

Plant Growth Facilities Faculty Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes – 07/21/2021

The meeting started at 9:02 AM.

Members Present: Sabrina Russo, Stacy Adams, Jinliang Yang, Stephen Wegulo, Justin McMechan, Ed Cahoon, Lauren Kruger

Ex-Officio Members Present: Hector Santiago, Matt Anderson, Amy Hilske, Scott Sattler

Approval of Minutes of 04/07/2021 Meeting – Stacy Adams moved to approve the minutes of the 04/07/2021_meeting; Justin McMechan seconded. The minutes were approved without changes.

Agenda Items

Policy Discussion – *“For larger projects (greater than 10-20 pots or trays) the space request form must be submitted (1) month prior to the start of the project.”*

- It was brought to Amy’s attention that a committee member/professor would like to request making a change to the current policy.
 - Proposed Policy by the professor: Change the wording to that “It is preferred....”
 - Amy is not opposed to changing the policy but there needs to be some sort of time frame. The committee would need to discuss as it is a team effort when making a decision.
 - Hector talked about the context and purpose of the time requirement. He said that materials are not always in stock and need to be ordered, so there needs to be time to place the orders.
 - In general, the greenhouse staff has been very accommodating and helpful.
- Background information on the situation is that this project wanted to start 9 days before a holiday and the greenhouse manager told them that that was very short notice and we may not be able to meet the time demand, but we will see what we can do. The manager was able to get the project going, but the professor and their team felt chastised for not meeting the time demand.
 - The professor has very strong feelings about this situation and feels that everything needs to be uniform. He would like to see the wording be loosened and to understand that they will do their best, but they may not get what they want. If there is a definitive rule, then it needs to be followed strictly in this professor’s view.
 - Toward the end of the project, it appears that there was miscommunication between all parties involved and the plants were harvested by greenhouse staff rather than by professor and his research team before they were done with the project.
 - Based on conversation during this meeting, it sounds like it could have been an issue caused by lack of communication, but it would be beneficial to hear both sides of the story and from all parties.
- General Information and Misconceptions about Greenhouse Space use:
 - There are different tiers of service in the greenhouse and communication between greenhouse managers and researchers and their teams is very important.
 - There is a lingering thought that once you request a space for a project, that you can have the space until the project is complete which is not the case. From a documentation standpoint and to follow the NIH rules, we need to know exactly what is going on with each individual project, more specifically, so that we can know who is working on a particular project within that space.
 - Often times space requests are not filled out with a month in advance.
- Potential Solutions
 - Sabrina suggested to keep the policy as is, but possibly include an addendum which states that “exceptions maybe made under certain circumstances, but there is no guarantee”.

- It might be a good idea to have a smaller group of committee members to meet with the individuals to hear their perspective of the situation. This would include James Schnable, his research team, and the greenhouse manager, Samantha. Then the committee can draft a response.
- Sabrina proposed to invite James and Samantha in separate emails to discuss their concerns to the committee. They would also meet at different times.
- Ed, Stacy, and Stephen volunteered to listen to the concerns of James and James' assistant and with Samantha at separate times.

Elect a new Chair of the Committee:

- Ed and Stephen have both served on the committee for 2 terms and are ineligible for the chair position.
- Sabrina nominated Stacy Adams for the Chair position and Stephen Wegulo seconded.
 - Ed Cahoon abstained from the vote.
 - All were in favor of electing Stacy Adams as the new Chair of the Plant Growth Facilities Committee.

New Committee Members:

- Ed Cahoon and Stephen Wegulo have both served two 3-year terms and new members have been appointed.
- New members include:
 - Dr. Katarzyna Glowacka, Department of Biochemistry
 - Dr. Ming Guo, Department of Agronomy and Horticulture
 - Dr. Amit Mitra, Department of Plant Pathology

Greenhouse Revitalization Plan Proposal by Stacy Adams:

- Status of infrastructure: they are working on that and making progress but there is not definitive decision yet.
- The document created by Stacy includes important statistics about the space capacities, etc., a section about risks, and a vision for the new plant growth facilities and important goals for the new facilities
 - Stacy mentioned that the proposal is currently missing an abstract in the beginning but goes through the thought process of where we are at and where we need to be for our greenhouses.
 - Safety and conservation are huge concerns with the current greenhouses, specifically electrical and current energy use. We need to be more efficient with energy and labor resources.
 - The greenhouses were built in the early 1920's, the 2 hoop houses were built in the 1960's, research facilities in 1975 and renovated in 1989. The infrastructure is a huge concern.
- From his current research, it looks like it could be a 40-50 million dollar project to replace and build new green houses on East Campus. Most of the current buildings are not worth investing anything more.
- There are 6-7 Big 10 institutions that have spent \$33 million for renovations in the last two years. It is eye-opening that other facilities are improving, and we are not.

Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 10:08 AM.