

**School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences
Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station**

Faculty and Staff Meeting, September 16, 2004

STATE OF THE SCHOOL AND STATION

1. Faculty Introductions
 - a. John Yarie – Val Barber and Steve Jones
 - b. Susan Todd – Julie Lurman
 - c. Milan Shipka – Matt Cronin
2. State of the School and Station Address
3. Associate Director Allen Mitchell
 - a. Matanuska Experiment Farm
 - b. Polycom status and issues
4. Associate Dean Steve Sparrow
 - a. Outcomes Assessment
 - b. Program Review
5. Plant, Animal, and Soil Science Department Chair Milan Shipka
 - a. Georgeson Botanical Garden
6. Comments and New Ideas

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIONS

Accomplishments

1. **Strategic Plan**

Strategic Plan 2004 was completed in June 2004. It is an exemplary effort by our faculty and staff, our Board of Advisors and expert panels formed by our clientele. Thanks should go to Glenn Juday who led the effort and to Steve Sparrow, who helped bring Strategic Plan 2004 to its conclusion.

2. **Fairbanks Experiment Farm Plan**

The Fairbanks Experiment Farm Plan was also completed this summer. The final plan was written by USKH, a local architectural firm. A planning committee that included Steve Ulvi, former BOA member worked with USKH to develop the plan. The Georgeson Botanical Garden is a centerpiece of the plan as is the concept of a new building to replace our old visitor's center. The College of Fellows has been working with us to raise funds for expansion. We hope to bring this effort to campaign level in the near future.

3. **Recruitment and Marketing**

Our website has a new look thanks to Steve Taylor, MS candidate and student of Pete Fix. He worked with Steve Peterson and others to give us a fresh face for our website visitors. We are also very pleased that the Geography Department web page has been updated and now is an integral part of our Internet image.

A major change in recruiting efforts is targeting our markets. We are now working in the Anchorage area, the Kenai Peninsula, the Nome and Kotzebue areas. We sent recruitment packets to selected area high schools that showed an interest in our program and faculty made follow-up visits. The recruitment and marketing committee is chaired by Steve Sparrow.

Articulation is an important part of recruiting transfer students. We have several activities in progress. Steve Sparrow is working with TVC in forestry. One of our new board members, Cindy Tack, hopes to begin to pursue horticultural interests. I have begun discussions with the Micronesian Islands about our program and we are now a part of a potential student exchange with the University of Petroleum China. Pete Fix was instrumental in bringing together an informal exchange with Colorado State University that is beginning this year with our first group of four CSU students here for a semester.

The Reindeer Research Program has developed a new K- 12 curriculum that is in high demand.

4. **Northern Forest Cooperative**

The cooperative was formed to assist private and public forest managers who often lack current best practices information for managing forest lands. The group is designed to help interested parties exchange information and define needs. Its next meeting is on October 12, 13, and 14, 2004, at UAF. It is a cooperative effort among the US Forest Service, State and Private Forestry, State Division of Forestry, and the AFES. Ed Packee serves as my liaison to the group.

5. **Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit**

Pete Fix has headed the efforts to bring the CESU together. It is created under UA as the Alaska CESU. There are two new member agencies - NRCS and ARS. They join USFS, NPS, BLM, and USGS. Our university partner is the University of New Hampshire and our non-profit partner is the Alaska SeaLife Center. The five rural campuses in CRA are our native-serving unit.

Actions

1. **Board of Advisors:**

New members:

Mike Woods, King Career Center, Anchorage (director of the Agriculture and Natural

Resources curriculum)

Cyndie Warbelow-Tack, Plan Kingdome owner, UAF alumni, Fairbanks

Prospective members;

Meg Hayes, Land management consultant, MS in NRM, UAF, 1974

Mara Kimmel, Attorney for Catholic Social Services, MS 1990, UAF, NRM, JD UM

Paul Costello, Director of Land Management, FNSB

Potential interest,

Ruby Hollenbaek, Delta Junction - Alamasu.

(All of the above members as of 2005).

2. Recent employee layoffs

We had to reach a target reduction of \$239,000 as a result of 6% across the board UAF cut to meet wage and benefit concerns in 2004. We also did not see a replacement of \$157,500; one-half of the shortfall we felt after UA returned only \$2.0 million of the \$2.3 million we have received in recent years (the original amount was \$10M from the Alaska Science and Technology Foundation). We laid off positions, not people. The Matanuska Experiment Farm was staffed to serve a much larger effort in field studies and livestock than we now put forward. The Palmer Research and Extension Center administrative staff duties could be partially provided by Fairbanks staff.

We are adopting a new stance on technician support. If researchers have shown a record of being able to fund technical support with outside grants, we will no longer be providing fund 1 for that purpose. This is the case with a number of our researchers. We are encouraging all of you to look toward graduate students to work with you. Those of you involved with very applied field work that cannot be funded through competitive grants will continue to receive fund 1 support. This is work that is in demand by our clients and we will provide it.

3. Space

The expansion of the atrium for office space in AHRB went significantly above estimated cost and will not proceed. Instead, we are considering an option to add two modules. One would provide office space, the other space for ARS to house growth chambers. All funding is from ARS.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Our enrollments have increased since 2000 with the NRM B.S. and GEOG B.A. showing fairly consistent increases. The B.S. in Geography has continued to decrease since 2000. Flat enrollments in NRM programs have been characteristic across the U.S. I have spoken with UAS's Brendan Kelly and they are also experiencing declines in the Environmental Science major. Dr. Kelly attributes this to the lack of focus in the major. I suggest that our Environmental Studies program may exhibit this same attribute. Dr. Kelly has expressed an interest in speaking with us about the two programs to assess their future and perhaps rekindle cooperative efforts made in the past. We have also spoken with Colorado State about geography, natural resources management and environmental studies/science program collaboration. The University of Wisconsin is also interested in collaborative efforts. I suggest that this is a fertile area for discussion and suggest that Associate Dean Sparrow coordinate these efforts.

Our M.S. enrollment continues to increase. A problem we have is space. We hope to rectify this with the addition of one module at the east end of the AHRB. I believe that our special grants and our competitive grants have provided us with recruiting tools that are attracting students. This is one more reason to continue our efforts to increase our income from grants - including special grants provided they include support for graduate students. This is a benefit we receive from the special grants that exceeds our cost of 9% of the total cost of the grant to accept them.

I expect to see an increase in our Ph.D. enrollment. One thing, perhaps major, that hurts us is the fact that we only offer the opportunity for an interdisciplinary Ph.D. degree. We have discussed presenting a Ph.D. in forestry and a Ph.D. in soils. I think these discussions are valuable and should continue, but we have to consider the resources that we have.

Perhaps an inventory of these resources is in order. I leave it to all of the departments to collaborate on this inventory. Think about collaboration with other units at UA.

When we think about increases in enrollments, we also have to think about caps on our courses. Our introductory soils course, NRM 380, the perspectives course, NRM 304, are at capacity. I suspect our NRM 290 field course will be as well. A challenge to the Program Review Committee - what are the realistic caps on our key courses? This will determine the % increase in student enrollment we can accept without an increase in our teaching resources.

STUDENT GRADUATION

Student numbers graduated appears to be a metric of interest to both UAF and UA. I do not know what ratio of graduates to entering students is considered realistic. I have only presented data for this year. I am satisfied with the statistics.

I think a more realistic statistic might be a tally of

1. entering freshmen
2. entering transfers
3. retained freshmen in NRM and GEOG (calculated from year of entry)
4. retained transfers in NRM and GEOG (calculated from year of entry)
5. what is the ratio of graduates to students retained in both programs.

We might be able to obtain these numbers because we have a small student body. We would have to track them by individual. Perhaps we could use ear tags and nano technology.

Expenditures by Fiscal Year

These are expenditures - they are not the grant dollars that are brought into the School and Station each year. But - expenditures mirror our income in overhead and operating expenses that we use to support your programs. Therefore, I find them much more realistic than our budget numbers and the total grant dollars brought into the School and Station in any given year.

As you can see, our total expenditures have increased. That is because we have had more dollars to expend. Where did they come from? State appropriations have increased. That is because we receive money from the state to partially cover raises and benefits. In reality, our appropriations from the state have gone down per capita. Our grants and contract expenditures have increased from 2003 to 2004. This reflects additional grants that you have successfully competed for - in part. In part it also reflects the way these dollars have been expended. There has been an overall increase in competitive grant dollars but we have not met our projected goal of \$500,000.

Federal funds are relatively flat. They will remain so. These funds must be matched by fund 1 state dollars. That means that every time we use state dollars for match, we lose the ability to use them for competitive grants. That is why we are concerned when we have to use state dollars to match the 9% we pay to accept special grants.

The amount we receive in special grants (earmarks) is increasing. There are costs and benefits from these earmarks. The cost to us is loss of match dollars. The benefit is obtaining funds for research that provide us with seed money to move into the competitive grants arena, obtain graduate students, and provide information to clients that they could not obtain otherwise. **THESE GRANTS ARE NOT ENTITLEMENTS!!** Some of us believe they will last forever just as we believe that the formula fiinds will last forever. Some of us believe that we don't have to produce research that has an impact on the state's economy, on our client's endeavors, on the University. Some of us even believe that it's not important to provide reports of the work that we have done nor to provide responsible proposals to obtain the funds they receive. Unfortunately, this attitude only reflects on the grant recipient. I am the PI on several of the earmarks and I make decisions on how funds are distributed and response is critical to me when I consider funding distribution.