

Family and Youth Advisory Committee meeting Minutes March 31, 2003

Present: Ann Dolloff, Catherine Violette, Thom Linehan, Claudia Boozer-Blasco, Nancy Berry, Charlene Baxter and Wendy Brock

We welcomed new members Ann, Claudia and Kathy Jablonski (absent) to our group. We clarified this is an advisory group which will help us to continue to look at the big picture of family and youth issues.

We opened the discussion referring to the Deficit Reduction Strategies that were distributed in the Bi-Weekly Update. Steps to implement the strategies are starting immediately. As reported we are planning on a scenario of the best of times - \$500,000 deficit, the worst of times \$1,000,000+.

The first points of the plan reflect directly the implementation of the Strategic Plan. It is important to administration (both extension and university) that the Strategic Plan does guide our operational direction. The group raised the concern that it doesn't address the program needs of extension and programming is our strength.

Annual conference is being held as a one day rather than two days as in the plan, and the committee has been given a strict budget to follow. It is important to maintain recognition within an organization and the conference is one way to recognize all staff within the system with a personal development day. Counties are encouraged to carpool.

To meet the budget deficit, it will be important that staff seriously consider the separation of service opportunities that might be available. Those interested need to talk with Jim Grady. The system is also seriously willing to explore reduced time appointments to 75% or 80% and still be eligible for benefits. Reduced time discussions should be held with the appropriate program leader.

The Family Life Specialist position was discussed. Jonathan Olson is the choice of the search committee. Several options are being explored. The Department of Family Studies and School of Health & Human Services remain committed to supporting 20% of this position and that is a critical element of our engagement with these entities.

The group noted there were a lot of rumors about deficit reductions. We encouraged the group to keep Wendy and Charlene aware of these so that when possible they could be stopped. Current ones noted:

- Many staff had not read the deficit reduction plan carefully and had not fully comprehended how serious this could be if the full 5% cut was established.
- Rumor- Some program areas might be eliminated. Not in the plan. All program areas are important to the effectiveness of extension to NH.
- Could someone be notified in June that they would be laid off in July? No, a 90 day notice is needed.

- Will there be forced layoffs? – Hopefully not, but we must have a reduction in staff. It is an unknown until we know how many people may take a separation package, and what the final budget figure will be from the state.
- The range of cuts is 5-15%. This range in figures is partially because of the benefits that we pay on all staff. With no increase in Federal or county dollars to the salary (this is a faculty negotiation year and we expect there will be a salary increase) and benefits pot, this becomes an added stress on our overall budget.

The group felt that there needed to be constant updates in the Bi-Weekly so that staff realize this is a serious situation. It was suggested perhaps an if-then chart that would help make some of this clearer to staff. Wendy and Charlene said they would mention these concerns to Ed and Jim.

President Hart has made the commitment to visit two counties per semester. The first one will take place April 14th in Merrimack County. The afternoon will be spent with county staff and from 4:30-6:30 PM there will be a reception hosted by the County Extension Advisory council. The question was raised about what we would be doing to help her understand the connection between the specialist role on campus and the county program and most importantly how it helps achieve the mission of an Engaged University.

In-services were discussed. It is agreed there is a need to have an in-service plan that has a limited, balanced amount of offerings. There needs to be procedure to submit offerings that document good planning so there will be less “To be announced”. Question was raised what happened to submitting every 6 months? In-services should be related to the POW and rationale of need should be presented. All program leaders should review the offerings as a group to look for conflicts, balance, and appropriate number in times of tight budgets.

There is a need to identify the core competencies needed by all staff, and those specific to their subject matter field. We need to explore creative ways to offer training to staff to increase their competencies. This could include face to face, CD rom, video, Pic-tel, etc.

Membership of this group – should it expand to include Nutrition Connections and Family Life Skills staff. The group noted this is an advisory committee to Wendy and Charlene, not a policy making group. It is important to be inclusive. The group is supportive of including the other areas on the committee. Charlene will confirm with Val and Suzanne that this is appropriate due to the restrictions on their time. It will also be worked out among them how to select and when to start their membership.

There was an update on the Web page. Because the new content management system can not be purchased, the proposed changes on the website will not be as dramatic as originally hoped. We need to think about where we put critical issues on the site. They should be found easily from the homepage. An example would currently be support for families and communities in time of war. County staff hope that specialists will help digest and sort through the mountains of information and web sites. Links are helpful but often overwhelming and educators don’t have the time to scout out information.

4H Afterschool roll out will happen in April. The team will be Paula Gregory, Rick Alleva, Julia Steed Mawson, Nancy Evans and Joe Drake from Plus Time. The team will come back and provide some training in the state. Our goal in 4H youth development is not to start new afterschool programs, but to provide technical and curriculum support to existing or developing sites. We hope family development staff will be involved where appropriate in the future.

There were brief discussions regarding the Youth as Partners Grant, with more information to follow to staff from Wendy as soon as she receives it, and also, of the Cultural Perspectives on Parenting two-session satellite conference which the Parent Education Work Team has recommended we downlink and offer at one site in NH. More information will follow on this as well.

Future meeting dates – will try to have all by Pic-tel- Sullivan, Rockingham, Grafton and Taylor Hall. Meetings 9-noon.

June 3rd (under negotiation because Pic tel not available)

Sept 10th

Dec. 5th.

Minutes recorded by Wendy Brock