

UF-IFAS Faculty Council Meeting Minutes
20 February 2008
Animal Science Building, Room 102

Individuals present: Judy Butterfield, Jerry Culen, Steve Johnson, Brenda Rogers, Samira Daroub, Adegbola Adesogan, Billy Crow, David Norman, Mike Kane, Sherry Larkin, Tom Obreza, and Jimmy Cheek attended in Gainesville; Maisie Ross and Monica Elliott participated via conference call.

David Holmes could not attend the meeting, so Billy Crow acted as committee chairman. Bill Lindberg was also not able to attend. Cindy Littlejohn was scheduled to be our special guest, but she was in Tallahassee working on behalf of IFAS. A group from IFAS Communication Services (ICS) was scheduled to arrive at 3:00 PM.

Billy Crow called the meeting to order at 1:45 PM. The minutes from the January 2008 meeting were reviewed, amended, and accepted into the record by unanimous vote.

Dr. Cheek began the discussion by indicating that IFAS will have another budget cut of about 4%, but it could be greater. Dr. Machen will provide details about the UF budget situation in a letter to be broadcast tomorrow (21 Feb). Six weeks ago, Dr. Machen told Dr. Cheek that he was contemplating an additional cut in the IFAS budget. Dr. Machen may be thinking about other targeted cuts throughout the university as well. IFAS administration is not exactly sure what this means, but they are concerned about it.

Dr. Cheek brought up the alleged quote attributed to Dr. Machen, suggesting that Dr. Machen had a negative view of the future of Florida agriculture. Dr. Cheek emphasized that he personally has never heard Dr. Machen express this idea and has no knowledge that he actually did say it at any time. Regardless, IFAS constituents across the state are concerned. They are wondering if future cuts could be targeted towards Florida agriculture in general, or towards IFAS in particular. There is a general perception among IFAS constituents that Dr. Machen is not "in tune" with what IFAS does. However, Dr. Cheek countered that idea; he thinks that Dr. Machen in fact does understand what IFAS does. If IFAS experiences disproportionate budget cuts, many people feel that a major uproar will occur around the state. Constituents are especially concerned about the rumor that IFAS Extension is a vulnerable program area.

Dr. Cheek indicated that he wants to protect faculty and staff positions as much as possible. The time frame we are working with is relatively short; the next round of budget cuts will probably occur after July 1. The letter from Dr. Machen due out tomorrow should clarify this. Brenda Rogers emphasized that counties have a big problem trying to project future budgets if they do not know the magnitude of state-level cuts.

A long discussion and question/answer session ensued between Dr. Cheek and the Faculty Council about various aspects of the IFAS budget and future cuts. For example, decisions about tenure and promotion of individual faculty will not be affected by budget cuts. IFAS will continue to maintain its academic integrity no matter what happens. Also, start-up funds for new state faculty will continue.

The council suggested that increasing tuition is an obvious way to augment university funding, but Dr. Cheek described why the Florida legislature is recalcitrant about doing this. There was a 5% tuition increase enacted this past January, and a 15% increase is due in August 2008. However, small incremental increases do not make much of an impact in the long run.

Steve Johnson asked if IFAS should take an inward look at itself, re-evaluate programs, and shift priorities as appropriate. Dr. Cheek said that IFAS does this regularly, and has done it for

decades. For example, new emphasis on subjects like growth management and bio-energy are an outcome of this process.

Dr. Cheek indicated some changes are due to the new university vehicle policy, e.g., items related to the motor pool and exempting vehicles not purchased with state funds.

Judy Butterfield reported on the Constitution Committee work that took place on 12-13 February. She told the group that very good progress was made. We now need an elected faculty assembly with a steering committee and four standing committees: Tenure & Promotion, Curriculum, Infrastructure, and one other. She suggested that IFAS should conduct an electronic faculty meeting. There are seven articles that focus on fundamentals, not details. The committee is essentially taking the UF College of Medicine constitution document and making a hybrid of it for IFAS. They have assigned re-writing tasks among the group with a deadline of Feb 27th. They are trying to simplify the language as they go through the re-writing process. Judy said there should be no problem meeting Dr. Cheek's April 15th deadline. She felt that the Constitution Committee comprised a good mix of people and personalities.

Dr. Cheek left the meeting at 3:00 PM. At that point, Ashley Wood, Dan Cromer, Marion Douglas, Diane Craig, and Jack Battenfield of ICS joined us.

Ashley Wood indicated that it has been difficult for ICS to procure a list of IFAS faculty and their expertise. A potential solution to this problem involves extracting information from the UNIFAS database. ICS is developing a fully automated system that converts selected UNIFAS data into web pages with a uniform look. These pages would not substitute for those that faculty currently maintain, but would supplement them. Individual faculty would have the ability to control the amount of UNIFAS information put into the website. Billy Crow warned that if UNIFAS information is wrong, then accuracy of the web page would be compromised. Ashley indicated that these web pages will be voluntary, not mandatory, within IFAS.

The ICS group presented a slide show describing what the web pages would look like, and Ashley explained the workings of the process. Questions/answers and discussion ensued between the council and the ICS group. The main issue discussed was the ability of UNIFAS data to form an accurate web page. There was general support for the web page-building concept among Faculty Council members, **if** the automatic input data is correct. Sherry Larkin suggested that perhaps there should be a disclaimer on the web page if the information used to create it comes from the UNIFAS database.

Ashley Wood said that ICS will program Faculty Council member information into prototype web pages so council members can test the system. It will take about 2 weeks to do this. Dan Cromer explained some of the options regarding programming and the information appearing in the final product.

Ashley Wood asked Faculty Council if they supported this project, realizing that the UNIFAS database accuracy issue must be settled. Billy Crow replied that tentatively, yes, the council supports the project, but we will have to see a final product generated from UNIFAS data before we can make a final judgment. Ashley indicated that he would like to collect "head shot" digital photos of the faculty. He further told us that the ICS group will continue to refine the idea and will return to the Faculty Council when they are ready to show us a new and improved product.

The March 11, April 15, and May 13, 2008 Faculty Council meetings will be scheduled for 1:00 to 4:00 PM instead of the usual 1:30 to 4:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:16 PM.

Submitted by
Thomas Obreza, Recording Secretary