

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Faculty Association Executive Committee
Minutes of 13 May 1998 Meeting

PRESENT: J. E. Marcy, D. E. Eversole, D. W. Reaves, K. K. Hatzios,
L. Geyer, S. Tolin, D. Mullins, and P. J. Kennelly.

Incoming President Geyer called the meeting to order at 11:00.

Leon Geyer briefly discussed his philosophy for his term as president, which will emphasize fostering involvement by the members of CALSFA and keeping the governance structure "in good repair". He announced his intention to work on updating the CALSFA homepage and exploring the use of "cybergovernance" to supplement and enhance current face to face mechanisms for communication and governance in CALSFA.

The upcoming retirement of Dean Cannell was discussed. President Geyer will meet with Dean Swiger to determine the number of CALSFA representatives that the Dean wishes to include on the search committee for the next Associate Dean for Research and Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station. Nominations will then be solicited by email and voted upon by the CALSFA executive committee.

The recent "Celebration of the Faculty" was discussed. Feedback from attendees was positive. It was noted that the timely manner in which the formal program was completed was singled out repeatedly by faculty as a major improvement. Concern was voiced over low faculty attendance and mechanisms for fostering increased participation. These included improvements in the nature and timeliness of advertisements, and direct encouragement by department heads to their faculty - particularly those singled out in the formal program. While alternate times (afternoon versus evening) were discussed, the current evening slot met with majority approval because it provided the maximum opportunity for attendance by spouses.

President Geyer read the recent CALSFA election results into the minutes:

CALSFA Executive committee:

President:	Leon Geyer
President Elect:	Dan Eversole
Vice President:	Peter Kennelly
Secretary/Treasurer	Dixie Reaves
Past President:	Joe Marcy

Commission on Academic Program Policies:

Alan McDaniel, George Norton, Bob James, Eluned Jones, Stan Burke

Commission on Extension Program Policies:

Eluned Jones

Commission on Faculty Affairs:

Stan Burke, Cindy Denbow

Commission on International Program Policies:

Dan Taylor, Cindy Wood

Commission on Research Program Policies:

Ina Hoeschele, Conrad Heatwole, Boris Chevone

Advisory Committee on Strategic Research Planning:

Bob James

Faculty Senate:

Susan Duncan (3 year term)

Leon Geyer (3 year term)

David Bevan (3 year term)

Boris Chevone (1 or 2 year term)

University Commission on Research:

George Lacy

Candidates for University Academic Support Committee (VT President picks one of two candidates):

Dixie Reaves, Bob James

Candidates for University Athletic Commission (VT President picks one of two candidates):

Bennett Cassell, Norman Marriott

The Executive committee discussed general meetings and activities for the coming year. Proposal for tentative meetings included a talk by Dean Cannell in fall concerning privatization and economic development. This will be followed by a reception to recognize Dean Cannell's service to the college. Other proposed events include a talk on the state of the college in spring, following the conclusion of the legislative session, by Dean Swiger and a presentation in fall semester by the 'to be named' Vice-Provost for Outreach. The merits of a purely social "mixer" activity in fall to complement the spring "Celebration of the Faculty" were discussed at length. It was concluded that a lunch cookout or cold sandwich type event in the Hort Gardens offered the most suitable format for an inaugural fall welcome event.

President Geyer reported on the activities of the University Advisory Council on Strategic Budgeting and Planning. The advisory council recommended that the university utilize internal resources to make up differences in the mandated pay raises between academic/research faculty (5.8%) and administrative and professional faculty and staff [which includes extension agents] (3.1-4.5%) during the next fiscal year. It was observed, however, that the university's resources are finite, rendering its ability to sustain such a policy in future years problematic. It was noted during the discussion that CALS made out very well relative to other units of the university in the last legislative session. This was attributed to Dean Swiger's efforts in crafting and presenting the "Plan to Serve Virginia". The inclusive nature of the planning process, which involved grass roots contributions from all units within CALS, was viewed by the CALSFA Executive Committee as a clear source of strength for the plan. It was resolved that the minutes reflect the appreciation of CALSFA for the Dean's leadership efforts on behalf of the college.

Trends in university funding for research and research infrastructure were discussed, including cross cutting initiatives. It was noted that the number of units referring to themselves as "centers" now exceeds the number of departments in the university. It was noted that the proliferation of centers may, to some degree, be diverting both funds and faculty time away from departments. Sue Tolin discussed the need for increased faculty input to the committees framing the university's cross cutting initiatives, particularly those that involve the college directly - e.g. biotechnology, as the initiatives form a principal vehicle for obtaining new revenues from the state.

A discussion next ensued regarding faculty participation in CALSFA and activities such as commencement. It was resolved that a more vigorous effort to solicit dues be implemented in future, and that the constitutional linkage between membership in good standing for the purposes of voting, etc., and dues payments be enforced. The poor turn out of faculty for commencement exercises was noted, and efforts will be made in the coming year to assist the college in boosting participation in this activity, which represents an important acknowledgement of the students and their parents on this special day.

Other elements of the Executive Committee's agenda for the coming year were also discussed. This included concerns over the declining "hard copy" collection in the library, which threatens both our teaching and research infrastructure. The three-fold increase in honor court violations this past year, an increase accounted for almost exclusively by "electronic cheating", was cited as one of the potential consequences of the trend toward an exclusively electronic library. Several persons pointed out that for many applications, particularly in the area of instruction, electronic and traditional publications are not interchangeable and that the maintenance of a balanced and diverse library collection is needed. It was resolved that the Commission on Research Program Policies draft a resolution on behalf of CALSFA presenting these concerns to the university administration.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30.

Peter J. Kennelly, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Biochemistry
Virginia Tech
123 Engel Hall
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0308
(540) 231-4317 / FAX (540) 231-9070 / email: pjkennel@vt.edu