

**DAFVM Senate Meeting
Minutes
1:30 pm. February 11, 2021**

Recording link:

<https://msstate.webex.com/msstate/ldr.php?RCID=ce4366e1b97f4e7eb46f92334efefabb>

DAFVM Faculty Senate Member Attendees: Camp, Jason; Correa, Sandra; Ezell, Taya Marquardt; Gholson, Drew; Grala, Robert; Grissett-Hardwick, Gretchen; Jack, Skip; Karunakaran, Ganesh Kumar; Knight, Tricia; Lee, Alison; Lemley, Caleb; Lemus, Rocky; Maples, Josh; Melanson, Rebecca; Meyer, Florencia; Nanduri, Bindu; Parker, Julie; Reddy, Raja; Seo, Keun; Siegert, Courtney; Stone, Amanda; Wamsley, Kelley; Yu, Fei

Excused: Barickman, Thomas (Casey); Fulford, Charles (Taze); Mathews, Rahel

Absent: Barnes, James; Howell, George (Trey); Morgan, Mariah; King, Jonas; Lee, JuYoung; Lloyd, Debra; Popescu, George; Street, Jason; Yan, Lifang

Called to Order at 1:31 PM

Roll Call

- Recorded by Drs. Julie Parker and Kelley Wamsley

Reading and approval of January 21 Minutes

- Motion: Dr. Josh Maples, 2nd: Dr. Rocky Lemus

Standing Committee Reports:

- Office of the Vice President: Dr. Reuben Moore/Dr. Keith Coble
 - Dr. Coble (newly named DAFVM VP) – Looks forward to working with everyone at DAFVM FS; thanked Dr. Moore for being a great mentor/advisor, as he stays on for the transition
 - Had meeting with other administrators from other land grant Universities (n=15) discussing how Covid-19 has affected them - Dr. Coble feels like faculty here have fared as well as other institutions
 - Faculty have continued to teach, submit grants, conduct/publish research, and Extension is maintaining contacts with clientele – shift to virtual
 - Need to think: What is it because of Covid-19 we did it, but want to keep doing?
 - NSF R&D rankings came out last week; MSU has held a position in those rankings for a long time and should be proud of given our state's size, etc.
 - Previously MSU was 11th, and this year 12th
 - Could be reporting things on our side – need to look at

- Dr. Coble wants to communicate with MS legislature and clientele –DAFVM faculty are effective in leveraging funds received
 - Dr. Coble believes this division is what makes this institution a Land Grant University; encourage multi-disciplinary activities, collaboration across campus
 - From Covid, research office asked for white papers - several papers were produced from DAFVM and DAFVM collaborations (i.e., food chain supply, etc.)
 - Dr. Coble is leading a work group with faculty representation from all 3 colleges– that will work together and expand upon these collaborations
 - Host conference in March on lessons learned pertaining to food and forestry supply chains during Covid-19
 - Group will work together in future and write grants, etc.
 - Dr. Coble recognizes his job to represent the MSU/DAFVM in DC, etc.
 - Partially due to Covid-19 - need to look at cutting edge practices for communication within and outside of the organization
 - Please email if any question, and happy to visit: k.coble@msstate.edu
 - Dr. Parker – Thanks for Dr. Coble and Dr. Moore – he has always had a listening ear
- Interim Dean, CALS: Dr. Scott Willard
 - Dr. Willard expressed thanks to Dr. Moore as interim and to Dr. Coble
 - Thank you to faculty and staff for what everyone is doing
 - In process of summer and fall scheduling - trying to return to some normalcy in fall
 - May still have some mitigation efforts
 - Seeing some major impacts on programming – Summer Study Abroad beginning to cancel – some voluntary and some non – depending on country, etc.
 - Trying to figure out how to help some majors that require SA
 - Proceeding with Ballew Hall renovation
 - Started some preplanning for Dorman – 2 years away from industrial renovation
 - World Food Prize MS Food Institute virtual this spring
 - March 29th high school student essay due; March 26th virtual program with World Food Prize
 - For CALS/MAFES – looking forward to awards/honors for personnel this spring
 - CALS/MAFES Diversity Council will be meeting with Ra’Sheda Boddie Forbes (VP for Access, Diversity and Inclusion) and Dr. Harvest Collier (Interim Exec Director, VP for Access, Diversity and Inclusion) to discuss restructuring Diversity Excellence Leadership Councils across campus
 - Meeting with Dr. Thomas Bourgeois, soon
 - He is current Dean of Students and now, Interim AVP for Student Success
 - Looking hard at retention and graduation rates for how colleges/programs can come up with new ways to improve
- Interim Dean, CFR & FWRC: Dr. Wes Burger
 - Not able to join; in virtual session with Peanut Promotion Board
- Extension Service: Dr. Gary Jackson/Mr. Richard Swann
 - Mr. Richard Swann - Thank you for having me, Dr. Jackson is Dixie Nationals
 - One of largest livestock shows east of MS - tremendous amount of scholarships

- Due to covid, not as many regional shows, etc. – everything going well and taking place with as many precautions as possible
 - Tracked online meetings hosted by Ag comm and CTO and >7000 meetings hosted; many of you holding smaller meetings through teams, etc. so # probably much larger
 - Credit to quality of faculty in every department – teaching, etc
 - Asked to be interim head for Center for Continuing Education
 - If any of you have ideas on continuing ed, please contact
 - Dixie National Sale of Champion today
 - Dr. Jackson has asked for ~1.9 mil – filling vacant positions for agents and faculty
 - Revenue #s for state trending positive, optimistic for budget increase
- Holland Faculty Senate: Dr. Amanda Stone
 - Not much to report; President Keenum reported budget looking up; similar comments to that said at the general faculty meeting
- Extension Advisory Council: Dr. Julie Parker
 - EAC did not meet in January; No report

Chair Report

- Invited Guest: Juli Rester from HR to discuss retirement options for various positions
 - Dr. Parker – glad to have Juli Rester here after the discussion from Jan regarding retirement, etc. for Research Associates/Ext, Associates
 - Juli Rester: PERS/ORP eligibility – based on type of position that someone is hired in
 - ORP positions: All teaching, dean, college coaches, interns, postdocs, library positions with academic rank
 - Once signed up for benefits, then have the option for plan; once you enroll in a plan, then you need to remain in that plan as long as you are in the position
 - PERS - for new employees – 8 yr vesting period
 - Understand concern, especially for soft funded positions – not something that HR can really make a change about
 - There are options with PERS; you can do a rollover to other accounts (if not 59.5, 10% penalty)
 - You can leave money in PERS esp if think will find another job in MS, but you can roll into another retirement plan or into an IRA
 - If we can educate some employees on what can be done, that may help
 - Other benefits – leave, insurance, etc
 - Link - https://www.orp.ms.gov/ORP/Documents/ORP_Plan_Document.pdf
 - Dr. Rocky Lemus – Is there a possibility that the policy may change – to add Extension Associates?
 - Juli Rester - Most recently added Research Scientists to ORP plan
 - Not 100% sure on how positions are added, but can look into it
 - Things aren't changed very often, but it has happened
 - Rather large group of employees - that could also affect the state of MS

- Dr. Lemus - Might have some people coming from a particular program (other University, industry) that want to continue in the same retirement program
 - Juli Rester – 8 yrs is a long time, but employees do have other options – even if required to do PERS, there are some supplemental savings options too
 - If anyone has any questions, we are glad to set up appointments with benefits specialists
- Dr. Bindu Nanduri – Most of our postdocs are hired for 2-3 year, if hired in PERS system, can they change their funds to ORP?
 - Juli Rester: If they remain at MSU, they can go from PERS to ORP
- Dr. Florencia Meyer – How do we compare to other Universities (i.e., 8 yrs vested)? In MS? Other Universities outside MS?
 - Juli Rester: In MS, it would all be the same, but do not have the information for other Universities outside MS
- Dr. Julie Parker – If hire someone in PERS and they don't stay the 8 years and then go to another University, can you roll into another account?
 - Juli Rester: Yes, you can – you have to check with other retirement plans and see that they will accept those funds. It is possible.
 - One of our goals this year is to provide more education; develop stronger relationship with PERS/Venders
 - Have them come and communicate with employees
 - Looking for feedback on that, if it would be helpful
- Dr. Ganesh Karunakaran –How do you check PERS balance - Other than them sending a statement annually, is there any other way?
 - Juli Rester- They do send a balance annually, but if you want a balance before, can call PERS and they should be able to give the employee their balance
 - It is a little different from ORP, as for PERS there is a formula used when you retire to calculate what you get
 - Dr. Julie Parker – There is a PERS app, but it isn't personalized
 - Thank you very much to Juli Rester, and if you do organize a pers person on campus or virtually, please let us know

New Business

- No new business

Old Business

- Digital Measures- any additional comments or questions
 - Dr. Tricia Knight – Last month seemed like there may be a switch in systems, so not sure if we need to add to the list at this point
 - Dr. Florencia Meyer – Confirmed hearing DM contract coming to an end
 - Dr. Julie Parker – Agree there has been discussion, but don't know the timeline – we do need some kind of data platform

- Dr. Florencia Meyer – ask Dr. Willard?
- Wamsley – Ask Dr. Tracey Baham? She has offered before to meet with DAFVM FS.
- Dr. Julie Parker – Since everyone has turned in Annual Evals, is there anything to add to the list?
 - Dr. Rebecca Melanshan (chatbox) – If we move platforms, would everything from DM be moved over?
 - Dr. Julie Parker – I would hope that it would, but I don't know for sure.

Floor is Open - Senator Updates

- None.

Important Dates

- March 11 at 1:30 next meeting

Meeting Adjourned at 2:33 PM

- Motion: Dr. Florencia Meyer; 2nd: Dr. Josh Maples

Minutes prepared and submitted by Kelley Wamsley, DAFVM Faculty Senate Secretary