Horticultural Sciences (HS) Department Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2013 9:30-10:30 In attendance: Chris Chase, Ken Cline, Danielle Treadwell, Eduardo Vallejos

1 – Chair Search
The committee discussed the challenges of filling the Chair position. The FAC agreed that a candidate’s leadership skills were more important than expertise in the Land Grant System. Ken raised the point that new chair hires are traditionally provided with new faculty lines.

The FAC recommends that Rob Ferl (Search Committee Chair) and Kevin Folta (Department Interim Chair) raise this issue with the Senior Vice President in the hopes that one or more faculty lines could be made available to the new HS chair, as one means of making the position more attractive.

2 – Indirect Costs (IDC)
The FAC discussed the programmatic problems created by the requirement that items such as fuel, computers and research related supplies (markers, staples, paperclips etc.) be purchased from IDC rather than direct costs. These items are central to the operation of programs. The University does not supply them from indirect costs, and the PI indirect cost returns are inadequate to cover them. For example, fuel is required for extension travel around the state and for daily travel of research personnel to and from Citra to conduct field-related projects.

The FAC recommends that Kevin invite JoAnne Davis to the next full faculty meeting to explore processes and procedures by which these can be paid from direct costs.

3 – Department Budget
The FAC discussed whether the department could and should fund some of the items that cannot be paid from direct costs. This led to a discussion regarding the past lack of transparency with respect to the department budget.

The FAC recommends that Kevin share the department's budget with the faculty at a faculty meeting.

4 – Facilities Operations
The FAC discussed the fact that IFAS Facilities Operations (FACOPS) no longer does minor renovations or repairs but instead requires the use of costly outside contractors and passes the costs on to investigators. Structural renovations and repairs cannot be funded from direct costs, and the PI IDC recovery is not adequate to fund such repairs. A second issue is that months-long delays are encountered for project estimates and for the completion of work orders by FACOPS personnel.

The FAC recommends that these issues be raised with the Assistant Vice President and the Dean for Research, either through discussion with Kevin as Interim Chair or through discussion with the entire faculty at a regular faculty meeting.

5 – Department IT
The FAC discussed the operation of the departmental IT staff. While there are some obvious strengths, there are also some areas that could be improved. Examples include on-going maintenance of the departmental and faculty web pages and transparency with respect to university software regulations. Danielle noted that By-Law
updates and current departmental committees were not posted and she volunteered to contact Kamin Miller and arrange for these updates to be made.

The FAC recommends that we initiate a transparent review of the IT department to determine:

- Current duties and assignments of IT staff
- Current needs of the IT staff
- Suggestions of the IT staff for improvements in current service
- Suggestions of the IT staff for new services that could be offered
- Suggestions of faculty for improvements in current service
- Suggestions of faculty for new services needed

6 – Undergraduate Curriculum
The FAC discussed the possible merger between the HS and Plant Science Undergraduate Curricula. Eduardo has initiated an information gathering survey of students who earned HS undergraduate degrees over the past ten years. These data will be useful in guiding the development of either the HS undergraduate or combined undergraduate curriculum. The FAC also noted that no clear process was laid out for further exploration of combining the two curricula.

The FAC recommends that at the next regular faculty meeting Kevin could lay out a plan for exploration of the curriculum merger. We further recommend that he makes full use of the HS Academic Programs Committee in developing and executing such a plan.

7 – Department Prospectus
We will use our department-generated PDF prospectus for the Chair Search. The current draft of the print version was passed out by Chris with a request for comments by 5 PM on 3/14. She will pass them on to IFAS Communications for development of the final print version.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30am.

Submitted by Christine Chase