

PSS Staff Meeting

September 8, 2020

Attendees: Julia Santoro, Joe Kupper, Maggie Maynard, Bo Tao, Elizabeth Carlisle, Natalia Martinez, Matthew Allen, Rebecca Ramsey, Audrey Sparks, Krista Lea, Sara Carter, Claire Venard, Ann Freytag, Joe Omielan, Jim Nelson, Lauren McMahan, Pamela Obura, Anthony Clark, Dalton Mertz, Abbie Cain, Rebecca McCulley

I. Good News

- a. Matthew Allen received a Sustainability Challenge Grant
 - i. A mural will be painted on the north side of the Agronomy Building at the North Farm. The mural will highlight past work benefiting Kentucky's agriculture. The expected completion date is sometime in 2022.
- b. Thank you for all that you – particularly for our research programs
 - i. Extramural awards have been on a positive trajectory over the last 5 years

II. News – Budget

- a. We have had 3 consecutive years of cuts
 - i. \$200,000 in 2018-2019 from the benefits swipe
 - ii. \$35,000 in 2019-2020 from the portion of merit raises passed to departments
 - iii. \$800,000 in 2020-2021 from 9.5% cut handed down to all units
 1. We will start 2021-2022 owing \$150,000 – this figure could increase
- b. All of this being said, this fiscal year isn't as bad as was initially feared

III. Staff & Faculty Updates

- a. Tara Valentine has joined Bob Pearce's program; Dalton Mertz has joined Claire Venard in soybean variety trials
- b. Change – Ricky King has left the Turf program and is now working Montse Salmeron
- c. Retirements – Susan Leopold and Linda Williams have already retired; Deanna Vance will be retiring in January 2021
 - i. Susan and Linda are both doing well
- d. Faculty
 - i. Gregg Munshaw left for a position in industry
 - ii. David Hildebrand's situation continues to evolve – as a result of a fiscal audit, he will no longer be allowed financial management of his program. Hiro will be leaving at the end of September when his grant funding expires.
 - iii. Glenn Collins passed away at the end of August
 - iv. Carrie Knott has been appointed the Director of UKREC
 - v. Larry Grabau has returned to the PSS faculty and will be housed in PSB

IV. IPSS – New Students

- a. COVID has caused delays/deferrals in the arrival of international students accepted to the program
- b. 5 new students joined the program this Fall
 - i. Kent Pham – Luke Moe (PSS)
 - ii. Zoe Schroeder – Seth DeBolt (Hort)
 - iii. Victoria Adkins – Rachel Rudolph (Hort)
 - iv. Chelsea Maupin – Krista Jacobsen (Hort)
 - v. River Dowell – Ray Smith (PSS)

V. AES Program

- a. Our department's new undergraduate program started in Fall 2019 with 8 students
 - i. 11 new students were added in Fall 2020
- b. Certificate in Hemp

- i. Hope to start courses in January 2021
- VI. News – Trip/Procard Changes
 - a. New system is live today – 9/8
 - b. Travel and Procard expense management will now run through the Concur system
 - i. A new Procard Voucher is live with the system
 - c. These changes, along with retirements, are contributing to reorganization of front/business office duties
 - i. Major changes – Vicki will handle Procards and Audrey will pick up Travel
 - d. Please be patient as we figure out how this new system will work – we received very little lead time and are learning this with you
 - e. We will revisit our processes in a week or two and update our Who Does What documents online
- VII. News/Reminders – Lab Safety
 - a. No lab inspections will be conducted as long as we remain in Phase II. High hazard labs will be prioritized in Phase III. We do not have high hazard labs so there will be no lab inspections in 2020.
 - b. We should still update Chematix and make sure lab specific trainings are up-to-date. Each PI should update BIORAFT.
- VIII. News/Reminders
 - a. Seminars are back – Fridays at 3:00 pm EST – Audrey is sending out reminders
 - b. CAFÉ Staff Appreciation Day – celebrate at home on 9/25-26
 - c. Research Activity Awards are once again open to staff (\$500-\$3,000) – watch your email for more information and notify Dr. McCulley if you plan to apply for one as they require department match
 - d. [Cultivating Inclusion Series](#) is happening the first Thursday of each month from September through December 12:00-1:00 pm EST
 - e. New relief fund – CRISIS
- IX. PSS Staff Recognition Program
 - a. Intended to be more immediate in recognizing excellence
 - b. Still determining if awards will be given quarterly or upon receipt of nomination
 - c. Anyone can nominate via a link on the website
- X. Good News
 - a. New microplate reader for S-104 – thanks to funding from Dave Van Sanford!
 - b. No graduate students were delayed in graduation from COVID – thanks to everyone who kept research going for our students!