

**SCRIBE NOTES**  
**OALP Class 15, Seminar 4**  
***“Leadership and Communications”***  
**December 8 - 10, 2010**

**Wednesday, December 8, 2010**

**Scribe: Brian Arnall**

**First Speaker:** Dr. Sue Williams, Professor and Head of Dept of Human Development and Family Science.

**Topic:** Managing Challenging Situations and People.

Dr. Williams was previously with the OCES (Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service) for 30 yrs before entering the Department of Human Development and Family Science where she has been in administration for four years. She manages approx 50 faculty and staff along with two auxiliaries. There are on an average 450 undergraduates and 80 graduate students in the department each semester.

**Introduction:**

This is commonly called a “Coping with Difficult People” seminar. However that is an overly used phrase and has a negative connotation. She discussed that in her position, a common question asked is “What is the hardest part of your job?” assuming it is the financial aspects. As she stated though, “A dollar is a dollar is a dollar.” The most challenging portion of her job is working with and leading a diverse group of individuals with independent opinions and a great range in age and backgrounds.

Sue also described the four most common methods of leading: 1) Yelling, 2) Baffle through use of data 3) Use of the leadership position, and 4) Physical force and threats.

**The Objectives of the session:**

- Recognize the personal and professional benefits of successfully working with challenging people and situations.
- Understand your own approaches to managing conflicts.
- Identify the characteristics of challenging people and situations.
- Manage interpersonal differences.
- Manage false agreement when settling personal and organizational goals.

One point made is that conflict is an opportunity for a person or organization to change learned learning, to grow, and to improve performance. Conflicts often point out existing barriers.

Many may agree to a topic or idea until it is time to develop the definition and all individuals have different definitions.

Our first interactive activity was “The Gold Watch.” Each class member read a short story outlining the events of six individuals. At the end of the story each of us rated which individuals were in the right and which were in the wrong. Opinions were definitely split amongst classmates. The exercise was performed to show us that, even with a group of what would be normally considered like-minded individuals, there will be disagreements. It also showed us that being a leader is about reining in emotion and limiting labeling and negative connotations.

**Next, personal conflict styles were discussed:**

**Aggressive/Confrontive** - “takes the bull by the horns”

**Assertive/Persuasive** - ”stands up for oneself without being pushy, can collaborate with others”

**Observant/Introspective** - “observes and counsels, is a listener”

**Avoiding/Reactive** - “passive and withdrawn, back away from confrontation”

As a group, we discussed these styles then each of us answered a series of questions that placed us into the categories.

We discussed the importance of building Conflict Resolution Teams that are made up of four styles. By having a mixture, a balance can be achieved of those that are ready to tackle the issue and those who want to look at the details.

**Next, the seven classes of challenging people and ideas for coping with them were laid out.**

**Complainers:** gripe and feel powerless. You cannot agree or disagree, direct the conversation towards and organized discussion. Stay away from accusation and rebuttal. State the facts.

**Super-Agreeables:** peacemakers that tend to not follow through. You have to clarify their commitments and help them be realistic.

**Negativists:** object to everything. You have to stay positive and make their comments constructive.

**Silent-Unresponsive:** respond with a grunt, "I don't know," or "If you say so." They need time to process so the best response is for you give them time to think and allow for them to respond via email.

**Indecisives:** tend to put things off and ruin projects simply by not knowing where to start. Many have issue with seeing past the large "elephant" and identifying individual task. You must set deadlines and help identify ways to help the individual make decisions.

**Hostile-Agressives:** tend to bully and threaten.

**Know-It-All Experts:** think they know it all. If managed properly, you can give them their credit but control by assignment.

Once we understood the people, we then discussed the ways to handle these people and situations.

- Put the problem people into perspective. Don't take them personally.
- Take your pick – positive or negative. If you can't be constructive, leave the conversation and focus on the beneficial outcome.
- Do not expect difficult people to change. They will not but they can be predictable.
- Learn to respond as well as to listen. Be forward - state your feelings and intentions.
- Give and request frequent feedback. Know what people think of you by asking for feedback, using open-ended questions.
- Look first at policies and procedures. Look at rules and policies and change when needed.
- Deal directly and discreetly. Choose face-to-face talks so that there is less chance of miscommunication which can often happen with written communication.
- Document for self-protection and protection of the organization and company.
- Be straightforward and unemotional. The more you can remain calm and matter of fact, the quicker most situations will be resolved.
- Be gracious. Do not stoop to the other's level.

When communicating with a challenging person, do it one-on-one. Create a good rapport prior to attacking the problem. Minimize interruptions to show the other person how important the situation is to you. Do not sit behind a big desk or take aggressive postures. Use intensity properly and go to the person's turf.

Other aspects of communication is listening, using the "I" message rather than "you". "You" is an accusation and will just put the other person on the offensive.

In the concluding moments, we broke into groups and read case studies. The case studies put us into a complicated situation and as groups we discussed the needed action plan. When discussion was done, each group shared the case study and resolution with the rest of the class.

In conclusion, Dr. Williams left us with a few closing thoughts.

Remember -

You can control yourself.

You can manage the situation.  
But, you cannot control another person.

### **After Lunch Break**

We were privileged to have Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett speak to us about leadership. Mr. Cornett said that leadership needs continued re-inventing, finding opportunities and untapped resources. Apply your own skills and utilize those of others. This is true whether you are leading one child or 1000 employees.

He gave the class a few universal tips on leading and speaking:

Know the subject matter; communicate at the level of the audience. To be a leader, you must have thorough knowledge and vocabulary above those you lead. However, you can only do this through lots of people and opinions, and the ability to give optimistic visions of the goal. Communicate positively. The perception of you is gained through your vocabulary and intelligence.

Personal skills - the same you learned in kindergarten.

Do not draw positive attention to yourself - bring attention to someone else or something else (Oklahoma City in his case). Show it is not about you but that it is about the bigger picture.

OALP Class XV then had an opportunity to ask the mayor questions.

Rhonda asked if his media background was good or bad. His answer was a humorous, "Apparently it was good because I was elected and had very little money backing me." He said the benefit also came from him being a sports anchor and already knowing all of the small towns, and learning to be a communicator while listening to his audience.

When asked about placing 2<sup>nd</sup> as International Mayor, he said that it was a treat but it was really about Oklahoma City and how far the city has come.

The next question concerned his decision to run for mayor.

Mr. Cornett said the bombing in 1995 really started him to thinking about running. In 1996, he looked at running for congress but could not run. He was then switched from covering sports to news and had to visit City Hall for the first time. He loved it immediately because he could see that the mayor could actually make an impact. He quit the news, was on the City Council for three years then became mayor.

He left us with his vision of Oklahoma City - moving from an auto city to a people-friendly pedestrian city.

After Mayor Mick Cornett addressed the class, we had a panel discussion focused on Economics in Agriculture featuring John Grunewald (President/CEO of Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma), Mark Holder (President of Stockman's Bank), Scott Eisenhower (General manager of P&K Equipment), and Steve Swigert (Ag Consultant at the Noble Foundation).

Steve began with the definition of leadership being the act of influencing people. Then he gave examples of individuals who use economics to thrive, stating that he wished he could clone them. One was a stocker operator who was never happy and always learning, sharing, and an exceptional record keeper. Second was a cow calf/stocker operator who started with nothing and today has a multi-million dollar operation. This individual continually thinks outside the box which is essential and an open-book to all. The final client was a gentleman who started with no net worth and now is worth more than \$1 million. This producer has found a niche market and changed with the environment. Steve's conclusion focused on the commonalities: supportive family (financial and emotional), not afraid of change, continually learning, always sharing, optimistic, slow growers, good timing,

supplied with good information, and the number one theme was that they all developed relationships with their bankers, vets, and consultants.

Scott followed up with a discussion on P&K's current standings. Scott said that agriculture has not seen the downturn that others industries have seen. P&K has been successful during the lean times through carefully forethought, planning ahead, slow growth, and diversification (agriculture, home, commercial, and turf). It is a challenge to keep 250 employees focused and positive.

Mark introduced himself and told his background and led with the comment that the misfortune of one is the fortune of another. Then he discussed his fears, focusing on today's society. Mark said that agriculture better pay down their debt because it is going to get bad. A depression will bring chaos. The country recovered from the Great Depression because the people had great character which the current society lacks. The leaders need to take control and while in Washington, D.C., we must tell the current leadership to take action.

John followed Mark and made the suggestions to retain capital to pay debt, so you can take advantage when the opportunity presents itself. Be fluid and reactive. John re-enforced much of what was previously said - change is good, continue to learn, and look for new ideas and leadership traits. We must agree to disagree - you have to have one voice as a leadership team. Be optimistic but realistic.

During the question-and-answer period, it was said that the first step to optimism is to realize the issue. When Mr. Holder was asked if he would ever go to the Capitol, he said he would never do that to his family.

Final comments were that we should not preach to the choir, we must approach the sinners, and be aware and active with social media.

The second panel discussion of the day focused on Organizational Leadership and Maintaining Memberships. On the panel were Terry Detrick (President of American Farmers and Ranchers), Mike Spradling (President of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau), Roy Lee Lindsay Jr. (Executive Director of the Oklahoma Pork Council) and Tammy Gray-Steele (Executive Director of the Oklahoma Women in Ag Association).

Tammy Gray-Steele began the session with an overview of the National Women in Ag Association which she developed to target minorities. She left a southeastern Oklahoma farm to be in New York for several years before moving back to Oklahoma. Once back, she saw the struggles of the local producers working through paperwork and taxes. The organization was founded in February 2008 and is now nationwide. The group develops farmers' markets and gardens in the cities to market the farm goods and work to develop the skills of young entrepreneurs. There are now 10 chapters from California to Florida. The three colors of the group are pink (flowers), green (forest/crop), and brown (soil). She, and now the group, is known as the Agra-Diva.

Mike Spradling followed with discussion of the purpose of Oklahoma Farm Bureau, one of which is primarily regulation and legislation. Mike noted that OFB is a farm organization with an insurance company. To be on the board, you must have primarily agricultural income. Another aspect of OFB is the Young Farmers and Ranchers group which develops the next generation and promotes a grass roots policy, as does OFB. Mike went through the aspects of bringing resolutions to the state and national level. All resolutions go through many levels but they all start at the local level and move up.

Terry Detrick followed up with the American Farmers and Ranchers discussion. Once called Oklahoma Farmers Union, the group changed its name to AFR because of the negative association in a conservative area with the word "union" in its name. The group was actually organized two years before statehood. Even today, any 15 members can meet and become a local chapter and collect dues. Locals are a part of a county, which are also state and national members. AFR does not need a national group for lobbying as it is large enough to lobby both the state and Washington, D.C. Originally, the company was organized in Point, Texas and then spilled into Oklahoma. It was

developed to help get the product to town and back out, so ten men set out to cooperate and speak with one voice. Even with only ten members, there was still a password. The group was viewed as populist, similar to the current Tea Party. The challenge today is similar to then but the time and people have changed. The Copper Volstead Act made Coops legal and AFR got it passed. Farmer Union Coops at one time were large and AFR also helped with the Producers Cooperative Oil Mill for cotton seed which now handles canola. Plains Oilseed Products Cooperative helped support the canola industry in Oklahoma which is needed to help promote no-till and crop rotation. AFR is a grassroots organization that helps promote private property rights (including water rights), fairness in taxation, and fair trade versus free trade. Mike's final comments were that money is an investment not an expenditure, and to exercise patience and be smart.

Roy Lee Lindsey Jr. finished up with his discussion on the Oklahoma Pork Council. OPC is a member organization that is involved with policy and is check-off funded, which means it is also involved in funding research and promotion. OPC is one of the few groups that does both. It collects from members for policy and the check-off for research, and the funds have to be kept separate. Roy Lee remembers that one person or one group cannot be everything for everyone and that you must find your niche. He also explained that in 1998, OPC had three times as many members as today. As a reminder, during good times no one cares or invests but during bad times they care when often it is too late. The pork industry was the fourth largest in the state in total receipts in 2007. One packer in Guymon ships more products to Japan than any other company. The GDP in Japan is \$170 with \$100 being pork. Roy Lee's final comment was to find the core issues and stay focused.

During the Q&A, it was asked of the panel, "What is the greatest challenge to their group's future?" Mike said animal rights and environmental regulations, Terry said budget and HSUS, Roy Lee said regulations, taxes, and HSUS. Tammy was asked about how the group educated the public. She said that they focus on farm to town and outreach with FSA.

Following our formal program for the day, we went to the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma and sorted and boxed food. After we ate dinner on our own, we met and had a Dirty Santa gift exchange.

#### **Thursday, December 9, 2010**

**Scribe: Bryan Vincent**

No scribe notes submitted.

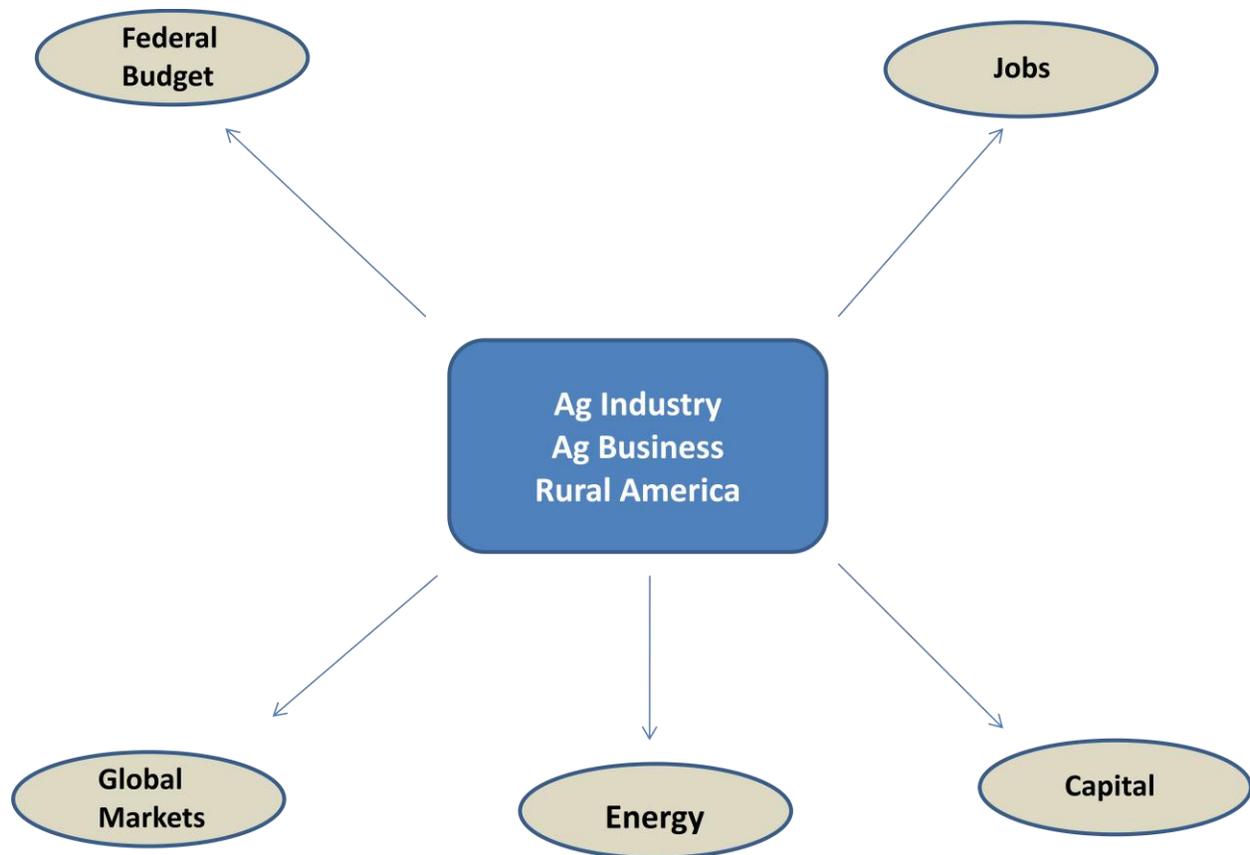
#### **Friday, December 10, 2010**

**Scribe: Amy Brown**

To conclude Session 4, we met in the classroom at American Farmers and Ranchers located at 800 North Harvey in Oklahoma City. Dustin Mielke served as chairperson. The agenda for the day was hearing from Dr. Larry Sanders of the Department of Agricultural Economics, completing individual presentations, and team reports from Thursday's interviews.

Dr. Sanders started the morning with a very important message on how to maintain a healthy level of sanity. One tactic was to sit in a parked car with sunglasses on while pointing a hair dryer at passing cars!

While covering topics of the general economy, agriculture, and the upcoming changes to the farm bill, Dr. Sanders stated that in today's society, more than half of all farms have over half of their income resulting from other jobs. He also focused on a graphic similar to the following.



First, in relation to **jobs**, Dr. Sanders provided two interactive sites that showed the geography of jobs and unemployment and the geography of a recession. To review those, go to:

**[tipstrategies.com/archive/geograph-of-jobs](http://tipstrategies.com/archive/geograph-of-jobs) and [cohort11.americanobserver.net.latoyaegwuekwe.com/geograhpyofarecession](http://cohort11.americanobserver.net.latoyaegwuekwe.com/geograhpyofarecession)**

During the current time of the class, Oklahoma's unemployment rate sat at 6.8%, one of the lowest in the nation. Blayne Arthur asked if it is a natural progression during a recession for the coastal areas to be the worst with the middle of the United States to follow. Dr. Sanders responded that many factors are involved in this including oil, population, and others.

For **capital** and **energy**, he stated that capital is more important now than it has ever been and individual relationships with bankers may help some get through the recession. In regards to energy, the U.S. is 2-5 years ahead of schedule in reaching \$100 per barrel oil but that in response, we are coming to the forefront of renewable energy.

In discussing **global markets**, we learned that 'output = consumption + investment + government spending+ net exports. Currently in 2010, consumption and investments are improving, but are still down. Net exports are up but still negative and that the government spending is propping up the economy. To show the comparison of the current GDP from past to current, Dr. Sanders provided [www.economagic.com/em-cgi/charter.exe/var/rgdp-qtrchg](http://www.economagic.com/em-cgi/charter.exe/var/rgdp-qtrchg).

Kurtis Sears asked Dr. Sanders' opinion on stagflation. This was defined to us as the economy and wages staying the same, while there is an increase in prices of products. His opinion to the class was that neither stagflation nor inflation is occurring right now, but inflation may be 3-5 years down the road.

We learned that there is a general weakening of the U.S. dollar, making our commodities more valuable because people will stay within the U.S. to get their products. Additionally, we are trading more than we are exporting, but as the dollar gets weaker imports will cost more, so the agricultural industry needs to always keep a surplus!

Currently, the top four countries for foreign trade are Canada, Mexico, China, and Japan, but changes with China will affect the agricultural sector the most.

Referencing the **federal budget**, Dr. Sanders stated that terrorist attacks and the global market have caused a loss of surplus in products. But the United States has an inherent strength and the entrepreneurial spirit will help us out of the “horrid debt.”

The following are mixed signals within the macro-economy right now:

- State and local budgets continue to be a problem
- Federal deficit continues to be very high, leading to cuts in 2011 and beyond
- U.S growth is expected through 2012
- Unemployment is expected to fall below 8% in 2011
- Inflation is a non-issue; some concern for deflation
- Wages will remain flat
- Consumer spending continues to improve
- U.S trade deficit, while large, continues to improve
- Late 2010 growth in new orders
- Housing starting but sales continue to be sluggish

The topic then turned to the 2010 Congressional shuffle with the results being the large shift from democratic to republican with a loss in the ‘middle of the field.’ This major shift will affect the outcome of the great ‘anti-earmark’ debate which may change government funding.

Oklahoma currently gets \$1.36 back from the government in subsidies for every \$1.00 that it sends to the federal government in taxes. This calculation is based on the number of tribes, army bases, farms, and other factors. Dr. Sanders provided the following for Oklahoma congressmen and the funding they have received for their areas:

Lucas -\$3.37 billion (wheat)  
Cole - \$615 million (wheat)  
Boren - \$310 million (disaster assistance)  
Sullivan - \$35 million (wheat)  
Fallin – \$29.5 million (wheat)

Dr. Sanders then turned to 2011, 2012, and 2013, and the future of the farm bill. He allowed that the future depends on the health of the U.S. and world economy, health of the farm economy, and the politics and mechanics of working through the farm bill process. The ‘Farm Bill’ is actually now considered more of a ‘food bill.’ While 12% of the bill will go toward commodity programs, 70% will actually be allocated to food and nutrition programs.

We also discussed why it is necessary to continue subsidies, starting with the fact that 10-15% of farmers produce 80-90% of the food supply with 3% of those producing 60% of the total food. Dr. Sanders advised that we must focus on the specifics (farm size, region, and money amount) to break down subsidies.

In conclusion, Dr. Sanders stated that the future depends on the economic downturn, recovery measures, tax cuts, wars, and loaning agencies.

After a short break, the group heard Blayne Arthur discuss major issues in agriculture; Shannon (Kim) Cunningham presented the importance of being educated on animal rights issues; Amy Brown spoke about family farming partnerships; and Vicki Jo Stephens concluded with factors affecting death and estate taxes in farming.

We then began our oral reports from the previous day’s interviews. The following is a list of each team and the people and organizations they interviewed. As we also completed two-page reports on our interviews, please refer to those reports for further details on the information we learned.

### **Group 1 Team Members**

Alisa Hines, Vicki Jo Stephens, Bryan Vincent

Interviewed: Mike Spradling  
Organization: Oklahoma Farm Bureau

**Group 2 Team Members**

Amy Brown, Orlin Nichols, Susie Vincent  
Interviewed: Terry Detrick  
Organization: American Farmers and Ranchers

**Group 3 Team Members**

Courtney Arnall, Kyle Dorton, Dustin Mielke, Katie Reim  
Interviewed: Dr. Becky Brewer  
Organization: Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry

**Group 4 Team Members**

Todd Love, Rhonda Regier, Danielle Whaley  
Interviewed: Heather Buckmaster  
Organization: Oklahoma Beef Council

**Group 5 Team Members**

Shannon Cunningham, Kurt Murray, Jessica Wilcox  
Interviewed: Mike Schulte  
Organization: Oklahoma Wheat Commission

**Group 6 Team Members**

Blayne Arthur, Kurtis Sears, Rodney Sutterfield  
Interviewed: Ben Pollard  
Organization: Oklahoma Conservation Commission

**Group 7 Team Members**

Brian Arnall, Shari Halloway, Job Springer  
Interviewed: Mason Mungle  
Organization: Farmers Royalty Company

After completing the reports and having lunch, we concluded Session 4 with comments from Edmond Bonjour. The advisory council is working on selecting a country for the international trip. Also, we need to have our energy ready for Session 5 in Kansas City and Session 6 in Washington, D.C. Everyone then headed home for the holidays!