

Plant Growth Facilities Faculty Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes – March 25, 2022

The meeting started at 2:02 PM

Members Present: Ming Guo, Stacy Adams, Katarzyna Glowacka, Sabrina Russo, Justin McMechan, Amit Mitra

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

Approval of Minutes of the November 2, 2021, Meeting – Sabrina Russo moved to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2021, meeting; Justin McMechan seconded. The minutes were approved without changes.

Updates from Amy Hilske –

- Growth Chambers –
 - There is a new bench top growth chamber at Beadle center
 - It has been ordered and should arrive early September.
 - The second set of growth chambers is scheduled to go in the plant pathology greenhouse.
 - There are currently 4 large region chambers, and only 1-2 work.
 - 3 chambers will be removed and will be replaced with 2 new ones. There is \$45,000 in grant funds right now, with the hope that we will get an additional \$45,000 to help pay for and replace the third growth chamber.
- Spring Break Projects
 - Plant Science Teaching Greenhouse – new windows and an air conditioning unit were installed.
 - Teaching Greenhouse West – one of the poly houses is on the schedule to be recovered this spring. At the same time, new interior jet tubes will be added.
 - AGH4 – a motion detected light was added in the long hallway at a relatively cheap cost.
 - Other items paid by facilities:
 - Fire alarms, heat sensor in each greenhouse room, adding university power supply backups to all greenhouse control panels, changing all pneumatic valves to electric valves.
 - Generally being done to the East Campus greenhouses since they are older.
- Staffing
 - We hired three new student workers at the Beetle center.
 - Deployed staff member is back in Lincoln and will return in a couple of weeks.

Updates from Hector Santiago –

- Plant Pathology Department – new faculty member taking over the lab (focus is on soybean pathology)
- Heuerman Lecture is on April 18
 - 2 key speakers:
 - Chavonda Jacobs-Young – current administrator of ARS
 - Paul Kiecker – current administrator for USDA FSIS
- UNL will receive \$20 million to continue partnership with ARS (was enacted in the spending bill)
 - Money will probably be used to build greenhouse complex.
 - There are efforts to build another building to place additional faculty at NIC.
 - It will be funded by the state and private sector.
 - The idea is to bring scientists from ARS and UNL as well as companies to get involved with research
- Agricultural Economics department is hiring a department head.
 - An offer has been made, but we have not heard anything else as of now.
- Big opportunity for RFA –
 - A smart farming/Farm of the Future proposal was submitted.
 - A decision has been made but has not been announced yet.
- 3 groups of scientists working together – climate smart commodities in the broader sense.
 - 2 different opportunities – 1) \$250,000 – 5 million and 2) \$5-100 million
- MPPEP proposal in progress for Animal Science/Meat Science Hub.

Agenda Items –

- Greenhouse proposal
 - The proposal was submitted to IANR Administration for review.
 - PSI APR – the review team brought forward that UNL should work more with the plant growth facilities.
 - It was brought to the table, at the PSI APR meeting, that this is within the first 3 priorities (if not first) for us.

