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November 12, 2010 - ALEC Departmental Meeting Minutes

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September 17, 2010, ALEC Departmental Staff Meeting
East Campus Union

Attending: Sarika Agarwal, Cheryl Alberts, Mark Balschweid, Jay Barbuto, Jan Cejka, Jason Ellis, Natalie Enochs, Patricia Fairchild, Dick Fleming, Gary Goodding, Jennifer Greenlee, Janice Hamer, Kurtis Harms, Lindsay Hastings, Mark Hendricks, Dann Husmann, Lisa Jasa, Carolyn Johnsen, Mike Kamm, Sandi Karstens, Michelle Kang, Jim King, Diana Kirkendoll, Renee Lanik, Bob Losee, Gina Matkin, Brad Mills, Dan Moser, Judy Nelson, Gary Nickels, Marcia Oetjen, Janet Owens, Pam Peters, Anita Schaepe, Vishal Singh, Roger Terry, Linda Ulrich, Mike Wilmot and Judith Wolfe

Meeting started at 9:05 a.m.

Introductions and Getting to Know Each Other
Mark Balschweid welcomed everyone to the first ALEC entire departmental meeting. This is a time for EdMedia and the academic programs to come together to get to know each other.

Everyone introduced themselves. Using information from the ALEC "Getting to Know One Another" Questionnaire, Mark Balschweid had the meeting participants guess the four staff members he was describing (Sandi Karstens, Dick Fleming, Vishal Singh and Lana Johnson).

Program Highlights
Mark Balschweid indicated that during this and upcoming meetings, he wanted to highlight programs so that we could learn what others within the department are doing and/or working toward.

Judy Nelson discussed "The Ag Place." This program would provide experiential learning for students in telling agriculture's story through incorporating writing, teamwork and critical thinking skills, which are the skills that employers want when they hire UNL graduates. The Ag Place would also provide the opportunity for students to work as professionals with other professionals. The Ag Place would also help meet the need for agriculture literacy education. While The Ag Place is just an idea now, it has not yet been funded; Judy urged the group to start working now to develop this exciting possibility.

Jason Ellis gave an overview of the Agricultural Journalism program and also discussed Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow and his work with the Nebraska FFA Association. Jason also shared about his work with the Food Processing Center's (FPC) Risk Analysis Group. He also works with the World Food Prize Youth Institute, which is a program for high-school students. Jason informed the attendees that he is working on curriculum revisions for the Agriculture and Life Sciences Communications program.

Organizational Structure
Mark Balschweid provided a copy of the organizational chart for the ALEC department. He mentioned that Tammy Meyer, Executive Director for the Nebraska FFA Foundation, also offices in the ALEC space within Ag Hall.

NIFA Review Final Report

Mark Balschweid discussed the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) review that was conducted in 2010. Based on more than a year of discussion, a self-study document was produced from input by the entire faculty and many of the staff. This, along with four days of intensive interviews, lead the review team (five external members and four internal members) to make the following recommendations as well as others as evidenced by the Final Review Report (available to all ALEC staff members).

- The merger of CIT and ALEC provides both great opportunities and challenges. The CIT staff and the new fee-for-service duties must find a beneficial place within ALEC's new strategic planning process and the final plan.
- Department needs to set program priorities and direction as a unit.
- Develop a team working towards common goals.
- Identify a new mission and vision for the new departmental configuration with faculty, staff and students.

Additionally, Mark Balschweid discussed the challenges identified by the NIFA team and their recommendations especially in the areas of undergraduate, research, extension, development/financial, integration of CIT staff.

Committee Reports

Mark Balschweid requested that outgoing staff members who like to have fun and plan activities contact Janet Owens to serve on the ALEC social committee. The Social Committee will help us "learn how to play well together!"

A Web Site Integration Subcommittee comprised of Jennifer Greenlee, Lana Johnson, Marcia Oetjen, Vishal Singhl and Malika Yadgarova are working to join the ALEC and EdMedia home pages and to integrate the searching options within the site. Mark reiterated that he wants to keep ALEC and EdMedia present on the Web so that people can find us.

Update from Roger Terry

Roger Terry indicated that publications and products had received the following awards:

- Class Acts (College of Agriculture and Natural Resources publication printed twice a year) received a first place award from National Federation of Press Women – Judy Nelson, Cheryl Alberts and Gary Goodding
- ACE (Association for Communication Excellence) silver award for graphic design for Design Decisions – Patricia Fairchild, Renee Lanik and Linda Ulrich

Roger Terry also mentioned that the ARD Science for Life newsletter, by Dan Moser, Judy Nelson and others, has helped IANR stories to get more play in the Omaha World Herald and the Lincoln Journal Star.

Additional notes of interest from Roger Terry included:

- We will have a booth at the Extension fall conference.
- The Technology people worked on State Fair.

- Administrators were pleased with our efforts toward Husker Harvest Days.

Roger Terry is working to schedule an EdMedia retreat for team building, developing trust, and communicating among ourselves. He is hopeful that it will be scheduled this by the end of the calendar year.

Announcements

A department photograph is scheduled to be taken at 10:00a .m. on September 24 at the East Campus Union. Mark said that the departmental photo will be used on the Web site and also a print will be placed in Miller Hall, Ag Hall and the Ag Communications Building. Mark said people could wear what they wanted. Individual photographs are also scheduled to be taken on that day. Note that Mark indicated that people could decide not to have their individual picture taken. Jennifer urged people to be early to help with set-up.

Mark asked that people who did not have a UNL name badge contact Kathy Bennetch at kbennetch1@unl.edu or at 472-8738.

Meeting ended at 10:38 a.m.