Plant Growth Facilities Faculty Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes – Apr 17, 2020

The meeting started at 2:00pm

Present: James Schnable, Jinliang Yang, Anne Streich, Ed Cahoon, Sabrina Russo, Lance Meinke, Stephen Wegulo, Hector Santiago, Matt Anderson, Amy Hilske, Scott Sattler, Kaitlyn Smejdir

Old Business –
• Approve minutes from last meeting (December 17, 2019) Motion by Wegulo, second by Meinke. Minutes approved without changes

New Business –
• Elect a chair for 2020-2021: Motion by Cahoon to nominate Russo, seconded by Wegulo. Russo elected the Chair for the 2020-2021 Term
• Hector on the continuity of research amid COVID-19 level 4 restrictions:
  o Buildings are more restricted than fields as the closed environments increases the risk of the virus spread
  o We are hoping that planting can continue and are glad that access is not as restrictive as it could be (relative to responses of other universities)
  o People have cooperated well and that will help us to get back to normal as soon as possible
• Open floor for bringing issues/concerns to light:
  o James: The interpretation in Ag/Hort has been that the restrictions apply to field sites as well – can people who are not on the access list still go to fields?
    ▪ Hector: No – the people accessing any facilities must be on the list of approved personnel, but with coordination, progress can still be made
  o Sabrina: Thanks to the staff and administrators that have been working hard to keep the greenhouses running
  o Amy: Greenhouse staff are rotating work in order to. One issue that has arisen is that some faculty are wanting to continue planting (new, but approved project), but the greenhouse staff are hoping to push that until after level 4 has passed in order to protect staff.
    ▪ Hector: There is also a limited amount of supplies available and ordering new supplies is also limited. It is best to wait to reduce the risk
  o Amy: Level 4 caught us off guard as we did not have the preparation time we normally do for shut downs (like the winter break). We stocked up on supplies and can sustain this for a while, but if that continues
  o James: If there is someone who is approved to do their work in the greenhouse, would you prefer that we send them or ask the greenhouse staff to do this?
    ▪ Amy: If they are well and willing, then the personnel more familiar with the project should continue to do the work
    ▪ Hector: This is where coordination will help to keep personnel safe – so that people are not planning to be in the greenhouse at the same time
  o James: Do you predict and issues with the budget shortfall?
    ▪ Amy: As long as the fees continue to come in, we should not have any issues since we are a service center. If level 4 continues, that could change
    ▪ Hector: Right now we are on track with our finances for the greenhouses
  o Sabrina: Confusion over the details of the hiring freeze- does it apply to student workers? Does it apply to grant-funded positions?
    ▪ Hector: Will take this back to discuss with administrators to get clarity
- Hector: On a positive note, applications for funding have continued at their normal pace
- Hector: If someone is really needing to have access, the best way to get that access is to go through their department chair/head. They are welcome to copy Hector or Tala, but it needs to go through their department.
- James: If these restrictions were to continue past May 1, a helpful change would be a differentiation between access to buildings vs. access to fields
  - Hector: It does make sense when talking about the fields, however the places where equipment is stored need to be considered as well as they are typically a shared space

The meeting ended at 2:37 PM