Farm Business Management
Advisory Council Minutes
January 10, 2006

Members Present: Glenn Bergeron, Curt Swanson, Steve Hamre, Steve Holte, Linda Hanson, Bryan Grove, Tom Harlow, Hans Kandel, Ron Dvergsten, Danie Packard, Greg Dvergsten. Guest: Dennis Sevigny, SBM & Precision Ag Instructor.

Chairman Curt Swanson called the meeting to order at 8:05, Curt welcomed and thanked everyone for coming, followed by introductions.

Minutes were approved as mailed on a motion by Linda, 2nd by Steve and unanimously carried.

Agenda Items:
Update by Regional Management Dean, Ron Dvergsten:
-On a sad note, Ron talked briefly of the passing of our former Management Dean Bob Bollesen. Bob had several years of dedicated service to the college and more specifically was a strong advocate for management education programming throughout the state. He had struggled with cancer for the past year.
-From a management education standpoint, Ron indicated that it not only was a busy year, but a good year. His first full year as the Dean saw many road miles and @ 100 nights away from home in hotels. Ron relocated from EGF to TRF to better serve the program in his new position.
-Was involved as a partner this past year again in the FSA Stakeholder meetings put on for area lenders and other ag professionals.
-Ron completed his busy one year term as the (NFRBMEA) National Farm and Ranch Business Management Education Association this past year and is currently serving as past president on the NFRBMEA board.
-Ron completed a two year Leadership Academy Training recently which was a great learning experience for him.
-(MEALC) MN Education Association Leadership Council Grant program: Betsy Jensen was approved for a grant for JAVA charts to be posted on the toolshed link to the smallgrains.org website. Dennis Sevigny was also awarded a grant to put together a mobile classroom for delivering the precision ag program concepts.
-Region 1 FBM and High School Ag Instructors hosted the 2005 MAAE Annual Summer Conference at the Marriott in Moorhead in July 2005. The conference was a great success with many educational workshop choices for the instructors in attendance. Betsy received the Outstanding Young Member Award.
-Dave Grafstrom was hired as the new instructor up in Roseau replacing the retired Duane Jaenicke. He started July 1, 2005 and has done a lot of work with the Roseau and Lake of the Woods Grass-seed Growers and has also done a lot of leg work on a new legislative proposal that would partially fund a Beef Diagnostic program, similar to the Dairy Diagnostic Model that is currently in effect. The Beef Diagnostics teams would work with animal ID and the current TB issues that producers are dealing with as well as a whole host of other management issues affecting their businesses.
-Our programs administrative assistant for the past 7 years, Robin Langevin, recently accepted a position as a library technician at Northland. Will need to fill the vacancy.
-Search committee for new college President at Northland is underway with hopes of selecting an individual by April and the position filled by July 1, 2006.
-John Murray, State Management Program Supervisor is also retiring and position will need to be posted.
-Dr. Kohl will be presenting at the Swenson House on February 27 on Best Management Practices as a follow-up to the state-wide best management practices survey that he carried out. First preference for attendance will be those individuals that participated in the study by completing the survey documents.

Precision Ag Mobile Classroom:
Dennis Sevigny talked about how the Precision Ag Curriculum that he wrote came about, and talked about the various group meetings that he has held to date throughout NW Minnesota for interested producers. However, to enhance the hands on concepts of the program, he applied for a grant to get funding to set up a mobile classroom to better demonstrate the concepts and how they all tie together. Dennis talked about the steep learning curve involved in all that is precision ag. It is all about knowing your fields & business better to make more informed decisions.

State Management Task Force:
Greg and Ron gave an update on the progress of the task force. Greg served as a representative of the faculty and Ron served as a representative of administration. There were 5 faculty reps in the state and about the same from the administration. The task force was organized to take a closer look at our management instructor work contracts and primarily workload/compensation. The process went quite well and I believe some common ground was found.

State Strategic Planning:
Ron reviewed the four main goal areas of the plan which were presented with a handout. The advisory council discussed the issue of needing a four year Ag degree and that it might be beneficial to expand this to include business degrees, accounting degrees, etc. as long as they appear to have the necessary qualities and abilities to do the job. This would hopefully come out in the interview process.

Dairy Diagnostics:
In the past this program had been administered by Extension, but recently, FBM was asked to assume this role. Ron appointed Danie Packard to be the coordinator of the program in the future with guidance from himself. In the future, the FBM instructor working with the farm family will be the on-site coordinator for the actual visit. Danie responsibilities will be to assist in scheduling visits, compiling and mailing out reports, and paying bills through the grant funds that are set aside at Northland for the program.

-Curt enquired about whether or not the crop diagnostics program existed anymore. There isn’t specific funding in place as such for the program but can still be done on a case by
case basis with collaboration between the FBM instructor and extension as well as other agronomists and ag professionals.

**Organic FBM Project:**
The MN Dept. of Ag, CFFM and MNSCU put together a grant program funded by the Dept. of Ag to get better economic information on organic production. The grant provides for a tuition subsidy of up to 80% (up to 3 years) for participating Certified Organic Producers to encourage enrollment in FBM to gather better information and assist these producers. The farms must have an enterprise analysis completed to receive the grant monies.

-Hans enquired about who interested organic producers should be sent to for enrollment in the program. They should be directed to their local FBM instructor who can get them enrolled and apply for the tuition grant money for them.

-Bryan also mentioned that some of the Banker Groups are also talking about ways to better meet the needs of the organic producers.

**Trade Shows:**
Ron indicated that we again had a strong presence in helping to coordinate the Prairie Grains Conference and providing workshops. We also had a booth at Big Iron and will again at the International Crop Expo this spring and possibly will be able to have the JAVA charts set up at the conference for producers to become familiar with.

**Rural Mental Health Specialist – Ted Matthews:**
Ted Matthews has a state-wide appointment and is available to visit with management staff and management students who may be having difficulties dealing with financial, family or a whole host of other issues.

**Current Topic Meeting Ideas:**
-possibly a short-course on excel utilization.

-Glenn talked about instructors bringing info out to the students that was covered at meetings. This is done as best possible on a case by case basis as time allows and as fits the farm. However, it is the students responsibility to attend meetings when offered, but can certainly call the instructor and let them know of the conflict but would still like the info to be covered.

-advisory council was alerted to talk to an instructor if they have current topic meeting ideas at a later time.

-Hans mentioned that Greg K. had sent him the dates for the upcoming current topic meetings, but he still needs the topics to post on the calendar of events on the web.

**Annual Meeting:**
Dates have been set for April 4 in Crookston and April 6 in TRF. Same format as last year will be utilized with a morning session in both locations. Coffee, juice and cookies will be served.
Advisory Councils:
Ron talked about the session we had presented at our recent college in-service by a representative from the MNSCU system office about the importance of establishing and utilizing advisory councils. We need to keep what we have going with this committee with student and agri-business involvement and input.

(SARE) Sustainable Ag Research Education:
Hans talked on how the Department of Ag has federal dollars available for research and education as well as new innovations in sustainable Ag. Possibly FBM could be more involved in promoting these programs.

With no further discussion and upon a motion by Bryan, 2nd by Linda, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15am.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Dvergsten, Council Secretary