

## Rural Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes of May 18, 2009

Present: Jennifer Elhard, Bryan Uher, Holly Royce, Susie Baird, Byrd Norton, and Liz Recchia

Excused: Colleen Abrams, Ashley Munro, Crystal Wilson, Juella Sparks, Jen Stutesman, Anne Sakumoto

1. Call to Order – Liz called the meeting to order at 10:04 am
2. Recap of Themes
  - a. Cost of Living Differential-- Jennifer spoke on the Alaska Geographic Differential Study done by the McDowell Group. Jennifer explained that one difference in this study from the previous one is the way that communities were blocked together. For example, she noticed that the whole Kenai Peninsula is blocked at a 1% cost of living differential, although Seward itself has a 3% cost of living differential. Jennifer also had the chance to speak with Chancellor Rogers about the study. He was unaware of the fact that the study had been completed. Jennifer asked him if the university would consider the results and change the COLD. However, since he had not seen the results, he could not give an answer. He did mention that with the state of the economy and where it's expected to head, he wasn't sure if any of the results would come to fruition. Liz commented that with these concrete numbers, she would work on a draft letter over the summer so that come fall, the letter can be sent out. She also mentioned that Susie had sent her some information on weekly food costs around the state from a cooperative extension survey done in December 2008. Susie also had attempted to make contact with the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation looking for Anchorage costs on certain necessities during December 2008. Jennifer encouraged everyone to check out the results of the study by the McDowell group. (Here is the link:  
<http://www.state.ak.us/local/akpages/ADMIN/GDS/home.shtml>)
  - b. Consistent Annual Training in Current Field--Jennifer asked people to email her or Anne Sakumoto because they are looking for volunteers who would serve on small committees to come up with required and recommended training for the job families. This would be helpful to have in place, just in case the merit based system is put into place.
  - c. Creating a Strong Rural Voice within UAF--Liz reported that Marianne had emailed her a draft letter to send to departments reminding everyone to have rural staff represented on new and existing committees. Liz had not had a chance to do much with it because May has been a busy month but will look it over and have it ready to present to the committee in the fall.

- d. Special Topics Workshops for Staff--Liz reported that the committee had only been able to put on one workshop this year. She wants to continue this in the fall because the one on different modes of distance delivery will be especially beneficial to staff in who assist students.
3. Margaret "Peggy" Wood Rural Staff Recognition Award Recap--Liz reported that Ashley told her the award was presented on Staff Appreciation Day by Jennie Carroll. Susie said that Staff Appreciation Day was a success. She really enjoyed it, found the topics interesting, and thought it was a great idea.
4. Election of New Committee Chair--There wasn't enough people at the meeting to vote on a new chair. Liz decided to hold the position through the summer and in the fall meeting, a new chair will be elected.
5. Other--NONE
6. Next Meeting--Sometime in September; a date will be set closer to September
7. Adjournment--The meeting was adjourned at 10:17am.