

UF-IFAS Faculty Council Meeting Minutes  
28 August 2007  
Red Larson Dairy Building, Room 102

Individuals present: Fritz Roka, David Holmes, Jerry Culen, Bill Lindberg, Steve Johnson, Heather McAuslane, Tom Obreza, Judy Butterfield, Brenda Rogers, Bola Adisigon, David Norman, Monica Elliott, Mike Kane, Mike Swett, Billy Crow, Gail Kauwell, Samira Daroub, Jude Grosser and Jimmy Cheek

Fritz Roka called his final meeting as council chair to order at 1:30 PM. He asked everyone in attendance to introduce themselves, since the group was a mixture of new, continuing, and retiring council members.

Dr. Cheek began the discussion by providing the latest information about the IFAS budget situation. The administration believes the budget will be cut by \$7.3 to \$8 million, or 4.25% of the dollars that come from the state. Relatively speaking, this is a "tremendous" amount of money. We probably will not know the exact, final amount cut until after the special legislative session set for September. Dr. Cheek said he has been talking to unit leaders in order to prepare them for budget decreases. The cuts will roughly break down as follows: about \$2.5 million from IFAS administration, \$2.6 million from IFAS units, and the remainder from faculty positions. IFAS has had some fund-raising successes with the legislature recently, e.g. new initiative money that is obligated for specific targets. These dollars will also absorb a portion of the budget cut.

Dr. Cheek further indicated that another budget cut may occur next year, and it could be even larger than the cut this year. He described the current-year situation as "cutting into muscle," but next year's situation would represent "cutting into bone." President Machen is currently in Tallahassee, and will provide further information to Dr. Cheek when he returns. Even with cuts that must be made now, personnel layoffs are off the table at this time. During the previous week, President Machen told the University Senate that UF has previously made cuts like this and survived, and we will make it through this time as well. The inability to advance UF faculty salaries in light of our current situation is still on Dr. Machen's mind. Dr. Cheek indicated that matching graduate assistantships and some fellowships have been exempted from cuts.

Central administration cuts will come from salary rate and internal operations. David Holmes asked about the January 2008 vote on property tax relief and how IFAS will be affected if the ballot measure passes. Dr. Cheek said that if property taxes are lowered, then public school funding automatically gets cut. For example, 38% of Alachua county property taxes are allocated to public schools. Public schools are financially "at the edge" right now without taxes being lowered. Governor Crist said that replacement dollars for public education will come from the state level if county property taxes decrease. According to Dr. Cheek, if that scenario becomes reality then state universities will probably suffer because they will fall behind K-12 schools and perhaps community colleges in priority.

Heather McAuslane said she heard that a UF tuition increase may be considered at the September meeting of the legislature. Dr. Cheek confirmed that this subject may indeed be revisited.

Fritz Roka inquired as to how much of the IFAS budget is allocated to utilities, e.g. energy cost. Dr. Cheek did not have an exact answer, but regardless he would like to hear any ideas about how to conserve energy. Fritz Roka asked if there is any way to provide an incentive to IFAS

units to conserve energy; for example, if a unit saves \$10 in energy, they receive \$5 in return. The group was reminded that it could be dangerous to give units the ability to spend utility dollars on their own (e.g. the air conditioning gets turned off). Heather McAuslane suggested that every IFAS building be subjected to an energy survey to determine where the most money could be saved on air conditioning. Brenda Rogers proposed implementation of an employee suggestion program where individuals receive an award if their energy-saving idea is put into place.

Dr. Cheek heard a comment from an off-campus facility suggesting that the amount of “regular” mail that moves from Gainesville to outside units is excessive. Some of this mail volume is delivered by Federal Express, which can be expensive. It was pointed out that e-mail has taken care of some of the excess paper mail. Monica Elliott brought up an example of FLREC receiving faxes (that require paper and a phone line) in place of PDFs (that were previously e-mailed). Dr. Cheek indicated that these issues should be brought to Tim White, who will be part of a new university committee assigned to work on improving efficiency across campus. Dr. Cheek said he would inquire into the paper mail situation, particularly as it relates to the use of FedEx.

Dr. Cheek commented on the status of open positions and indicated that very few will be added to those now on our web site (that are grant-funded). FSHN, FRED, and IRREC have open positions, but they are not accepting applications. Regarding the NFREC director’s position, a second interview has been held with a possible candidate. It is likely that this position will end up being re-advertised. IFAS will have to hire a Sea Grant director starting in the fall.

The Emerging Pathogens center is a non-conventional funding and hiring situation. Dr. Cheek explained that the IFAS-related positions in that group are a “bargain” due to the relatively low amount of funding required, so they will move forward. IFAS essentially gets four positions by providing enough funds for one.

The UF faculty survey has been completed. In general, thoughts about IFAS moved in a positive direction. Results are on the President’s web site and/or faculty senate web site. This survey was last taken 2 years ago and IFAS made some changes as a result. Dr. Cheek has the IFAS responses and will provide that subset of overall survey results to the faculty council. According to Dr. Cheek, disturbing factors identified by the survey include the way we view diversity at the university. (The population representing the diverse faculty have a worse view than the whole.) The view relative to gender is similar. (A poorer view by women compared with the general view.) Dr. Cheek asked the council to provide input on how IFAS should address these situations.

Heather McAuslane said that having multiple deans in IFAS makes it difficult to answer survey questions about IFAS administration, and asked if the survey could be changed to allow for varying opinions relative to the different deans. Fritz Roka asked if there was someone we could invite to a faculty council meeting with whom we could discuss the diversity issue. Dr. Cheek suggested Mary Ann Morgan, the Vice President, Deans, Chairs and Directors. Dr. Cheek said that he would like a faculty council representative present at IFAS administrative council meetings to help open up communication. This person could be the faculty council chair or vice-chair if so desired.

Dr. Cheek distributed the IMM for the faculty council to the new members. Since it had been adjusted a bit, the council was asked to review it and provide comments.

Dr. Cheek commented once again about the importance of the shared governance concept to IFAS administration. Thus, we need to move forward with a document. Nine months ago we had a draft document that was composed by a small committee; at this time it should be shared with a much greater audience. A larger, more comprehensive committee should look it over and compare it with documents from other university entities to learn from what others have done. After that process, a document should be finalized that can be shared with the entire IFAS faculty. Barbara Wingo (our general counsel) must look it over as well. The final document must reflect a "happy medium" between the extremes of "restrictive" and "wide open." The new faculty council should review the results of the shared governance survey and move forward.

Dr. Cheek discussed the idea for a possible new supplemental salary compensation plan. He distributed the latest version on paper and summarized various aspects about it. If this plan was implemented, it should be revisited once per year by the faculty council to see how it is working and how things may be improved. The extra dollars gained by IFAS would be used for faculty in general, not for those faculty creating the reserve. Some faculty council members were concerned about the transparency of how the generated dollars would be used. Some were concerned that the plan is not fair. Dr. Cheek said that a faculty/administration group would be assembled to examine the program of each plan enrollee. Further discussion ensued about the potential merits and possible downfalls of the plan. David Holmes asked what the next step forward should be. Dr. Cheek needs to share the current version of the plan with President Machen and IFAS unit leaders, and then will bring it back to the faculty council one more time.

Monica Elliott asked about the IFAS policy relative to charging for extension services, and asked if charging for extension was similar to charging salaries to research. Dr. Cheek wants the faculty council to interact more with the deans so questions like this could be answered.

Dr. Cheek left the meeting at 3:30 PM.

The minutes from the July meeting were reviewed, and no further edits were offered. The minutes were accepted into the official record.

Fritz spoke about the liaisons from the UF faculty senate and how that is structured (Butterfield and Lindberg). He then turned the meeting over to Judy B. to discuss the UF faculty survey. Bill handed out some pages showing a partial summary of the survey and discussed the results. Several of the categories could relate to shared governance topics. A discussion ensued about where we are in the shared governance process, particularly where we are in regard to the new committee to be set up, which was supposed to be created months ago.

Fritz Roka distributed a summary from the IFAS shared governance survey, initiated discussion, and made key points of emphasis. He had performed some initial data analysis comparing perceptions with expectations. These data need to be absorbed and digested by the group before making conclusions; Fritz suggested that a three to four-person subcommittee of the faculty council be asked to do this. It appears that the faculty would like to see more shared governance in most categories. A long discussion ensued about various ways the data can be broken down, categorized, and comparisons made. A particularly point of discussion was how to handle the "N/A" selection by survey takers. Unless there are large differences in sub-categories, it would be easier to consider all the data together as a whole. After all, the shared governance document will be for all of IFAS. In almost every case, faculty perceptions were lower than expectations.

The faculty council should form the subcommittee to make inferences and compose statements by next meeting. The subcommittee should determine how to put the numbers together and present them in a meaningful way (e.g. graphs?). Volunteers for this subcommittee included Fritz Roka, Steve Johnson, Mike Kane, and Bill Lindberg.

David Holmes has agreed to take the chair of the faculty council for 2007-08. He will create a second e-mail address for council business only.

Good dates on Cheek's calendar for future meetings include Sep 18, Oct 16, Nov 28, Dec 18, and Jan 15.

It was pointed out that we will require a substitute faculty council chair to attend IFAS administrative council meetings if David Holmes cannot make a meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:47 PM.

Submitted by  
Thomas Obreza, Recording Secretary