

UTIA Advisory Council Ad Hoc Committee Report On Proposed UTIA Organization Structure

Introduction

At the July 9, 2004 meeting of the UTIA Advisory Council, Dr. Britt (Vice President for Agriculture) presented a proposal for a new UTIA organizational structure and asked for a review of the proposed structure by the UTIA Council by the next Council meeting. An Advisory Council Ad Hoc Committee [Joseph Donaldson (Chair), Mark Fly, Bart Rohrbach, Michael Davidson, and Alvin Womac] and the Executive Committee reviewed the proposal, reached a consensus, and are including “Specific Recommendations” below for the Council to consider.

Proposed Structure

The Vice President proposed a new structure closely tied to proposed new titles as follows:

- Vice President for Agriculture and Dean of CASNR (formerly Vice President for Agriculture)
- Associate Vice President of Land Grant Programs (formerly Associate Vice President)
- Director and Associate Vice President – TAES (formerly Dean of CASNR & TAES)
- Director and Associate Vice President – UTE (formerly Dean of UTE)
- Dean and Associate Vice President – CVM (formerly Dean of CVM)
- Director and Associate Dean for Academic Programs (formerly Dean of CASNR & TAES)

In addition to the title changes as noted above, the major substantive proposed change in the organizational structure is the elimination of the combined position of Dean of the Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station (TAES) and the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) with Associate Deans in each unit. Under the new structure, the head of the Agricultural Experiment Station will be the Director and Associate Vice President of TAES. The Dean of CASNR will be a joint position “Vice President for Agriculture and Dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.”

The Vice President for Agriculture offered the following rationale for new titles:

- to organize UTIA similar to East Campus and several peer institutions
- to recognize units having a long history of statewide responsibilities (UTE and TAES) and units with recent statewide responsibilities (CVM)
- to distinguish units with degree-awarding responsibilities

General Approach by Committee

The committee formulated specific recommendations primarily based on improving unit (CASNR, TAES UTE, CVM) level decision-making, direct advocacy of unit missions, and responsibility for unit performance. Each unit has excelled by focusing on their core missions that well fit the land grant university mission. The committee examined ways to remove any barriers in the administrative structure that could hinder that focus of each unit, and for ways to enable each unit to further excel in accomplishing their mission. The committee recognized that individual unit strength towards meeting their unit objectives was linked to strong unit leadership embedded in the unit, and that unit leaders should be empowered to make decisions and to advocate the unit. This model also places direct responsibility for unit performance on the unit leaders. Effective linkages between all units and the UTK campus were recognized as highly valuable in supporting unit missions, and in support of other UT programs. Uncoupling the proposed duties of Vice President for Agriculture and CASNR Dean was viewed as a necessary step to allow the Vice President to focus on the overall Institute’s missions and for advocacy of linkages at a level above and beyond that which could be achieved by an individual unit leader.

More specifically, two common themes among recommendations evolved after discussions. One theme was that equally strong leadership, embedded within each of the major units (CASNR, TAES, UTE, and CVM), was necessary to fully realize each unit's unique mission. Another theme was that each unit needs leadership with the title of Dean for effective linkages across campus and the state, and the individual title of Vice President is needed to allow him/her to pursue new linkages, especially those that involve the array of unit expertises.

It should be noted that the fundamental basis for Committee evaluation of the structure was on the Committee's assessment of the proposed structure alone, and not on personnel that may occupy the administrative positions. One reason for this approach was that any realignment of the UTIA structure has the potential to outlast this particular snapshot in time of current individuals likely to fill the new positions/titles.

Specific Recommendations

The consensus of the Committee was for Council to recommend the following:

1. The Committee recommends use of the term "Dean for TAES." The majority of 1862 institutions in the Southern Region use the title Dean or Associate Dean of Experiment Station for the chief operating officer of the Experiment Station (Auburn, University of Arkansas, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, Clemson, Texas A&M, University of Tennessee and Virginia Tech - all use Dean; this information is posted (<http://www.cals.ncsu.edu:8050/saaesd/direct/state.htm>)).

The Committee recommends that use of the term "Director" for TAES is not appropriate for the university environment. The TAES Dean should participate in the UT Deans Council (<http://provost.utk.edu/deans.shtml>). The Dean for TAES has inherent linkages with academics through a long history of graduate student support in a number of disciplines. The TAES Dean also has oversight of university faculty.

Directors often supervise university-established "centers." Centers and institutes abound (93) in the university (<http://www.utk.edu/centers/>). The size and scope of the TAES program is much broader and deeper than a typical "center." The university environment could confuse TAES as a center and miss the actual mission. For example, Faculty Handbook* language defaults to indicating that a dean supervises a director.

**excerpt from 1.4 College and Departmental Administration*

Generally, the **Dean has these administrative concerns:**

1. the academic program in its college wide aspects, in the special relationships among its departments, and its relation to the larger University and public;
2. the faculty of the college and the leadership of the college (**directors** (*This implies that a Director is under a Dean.*) and department heads, college committees and task forces), their well-being, development, review, assessment, and renewal;

The remainder of the discussion uses "Dean" as the default leader of major units, not "Director."

2. The Committee recommends use of the term "Dean for UTE." A large number of 1862 institutions in the Southern Region use the title Dean or Associate Dean of Extension for the chief operating officer of Extension (University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, North Carolina State, University of Tennessee and Clemson - all use Dean; this information is posted (<http://asred.msstate.edu/directory/membersstate.html>)).

The term “Director” for Extension, as used in the university environment, is not appropriate for the following reasons:

- Linkages and cooperative efforts between UTE and the UT East Campus, entire UT system and peer institutions are strengthened through use of Dean (e.g., UTE has an Associate Dean in the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences, works closely with UTM and has been successful in extramural funding with UT Medical Center). Many UT centers and other organizations have directors such that the term “Director” does not reflect the magnitude of Extension’s scope and size. Centers and institutes abound (93) in the university (<http://www.utk.edu/centers/>).
 - The UTE Dean must continue participation in the UT Deans Council (<http://provost.utk.edu/deans.shtml>) to foster seamless communications and to foster UTE-East Campus linkages. This participation will result in UTE being able to build the needed partnerships to achieve the greater vision of the land-grant university.
 - The UTE Dean also has oversight of university faculty.
3. The Committee recommends a CASNR Dean at the college level within the UTIA organization, and with a “dashed” structure line to the UT Knoxville Chancellor to reflect the academic connection. The title of “Director and Associate Dean” should be “Dean for CASNR” to accommodate participation in the UT Deans Council and to accommodate autonomous decisions through consultation with the Vice President for Agriculture and the UT Knoxville Chancellor.

The Committee recognizes limitations in resources and recommends that the internal CASNR structure involving Associate and Assistant deans be examined for resources to realign the embedded unit level head as a Dean.

Though not directly indicated on the proposed institute structure chart, a Dean separate from other Dean’s positions (such as TAES), should head CASNR. The four units (CASNR, TAES, UTE, CVM) have substantially different missions and should have separate Dean-level leadership to ensure focused leadership and advocacy.

4. The Committee recommends that the joint title of “Vice President for Agriculture and Dean (of CASNR)” be reassessed. The Committee does not recommend this structure because of the following:
- The proposed structure shows the Vice President for Agriculture (as CASNR Dean) reporting to the Chancellor as well as to the Vice President for Agriculture (him/herself). This can create confusion in terms of administration of UTIA. The Vice President’s role as a dean of CASNR could be 1) perceived as having the potential for bias in the way other units within UTIA are treated relative to CASNR, 2) the Vice President for Agriculture in his/her role as Dean of CASNR may be viewed as having a subservient status relative to the chancellor and 3) in the Vice Presidents role as Dean of CASNR he/she may be perceived as having a greater level of authority than deans of the other units within UTIA.
 - Most importantly, the role of the Vice President in providing general oversight of the four units and in promoting the Institute beyond the university should take precedence. The Committee recognizes the importance of the Vice President for Agriculture position, and the full time nature of associated responsibilities should not be hindered with other responsibilities that are normally delegated to the unit level. Strong visionary leadership at the top of the Institute is needed on a continuing basis to develop strategic partnerships between the Institute and other organizations as agriculture and related fields become ever-increasingly complex.

5. Use of the term “Associate Vice President” elevates the perception of those positions to included statewide responsibilities and is acceptable. Adding this title to the title of Dean for UTE and TAES is acceptable and appropriate.
6. The Committee recommends that the title “Dean and Associate Vice President” for CVM is satisfactory, so long as clear statewide responsibilities are communicated via the organizational chart.
7. The Committee recommends that the title “Associate Vice President of Land Grant Programs” is acceptable and appropriate.