

Extension Educator Council Meeting Minutes  
May 11, 2005

Present: Karen Blass, Steven Turaj, George Hamilton, Alice Mullen, Alan Eaton.

Absent: Matt Tarr, Charlie French

Alice mentioned an item from the SPCC meeting: UNH is looking to revise the descriptions of Extension educators in the revised appointment policy (in UNH policy manual). Alice handed out the proposed changes for us to review and consider. [Jim Grady later pointed out that this is a major rewriting of the manual, not just change in extension stuff.]

Alan discussed the May 5th meeting in the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture, presided by Provost Bruce Mallory. COLSA is running a deficit of over \$1M. He informed the faculty about the procedures that will be followed in the coming COLSA displacement review. The review will identify "programs" that will be eliminated in the next 1-2 years. Because salary represents such a large percentage of the budget, this will eliminate 15-20 positions in COLSA. The university must follow the procedures outlined in the contract with the faculty union. These specifically state that the first to be eliminated will be non-tenure track positions. When those options are exhausted, then people in tenure track positions, who haven't yet achieved tenure will be considered. When those options are exhausted, tenured staff will be considered. Some attrition will result from closing positions upon retirement, but it is clear that that will not be enough. There is wording that could protect some positions that are considered especially valuable, but it is clear that teaching (undergraduate enrollment) is the driving force in the process.

Nancy Franz joined us, and we discussed POW. This time the Plan of Work we are working on will cover our entire work plans, not just the parts that we must report to the federal government. By August 1<sup>st</sup>, various groups must get back to Ext administration on their plans. Between August 1,05 and January 1, 06 Nancy will meet with councils, county staff, specialists, etc. to look at the proposed POW, and see if there are missing things. We will have January and February to address gaps, consider or make changes. In March the report is due to the federal government. Steve Judd is leading a 4 state program to jointly design a planning & reporting system (VT, ME, NH, MA). Alice pointed out that County Council members may find it challenging to understand, unless it is carefully thought out (how to present it). Jim Grady joined us as discussion continued. Q: How will this POW process be communicated to staff? A: through program lines, program leaders, etc.

Budget update: John Pike will make a presentation on the budget at our statewide conference May 17. No news today; we are working on his power point presentation for the 17<sup>th</sup>. Q: any news on Hatch/McIntyre-Stennis funding? A: still significant concern, but no concrete news at this point.

Vacancies: The family development position in Belknap County seems lost; meetings on this still underway. Nancy mentioned documentation to show benefits for each program area in each

county. This could be similar to “success stories” — to help defend a position if another program is challenged. This was a suggestion that had been made by Sumner Dole.

Alan Eaton reviewed the COLSA situation (reorganization and displacement review discussed above) for Jim and Nancy. Jim commented that this was in flux now; there is no plan per se on how extension will respond. They will be watching closely. This year we will probably be putting \$ into reserves, says Jim. We discussed lobbying groups and whether we should be discussing things with them. Phil Hammond (from PAT Council) joined us at this point.

The Family medical leave policy is going before the President’s Council and other groups. It will probably be adopted July 1<sup>st</sup>. We will need a change in TERS codes to distinguish family medical leave from other sick time. We discussed other TERS problems too — incorrectly listing total accumulated leave for example (showing a number higher than the ceiling allowed).

Jim pointed out that we haven’t discussed salary recommendations. EEC has had input in the past on how merit should be distributed. This should go back to Nancy. We have 1% merit (1% of salary base). Fixed amounts? Apply in what manner? Salary increase is planned at 3% (2% + 1% merit). Administrators meet with program leaders in June in salary increase decision-making.

We discussed health benefits and the family-friendly leave proposal expected to go into effect July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005. Since we will go to a maximum of 35 days of vacation accumulated (now it is 36), we will be given 1 year for that aspect to be implemented (until 7/1/06). Phil Hammond outlined how OS & PAT council representatives work, regarding benefits reviews and proposed changes. Q: where is compassionate leave program now? A: this was piloted at UNH; Keene, Plymouth and SLL watched but didn’t participate. The program looks good enough to be implemented at UNH after the pilot phase ends.

We briefly reviewed retirement policy changes (handout).

Alice gave us a handout (from the SPCC meeting) regarding medical benefits cost containment. They are trying to keep increase in contributions down to 2% this year. The increase in premium cost from 04-05 was 9.1%!

Alice pointed out that there is an article in April 7,05 (of what journal?) By Candace Corvey on an overview of the financial status of UNH.

Last Friday (May 6, 05) there was the university awards and recognition program for OS and Extension educators. Debbie Cheever received the President’s award of excellence for cooperative extension. This year, the printed booklet of awards winners (that formerly was just faculty) will include the operating staff, professional & technical staff, and extension educator winners.

The idea program has been launched. This was mentioned in the biweekly update. If the idea you submitted is implemented, you get a reward.

Alan briefly updated people on the recent president’s staff meeting. He attended when Alice

could not. The meeting was shorter than usual, due to a conflict in President Hart's schedule. Most of the time we spent on UNH's new diversity strategic plan (2004-9). Wanda Mitchell made the presentation. Alan commented to her that the section on "Develop mutually beneficial collaborations between UNH and diverse external partners for the purpose of generating and applying relevant knowledge to directly benefit the public..." needed a more obvious link with cooperative extension. He suggested she also contact Dean John Pike. Wanda was due to address the OS & PAT council staff soon after that meeting. We discussed Alan's suggestion that we invite Wanda to meet with us. We agreed, and Alice will invite her to our July EEC meeting. Alan also pointed out that Homecoming activities were discussed, including the opportunity for displays at certain homecoming events. Some cooperative extension activities may be of especial interest to returning alumni.

Minutes for the March EEC meeting are incomplete, as Alan had to depart to teach. We decided to contact Matt Tarr for his additions to the minutes, then send them for review by email.

We discussed bylaws revisions. Alice will send out the "final" version of changes to us in July, for final voting later. Do we keep in the advisory function (to the Dean & Director, about policy) that was removed in 1998 or 99? Alice has talked with John about "liaison" vs. "advisory". She has the feeling that administration doesn't like the latter term in the bylaws. Steve moved that we return this phrase to our bylaws. The motion passed.

Karen asked about the status of the website for EEC notes, etc. A: This is still on the to do list.

We discussed what we should recommend to Jim Grady about distribution of merit \$. After several minutes of discussion we voted to suggest four things: 1) a flat \$ amount be determined for outstanding and (another) above average employees. 2) we suggest that the figure for "above average" people be 2/3 that of outstanding people 3) program leaders discuss among themselves the criteria for "outstanding" and "above average" and they communicate what they decide for a definition to their employees. 4) After completing #3, program leaders get to decide individually who is outstanding and above average in their area, without other PL's having further voice.

Meeting adjourned 12:30 Alan Eaton recording secretary