

State Board Meeting
November 15, 1999
McKimmon Center, Raleigh, NC

The meeting was called to order by President, Rett Davis.

Those in attendance included Marjorie Rayburn, Richard Melton, Nancy Keith, Freddie O'Neal, Joe Dickens, Lenny Rogers, Dalton Dockery, Rett Davis, Roger Cobb, Art Bradley, Cyndi Lauderdale, Kevin Starr, Sheila Jordan, Lisa Wimpfheimer, James Cochran, Johnny Hensley, and Alan Durden.

Rett indicated that \$20,000 had been contributed to the employee benevolence fund through the Ag Foundation to assist Extension employees who had been impacted by hurricane Floyd. NCACAA had contributed \$7,000 towards that fund, but in the same time period, our investments had made \$10,000. So, our contribution did not severely impact our investment balance.

Rett shared information on committee appointments.

The primary purpose of this meeting was to approve the selections for awards - Achievement Award (AA), Distinguished Service Award (DSA), Young Agent Scholarship (YAS), and Service to Agriculture.

2000 STATE MEETING

Dalton Dockery gave a brief report on plans for the 2000 NCACAA State Meeting in Fayetteville. At the Board Meeting in February (Feb. 11), his district will have a budget available and more details on the meeting. Rett will make arrangements to have use of the Wake County office for the February Board Meeting.

FEDERATION

Joe Dickens reported on the Federation Forum meeting to be held December 7th at the Faculty Club in Raleigh. Rett is to bring any major concerns of the association to Extension administration. It will be important for Rett to get agent concerns ahead of time, so he can be prepared to present them on behalf of NCACAA. Last year there was not a formal request made for concerns. Last year Billy (Dunham) brought up the concern agents had about the cost of taking a course off-campus. Joe Dickens mentioned that now agents feel freer about sharing concerns with Drs. Ort and Zublena.

One hot issue is the organization for program assistants and technicians. A vote will be taken on whether or not to accept that group into the Federation. It was pointed out that the NC Soybean Association gives the money to each association to pay that association's Federation dues. We can also e-mail Joe Dickens with our concerns since he is the representative from NCACAA in the Federation.

The Vice Director of each NCACAA District (or someone designated to go in their place) is supposed to attend the Federation Forum. NCACAA pays \$5 per head for each person attending. Nancy needs to know who (how many) is going so she can send a check. Sandra Wiggins is the President-Elect of the Federation and is responsible for planning the Forum. She should be getting out further information.

CONCERNS

What are the major concerns??

The system of merit pay is out of whack. There is not enough difference in grades to encourage an improvement in performance.

Low starting salaries - makes it hard to attract good people.

Kevin Starr mentioned the campaign several years ago among Community College instructors to raise salaries which was successful. Why couldn't we do something like that? We need to look at the history of Community College involvement and see if it is feasible for this organization to do that. The answer is probably "no." Joe Dickens pointed out that many legislators and politicians have ties to the Community College system and that helps.

Rett indicated that when Scott Sholars visited his legislator - he was told that the problem was not in downtown Raleigh, it was "your organization on campus." The legislature gives the money, but it is not given out the way we (the legislature) thought it should be given out. "The problem is not us, it is your organization."

Could something be done on behalf of University faculty? There has been no apparent financial benefit of Extension agents being University field faculty. UNC-Chapel Hill has proposed a tuition increase to go to increasing professor's salaries. That is one campus going out on its own.

Sizable pay raises have gone to teachers the last few years. Teachers should get more money, but other State employees also deserve more. What is being done by University administration to go to bat for the faculty in terms of raises? Are we being treated as field faculty in comparison with campus faculty? This issue needs to be worked on - there may be changes in the long term. The structure at CALS is slowly changing.

Rett indicated that he heard the next two or three years are going to be very lean as far as pay goes. Why should this be with the revenues the way they are? There is a desire to cut taxes.

Also, with the special legislative session - what is going to happen? How are they going to raise money to help some of the areas damaged by the hurricanes and flooding in the East? There are a lot of rumors out there.

We still have the issue of low starting salaries to deal with. We have a hard time attracting good people. There is also high turnover - we have someone for a couple of years, give them training and experience and then they leave for a better job. It costs money to train these people.

We complained about low travel budgets for years before something was finally done to increase travel. We may have to do that with the issue of salaries. We need to keep raising the issue - in a nice way.

Regarding the issue of low salaries, Freddie suggested we may need to get Extension retirees back into the issue - they may be able to help get out the message that we need more pay and they may have some time to put into it. Retired agents don't have restrictions on who they can and can't talk to. Many of our administrators don't have enough Extension experience to know how things went 10 or 20 years ago.

Does anyone understand how the budgetary process works? We need to understand it better. Money may be held out for County Director salaries or for bargaining with agents who want to leave, or for political reasons.

A 30% reversion talked about this year goes back to the General Fund - Extension can't touch it.

Kevin suggested that we (as an association) express concern about low salaries and request some detail about how the salary determination process works.

Cyndi indicated that there were difference standards for agents and specialists who want to do "work on the side" - outside their normal job. It seems that agents have to complete a detailed information form to do work outside their job. Do specialists? Specialists do have to get department head approval for work "outside their job."

There is a consulting policy allowing agents to consult 2 days/month. You need to file an intent form and have it approved to do that. If someone complains about what you are doing outside Extension, then it becomes a problem. There may be a conflict of interest if you are a horticulture agent and do landscape contracting or consulting - other landscapers may complain.

Johnny Hensley indicated that you could probably avoid problems if you do your outside work in another county. To cover yourself, you should fill out the form every year. There is also a form to be filled out if you run for political office.

The issue concerning agents teaching at a Community College was because of a requirement that you could not receive two paychecks from the State of North Carolina. Joe Dickens indicated that there was a Community College committee that was looking into this. While you could not get two paychecks, you could take the money and put it back into your program.

AWARDS

Johnny Hensley presented the names the awards committee selected as recipients for DSA, AA, Young Agent Scholarship, and Service to Agriculture. Applicants for DSA and AA were very high quality applicants this year. The committee met Monday afternoon and consisted of Mike Miller, Mike Regans, Eric Spaulding, Jerry Washington, George Autry, and Sam Uzzell, and Johnny Hensley. There were seven DSA nominees, one from each district - Fred Miller, Phillip R. Ricks, J. Russell Sikes, JB Coltrain, John Dorner IV, Mario DeLuca, and Mark D. Hucks. Five were selected - Fred Miller, Phillip Ricks, Russell Sikes, JB Coltrain, and John Dorner with Mario DeLuca as the alternate.

There were six AA applicants - Nancy R. Anderson, Peggy Drechsler, Steven Wayne Duckett, Norman E. Harrell, Phillip R. Rucker, and Susan Ruiz-Evans. Three were selected to be recognized at the National meeting, with the remaining three recognized as district winners who would receive a plaque and \$100 at the State meeting. Winners to be recognized at the National meeting were Peggy R. Drechsler, Stephen Wayne Duckett, and Phillip R. Rucker. The alternate is Susan Ruiz-Evans.

Young Agent Scholarship award went to Karen F. Spivey. Service to Agriculture Award went to Allen L. McMurray from Newland, NC. He is very supportive of a lot of agent and commodity events. He works with Christmas tree growers, vegetable producers, and apple growers in the mountains.

Johnny moved that the Awards and recognition committee report be approved and that we accept these nominations. It was seconded and passed.

Eric Spaulding is the new state committee chair for the Awards Committee.

Johnny indicated that the Purcell Pinnacle Award for Outstanding Humanitarian Service is still open and only requires a narrative. This award is made for humanitarian activities and is worth \$5000. It is due the

end of January to Eric Spaulding. Marjorie mentioned that some of the agents who were instrumental in helping with flood relief would be good candidates for this award.

OTHER ITEMS

Marjorie reminded Rett about sending a letter to the Secretary of Agriculture expressing concern about the agricultural situation in this area.

Rett needs a copy of district committee assignments. Send that to him.

District treasurers need to send their dues and membership information to Nancy.

James indicated he would get the books (Annual Report) out to members some way, some how.

We discussed whether or not it would be feasible to have a breakfast for new members and potential members at Annual Conference.

Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Marjorie Rayburn, NCACAA Secretary