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Agribusiness Advisory Committee Meeting

Date | time | 3/28/2019 7:30 AM | A1228 |

# In Attendance

*Members Present:*

Donna Langford —DeKalb Area Agricultural Heritage Association

Greg Millburg —Manager, DeKalb County Farm Bureau

Daniel Carmichael —Maplehurst Farms, Inc.

Barbara Koehnke —CFO/Controller of Maplehurst Farms, Inc.

Paul Taylor —Taylor Farms/ Kish Alumni

Erik Hill — Crop Consultant, Nutrien Ag Solutions

*KC Members Present:*

Bette Chilton —Executive Dean of Career Tech Ed

Chase Budziak —Dean

Janet Gallagher —Horticulture Instructor

Tammy Tiggelaar—BUS/MM Instructor

Reyne Alde —Ag instructor

Melissa Gallagher —Coordinator of ST Training, Continuing Ed, Workforce/Community Ed

LaCretia Konan — Director of Business and Training Partnerships

Joanne Kantner —VP of Instruction

Audra Boehne—Adjunct Health Faculty

Sarah Brown — Student Worker, Recorder

# Introductions

Bette welcomes and thanks everyone who was able to attend. She explains that with Steve Durin being out this semester, things have been a little challenging. She explains that the college has moved to a new advisory model called the co-chair model. She briefly goes over that a co-chair is just an advisory member/stakeholder who works closely with the faculty on developing the agenda and co runs the meeting.

Everyone goes around and introduces themselves. Chase explains that he will be taking over the Agribusiness department as Bette will be retiring this upcoming June.

Bette asks that everyone look at the minutes from the fall 2018 advisory meeting. There are no comments or concerns on the minutes so the committee moves forward.

# Program Status

Even though it has been a challenge this semester without Steve present, the college has been doing a good job at looking at the needs of the program. Bette explains that Reyne Alde is assisting with a continuing education course which will take place this summer. He has been coordinating with Steve to try and fill in any of the gaps in the Precision AG program. The Precision AG or Agribusiness program is still relatively new, so the College is trying to get information out regarding the program to many different people. Hopefully, the enrollment will go up for fall. The program has also gotten good press from the Farm Bureau. Joanne explains that the program for the continuing education summer class is actually in response from when Dr. Borowicz talked with students about it. This course could even be for community members who might just need a precision Ag class. Bette states that Tammy, Janet, and Audra have had classes with Ag students in them in fall 2018. Janet explains she had two Ag courses and she is looking forward to doing more classes like that. She explains that the students most loved going out to see different farms in person and if any members have somewhere students can see to let her know. Tammy explains that she has had some Ag students in her business classes and they have done well. Audra had 14 students for her first intro to animal science. The students most enjoyed doing the labs in her classes, and she would love to set up more labs for the fall since they went so well.

# 10th Day Report/ Enrollment

Bette goes over the spring 2019 10th Day Enrollment Report. She explains there is not a lot of data as this is a newer program. This spring compared to last spring for the College is a 7.8% decline in enrollment. This is a trend that is across Illinois and also occurring at NIU. They will continue to monitor the enrollment and adapt to the trends. Enrollment in continuing education courses has actually increased so Bette is hoping Reyne will have high enrollment for his summer course.

# Presentation/ Reyne Alde Continuing Education

Reyne goes over an in-detail presentation for what he plans on teaching the students in his summer continuing education course. The three main focuses of the program are Global Positioning Systems, Geographic Information Systems, and Variable Rate Application. The goal is for the students to understand theory and be able to physically achieve these tasks. The class will be 2 hours of lecture per week and two hours of lab per week. The labs will be split between a field and computer section. He states the biggest challenge is having enough time since it is just a summer class. Reyne goes over a course outline week by week on what the class would look like. For their labs, the students will be going out and collecting data/information and then returning to the school to put this information on the computer. During the last week of the course, the students would take all of their computer files and compile into one portfolio that would demonstrate their knowledge on the different areas worked on. Paul thinks this is a great idea because it gives the students a good base and good exposure to the steps and skills needed in the agribusiness field.

Reyne explains the class would start June 18th, and would be meeting two times a week, most likely Tuesday/Thursday evenings. They will begin marketing for the class soon. Greg states the deadline for the Farm Bureau magazine is coming up in a few weeks and if he gets the information on the program he will try and get it in the magazine. Daniel thinks that this would be a good time for the class to happen. He also sends out a publication would be happy to advertise the program in it once he has more information. He also suggests sharing this information with local Ag teachers. Bette brings up that the class will need to have a deadline to cancel the class in case there is low enrollment. Melissa adds that they are looking into funding around a $300 scholarship for this course. Since it is a continuing education course, the students wouldn’t get financial aid for it so hopefully the scholarship would interest more students. Reyne mentions the only requirement the students need is to have a valid driver’s license so that they are able to drive the farm equipment. He is looking into having a class size around 8-10 people so that there will be enough time to get done with all of the labs.

Joanne explains that IFarm has been loaded and the local John Deere will let us use their software. She explains it would be up to Reyne to decide if the students should only use one type of software or if it would be better to give the students more experience in different types of software. Bette also adds that this is a non-credit course. She explains that there are a lot of steps in trying to make the course a credit-course; they would have to go through the ICCB which could take up to a year. Reyne also explains he will look into if there are any certifications that the students could get that could be recognized as a pathway into going to another credit program. Bette thanks him for all of his work into this course.

# Internship Opportunities

LaCretia explains that the college applied for the Illinois Cooperative Grant that allows the college to reimburse employers for interns for up to 50% of their wage. The position has to pay at least $11 an hour. She explains that the employer would be in contract with Kishwaukee College and the student could work up to 200 hours (or a max of 20 hours/week). She states that for Fiscal Year 18, 9 students who did the internship were hired by the employers afterwards. Barb states that they normally have 2-3 interns over the summer and would welcome any internship opportunities from the college.

# Industry Standards or Certifications

Bette asks if there are any certifications or standards that the students can get to benefit them for a future career in agriculture. Committee members agree that one of the best things a student can have is good work ethic. Daniel also feels it is important for the students to do internships. Melissa explains that they college is looking into offering a Dale Carnegie continuing education class. They have been reaching out to local businesses to sponsor part of the event. She explains that this leadership event could be very beneficial to the students and the only challenge is the expense of it. Barb inputs that any leadership skills the students can get would be helpful for them. Paul feels as if it is important to have some knowledge in the electrical components of agricultural machinery. Since everything is becoming more electrical, it would be a very beneficial skill set to have. Barb also adds that the students need to have a base understanding of safety standards. Reyne thinks having a CDL license would be beneficial since the students will have to drive big machinery.

# Issues in the Workforce

None.

# Open Business/ Next Meeting

Bette asks if anyone would be interested in being the co-chair for the agribusiness department. Daniel volunteered.

Chase thanks everyone for attending and giving such good feedback on the program. The committee agree that a September date would work for next semester’s advisory meeting.

Meeting Adjourned 8:30am.