Minutes - OSUEA Board Meeting

December 2, 2014

Participants:

Mylen Bohle

Lillian Larwood

Dani Annala

Gail Langellotto

Jenny Rudolph

Katie Ahern

John Williams

Deb Schreiber

Jackie Russell

Kim Tarrant

Pam Haney

Debbie Maddy

Bob Parker

Meeting was called to order by President Gail Langellotto at 11:00 A.M.

Some people who should have been invited weren’t, Gail needs a current list of OSUEA Board members, Affiliate representatives, committee heads and Directors. The OSUEA website information needs to be updated. Honour Bowen used to do that, not sure who is now. Gail will follow up and Jackie Russell will help out.

Gail gave a brief summary of the 2014 Extension Annual Conference. Overall evaluations were positive. About ½ of attendees were Extension faculty, ½ support staff and some from Administration. There was also about an even split between staff new to Conference and “experienced” staff. There was no registration cost, participants only paid for the BBQ, Award Dinner and Cooperator award breakfast. Participants overall felt the costs were reasonable. There was some dissatisfaction with the dates but that’s always an issue. There was some concern about the low attendance by on-campus staff.

Other Comments:

The classes were too spread out over the conference which made scheduling problems and also required people to stay for the whole event rather than just focus on fewer high priority days.

The goal for the conference was to go to a 1 meeting per year model and make if for a full week, which helped lead to things getting spread out.

The conference only went through Thursday noon for most people so ran out of time and could have used Thursday afternoon and Friday to help even out and complete the schedule.

There was some confusion about the Cooperator award event, some people didn’t know they could attend. For 2015, we need to do a better job with communications. The RAs need to be sure the word gets out, and the registration form could better explain the schedule. For people who didn’t attend because of the cost, the cooperator award is part of the conference so the expense is refundable.

Classes also need better descriptions as there was some confusion about what they were about, making difficult to determine what to attend.

There were a number of suggestions in the evaluations that there should be more focus on office support staff and offer a wider selection of classes and schedule them to make it easier to attend such as using a track format. The RAs have indicated they will be happy to work with the planning committee re: what to offer for classified employees.

The Monday night BBQ was very popular, well organized.

The comments on the keynote speaker Jay Rifenbary varied widely in a bi-polar distribution. Many people liked him a lot, thought he made a valuable contribution to the conference and quite a few people thought he was too long, preachy, even inappropriate. Jay expressed that the reviews were the lowest he’s ever received and he thought some comments were personal and unprofessional. 3 days may have been too long, better to make it only 2. There were problems with the audio system, making it hard to hear Jay especially when his voice dropped. The A/V and technical support were Alumni center staff. Jay’s presentations could have been videotaped for people who weren’t able to attend Conference but that wasn’t thought about ahead of time. Something to plan for in future conferences.

There were problems with the wireless service which created problems for some classes but that was apparently due to campus-wide problems and not the fault of the Alumni center. It was noted that even though there were problems, the facility should have been prepared for a “Plan B” alternative for those kinds of eventualities.

The tours experienced problems with a lack of organization which caused people to be unsure of when and where to gather to go on tours and the attendance was poor, leading some tour hosts to feel it wasn’t a good use of their time and effort. Poor attendance may have been partly a function of the timing in the conference and some of the impromptu meetings that occurred helped to degrade attendance. For future conferences, we need to take steps to ensure better attendance. Tours have good value, nice way to see parts of campus people don’t normally visit and learn more about exciting things happening on campus and in Corvallis.

Overall attendance was good but it may be helpful to place the key events of the conference in the middle of the week and place items of lesser importance at the beginning and end. Some people don’t attend conferences because they don’t see the value personally, but staff need to consider that it’s not just about themselves, also need to look at it as a team and the value of mixing, meeting and interacting with others.

A disadvantage of a long event is that it makes it hard for people with families to attend.

There was some concern about why FCH/Snap-ed had sessions every day. That may have been at least partly due to the grant requirements narrowly define what is ok to attend and what’s not, necessitating daily program functions.

Laying the leadership development sessions on top of Conference was well received by the participants and about 90% want the capnote layered on the 2015 conference.

Gail asked that if anyone has additional thoughts or comments they’d like to offer then please call or email later.

The conversation then turned to options for when to hold the 2015 Conference. The evaluations indicated that Fall and Winter were the most popular choices for timing, although early fall is too busy for many staff and they would prefer a later date. There are several important conferences in the fall that we have to plan around, and it would be better to avoid the first week of classes at OSU. The only 3 weeks that the Alumni Center is available for a 5-day conference and don’t directly conflict with those events are: Sept. 14; Oct. 19 and Nov. 9. For a 3-day conference the weeks of Oct. 4 and Oct 12 are available. And even though those dates are available, they are uncomfortably close to the other events that many staff will be attending. OSUEA affiliates need to provide information ASAP about other meetings that may provide additional conflicts. The Lasells Stewart Center was discussed as an option but it doesn’t have the banquet facilities we need and is too small. It was discussed whether the first part of December would be an option as that was done in the past. The Linn county fairgrounds were also discussed and are adequate, even perhaps too large for our needs. The Alumi Center is available Dec. 7-11 and Dec. 14-18th so that month is an option. Dec. 7 looks like the best option so we’ll tentatively reserve the building for that time and drop it if necessary. If we go with Dec. 7, need to give staff advance notice of the schedule ASAP.

The 2015 Conference budget will be roughly similar to 2014 with an increase for inflation. The 2014 budget was stretched because the keynote speaker was unusually expensive and had to cut corners. We depleted some of the professional development funds,etc. Part of the high cost for the 2014 conference was due to the high participation rate (314). A small registration fee will be considered for 2015, perhaps $25 will help people honor their commitment to attend.

Planning committee volunteers so far were listed and Gail asked who else might want to volunteer or should be on the committee. Darrin Walenta was suggested since he is the OAEA President. Bob Parker also volunteered. The committee should also have representatives from classified staff such as an office manager, and FCH/Snap-Ed. It was also suggested to have RAs from both the West and East sides of the state. Gail will send a letter of thanks to the volunteers and will look for a FCH/Snap-ed candidate. She will also talk to Janice Cowan about getting a copy of the current OSUEA members list, and will check with OSUEA Affiliates.

Extension Administration requests another 2-hour time block during the 2015 Conference. Pam Haney will provide assistance to the committee and Debby Maddy will again be the Administration liaison.