

Unit Leader Meeting, November 19, 2020

Jason Ellis:

- **Still interest in, support for dept-level comm position? Yes!
- Working on some unit-level budgeting to allow areas more decision making and management authority
- The College of Ag and Kansas State University are working toward some initiatives related to the new KBOR strategic plan in areas of precision ag, value-added ag, and state/community development
 - Looking at office space buildings and the space utilization.
- The college is starting a strategic planning initiative after the first of the year in preparation for the University's 2030 planning that will begin in summer 2021
- Faculty have been highly involved in grant proposal submissions this fall
- Academic programs are wrapping up the fall, preparing for spring as best as possible. Right now, instruction room occupancies are consistent with this fall
- Multi-program conversation about a KSU-wide student-run communications agency
- UP & BSMC retreat coming up December 11

Gina Nixon:

- Furlough reminders were sent to those who have not yet taken any days. Reminders with remaining furlough balances will be sent the week of November 30.
- There was discussion regarding the holiday break(s), potential increased opportunities for exposure to COVID-19, and messaging to employees regarding return to work after the holiday break.
- The BCOP continues to meet weekly. We are looking at the BPC process and at some ways to address some immediate departmental support issues in departments that have lost or will soon be losing employees. In some cases, these positions were given up as part of the budget reduction.
- The business office staff met to discuss how Patty's duties will be temporarily distributed as she departs. This position plays a vital role in the student experience, continued business operations of the department, and leadership support. Temporary contact info for the assorted services provided by the business office will be shared in an email.
- Kelly is diving in and learning all she can about grant management – how to access and use Cayuse, effort reporting, outstanding obligation listings, etc. It is important to note that all federal capacity funds are now being handled as grants, so the reporting activity has increased.
- Kelly is also beginning to review the department's current schedule of charges so we can get them updated. We will work with unit leaders to finalize charges and develop standard charging practices/guidelines.
- Deb is staying busy paying all the bills so we can keep operating and working with vendors to improve the payment process.
- Patty is wrapping things up. She is contacting the various individuals/offices she works with and having them update their contact lists; organizing files and areas to set us up after the first of

the year; working on the 2021 Fall/Summer line schedule; updating the Ag Education senior page; scheduling prospective student visits; and helping others with projects as requested.

- Bookstore staff will be completing publication and promotional item inventory. This year it will be done in sections rather than freezing the entire inventory at one time.
- Requests for signage of various kinds continues to increase. Mandy is currently working with Vet Med for some signage for their welcome desk. Phylcia, Janie and Mandy collaborated to design and secure large building signs for the McPherson Extension Office.
- The 2020 tax guides have been fully distributed.
- Plan now for the December holiday break! The department will cease operation December 23 – January 1. For the first time in recent history, the university is not requiring use of accrued leave during this period. For more information, please see the November 20 [K-State Today announcement](#).

Jason Hackett:

- Marketing is helping with adjustments for commencement going online and the need for videos of speakers to be shot.
- News helped DCM with preparations for Sen. Moran to visit Salina and talk Feed the Future Labs' value
- [Swine Day report is online](#).
- Statewide was sent Tuesday morning – we had to hustle to get it out but had good teamwork and now have a commitment to a schedule of every third Tuesday of the month. Note: The newsletter used to be quarterly.
- A few of us met with the Program Leader Coordinator team for KSRE yesterday to talk about their needs for reporting. Previously had been a trifold of Making a Difference recaps. We talked about updating that approach. PLC team and our team each have some planning to do to make some of yesterday's brainstorming work.
- A couple of us met with a group from DCM to hear from the university's cybersecurity expert on spearphishing threats and how bylines could be exploited.
 - Urging Comm Solutions to be extra careful when viewing emails, as attacks could happen from the outside.
 - They are becoming a lot more sophisticated in looking valid.
 - This could be a great professional development training for Comm Solutions.
- Top publications (online) for October included:
 - Kansas Garden Guide
 - Planning Cattle Feedlots
 - Designing a Bud Box for Cattle Handling
 - Food Safety for Kansas Farmers Market Vendors
 - Kansas Crop Planting Guide
- Popular sales titles include:
 - 4-H Secretary's Record Book
 - 4-H Treasurer's Record Books
 - Guide to Parliamentary Practice for Your Club
 - Meeting Will Come to Order: Simplified
 - 4-H Reporter

- We've begun work on planning for legislative reports. These will be much different this year because of COVID.
 - Discussion about delayed legislative report and possibly reusing Statewide stories.
 - Suggested that it be formatted similarly to AgReport.
- We are wrapping up our Qualtrics time keeping as of the end of this week. Staff members have two more weeks to get caught up.
- Work has begun on the dean's holiday card.
- Several new publication requests came in at the beginning of this week.
- A couple of our stories were picked up by KC TV journalists: ID theft via unemployment claims (we had a couple on our team); and the Olathe Hort Center's annual partnership with After the Harvest.
- Our video focusing on Randy Phebus' virus work is scheduled to run tomorrow on Farm Journal's platform. Email about this was not clear if it was RFDTV or other outlets among the many they own.
- Working in a bit.ly account for KSRE to use custom link shortening similar to the kstate.ag link shortening.
- We now have 23 video-based training modules posted in the KSRE Marketing Course in Canvas, plus six tip sheets.
- Team leaders are working on improvements to overall Comm Solutions organization and workflow based on a SWOT analysis after our first year – and all its COVID disruptions.
- Expanding on today being National Rural Health Day, we are taking a lot of the ideas that were floated for it and using them to talk about various aspects of rural health during the holiday season on Sound Living and in related news releases. Makes extra sense because a lot of the family relationship, meal prep, and other types of programs we normally have during this season will not work as well this year.
- Our work to coordinate video shoots for the U.S. Farm Report's College Roadshow led to the College of Ag being all over the [Nov. 7 episode](#).
- Several of us will be out all week next week, taking furlough time.

Rob Nixon:

- University Printing calendars are ready for curbside pickup. We are offering 2 styles this year. One is 11" x 17" double sided with 6 months on each side offered for free. The other is new this year and has all 12 months on the single sided vertical mini banner @ \$3.00 each. Check out the new calendar and other mini banner offerings here: <https://www.k-state.edu/uprint/docs/Current%20Banner%20List.pdf>
- Printing is set up to produce vehicle ID signage for gators and golf carts on campus.
- Commencement programs are printed and delivered – Commencement is cancelled.
- Zoom meeting to discuss departmental safety is scheduled with Sandra Hoffman and Dr. Ellis.
- U.P. Mac computers have had Lansweeper Agent installed.
- U.P. is performing very limited delivery service and encouraging customers to take advantage of our curbside pickup option.

Cory Spicer:

- The University will soon be announcing a new laptop purchase program, funded centrally through SPARC funds. Initial purchase will be approx. 800 computers and is intended to replace work laptops that are 4+ years old and provide laptops for people relying on personal computers for work-at-home. The majority (around 750) will be Windows PCs, and Division of Finance will be sending communications to Deans with information on how departments can submit requests.
- AGCM computer inventory review. Still working on getting Macs enrolled in Lansweeper inventory system, currently we have 47 total computers in the system. Nine of those are over six years old (all desktops), and four Mac laptops qualify for replacement under the guidelines of the new program. 19 are covered under active warranty.
- MacOS Big Sur has been released; we are still recommending that people defer upgrade for now. Palo Alto has published a version of the VPN client that is compatible with Big Sur, but it has a known issue with errors during web browsing. ITS is waiting for that issue to be addressed before pushing new version.