-IFAS Faculty Council Meeting Minutes
21 November 2006
Red Larson Dairy Bldg., Room 102

Individuals present: Fritz Roka, Mike Sweat, Mike Kane, Gail Kauwell, Lockie Gary, Heather McAuslane, Bill Lindberg, Elizabeth Bolton, Nick Place, Gloria Moore, Tom Obreza, Steve Johnson (via Polycom), Samira Daroub (via Polycom), Danaya Wright, Sandra TenBroeck

Not present: Jimmy Cheek, David Holmes, Jude Grosser

Chairperson Fritz Roka called the meeting to order at 1:35 PM.

The agenda presented by Fritz Roka centered on how to move the shared governance process forward. Objectives: 1) Discuss a plan to be implemented in next 3 to 5 months, and obtain consensus from peers that it is the right approach to take; 2) Develop a set of questions that can be used to approach the faculty in each IFAS department; 3) Determine how to accomplish objective 2.

Fritz Roka reviewed the shared governance process to date. Basically, the process began at an upper level and is now working its way down through lower levels. The initial effort to draft an IFAS constitution was strong and well done, with a lot of hard work and thought put into it. However, the initial road to completion has encountered some "speed bumps." Fritz discussed the new idea of a committee of 10 to 13 members and how it differs from the original planned pathway. The idea now is to step back and interact with our faculty colleagues, unit by unit, soliciting their knowledge, attitude, thoughts, expectations, and willingness to commit to shared governance. We need to gather these data and summarize them, then decide what to do next.

Comments from the group:

Lockie Gary indicated that we need to have uniform standards with which to approach each unit.

Samira Daroub asked if by doing what Fritz just outlined, are we bypassing the committee suggested by Dr. Cheek? Fritz replied that we are not; we are just delaying its formation until we are able to canvass the faculty.

Mike Kane asked about the role faculty will play in the lead-up to shared governance. At what level will their input be considered? How involved will they want to be? Fritz replied that we need to determine the type of activities/decisions that faculty will and will not want to be involved in.

Bill Lindberg indicated the need to explain to faculty the principles of shared governance and the expectations. We first must provide a historical perspective and educate the faculty. Some of our colleagues will have no idea what shared governance is all about, or where it comes from and why. The President's faculty surveys have given an idea of what faculty want and/or would like to have. Could we review the responses and derive some general axioms of faculty attitude?

Fritz Roka asked if the group thinks we will need to visit units multiple times. Elizabeth Bolton suggested multiple visits will not be necessary because we already have a lot of background, printed material.

A discussion about CLAS and the things they are experiencing was initiated by Danaya Wright, including the suggestion that IFAS is having a similar experience with the shared governance issue. We need to find out what big issues IFAS faculty want to tackle, bring them back, write the constitution around them, and leave everything else generic. We also need to determine how the faculty want policy to be made. Examples include: 1) Define and set policy; 2) Consultation and advisory; 3) Informed and communicated to but not asked for advice. We must ask the faculty about the process.

Another question arose: What about legal issues, can they interfere with a possible concept of shared governance? Legal issues might constrain some ideas suggested for the constitution. Fritz suggested that when we approach the faculty units, we should disregard the legal constraints for the time being to avoid suppressing opinions and ideas.

Gail Kauwell suggested that a survey be taken within various units, perhaps using Survey Monkey.

Samira Daroub suggested that the "Cheek committee" should proceed with its work and develop a document that IFAS administrators can live with, then take this document to the units and decide where negotiations should be directed to further improve it.

Nick Place reiterated the importance of educating the faculty with a historical perspective because he believes very few even know what is going on with respect to shared governance. Even our own committee is not that well informed.

Regarding the involvement of Barbara Wingo: Rather than have her attend a meeting and make calls as the document is finalized, the document should be finalized and then passed by her to check for glaring problems related to laws and higher-level university documents.

Steve Johnson suggested that now is the time to take the shared government concept to the IFAS faculty in the form of an educational component combined with a survey, similar to a needs assessment. After compiling the responses, key ideas identified should be brought into the constitution.

Mike Kane suggested that unit meetings should occur first, then follow up with survey. This method will sensitize the faculty so they will be able to provide more thoughtful answers.

As an example of a key idea that could go into a shared governance document, Lockie Gary indicated that county extension directors would like to influence the selection, evaluation, promotion, and retention of district extension directors.

Mode of action

Suggested educational process: A small subcommittee plans a presentation (video or PowerPoint) with handouts for webcasting that will provide consistency of message on the concept of IFAS shared governance. Another subcommittee designs a survey. Fritz Roka indicated that we still need directed conversations along with the above. Steve Johnson asked if there are any funds to hire a facilitator who could carry the message to IFAS units. Fritz Roka replied that a message needs to be designed before finding the answer to that question. Elizabeth Bolton suggested that the video of Dr. Machen et al. made in October could be edited for our purpose. Another background document that could be used is a report that came out in April 2006. Is it possible to take "topic areas" and put them in a schematic diagram? Do we even

know what all of these topic areas are? Topic areas must be related to the “sole authority,” “joint authority,” or “advisory” concepts at some point.

Our committee needs subcommittee leaders for the above two tasks. It will be difficult to come up with these due to everyone’s workload. Gail Kauwell asked if we could use the December meeting time to do some of this work within the committee. Nick volunteered two Ag Education and Communications department graduate students to help out.

Regarding meetings with each IFAS unit, it was suggested that we arrange larger meetings with combined units in place of visiting each individual unit. These meetings would follow-up the on-line survey. Mike Kane suggested that a video could be sent to individual units, with department chairs showing it at faculty meetings so those who do not attend the larger meetings would still have an idea of what is transpiring.

After some discussion of the above options, we decided that a PowerPoint presentation at individual faculty meetings is the best way to go, followed by the facilitator, then the survey.

The group then discussed if the question of whether or not the group present today should be the first focus group, i.e. do what a department will be asked to do? We could try this on Dec 20th, the date of the next faculty council meeting. At that time we would come up with topics of interest above the unit level.

Elizabeth Bolton suggested that we create a list of topics of interest from within our own group as homework.

The idea for Dec 20th is to take the two current PowerPoint presentations and put them on the screen, then make our own customized versions. There is even the possibility of embedding video into the slide shows. We also will need narration. We can connect to our off-campus members using Breeze. We should send our list of topics to Fritz Roka by Dec 13th. The question of inviting senators to the Dec meeting was discussed. We could also have Jimmy Cheek in for a short time, then after he finishes his business we could have senators come in. Dr. Cheek could remain at the meeting or depart according to his choice.

We need to ask Dr. Cheek about allowing faculty with strictly-interpreted administrative appointments, like county extension directors, to be a part of the T & P committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 PM.

Submitted by
Tom Obreza
Recording Secretary