

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Alloway, Bradford, Fech, Flowers, Hachtmann, Ledder, Moeller, Prochaska Cue, Zimmers

Absent: Bolin, LaCost, Lindquist, Rapkin

Date: December 12, 2007

Location: 201 Canfield Administration Building

Note: These are not verbatim minutes. They are a summary of the discussions at the Executive Committee meeting as corrected by those participating.

1.0 Call to Order

Bradford called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Perlman

2.1 Commission on Sustainability

Bradford asked if the Chancellor is in favor of creating this Commission. He asked if the Chancellor had any idea of what the structure of the Commission would be like.

Chancellor Perlman stated that Professor Hoistad, Architecture, raised the issue at a Deans and Directors workshop. He stated that he has a general idea about the Commission but really hasn't looked at it too closely. He pointed out that the university is trying to do as much as we can with making buildings more sustainable and we have even received an award from the Chamber of Commerce for it but we are limited by available resources. He noted that if the faculty wanted to direct resources to sustainability issues rather than building faculty programs he would consider going in that direction.

Bradford stated that he is not exactly sure what is meant by sustainability. He assumes there would be some cost trade-offs with it. Chancellor Perlman stated that the premise is that there would be cost savings in the future. He reported that UNL has an agreement with LES that allows us to finance building improvements through bonds by pledging the rates that we pay to LES. He noted that the proceeds of the bonds have been re-invested back into making buildings more effective and cost savings have been put back into the bonds. He stated that there are other things that can be done but there is a limit as to how much some buildings can be made energy efficient. He stated that if there is a Commission there needs to be people on it that have good ideas but who understand that there is a limit as to how much the university can do given the resources. He stated that he is willing to entertain the idea of a Commission if the campus wants to do it.

2.2 “Advisory” Committees (Telecommunications; SIS)

Bradford reported that he recently has been asked, on short notice, to find faculty members to serve on advisory committees even though there have been on-going efforts looking into these upcoming changes for the campus. He stated that it would be much more helpful if advance notice was given if a faculty advisory committee is going to be needed. He pointed out that it is hard to get people to serve when there is such short notice of the meetings. Chancellor Perlman stated that this is fair enough.

2.3 Affirmative Action Amendment

Bradford asked what the Chancellor’s preliminary thoughts are on the effects of this amendment if it passes. He noted that President Milliken’s office stated that a comment will be made later on the amendment. He asked if the Chancellor is personally going to take a position on the amendment.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he does not know when he will take a position on the amendment personally. He pointed out that the university position has to be formulated for the system as a whole although he does not know whether a university can take a position on such an issue.

Bradford noted that on LB 413, the spending lid bill, university employees could inform people about the effect the bill would have on the university but the employee could not tell a person how to vote. He stated that he did not think that the affirmative action amendment would have much of an effect on undergraduate admissions but it could have a substantially stronger impact on graduate admissions. He asked if the amendment would affect women and minority candidates in some fields. Ledder stated that he suspects that the amendment would not affect women candidates. He noted that the top qualifying students in math are now women.

Chancellor Perlman reported that the impacts of such an amendment can be mixed. He noted that in states that have this amendment some universities have experienced a significant loss of minorities while at other systems there has been little impact. He pointed out that it is possible to accomplish a diverse student body by shifting to non-race factors when admitting students. He stated that as far as he can tell, with the way the amendment is written it would not affect affirmative action. Bradford thought that the amendment could affect funds. Chancellor Perlman stated that he is not sure about this and noted that there have to be ways to address increasing the diversity pools.

Bradford asked if the minority scholarships here at UNL have been converted. Chancellor Perlman stated that they have been converted to be consistent with the Supreme Court.

Ledder speculated that it might be best for the university to take a low profile on this issue. Bradford noted that it will more than likely be on the ballot. He stated that if the amendment really does prevent the university from spending funds to help increase the pool of diversity then there will be a problem. He noted that minority admission programs would be hurt if funds cannot be used.

Alloway noted that when the lid bill came up there was a university effort to provide data to the general public on how the bill would affect the university. He asked if the university would do this again. Chancellor Perlman stated that it is possible.

Bradford noted that the Senate took a position on the spending lid bill and might consider doing so on this bill.

2.4 Issues on the Horizon

Bradford asked what the status is of the state fair grounds. Chancellor Perlman reported that there will be a hearing on Friday about it.

Bradford asked if the Legislature will get involved. Chancellor Perlman stated that there is a state statute that says that the state fair is to be held at the state fair grounds so the Legislature will have to be involved. He noted that the state fair is a tenant of the land.

Bradford asked if another site is being proposed in Lincoln. Chancellor Perlman stated that there are several sites in Lincoln that could be considered. He noted that the Governor's bottom line is that he does not want to spend any money on this project. Alloway stated that there have been comments from the public that the university is being a land grabber in wanting the state fair grounds.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the proposals demonstrate that the fair can be moved without going to general tax revenue. He stated that significant involvement from private and philanthropic sectors are expected to play a substantial role in the development of Innovation Park but he cannot say that there won't be any request for funds to help with the project.

Chancellor Perlman reported that UNL's agreement with the RIAA will expire on 12/31. He stated that the agreement primarily states that the RIAA will offer a settlement to the students for alleged illegal downloading of music before they file a lawsuit on them. He noted that this requires some record retention on our part but it is not difficult to do.

Alloway asked if we have enough information to know if the contract is working well enough. Chancellor Perlman stated that he does not know the actual numbers but a few students have settled with the RIAA.

Bradford stated that his personal opinion is that UNL should do what Oregon is doing. They refuse to cooperate except as required by law. He pointed out that there are probably a lot of kids settling that probably would never have been sued. Chancellor Perlman stated that the flip side is that some students who have been sued would have probably preferred to settle.

Chancellor Perlman stated that it is his inclination to go forward with the agreement. He stated that ASUN's educational campaign seems to be working and with all of the press the issue has received it has made students more aware of the violation. He stated that if

anyone has any concerns about the contract they should contact him prior to the semester break.

Bradford asked how the General Counsel search is going. Chancellor Perlman reported that the last email he received stated that the final interviews have been postponed until after January 1st.

Chancellor Perlman stated that an issue that needs to be addressed is the use of TOEFL scores to admit students. He pointed out that this is an increasingly important issue because of our efforts to attract more international students. He noted that we want to bring students to the university who will be successful but there might be other activities that can be used in evaluating potential students. He stated that it is unclear who was responsible for the rule in the first place which leads to the question of how we can change the rule.

Moeller noted that UNL's requirements are a little above the typical university's requirements. She stated that she has a lot of international students and if she encounters any that are having a little difficulty with the language she recommends that they take the English as a Second Language course. Alloway pointed out that the College of Journalism & Mass Communications sets its own requirements for minimum TOEFL and TSE scores.

Chancellor Perlman stated that there must be other ways to demonstrate proficiency in English. Moeller reported that there are other options that can be used. She stated that an oral proficiency interview can be conducted over the phone and Minnesota has developed an on-line option as well. She noted that what is important is that the students can read and write English well.

Alloway asked if the TOEFL requirement is institutional or set by the colleges. Moeller stated that she believes the Graduate College makes the determination. Chancellor Perlman stated that there may be two different tests, one managed by Admissions and the other by the college.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the rule on the TOEFL scores is administered by the Admissions office but this office believes that the Senate might have approved the rule at some time. He stated that he thinks the Senate might have been engaged in the process but he is unsure as to when this would have occurred. He stated that he might decide to form a committee to look into this issue.

Ledder pointed out that having a rigid rule is incompatible. He noted that college curriculum committees can deal with some of the issues that come up with international students. He stated that this problem should fall under the purview of the college curriculum committee because it decides what is needed for a student to graduate from their college.

Alloway suggested that previous graduate and undergraduate bulletins could be reviewed to see when the TOEFL score was first applied. He pointed out that it might then be possible to check Senate records to see if the Senate approved the rule. Chancellor Perlman stated that he may come to the Senate with a process for dealing with this issue.

Fech pointed out that the issue also effects recruiting efforts. He noted that students do not want to go to a university to be taught by a graduate student who cannot speak English well. He stated that if the university is looking seriously at having successful students this is an important thing to be considered.

Chancellor Perlman noted that the requirements on our TOEFL scores are higher because of pressure to have more articulate students. He says he has no argument with that but to say that we are significantly higher than our peer institutions with this requirement sends a message to international students.

Ledder stated that he has sat on panels that review a graduate student's ability to speak well enough to teach a course. He stated that he is confident that our standards are good and yet they are not so high as to exclude students who merely have an accent. Bradford pointed out that some students have more problems with an international professor rather than an international graduate student.

3.0 ASUN (Laine Norton and Linsey Marshall)

3.1 Commission on Sustainability

Norton reported that ASUN is interested in forming a commission to address sustainability on campus for the long term. She noted that ASUN has been looking at the structures of similar commissions at other universities.

Marshall stated that the goal is to get recycling on campus and to keep it going. She reported that at the University of Texas there is a sustainability network where faculty, staff, and students get together once a month to discuss issues relating to recycling and sustainability on campus. She noted that the idea is to have a similar commission here at UNL and members would be appointed by the Chancellor. She stated that some of the members would represent Business & Finance, Landscape Services, and Housing, as well as faculty, staff, and students.

Norton stated that the idea is to bring a little more legitimacy to the idea of sustainability. One of the missions of the commission would be to review current policies and standards on campus. She stated that ASUN would like to request a small operating budget for the commission which could in part be obtained through grants. She noted that the commission would be responsible to the Chancellor and it would meet once a month.

Moeller asked how recycling is currently being handled on campus. Marshall stated that it is actually kind of a mess. She stated that many units are doing their own recycling but there needs to be a more efficient system to deal with it.

Griffin pointed out that there used to be an active recycling program on campus but the budget cuts in 2003 seriously impacted the program. Bradford noted that having a recycling program would cost money. He asked if the students would be willing to come up with additional funds in order to cover these costs because the campus operating budget cannot accommodate them. Marshall pointed out that it is difficult for the students to tackle the issues by themselves. She noted that the Chancellor wants to see a joint resolution from ASUN and the Faculty Senate before he would consider forming a commission.

Bradford suggested that ASUN change the name of the commission to something like the Commission on Environmental Issues since that is what the commission proposes to address. Marshall and Norton both stated that they did not think this would be a problem because the students want to work on more than just recycling. Ledder pointed out that the name Commission on Sustainability is too vague and does not give a clear indication of what the commission does.

Zimmers asked if the commissions at other universities have a budget. Marshall stated that she did not know the answer to this question. Bradford asked what the budget would be used for. Norton stated that they were not sure, that ASUN President Solheim knew more about this but he is currently out of the country.

Bradford pointed out that the commission would not put policies in place so he is not sure what it would be used for.

Ledder stated that students should be asked if they would agree to a small portion of their student fees being used for efforts on campus. He suggested that the students could vote on what percentage of their fees would go to sustainability programs.

Ledder pointed out that recycling is only half of the issue. He stated that the question needs to be asked what the recycling gets used for, if nothing than what good is it. He noted that if recycled products are not used on campus then it might not be worth the recycling efforts.

Alloway stated that the more critical issue is the reduction of materials to begin with rather than just dealing with the waste of materials. He pointed out that there should be an effort to eliminate paper usage as much as possible. Ledder stated that the commission might suggest that all exams be printed back-to-back.

Alloway noted that Custodial Services was mentioned. He asked if they have been involved in any of the discussions on this subject. He pointed out that the custodians might have ideas of what needs to be recycled or what needs to be saved. Ledder stated that asking Custodial Services to participate in this effort is unreasonable because they have been scaled back so much due to the budget cuts. Alloway clarified that he was suggesting they might be flattered to be asked their opinions as members of the commission – not that they should be asked to shoulder more of the actual recycling work.

Bradford asked what the structure of the commission would be and how members would be selected. Norton stated that this could be done a number of different ways but ASUN hopes there would be a few permanent members on the commission. Bradford suggested that the commission be set up like a regular committee. Chancellor Perlman could then appoint some permanent people like Vice Chancellor Jackson. Ledder stated that it would be important to have people with expertise well represented on the commission.

Bradford stated that the commission could be composed of some administrative people who could be permanent members and have been appointed by the Chancellor. He stated that if ASUN is going to be represented then members of UNOPA and UAAD should be represented as well.

Bradford stated that in order for the Senate to approve the commission a copy of the syllabus for it would need to be presented to the Senate. If the Senate and ASUN approve it then the Chancellor will form the commission. He noted that at some point someone is going to need to draft a syllabus for the commission. Norton stated that President Solheim will probably work on it when he gets back. Bradford stated that he will work with Solheim on a draft syllabus.

4.0 Announcements

No announcements were made.

5.0 Approval of 12/5/07 Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes as amended.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 UNL Strategic Compass

Fech asked when there will be a revised version of the UNL Strategic Compass. Bradford stated that the second forum on the strategic compass won't be held until January 24th. He noted that he is still waiting to get comments back from the Executive Committee and then he will send SVCAA Couture the comments and suggestions on the document.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Report on Telecommunications Committee

Bradford stated that he has been asked by the SIS advisory committee how the faculty can be contacted for gathering input on a new SIS program. He noted that the SIS committee informed him that a consultant will be coming to campus and he will be contacted about this but he has not heard anything yet.

Bradford stated that he attended the Telecommunications Committee meeting. He reported that UNL's landline contract with Windstream expires December 2008. He noted that the State government contract and UNK contract will be expiring around the same time. He reported that the consultant working with the Committee suggested that UNL could piggyback on the State of Nebraska's rfp. It was pointed out that the State

will need to have multiple providers for telecommunications because of the way the service is provided in the state. Bradford reported that UNL is still in the process of talking to Windstream about a possible renewal of a contract which may not require an rfp.

Bradford stated that earlier this year companies made presentations to some of the administrators about telecommunications and a consultant has been hired. He noted that the consultant will not be making a bid. He stated that the consultant will come out with a report in late February. He stated that discussions were held with the consultant about what kinds of features the campus is looking at in terms of telecommunications.

Bradford reported that some things that are being considered are voice over internet and wireless possibilities and elimination of phone lines in student housing because they are never used. He stated that basically the campus is currently renting landlines and there could be substantial savings by eliminating the phone lines in housing. He pointed out that the question is where the savings go to; back to the telecommunications budget or to the parents and students.

Bradford stated that there was talk about having wireless phones for everyone with dual lines. One line would be for work and the other would be for personal use. This would allow people to carry only one phone. He pointed out that this could create some tax issues for employees though.

Ledder asked if the university would supply the employees with cell phones. Bradford stated that this question was raised. He noted that the consultant realizes that this would be an issue because the phone would become a taxable compensation to the employee and this expense would need to be covered by the university.

Bradford stated that for voice over internet to be seriously considered there would need to be substantial improvements made to internet capability. He noted that a problem with this option is how to bill the use of it. Ledder asked how we get billed now for using the internet. Alloway stated that we are billed for the ports. Bradford stated that the question was raised if we could get billed for usage rather than for ports but this would be difficult to do.

Ledder asked what the experience is with voice over internet. Bradford stated that there are some places on campus that are already experimenting with it. He stated that the Committee was told that it works fine and uses a regular cordless receiver. He noted that it is currently being used in the stadium but you must have the right capacity in order to do this. He pointed out that the downside of this kind of system is that if you lose internet capacity then you lose your telecommunications so some kind of back up system would be needed. Ledder noted that everyone has cell phones so if calls really needed to be placed in cases of emergency it could easily be done.

7.2 Possible Cancellation of 12/19 Exec Committee Meeting

The Committee agreed to cancel the December 19th meeting.

7.3 University Health Insurance

Alloway asked how the university arrives at its insurance packages. He noted that his in-laws who are both retired employees of the university, found a better deal for insurance. He stated that he has had some colleagues tell him they are frustrated that the university is not able to negotiate a better insurance package.

Bradford stated that the university is self insured. He noted that when the health insurance is being negotiated the amount of money that is being paid out for medical expenses then determines what the rates will be for employees and retirees. He pointed out that the only reason why this system makes sense is because of the subsidies that the employees receive with the NU Benefits.

Prochaska Cue stated that private insurers have a much larger pool to work with so they can spread the costs out over a greater amount of people.

Bradford noted that the university has a relatively old faculty so there are high health costs. He stated that if the faculty were distributed more evenly we would probably have lower rates.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, January 9th at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Rick Alloway, Secretary.