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March 12, 2010 - Staff Meeting Minutes

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ALEC Staff Meeting
March 12, 2010
Minutes

Present: Mark Balschweid, Jay Barbuto, Kathy Bennetch, Heather Borck, Jason Ellis, Arlen Etling, Patricia Fairchild, Dick Fleming, Lindsay Hastings, Dann Husmann, Betty James, Jim King, Tom Kraft, Gina Matkin, Tammy Meyer, Lisa Pennisi, and Mike Wilmot.

Approval of Minutes - The February 12, 2010 minutes were approved as edited with the date correction.

Advisory Council - Dr. Fleming outlined the biographical information on four potential nominees for the ALEC Advisory Committee which was distributed to the faculty before this meeting. One replacement is needed for Elaine Stuhr on the committee which is an "at large" position. Discussion focused on the various attributes of each nominee and personal insight was given when known about each nominee. Etling mentioned we need individuals who have the overall scope of the department. Husmann asked a parliamentary inquiry about who is voting. Balschweid read the departmental operational guidelines on who has voting privilege. A visual vote, by raising the hand, was done and Leigh Wakulinski was elected to the Advisory Council. A motion was made by Gina Matkin and seconded by Dann Husmann that if Leigh Wakulinski turns us down, then the person who came in second, Colby Coash, would be appointed. Approved. Fleming indicated Leigh will accept.

AFRI Development – Husmann presented the good news, bad news regarding the AFRI updates. The good news is, eight hundred million dollars will be given at this one time opportunity; bad news is no official announcement yet. There will be workshops on March 24, 25 and 26 (not to be video taped). An email was sent to all. Balschweid indicated when RFP's are released; you will have 90 days to prepare something. Husmann announced you can get the latest update by going to the grants.gov website.

External Review – Fleming said the department report is in the hands of the deans. He expects reports back by next week with their inputs and any revisions will be made before it is forwarded to the review team. The team is now complete. The team leader is Greg Crosby, National Program Leader, USDA; Tracy Hoover, Professor and Head of Ag & Extension at Penn State; David King, Associate Provost from Oregon State; Florita Montgomery, Professor, Extension, West Virginia; Susie Whittington, Professor, Dept. of Human and Community Resource, Ohio State.

Internal team members are Duane Ball, Associate Professor of Marketing, UNL; Heather Borck, Graduate Student representative and Paige Bek, Undergraduate Student representative.

The review dates are April 21 – 23. He hopes to have the Advisory Committee meet also on that Wednesday, April 21.

Ellis questioned when the schedules will be published. Balschweid has a conference call scheduled on Tuesday with Greg Crosby so we will know more after this meeting. Transportation will be needed for the team from the Embassy Suites while they are here.

Balschweid and the team appreciated faculty efforts writing the report. Faculty are the experts of the programs and they are the ones who can speak best of their opportunities and challenges.

Balschweid hopes to institutionalize some of the data collection and some of the things provided on an ongoing basis so that the 2015 review will be easier to complete.

Open Searches
Ag Education-NDE Joint State Specialist - Bennetch indicated her goal is to have the interview schedule in the next Monday Memo. The final two candidates are scheduled March 22-23 and March 25-26. The first day of each schedule will be with ALEC, the second day will be with the NDE group. Turn in the evaluations to Kathy or Dr. Balschweid.

HRTM Tourism - Husmann indicated the search team for both of those positions, Nutrition and Health Sciences and the ALEC position, has developed a short list, completed the reference checks and four names have been submitted for each position to administration for their acceptance, then interviews will be scheduled.

Ag and Life Sciences Communications – Ellis reported interest in the faculty positions.

International Study Abroad – Ellis has the students working on assignments which include reading the book, *The Farm*, and doing a comparative contact analysis on the US publication vs. UK publication and how they are presented in the media. He is briefing students on travel issues, how to get money and where they would be taxed the most. They are also doing a cultural report and developing a summary handout so they can get a feel on why we are visiting the sites and the significance of those locations.

The agenda is being completed and Ellis will have it in the Monday Memo. Lindsay Hastings will be traveling with him and 10 other female students. Husmann asked if he will be submitting a co-curricular project or an ACE outcome. Balschweid asked if they will be doing a blog. Ellis thought his students would love doing a blog. This will be an excellent opportunity for them. Nine students in Ag Journalism and one in Political Science will participate.

Reorganization – Balschweid explained that it is now public knowledge that eight people were cut in CIT. It would have been worse but they already had 10 open positions that also were cut. All the employees, those being cut and those surviving are being impacted by this procedure. Last April this process was started and has been delayed several times. The Institute has committed to a full 90 days, so June 7 will be their final day unless they find employment elsewhere. UNL Human Resources department takes these

issues very, very seriously and they take every opportunity to benefit the employees who have been affected by offering personal and career counseling. Attempts will be made to hire them within UNL when their expertise lines up. From the Institutes perspective, July 1 is the formal date of reorganization. The new faculty hires in ALEC are still in a frozen mode at this point. Four people contacted us about the positions, so we had to share with them this is an ongoing process.

Barbuto expressed concern about those employees who are staying who will have emotional scars and feel guilty about still having a job. Before we can be one unit there has to be a healing process. The unknown is causing more problems and we need to continue to work on the relationships we have with our contacts in CIT. Several faculty shared some of their interactions with the staff at CIT since the announcement.

The Monday Memo eventually will be used to build the relationships between ALEC and CIT. Balschweid announced that a departmental newsletter is one of his administrative goals for this year. He would like to have two, one in the spring and one in the fall. He will be soliciting ideas for the newsletter. Short articles could be written by members and students in both units to celebrate the things we are doing within the department. Hopefully, this will be a natural segue for our two units coming together.

AAAE Conf – Balschweid and Bell went to Omaha last week and confirmed the Dinner under the Sharks, confirmed the Zoo and developed contracts, i.e. caterers, zoo and hotel. Registrations are starting to come in. Bell will be sending out updated schedule soon.

Recruitment – Wilmot said ALEC has 13 new freshmen for this fall. We would like to update pictures for the web and our printed materials. Approval forms to use the photos are in the forms drawer. Gifts for commencement graduates – business card holders for undergraduates and mugs for graduate students are being purchased.

Big Red Road Show – March 20 in Scottsbluff
Skills USA – March 25-26 in Thomas
FFA Career Fair – April 8
CASNR Week is April 22-25.

Announcements

Matkin announced that the CASNR Curriculum Committee is asking for the names of faculty who teach 100 level classes or who teach freshman. The committee is working with LPS teachers who are concerned they are not adequately preparing teachers for college. Matkin developed a list of faculty who work with freshman. You will be invited to some meetings to begin having these conversations.

Other –
Barbuto – Faculty Advisory Council asked members to contact faculty to find out to what extent A+ has been used in our courses, how we use it and whether or not some sort of guideline should be developed. Matkin said it was just mentioned at CASNR Curriculum

Committee. Ellis doesn't use it, 93 and up is an A, not on the grade point system. Etling uses it for exceptional student, 98 or above if merited, but does not always give it. Matkin looks at A+ as exceptional performance and a way to reward a student, above and beyond, not excessive, beyond the norm.

Matkin doesn't want A+ to be built into the grading scale since that will take away the value of it. She would like to retain it as a way to reward exceptional students.

Barbuto indicated for those students who are applying to professional schools, i.e., law schools, medical schools, 3.8 GPA isn't enough anymore. They need to stand out. It's becoming a part of the student's record and A+ needs to be standardized somewhat.

Consensus: The feedback received already indicates we do not need a standardized system. We not need a policy on A+. Other departments have expressed similar reactions.

Financial Report - Balschweid had a copy of the ALEC current financial situation from February which Betty pulled together. He discontinued giving this out mid-way last year. There was a comment during his review that the members of the department do not know much about our financial situation. Betty has the responsibility to designate which account is used for various expenses. The Deans have indicated it really doesn't matter which account is used. Balschweid's personal philosophy is that dollars ought to flow to those individuals who generate the dollars.

A limited amount of the budget, less than 7%, is operating which means 93% is salary. The adjunct faculty money flows through our accounts. This money is not actually in our budget. Balschweid doesn't feel comfortable publishing the revolving accounts which each faculty member has. This is faculty money each person has to travel, purchase technology within the UNL guidelines, etc. Those dollars range from 0 – $10,000. Those dollars stay with those individuals.

King said this is a transparency issue which helps him understand where the money is flowing and if we have money in these accounts. By sharing this information, trust and openness is developed. Balschweid indicated each semester ALEC gets funds from the deans but the funds do not always come in the first of the semester, hence, making an inaccurate reflection on some of these monthly reports. The consensus was to keep distributing these reports. Betty will now send out the ALEC Budget sheets as a pdf file electronically.

Ellis announced he took five of his students to the ACT national conference and came home with two awards. One was a chapter award and one as most engaged as a collective whole. The award was placed in our display case.

Matkin congratulated both Ellis and Harding for their Holling Teaching Awards.

Balschweid indicated ALEC was approached a week ago from the Food Science Department about a rather large grant from the Ministry of Agriculture in Saudi Arabia. They were looking for someone to partner with them in Curriculum Development.

They plan to develop a school in Saudi Arabia to train dairy food processing workers. The grant is due March 31. There are opportunities for our department in curriculum writing for a two-year program, instruction and a six-month internship on Dairy food processing. There is enough enthusiasm from Prem Paul's office that a team of four will be traveling to Saudi Arabia with funds from his office.

This is a five year project in the millions. Saudi Arabia contacted UNL and is very interested in our involvement. Rolando Flores, Lori Bern, Nathan Meier and Balschweid will be going next week. Nathan Meier will be our guest next month to explain their role in helping write the grant.

Fleming said Jeff Keown in Animal Science is a contact in the dairy industry. He has worked with the Community Colleges to develop training programs in dairy.

Meeting adjourned at 11:26.

Submitted by Kathy Bennetch