

UF-IFAS Faculty Council Meeting Minutes
10 June 2008
Red Larson Dairy Building, Room 102

Individuals present: Billy Crow, Mike Kane, Judy Butterfield, David Norman, Jerry Culen, Steve Johnson, Bill Lindberg, and Tom Obreza. Participating by Polycom were Monica Elliott, Samira Daroub, Brenda Rogers, and Maisielin Ross.

Billy Crow, substituting for David Holmes as Faculty Council chair, called the meeting to order at 1:07 PM. Billy reminded Mike Kane that he (Mike) is scheduled to chair the July 2008 meeting. The minutes of the May 2008 Faculty Council meeting were reviewed and approved.

Bill Lindberg said that for all intents and purposes, the Constitution Committee's work was finished following the final adjustments that took place during the past month. The only subsequent changes that could possibly be made would come from last-minute input from the Faculty Council, Dr. Jimmy Cheek, or Barbara Wingo. The Faculty Council has received a copy of the final document by email. Bill requested that Barbara Wingo review this "final" version. By the end of June, the document will be sent to IFAS administrators and faculty. Three weeks later, there will be a call for a ratification vote. It will be a "yes" or "no" vote for approval that will take place during a 1 or 2-week period. In order to pass, the constitution will require a two-thirds positive vote of the ballots cast by all eligible faculty. It was noted that in general, IFAS faculty have not put forth a great deal of interest or enthusiasm about the constitution. It will take time for faculty to gain confidence and a belief that the document is for real. A memorandum attached to the ballot will originate jointly from the Vice President and Faculty Council.

Bill Lindberg discussed in detail the final changes to the constitution that occurred during the past month. The document will be signed by three individuals: Jimmy Cheek, David Holmes, and Bill Lindberg. Bill's committee name was changed from "Shared Governance" committee to "Constitution Drafting" committee in the official record. A discussion ensued about the specific changes, and the Faculty Council agreed that they were appropriate. At this point, Bill concluded his committee report. A motion was made to accept the constitution document in its present form, and it was seconded. Upon a vote by the Faculty Council, the motion passed unanimously. This vote signified that Bill Lindberg's committee work was complete as far as the Faculty Council is concerned.

Judy Butterfield provided an update from the Faculty Senate. The Senate was told of the Faculty Council's approval of a vote of confidence for IFAS administration that occurred in May. Subsequently, the Senate also approved a vote of confidence for IFAS administration. Most colleges/departments represented in the Senate meeting expressed concern about their lack of involvement in the budget cutting process...Judy indicated that a "spirited" discussion took place. Every unit within IFAS had its own way of dealing with the budget cuts. At a more local level, it was stated that counties are being hit quite hard by the budget cuts and are losing numerous positions, including many current employees.

Dr. Cheek arrived at 1:50 PM, and began his discussion by expressing his assumption that the Faculty Council was supportive of the constitution draft. The Council confirmed that this assumption was correct. Dr. Cheek said that he thought the Constitution Drafting committee did a superb job.

Dr. Cheek proceeded to discuss the recently-approved federal Farm Bill. The bill was passed by the US House and Senate, then vetoed by the President, then passed again on the override vote. Due to a procedural mistake, this process had to be re-done from start to finish. Usually,

the Farm Bill is not a concern in Florida because it is traditionally Midwest-driven. However, the current bill contains about \$28 million in funding for specialty crops research. Mike Stuart of FFAA was a principal individual behind this allocation...he put together the multi-state organization that introduced it into the new bill. Dr. Cheek indicated that IFAS wanted funding available for specialty crops, TSTAR, and biofuels/bioenergy, and received all three. IFAS should compete effectively for these funds. We need to thank Tim Mahoney, Alan Boyd, and Adam Putnam for their major contributions to this effort.

Dr. Cheek proceeded to discuss mergers that will occur between IFAS units. Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences was asked to find a new home, so they proposed a merger with the School of Forest Resources and Conservation. This plan is going along well and should be finalized shortly. The other merger under consideration involves seven departments becoming six. This merger will require more time to accomplish because it is more complicated. We should know much more about this by July. The departments involved are looking at numerous options on the table. The final combination of units will not be done unless it makes programmatic sense, i.e., it will not take place just for expediency. A discussion ensued about the number of units IFAS has, the historical situation, and where the university is going programmatically.

The discussion reverted to how IFAS budget cuts came about and the process used to accommodate them within the units. There is evidence that a number of faculty across campus do not believe the process was fair. Dr. Cheek and the Faculty Council have discussed the reasons for this situation in the past. Some faculty felt that more forethought could have gone into what they interpreted as "11th hour" decisions. Bill Lindberg put forth a thoughtful oration on this subject.

Several Faculty Council members asked Dr. Cheek if planning was underway to determine how the next budget cuts will be handled. Dr. Cheek indicated that determining the pathway of budget cuts is a complicated process. Right now, no planning is taking place to consider the nature of the next response because they IFAS is still implementing the most recent budget cuts. It takes considerable background work to put new procedures in place. After July 1, when the new procedures stabilize, then thoughts will turn to events that may happen in the fall and the potential responses to them.

The discussion turned to the supposed "cash reserve" kept by UF that news media have reported on recently. Dr. Cheek said that most of this reserve is in the hands of faculty programs. The "reserve" comprises IDC accounts, residual accounts, carry-forward money for faculty start-ups, and deans/VP office IDC/residual accounts and carry-forward accounts. There is no "free money" reserve in IFAS...most of it is spoken for against a liability.

A discussion of the supplemental salary increase plan ensued. It was asked if implementing the plan could be used to increase morale. Dr. Cheek agreed that this could be a positive move. He suggested that the Faculty Council propose alternatives to the plan. There has not been a lot of participation by IFAS faculty, probably because grant dollars have been used for other things as budgets have been cut. Dr. Cheek encouraged the Faculty Council to take on this effort. We should know more about salary-related items in July.

Smaller faculty numbers and a lower funding level mean IFAS cannot do all of what it used to do. We need more endowments and more creative ways of acquiring funds (e.g., from industry).

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 PM.

Submitted by
Thomas Obreza, Recording Secretary