Plant Growth Facilities Faculty Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes – May 21, 2019

The meeting started at 3:00 p.m.

Present: Alan Christensen, Amy Hilske, Anne Streich, Hector Santiago, James Schnable, Keenan Amundsen, Lance Meinke, Matt Anderson, Scott Sattler, Stephen Wegulo

Approval of Minutes of April 24, 2019 Meeting – Amundsen called for a motion to approve the minutes. Christensen moved, Streich seconded to approve the minutes from the April 24, 2019 meeting. The minutes were approved as is.

Amy –
- Contacted the “renters” of the empty growth chambers. All people said they were planning to use them. It has been 2 weeks and none of the growth chambers have been filled yet. She will draft a policy for the first fall meeting.

Hector –
- Amundsen and Christensen have served their term limit
  - Yin Liang Yang will replace Keenan Amundsen
  - Undecided person will replace Alan Christensen

2020/2021 Elections –
- Secretary/Chair elect: Anne Streich nominated Stephen Wegulo. Stephen Wegulo unanimously elected.

Discussion of the External Review –
- Stephen Wegulo:
  - Faculty member raised a concern about the statement “the current state of the facility on East Campus is a life safety concern” – this comment was made regarding the two fires that have happened and some exposed outlets that were being switched during the review
  - Faculty member asked – if the East Campus greenhouses were to be replaced, what would be the timeline and cost? Suggested to raise money through the foundation or board of regents.
- Anne Streich: how are greenhouses typically funded?
  - Amy Hilske: a new one was built in Kansas with funding from the Wheat Board (the greenhouse is primarily for wheat)
  - Hector: it’s time to start making a master plan (or multiple master plans for different stages) for new facilities so that we can become a priority for funding
  - James Schnable: do we need to also consider adding square footage to help accommodate a growing faculty?
    - Anne Streich: we should look at the University master plan to ensure we fit within
    - Amy Hilske: the University is reworking their master plan, so now is a good time to start
- Stephen Wegulo: transgenic insects – need to ensure containment
- James Schnable: there are 3 main concerns/action items
  - New greenhouses
  - Advocacy to administration
  - Moral and personnel issues – this one can be addressed in the next several months
    - Improved lines of communication
    - No one should be afraid to work somewhere or of losing their job
• Possible solutions
  o Every 3 months, we could have an open conversation about what is going well and not going well
  o One-on-one sessions with PI’s
  o We could invite greenhouse managers to the committee every now and then to reassure them that we back up the policies and safety regulations
  o Back up employees that are trying to enforce the rules, make sure they know we support and trust them, support training opportunities
  o Training is important for students – maybe include this in grad student onboarding
  o Increase staff appreciation efforts
  o Revise position descriptions to better describe their duties (to include rule enforcement)
  o Include orientation on facility use and procedures in the safety training sessions
  o Make it so that people do not have key card access unless they complete the training
  o Have some committee members attend faculty meetings to discuss the issues/possible solutions
  o Work with the City Planning Master program – maybe they could take the new greenhouses on as a project

Next Steps –

1. Addressing the culture and personnel issues – James will send a proposed list of action items
2. Work on a master plan for new greenhouses

Next Meeting – start of fall semester, date and time TBD

Adjourn – Moved by Christensen, seconded by Wegulo. Meeting adjourned 4:09 p.m.