

## **Extension Educator Council Meeting Minutes November 9, 2005**

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

Absent: Matt Tarr, Charlie French

We began with visitors John Pike and Jim Grady.

Since this was George Hamilton's last meeting on EEC, we recognized his 6 years of work on the board with a plaque and hearty round of applause. George has accomplished many things while on EEC, including increased recognition of ext staff by UNH administration.

### **Discussions with John Pike and Jim Grady:**

John Pike mentioned the recent farm bill hearings in New Hampshire. UNHCE was frequently and favorably mentioned by many people testifying. John handed to us an update on NH legislative issues: House Bill 229 (Farm viability) and Senate resolution #1. There are a number of people well acquainted with extension, on the task force and legislative committee.

John was appointed by Bruce Mallory to serve on the UNH Diversity Council.

This is the 5<sup>th</sup> year of operating under RCM, so the management process is now under review. Subcommittees meet several times this month. By Nov. 30, all preliminary reports from the subcommittees will be in, and the steering committee considers them and holds open forums about December 15<sup>th</sup>. The target is for changes in RCM (if any are recommended) to be in place July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006.

We discussed the COLSA displacement review and reorganization processes.

John Pike and Jim Grady departed, and Steve Judd joined us (at our invitation).

### **Secure Discussion Site**

With Steve Judd we discussed the possibility of setting up a "secure discussion site" on the web, so educators could discuss topics confidentially. Steve said there were basically two formats: blogs and discussion forums. A person's ability to read and/or post things could be controlled; a registration process is one mechanism. This would be relatively secure, but obviously electronic records would exist. In the case of a serious challenge (a court order for example) there would be records to trace information.

If we set this up, Steve suggests we have some issues of interest to people to grab people's attention. Otherwise, with little happening, people would tend to stop checking the site. You could also have a second function: allow people to make anonymous comments to EEC. This could be set up in only a few days. We could call it EEC forum or some similar name. We could send out an email to all ext staff, with a link for those interested in registering. The moderator would approve registrations.

In a similar matter, we asked Steve if Ext people could get access to blackboard. Basically Steve said it was possible, but (CIS) sets up barriers. Apparently, when blackboard was conceived and money appropriated, ext was asked if we were interested, and we declined.

So blackboard access is for teaching and research functions, but not for extension work.

Steve departed, and we continued discussion on the forum idea. We discussed having all EEC members as moderators. Several discussion categories were considered: 1) “blowing off steam” 2) COA positions 3) reporting issues 4) balancing work & personal time 5) post your jokes 6) other (start your own topic). We also discussed two that would likely be of interest later, but not now: 1) distribution formulas for salary increases and 2) benefits.

We discussed making it clear that EEC won’t always be actively monitoring/answering the posted commentaries, but we will check on it for feelings and concerns to be brought up at EEC meetings. We want to generate discussion among extension staff. We discussed aiming for setting it up in January, so we can look at a draft of the (announcement) email, proposed rules, etc. Karen Blass will consider working on this with Steve Judd, possibly with another EEC member, to set up drafts for our consideration.

### **By-Laws:**

We received only one comment on the by-laws sent to all ext staff. Cathy Neal suggested that we expand “Natural Resources” to say “Natural Resources and Agriculture”. This captures our intent, and we even discussed saying “NR, Ag and Sea Grant” to make it fully complete. But making this small change requires that we send out the entire proposed by-laws to all staff once again. After such a long process, we decided not to add this change now, but to put it on the list for the next time revision of by-laws is considered. Alan will contact the person who made that suggestion, and explain our action.

### **President’s Meeting:**

Alice reported on the last president’s meeting. They discussed logos, graphic identity, and branding all UNH publications, posters, handouts, etc. “Branding” involves not only incorporating the standard logo, but also complying with standard fonts, colors and designs. Meetings are coming in November and December to inform UNH people that produce such items. Alice said she understood that Holly Young was already included in this information loop.

### **SPCC Meeting:**

The board of trustees has drafted a new policy on fraud and conduct. Alice passed it around (still a draft). The new policy appears to forbid some things currently acceptable (under consulting guidelines, for example).

### **Performance Mgmt Committee (PAT & OS) Oct 26**

The committee presented a form for performance management reviews. It seems to have received high marks from those present. Alice handed out the forms, and asked us to review them. These will be used by any ext staff who employ PAT or OS people. They plan to begin using this July 1<sup>st</sup>, ‘06. We discussed the problem of changing performance evaluation forms “midstream”. There will be a joint meeting of OS, EEC and PAT council on January 31, on campus.

## **Nominations for EEC**

Karen Blass sent out email announcements to extension staff regarding nominations. So far she has received 3 specialist nominations: Suzanne Knight, Catherine Violette, Lisa Towson. Suzanne and Catherine declined nomination; Lisa is unsure if she can serve, since on 50% time. In Natural Resources, Seth Wilner, Phil Auger, Nada Haddad and Geoffrey Njue have been nominated. Nominations are open until November 15.

## **Jim Grady Discussions (Nancy Franz was Unavailable)**

We invited Jim Grady back to our meeting, and asked him how well are specialists doing in getting 20% of their salary from grants. Jim said this is still a **target within program areas**, and they are looking at this as a “carrot”, rather than a “stick”. We are doing fairly well, and have put \$ back into reserves. We discussed how grants are coming in, and Jim said he thinks some people are close to “maxing out” in getting grants. Also, more grants means more reports to be done.

We asked if there was any update on the COA position/situation. Jim said he is not really involved; we have to talk with Paul Bonasparte-Krogh. Jim doesn't see major changes being made. We had more discussion about putting new staff (esp. those finishing degrees) in a COA position. We feel it is unfair to such staff to do this. We need to better utilize our CC members. They could take some of the COA load. We decided to tell Paul BK about this suggestion and discussion. Steve commented that there seems to have been a change in the makeup of (at least some) county councils. Many CC members are quite capable and willing to take on some responsibilities. Why not utilize such expertise more? COA responsibilities are a continuing item of concern brought to our attention.

Budget forecast: Jim thinks we will have a surplus, but several factors affecting us are not predictable now, so he must guess. Budget projections are due November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Adjourned

Notes taken and transcribed by Alan Eaton