FACULTY MEETING MINUTES

Date: 5/26/11
Meeting started: 2:00 PM
Meeting adjourned: 4:20 PM

Attendees: Fredy Altpeter, Jerry Bennett, John Erickson, Jason Ferrell, Fred Fishel, Maria Gallo, Bill Haller, Rose Koenig, Greg MacDonald, Theresa Martin, Yoana Newman, Diane Rowland, Brent Sellers, Lynn Sollenberger, Barry Tillman, Joao Vendramini, Wilfred Vermerris, Jianping Wang

Business Items:

Dean Reiger – RCM and matching graduate assistantships

- Discussed the difference in RCM funding for Masters vs. Ph.D. assistantships. Masters students cost the College while a Ph.D. student makes money.
- Changes in weights have been made as a result of re-routing taxes on Foundation funds. This will change the numbers so that Masters students will cost a bit more, and Ph.D. student earnings will be a bit less.
- Recent meeting with upper UF administration indicated that there was an overall reduction in credit hours taken, but IFAS actually had an increase in higher division hours so we looked better.
- Tuition waivers are no longer tied to whether a student is state funded or not. There is consideration of giving tuition waiver funds to the department to manage and it would be their decision on how to use those funds. These amounts would be determined by how much waiver had been done in the previous fiscal year.
- There is expected to be a 10% tuition increase beginning Fall 2011.
- Discussion among faculty was that Agronomy should look at what’s best for the department programmatically, and not focus so much on whether we admit a Masters or Ph.D. candidate.

Congratulations

- Dr. Vermerris (PI) and Dr. Erickson (CoPI) were recently awarded a $5.4 million grant from USDA BRDI. The focus of the grant is the use of biofuels as a reality in the short term. Initially integrated as a pilot scale level, and later as a commercial biorefinery at Highlands Envirofuels. Dr. Erickson’s responsibility with the grant is to work on systems that can take up water more effectively into the sorghum plant. Other CoPIs on the project are L. Ingram, K.T. Shanmugam, and J. Preston from Microbiology, J. Tong from Ag & Bio Engineering, and L. Dempere from Materials Science and Engineering.

Position Updates

- Weed Science position – Jay/Milton: Currently in negotiations.
Horticultural Science Chair: Dr. Gallo will serve as chair of the Search and Screen Committee for this position.

Newell Move

Next meeting with all of the affected departments will be June 3. The meeting was called by Dr. Joyce.

Plant Science Major

Meeting is set for June 10 to discuss program coordinator position. Dr. Gallo will keep us posted on the outcome.

Agroecology Distance Education Master’s Track

Dr. Bennett noted that this would be proposed as an off-book offering.
Currently, the committee is working to obtain a market analysis, but everything is moving forward.
Tuition can be set at whatever the department determines (Eg. Soils currently charges $440 per credit hour for their DE classes).
Proposal still has to go to the Dean and gain final approval.

Departmental Committee Updates

Graduate Curriculum Committee (Bennett, Ferrell, Erickson) – Bennett provided updates
  o Determined that there is a need to establish general criteria.
  o If we want to accept B.S. students straight to a Ph.D. program, these students would not be eligible for departmental funds.
  o Graduate committee needs to be set by the student’s second term.
  o Encouraging one semester of formal teaching for Ph.D. students and there should be written documentation of what this supervised teach was for.
  o Suggestions of a different day of the week for seminar should be sent to Dr. Bennett.
  o Each program area needs to review their course offerings and update as necessary.
  o Agronomy had 3 new students that started summer and 7 new students that will start fall. Overall, this gives us a gain of about 3 students to the Department.
Dr. Gallo mentioned that at some point in the future (she will let us know) each committee should bring all recommendations for changes so they could be voted on in one meeting.
Undergraduate Curriculum Committee – Dr. Koenig provided updates
  o Has met two times.
  o Feels that some courses should be taken off the list of offerings and Dr. Koenig will handle the forms required to make these changes.
  o Asked that faculty provide her with syllabi for their courses so she has the most recent version and can check it for compliance with UF policies.
o Asked that courses be analyzed for competencies to ensure that information is not being duplicated between courses.
o Needs input on what to do with the design phase of the Teaching Farm and how to get irrigation.

Administrative Updates/Information

- Theresa notified the faculty that she is working to develop a customer satisfaction survey for the administrative staff. This will come as a link and the survey would be online. Feedback and completion of this survey will be helpful in determining how the staff is doing, if they’re meeting expectations, and where there are improvements needed.

- Reminder that Theresa will be out for surgery from June 7 until at least July 10.
- Reminder that customer service training, the first professional development opportunity for staff, would be June 1 from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
- Effort Reporting will be changing. UF is asking for some initial information to load into the system, and an e-mail would be coming that would require faculty input relative to their effort commitments for all open projects.

Departmental Website

- Metrics since January 2011: 1,261,379 hits; Daily Average = 8,640; To access the stats, go to [http://livestats.ifas.ufl.edu](http://livestats.ifas.ufl.edu) (Username: agronomy.ifas.ufl.edu ; Password: ifasstats).

- Dr. Gallo hopes that in the future she can provide more meaningful data related to the pages that are viewed, etc.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

Future Faculty Position

- Need to determine gaps and strategically what we want.
- Met with Dr. Payne on May 25 to discuss the World Crops Breeder position. He agreed to 2 years funding and leveraging a future retirement to pick up the costs after that two year period. Maria felt it would be best to make a final decision about this since information had changed rapidly since our previous faculty meeting. Originally, it was agreed that we provide 2 years funding and then IFAS would cover. Then it changed to 5 year of funding before IFAS would pick up the line. Now it’s a requirement to leverage a future retirement.

- Dr. Haller brought up the question of what priorities were really in the department relative to teaching, long term needs, etc. Dr. Sollenberger responded that he felt that the Physiology area was solid, the Management/Nutrition area was limited but he had concerns regarding future funding opportunities to support the research if we chose to go with that type of position. He felt it was best to move forward with the World Food Crops Breeder position. Dr. Vermerris agreed.

- Dr. Gallo will route the position description again, and future discussion could be what type of appointment split this position would require.
• **UPDATE:** Dr. Payne has put a hold on this position at this time. Notifications have been sent to the faculty about this, and in the meantime we will continue to prioritize positions for the department so that when opportunities are open, we will have a plan in place.

Meeting adjourned.