

PSS Staff Meeting

April 20, 2021

I. Congratulations!

- a. James Dollarhide retirement – celebration at the North Farm on May 7th with light refreshments; COVID protocols in place – social distancing and masks
- b. Todd Pfeiffer and Deanna Vance retired at the end of 2020 – Todd is on a post-retirement appointment to finish up his sorghum work
- c. Bob Miller is retiring June 30, 2021 – no plans to celebrate yet; will go on a post-retirement appointment to finish up his tobacco work over the next 2-3 years
- d. We may be moving forward with replacing one faculty position – likely a breeder position but will be discussing with faculty soon
- e. Jason Unrine – 2020 Thomas Poe Cooper Research Award
- f. Larry Grabau – 2021 UK Global Impact Award for Education Abroad

II. Research for the Department

- a. The last 2-3 years has shown a solid increase in funding but this year is lagging
 - i. Not sure why this is because the University is on track for normal research dollars

III. Budget

- a. Department has had 3 consecutive years of budget cuts – possibly longer
 - i. 2018-19 - \$200k (benefits swipe)
 - ii. 2019-20 - \$35k (our portion of raises)
 - iii. 2020-21 - \$800k (9.5% cut handed down to all units)
- b. We lost people:
 - i. Kai Su
 - ii. Susan Leopold
 - iii. Deanna Vance
 - iv. Reduction in support of Crume greenhouse position
- c. We lost open positions
 - i. Montse's tech position
 - ii. Munshaw's faculty line
 - iii. Academic Coordinator position
 - iv. 1-2 other positions that had been open for a while
- d. We had two faculty voluntarily take 12-to-9 month conversions (salary cuts)
- e. The Turf program has also hurt through all of this but was not part of the 9.5% cut
 - i. Only remaining position left is Travis Shaddox, but that is tentative due to the nature of his appointment (terminal appointment in the Research Title Series)
 - ii. This has not been a decision by the department or the College – this has been a result of the open line for Munshaw
- f. Budget is staying flat for next year – no growth or cuts
- g. No news on whether there will be raises
- h. Should have seen that the 2:1 contribution to retirement was reinstated

IV. Staff & Faculty Update

- a. New people: Sarah Cain & Sean Goins (Brad Lee); Brittany Bradish (Teutsch)
- b. Changes: Conner Raymond (Knott) – moved to Ag Extension Associate

- c. Opportunities – Knott hiring Lab Tech Senior. Pearce looking for a postdoc in hemp production; Dollarhide position will post soon
- V. New IPSS Students – 6 students expected in Fall 2021; 3 pending
 - a. Victoria Bajek (MS) – Rudolph
 - b. Upama Dev (PhD) – Moe
 - c. Caleb Perkins (MS) – Bailey
 - d. Joyce Robinson (PhD) – DVS
 - e. Fatemah Shahrivar – Wendroth
 - f. Mounica Talasila – Salmeron
- VI. Undergrad Curricula Updates
 - a. Agricultural Ecosystem Sciences (AES) – 25 students currently enrolled
 - i. First field experience is happening this summer – may see them at the Farms
 - b. Certificate in Hemp Science – moving forward with a Fall 2021 start
- VII. News – Concur & Vehicle Rentals
 - a. Concur – thank you for figuring it out and persevering!
 - b. Motor Pool is gone – Enterprise is in
 - i. Can use personal vehicle, if necessary – need a form signed by the Chair; available on the PSS Internal website
- VIII. News/Reminders
 - a. Unconscious Bias Training – new and free! Anyone can take it – comes through myUK Learning
 - b. Staff Professional Development Fund – if there is training that you would like to complete, consider applying for this
 - i. 6-10 PSS staff have done this over the years
 - c. Research in Phase IV – Remind PIs to submit revised research plans for Phase IV approval once summer workers are on board
 - i. Still no high school students or volunteers allowed in labs without VPR pre-approval
 - ii. All social distancing and mask rules remain as they have for the past year
 - iii. Should be having conversations with supervisors about plans for normal return in the Fall
 - d. PSS Staff Recognition Program
 - i. Please remember to nominate staff for out of the ordinary acts
 - e. Centralization of Business and IT functions
 - i. Motivated by cybersecurity and fraud
 - ii. Sounds like this will mean a College-level management structure that reports to central campus (51% central/49% CAFÉ)
- IX. Good News
 - a. Dan Quinn – going to faculty position at Purdue
 - b. Jesse Carmack – going to breeder position in California
 - c. Sam Leuthold – going to PhD position at Colorado State University
 - d. Virginia Verges – also graduating but we’re unsure of her plans
- X. Thank You!