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8-20-2010

August 20, 2010 - ALEC Faculty Meeting Minutes

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"August 20, 2010 - ALEC Faculty Meeting Minutes" (2010). *ALEC Committee Minutes.* Paper 113.
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ALEC Faculty Meeting
August 20, 2010

Present: Cheryl Alberts, Kathy Bennetch, Lloyd Bell, Jason Ellis, Arlen Etling, Patricia Fairchild, Dick Fleming, Kurtis Harms, Lisa Jasa, Carolyn Johnsen, Michelle Kang, Jim King, Sandi Karstens, Matt Kreifels, Bob Losee, Gina Matkin, Dan Moser, Judy Nelson and Roger Terry.

Each person introduced themselves and outlined their teaching and/or other responsibilities. The faculty are in charge of the academic programs and related issues to those programs. With the new structure of the unit Dr. Balschweid outlined the new meeting structure. The faculty will meet separately in August and October. The whole department meetings will be in September and November in the Nebraska East Union.

Dr. Balschweid read the current voting section of the ALEC operational guidelines (updated in 2007). These guidelines were written prior to the reorganization of the department and those with at least .25 FTE have voting privileges. Roger Terry mentioned the faculty from EdMedia have .15 FTE academic appointments.

Old Business

Faculty Courtesy Appointments - Courtesy appointments are for a five year period. At the end of the appointment the individual can reapply if they wish. They are unfunded appointments and are a cooperative relationship with another department that will benefit both parties. The requests are first presented to the Promotion & Tenure Committee for review. If approved by the P & T Committee then a formal nomination is presented to the faculty. Discussion followed regarding the two applications (Chuck Francis and Phyllis Larsen) for courtesy appointments in ALEC. Bell moved to approve and King seconded. Approved.

ALEC faculty with courtesy appointments in other departments are:

- Bell, CEHS
- Elllis, Journalism, Advertising
- Fleming, Journalism
- Husmann, CEHS

Standing Committee Assignments 2010-2011 – A review of each committee's purpose was explained. A decision was made to postpone the voting for the departmental committee representatives for two weeks to get volunteers or other committees listed. An electronic vote to be taken by September 3.

New Business

ALEC Advisory Council - Advisory Council committee list was distributed by Dick Fleming. All departments are encouraged to have advisory councils but many do not, however, ALEC has a very active Advisory Council. The members are volunteers and receive no reimbursement for their expenses. The last meeting was held in conjunction with the NIFA Review Teams visit and was well received by both groups.

Ed Media representatives can be incorporated into the group as well. Ag Ed nominees need to be solicited to replace Kreifels who now is a faculty member in ALEC. Additional nominees will

be solicited in the next few days then their biographical information will be submitted for consideration at our next faculty meeting. The next Advisory Council meeting is October 27.

Instructional Improvement Plan - Ellis reported we have a plan in place but it has been voluntary and no faculty have used it to formally guide their instructional improvement. The plan consists of three fundamental components:
1) Develop a goal to have some sort of instructional improvement plan/process for their course
2) Have a Peer Review of plan and observation of their instruction.
3) Debrief with the peer reviewer and conduct a Self Reflection of their improvement activities to determine successes and next steps.

In previous meetings of the Instructional Improvement Committee, it was mentioned that CASNR was adding an optional section to the eARFA for documenting/reporting outcomes of faculty instructional improvement plans. Faculty competing an IIP are encouraged to have an external report (e.g., brown bagger presentation) to share their experience with the process and outcomes with other faculty. Roger Terry suggested those teaching a course for the first time might be incorporated into this plan. If faculty have an area in a particular class they feel could benefit from a formal improvement effort, they also are encouraged to participate. Balschweid will outline our plans and submit to John Markwell.

Strategic Planning process – Balschweid handed out the Composite Unit Performance Report. For three years now the Institute used a compost index score based on research (per FTE); for teaching. Its how many student credit hours are generated per teaching FTE. The report is not very flattering for ALEC; Out of 12 units ALEC is 12th in the ranking. As budgets become tighter and tighter we become more vulnerable in our placing. Some of the things we pride ourselves in is the very thing that is hurting us when put into a metric. We do not have large lecture classes; we cap our classes at 25. We have a lower percentage of extension and research compared to other departments. Do we need to change emphasis? Ellis questioned the report. Extension grants have salary savings which is not showing up on the reports. Does being a Co-PI show up in the reports? Balschweid will check into this issue and get back to him.

External Review Report - Balschweid presented slides of the recommendations we received from the NIFA Review Team. The administration is ready to help us with resources; however, we shouldn't plan on asking for more positions.

Responses to the Challenges and Recommendations from the review team

- Do we need to re-evaluate faculty time doing service and advising?
- When we don't get grants - how can we increase our publications?
- Department is unique compared to Ohio State or Penn State, 2 institutions representatives on the review team
- Social Science research department can be done without funding – other departments get upstart funding for research or extension
- Can we be pursuing external dollars to get credit for both?
- Scholarly activity – peer review publications sometimes take 1 to 1 ½ yrs to pursue
- Within this unit we are so diverse. We have five separate units at least and those units have to be cohesive within them first and then we need to review and see what our common goals are to develop our strategic plans.

- We didn't have a choice – HRTM and IT were given to the department
- Industrial Technology was working. We can work it out because it was responding to the need of the state. It was giving us numbers. However, Review Team recommends we drop it. Advisory Council recommended we keep it also. We need to look at the context of our programs. We do have support in the dean's office. 2 + plus program is a possibility and needs to be brought forward.
- When Teachers College and Consumer Science came together it was a unique marriage. It was recommended we visit with Marjorie Kostelnik to help us since she has had experience with such a marriage.
- Cancellations of classes – Matkin believes this is a misunderstanding – ALEC 202 classes are over filling. When we need to cancel classes it negatively impacts our department because of FTE calculation. HRTM minor impacts us as well. Our classes were full even before the minors register.
- HRTM program as it is currently is in two colleges. As numbers continue to grow it will become a School of HRTM within National Resources
- Space issues - Opportunity to have a classroom in AgCom building again. Administration offering support
- Take to committees to see what they see as priority and then move forward
- Research and statistics was discussed at a retreat and they developed a set of core research courses
- UNL does have Sabbatical leave for faculty available
- Extension session – Evaluation course not taught regularly. Ellis did teach it once (Spring 2007) after Rockwell retired. Look across the country to see what is being offered by distance
- Best way to proceed – NIFA indicated we have up to a year to respond to report. Not obligated to respond to each recommendation.
- Develop response using strategic plan process to respond to some of these issues. This is a good opportunity for us as we move forward.

Announcement

Ellis is starting the Academic Program process for Curriculum Review for Agricultural Journalism program and will present it first to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and then to this group.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

Submitted by Kathy Bennetch