

CAHE OPEN FORUM
DEAN LOWELL CATLETT
December 18, 2006
10:00 a.m. – GT 253 - CENTRA

Members Present:

Lowell Catlett, LeRoy Daugherty, Wes Holley, Rich Phillips, Tim Nesbitt, Ann Bock, Greg Blanch, Jim Libbin, Terry Canup. 78 attendees signed in on CENTRA.

Dean Catlett Opening:

Thanked everyone for joining on CENTRA and wanted to lay the foundation for why he started this visioning process and how it is going to be run.

- The process will be open, communicative, and most importantly participatory.
- Everyone with good ideas to better the college should be allowed to express those ideas.

Dr. Catlett chose Rich Phillips to oversee this process because he had the right skills and experience to help make this happen. He and the Dean talked at length about how best to incorporate all of CAHE and they decided on a 'Vision Team' to include faculty from across campus, both main campus and extension, but excluding administration. Dean Catlett feels strongly that the administration is here to serve the college and its workers and those are the people he wanted to hear from. The Vision Team would collect input from across the college.

- Visioning Team includes: Roberta Rios, Greg Blanch, Jim Libbin, Ann Bock, Jeanne Gleason, Dennis Hallford, John Mexal, Rich Phillips as facilitator. Terry Canup, Kim Hand, and Daniel Kim are assisting to get the process organized and set up.
- Team will continue the processes indefinitely.
- They will report the findings of all teams to the faculty & staff.
- They will recommend a rotation process by January 31, 2007 for bringing in fresh team members.

Main goal of the team is to look at what in our college is working, what doesn't work, what should we keep or throw out, and what are the people in the college feeling. They decided the best way to accomplish this would be open forums to include face-to-face meetings as well as a website for comments and concerns that could be anonymous. There were a total of 19 meetings over the past 6 months involving approximately 156 faculty & staff with the first meeting having about 70 attendees.

The two top areas of concern that were identified from these forums and web comments were:

1. A possible name change for the college to better identify the diversity of departments. We are putting together a team of 7 people to look at:
 - a. Compile a list of stakeholders.
 - b. Assess pros & cons of changing the name.
 - c. Review comparable names at other institutions across the country.
 - d. Solicit input.
 - e. Select 5 candidate names.
 - f. Poll stakeholders until there is a 66% agreement on a new name.

study and be part of. Extension offices are a very important of this as they are face to face with the people out in the counties and have the pulse of their communities.

We have some great opportunities for growth. One example is that we may have the opportunity to join AEAB & Economics as one school with a critical mass of the largest group of economists in the Southwest enabling them to do great things in economic development. Jim Libbin of AEAB & Jim Peach from Economics have developed a protocol for a doctorate in Economic Development that is opening up a great opportunity for growth for NMSU. Studies show that America's love of horses is always on the rise, both for racing & pleasure, which opens up the opportunity for growth for ANSC. Just recently Dean Catlett attended the ribbon cutting ceremony for the world's largest cheese factory in Clovis which is a collaboration between NM Dairy Producers and a cooperative from Ireland. Other arena's that are changing and opening up for new growth and ideas including ranching, crops, natural resource management, biofuels, health, and tourism. We have world class scientists & researchers here that can address these issues. Our outlying offices in the counties are a very important conduit for finding out what the needs & desires are of the people. We have almost every talent on the planet contained in our college and this diversity is our greatest strength.

Question & Answer Session

Q. Kathleen Hellman – She read the comments that came in during the focus groups & anonymous website and did not feel changing the college's name was a major issue based on those comments. As a former advertising executive she is aware of the cost of a name change and feels the resources could be better used elsewhere. Many of our county offices are understaffed & underpaid. They work long hours, are under-funded, have broken down equipment, and often use their own resources for work.

A. Dean Catlett – He assured her they will certainly not be directing resources in a manner that would prevent employees from having the equipment they need to do their job. However, he said there was much discussion during the face-to-face sessions concerning the importance of all departments being properly represented by the college name. A name change will not occur unless there is at least a 66% agreement across the college.

Q. Wendy Hamilton – Wanted to know if the Dean had any thoughts on providing additional training and wages to classified staff.

A. Dean Catlett – He has no plan at this time but classified wages have been of great concern to him since he first became aware that many classified employees qualified for foodstamps. His original concern prompted a conversation with President Halligan and Dean Catlett still believes this situation is untenable. He does not know at this point what he can do as Dean but he is certainly committed to do whatever it takes to change the situation. On training - I am in support of additional training in many forms including ad hoc, continuous, or even sabbaticals and am open to any and all suggestions.

Q. Rick Richardson – He was in a focus group that discussed at length the combining of departments and could the Dean give some insight on that.

A. Dean Catlett – Neither he nor the Associate Deans believe you should combine departments just for the sake of combining. But if there are strategic initiatives that would make a combination of departments something better than they are apart, if they can be better or do better by joining, then to do so would make sense. And it is important that everyone in the departments be included in the discussions.

Q. Wendy Hamilton – One of the suggestions submitted was to allow 1-2 month sabbaticals for agents. Would the Dean be willing to explore this idea?

A. Dean Catlett – Absolutely, but I think the time frame you mention is probably on the short side. The Dean was also reminded that there is going to be additional Banner training made available for those who desire it and for any other business processes that are changed or added, training will be provided.

Q. Kari Bachman – She is on ACAP and they are working on changing policy to create university-wide opportunity for sabbaticals and other alternatives and she just wanted to say she appreciates the college being willing to look at this as well.

Q. Charles Martin – He suggested if Dean Catlett wanted to take action to alleviate the hardship on others in the college, he should consider taking a pay cut along with President Martin and the President could also donate his \$30,000 bonus to more important priorities at CAHE.

A. Dean Catlett - He can't speak for Dr. Martin but Dr. Catlett did take a payout when he accepted the Dean's position.

Q. Kathleen Hellman – Many county agents are working weekend & nights with no extra compensation and this is not right or fair. And the idea of sabbaticals is a bad one. Some offices have only 1 agent & 1 secretary and if either is away from the office there is no one to handle the needs of the community? It seems to be all about numbers with the university and the people in the counties are not treated fairly. They are having to give up family time for the university and their quality of life is not considered by the university.

A. Dean Catlett – He realizes that many university employees have had to give up family time during their careers to advance the cause of what we believe in. For those working nights & weekends are hopefully doing it because they love their jobs but he is sympathetic to the low pay. As a university we are under certain constraints but he will endeavor to work with our government entities to compensate all our employees as fairly as possible and to let them know we appreciate their efforts.

Q. Wendy Hamilton – There has been discussion in the past about a college-wide P&T process. What are the Deans thoughts on combining Extension P&T with Academic/Research P&T?

A. Dean Catlett – This is simply one of those things that is going to happen partly due to University-wide extension but it will be our job to make sure the committee is looking at

employees based on their particular job. We are looking at ‘grandfathering’ in those already employed if they choose to use the old process. The Dean believes it is critical that everyone is recognized for their individual efforts. Extension has a large faculty group and they will all be included as the creation of a simpler and fair P&T process proceeds.

A. Ann Bock – There is a university-wide P&T proposal out and she encourages everyone to submit their comments to the website. She will be sending out an email to everyone with the link.

Q. Kathleen Hellman – There is concern that University-wide extension will exponentially increase the workload at the county offices while there are no plans for additional compensation. An example of this is when student registration was added to the county responsibilities.

A. Dean Catlett – Paul Gutierrez is working on a proposal with UNM to get medical extension work done out in the counties but as with any university-wide extension proposals, we will also be seeking funding for these changes & additions. We will try not to put additional burdens on county agents but at the same time we want to better provide for our communities. If the student registration does actually become an exponential burden on our county offices, we need to know this and will be as helpful as possible in alleviating any unfair workloads. Dean Catlett would also like to hear from the county offices on what opportunities there are to meet the needs of the communities because there is no one that has the pulse of the people of NM like the county offices.

Q. Margaret West – Just wanted to thank Media Productions for their assistance with the Ag Science Centers’ Web Development. It was a stellar effort. There have been many positive reviews on the web page from the clientele. Thank you.

Q. Wendy Hamilton –Communication between CAHE faculty & administration was a big issue in the forums. Besides the regular online update, what other ways of improving communication and transparency in decision making are being considered?

A. Dean Catlett – There are plans for more forums in the future as well as continuing with the online site for comments and we want to use the visioning team as a sounding block for everyone to address their concerns and the Dean is open to any and all comments & concerns. Also, all cabinet meetings, department head meetings, and any administrative meetings are open to anyone wishing to attend. The only items addressed that would not be open to the college community would be private personnel issues or federal statutes. You can contact the departments or the Dean’s office to get dates & times of these meetings. The minutes of the meetings will also be posted on the web.

A. Ann Bock – One issue that came up in the focus groups was the feeling of being overwhelmed with emails. The team is looking at other mechanism of keeping everyone informed but not overwhelmed.

Q. Kathleen Hellman – Is anything being done to address the cumbersomeness of the 4H Plus program? She feels it is just a really bad program. When she attempted to explain the program to some clientele they were just overwhelmed and walked away.

A. Terry Canup – The 4H Plus program is a National program but perhaps we can assign some people to look into it and address some of the problems.

A. Rick Richardson – They are in the process of putting together some training programs for all the counties agents on the 4H-Plus program. This training should be in place by the New Year.

A. Kim Hand – She does some work with the 4H-Plus program and it's designed to work with several states. If there are any suggestions or problems you are having, the program is very open to addressing these issues.