

Special Greenhouse Committee Meeting minutes, Sept 4, 2014

Present: Alan Christensen, Amy Hilske, David Jackson, Keenan Amundsen, Scott Sattler, Lance Meinke, Ed Cahoon, Matt Anderson, Stephen Wegulo, Anne Streich.

Absent: Aaron Lorenz

Agenda item to approve user fees for the period of July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015.

Amy Hilske presented a spreadsheet developed with Kathy Ellis from the ASSIST Business Center. It was noted that this is the first time that user fees have been developed on the basis of cost accounting. Amy explained how the available space per tier was inventoried across campus, how operating expenses were estimated based on past expenses, and discussed salaries and depreciation. Two anonymous users were shown as examples of how the total fees would be impacted by these new user fees compared to last year, and the changes were relatively small. The biggest increase will be in tier 1 growth chambers, and some fees will decrease slightly.

Major changes noted are:

- Monthly billing

- Billing per square foot of usable space, rather than per bench or per growth chamber

- Two service types, plus different categories of space

The following resolution was moved and seconded:

It is the intent of the Greenhouse committee that rates within each tier will not increase more than 5% per year for the next three years.

Discussion followed, the motion was approved unanimously.

The spreadsheet and rates were discussed. A concern was that the estimated expenses of bringing much of the Agronomy & Horticulture space up to minimal service were too low. It was also decided to include the full salary of the Greenhouse manager to be hired, even though the hire would take place partway through the fiscal year, because it will be a full-year expense going forward. That increase in salary expenses is matched by an increase in the ARD subsidy.

Following these modifications, a motion was made and seconded that the rates be approved. The motion was approved unanimously. Implicit in the rates is that there is no user option of "no service." The two tiers of minimal and full service are included in the user fees. An important point to make to users wanting less than minimal service is that they will no longer have to take out the trash, wash pots, buy and change lights, etc. These are not things that a first-rate research university would ask of PIs. The change in user fee is minimal and the faculty time saved is significant. It was also noted that users who formerly were billed for an entire room or bay will now be billed for actual square footage used and may realize significant savings, or may be able to reorganize in order to save money.

Amy was directed to install signage as soon as possible in the greenhouses indicating what services will be provided and directing users needing those services to the appropriate manager.

Anne reported on behalf of herself and Keenan that the subcommittee had assembled a group of faculty to gather ideas and propose a vision of what a Greenhouse learning environment would be.

Respectfully submitted,
Alan C. Christensen, chair