

Executive Committee Minutes

Present: Alloway, Bolin, Bradford, Fech, Flowers, Hachtmann, Ledder, Lindquist, Moeller, Rapkin,

Absent: Lacost, Prochaska Cue, Zimmers

Date: Wednesday, September 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 3:04 p.m.

2.0 SVCAA Couture

2.1 Current and Upcoming Issues

Bradford asked SVCAA Couture to review the new effort to define university goals discussed at the Deans and Directors meeting held earlier that morning. SVCAA Couture referred to the list of goals as the University's "Strategic Compass."

SVCAA Couture said the list is an outgrowth from the strategic planning process used in the most recent North Central accreditation procedure; the University administration selected some of the issues from that process to be expanded—one such issues was to create a document that captures the overall goals of the university.

SVCAA Couture noted that Chancellor Perlman felt it would be helpful for members of the university community to speak as one voice about the goals for the institution. She noted there have been previous documents where that singular voice has been used, but there has not one brief seminal document to outline a set of activities that the whole university could focus on.

SVCAA Couture said Chancellor Perlman had suggested creation of a document to summarize what we've been saying as a community already, so she and the Chancellor started working on one, with the help of University Communications. The resulting document was shared with Deans and Directors last summer; they will review it again at their dean's retreat and then have the whole campus review it. This is a process similar to the one used for the university's core values document. SVCAA Couture noted there will be two open fora where faculty may comment on the proposed document – the first on November 27 from 3 to 5 p.m. in the City Campus Union, and the second on January 24 from 1 to 3 p.m. in the East Campus Union. Extension sites will be connected for that

forum as well. E-mail comments will also be welcome. After faculty review, the document will be modified again to take into account suggestions.

SVCAA Couture said the administration believes core planning comes from academic units and colleges, but this document will summarize how those overall processes come together. She said administrators often get asked what the university's "elevator speech" is, that is, the brief descriptor of what the university is all about, and how we define our goals as a campus. This new document should help with that definition.

Why the compass metaphor? SVCAA Couture said the image relates to overall direction as opposed to a set of specific plans, which come from the colleges.

Bradford asked what format these recommendations might take; SVCAA Couture said that is yet to be decided but lots of things are under consideration.

Moeller asked if something like internationalization might be an example of one of the goals. SVCAA Couture said that is certainly one, taking into account elements like the new Confucius Institute, which will officially open on October 30. A group of Chinese visitors will be on campus October 28-31 in conjunction with the opening of the Institute. Included in the group will be a 12-piece Chinese student orchestra; SVCAA Couture said a concert is planned, most likely on October 29th.

Bradford asked if the Institute has a home; SVCAA Couture said it is in Nebraska Hall with space for a director, faculty, classrooms and a conference room. A plaque has arrived from China displaying the official name for the institute. Professor David Lou is the Director of UNL's Confucius Institute; Joyce Young is the administrative assistant of the Institute.

SVCAA Couture noted the Deans and Directors also will discuss in their retreat progress in the new ACE general education program. She said the university administration urges faculty involvement in the approval of the final proposal. She said she is hearing positive words about faculty involvement, and stressed that faculty engagement will be most beneficial before the voting takes place on the proposals than after.

Ledder said there are two or three key issues faculty are keenly aware of. SVCAA Couture said the faculty need to be actively discussing those issues. Ledder said faculty in his college don't always hear feedback on the ACE issues they raise. SVCAA Couture said new Arts & Sciences Dean Manderscheid is very involved and committed to encouraging involvement in the general education revision process.

Ledder noted that in January, the Arts & Sciences faculty approved an advisory letter reviewing some concerns about the proposed program, yet nothing seems to have been changed to accommodate those issues. He noted as examples of their concerns the need for a clear plan for maintaining the program and recertification of courses, strengthening the writing requirements, and the creation of at least some minimal guidelines or instructions for faculty writing and evaluating the course proposals to indicate how the

outcomes would be applied. He said so far, the proposals do not seem to have been modified to reflect those suggestions. Bradford said Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Wilson told him the ACE committees did not meet regularly during the summer, but they are resuming regular meetings now that the fall semester has started. Moeller said she also spoke with Wilson, and he said all input has been welcomed; the committees just need time to gather and respond to all of it. Ledder thinks there needs to be one more round of input to make sure changes were made and review them before colleges vote on the proposals. He noted, for instance, that Mathematics faculty members are not satisfied with Outcome 3. He said he believes people will still want to revisit any changes to the proposals before a vote.

Bradford said it makes sense to give committee members a few weeks to respond to the latest iteration before anything goes to a vote. Ledder says things are happening in bits and pieces rather than all together. He said Philosophy faculty may talk about things and then History faculty members respond. He thinks it would work better if colleges met all together, which SVCAA Couture agreed would be good. Moeller said the upcoming fora should help with the process.

Ledder suggested sending the revised copy of the proposals to everyone who made comments to get their feedback. SVCAA Couture said the revised documents are on-line for anyone to review. She asked that everyone be engaged in the process, and that the committee can't respond to what's in people heads. Ledder said it gets confusing when documents get labeled as "final proposals" when they haven't been fully vetted. SVCAA Couture said though proposals 1 and 2 were voted on and approved, that doesn't mean they can't be reviewed further to take into account new input, and they have been.

Bradford said if something has gotten changed or omitted unintentionally, people should tell the committee about that, regardless of whether a proposal is listed as "final" or not.

SVCAA Couture said she seconded what Chancellor Perlman said at the State of the University address: he is pleased with how faculty have responded to what matters most at UNL, that the university's general education program will be one of the best in the country, that students will understand the value of the program, and it will help them move effectively toward graduation. She congratulated the Senate on its involvement in the process, and said it is clear the Senate functions as a body that cares about academic matters, and this has been helpful in the entire process.

SVCAA Couture said Chancellor Perlman reviewed the university budget with the Deans and Directors, and that he said increased enrollment this year won't necessarily mean more money in the short term. Increased expenses, for utilities and operation costs, may offset increased income. While increased enrollment may mean there is no immediate need to cut back in our programs, it may not mean that new money is available now for new programs or enhancements.

Fech asked when colleges could start hiring again. SVCAA Couture said hiring decisions are managed at departmental and college levels, and at greater distance, within her office.

She said about all her office does is take the money of a retired faculty member, withhold any overage from what a new hire in that same position might require, and return the remainder to the colleges to support their hiring plans. She said she doesn't keep any funds, though distribution of the withheld funds might get deferred until a new faculty member is hired. She noted there is also diversity funding available, particularly in the "stem" (science, technology, engineering and math) fields to support new hires. She encouraged departments to strive for diversity or opportunity hires. She said she encourages departments to have conversations with her office about that; her office may have temporary funds available to help with opportunity hires.

SVCAA Couture said the administration is also concerned with retention of current faculty. She noted there is not always much the university can do about offers which the institution simply cannot match. She noted we also need to look at how the university deals with spousal hires. She said Deans and Chairs are savvy about addressing the needs of spouses when they arrive, but we may not be as good at paying attention to the careers of spouses over time as this may affect faculty retention.

Moeller asked whether the university eliminated the dual career provisions; Bradford said those had been cut during previous budget cuts. SVCAA Couture said sometimes it is difficult to keep both partners in "dual career" hires on successful career paths.

Moeller said that her research shows that a sense of community really makes a difference in retention, and that faculty value having somebody with whom they can talk substantively about their work. She suggested that if the university could create or enhance venues for discussion of faculty research and creativity in productive ways, that has been shown to be effective. SVCAA Couture said the University Academy that College of Fine and Performing Arts Dean Oliva discussed with the Senate a few months ago might be one of those venues, creating exciting collaborative opportunities. Moeller said even within the department level faculty members need opportunities to find ways to connect research and scholarship. Bradford said that is a department-by-department issue, and while some faculty members might value the opportunity for interaction, others might prefer to work independently.

Fech said the perception is with the increases in enrollment and other funding we should be able to starting hiring again. SVCAA Couture said this issue is important, and to do that we need to know where the money would come from. She said the reversion fund she has already goes back to the Deans. She said the money from enrollment increases is considered at present temporary and isn't yet available to be used for long-term commitments like salaries. She said this money now is being used to fund utility costs and other on-going expenses. She said since it is not yet a permanent addition to our budget, it can't be freed up for distribution to colleges to hire new faculty. She said her temporary funds are being made available to colleges based on strength of their strategic plans, and that has sometimes has provided "bridge funds" for new faculty, but permanent money comes from the reversion fund and from college budgets. Bradford asked if Fech thought there was a university-wide freeze, which he says is not the case. Lindquist said it is an issue of transparency and perception – that some positions are not

being filled and the faculty does not know why, so there is confusion and frustration. SVCAA Couture reiterated that hiring is a department or college decision – that Deans and Directors make those decisions, not her office; we all are constrained by the resources we have available.

Moeller asked if the university still reallocates funds to different programs, as former SVCAA Edwards did. SVCAA Couture said that reallocation from the reversion funds does happen each year in response to strategic planning, and there are some competitive Programs of Excellence funds which occasionally allow for additional staffing, but there isn't new competitive funding for this purpose at present. The NU campuses made a system-wide decision to support Life Sciences and on-going institutional initiatives with POE funds this year, so there is no money for new programs or proposals this year. However, there will be a call later in the year to consider Program of Excellence renewals for POE's that expire this year.

3.0 Approval of Minutes

The minutes were approved as amended.

4.0 Announcements

Bradford mentioned some additional information from that morning's Deans and Directors meeting.

He said overall enrollment is up 3.9% and enrollment of first-time students is up 10%, noting that UNL is the only campus where first-time student rates are up. Bradford said SVCSA Franco noted the indicators of the first-year class show it is one of the best and brightest in years. Moeller noted a 3.8% increase in grad students according to Executive Associate Dean for Graduate Studies Weissinger.

Bradford noted Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Wilson updated the Deans and Directors about General Education proposals and noted the university will be going through the third round of ITLE grant proposals, due in October.

Bradford noted Chancellor Perlman said the voluntary wellness initiatives may eventually become a higher priority, with the possibility of higher insurance rates for those who don't take part. Moeller asked how we would enforce that. Bradford said it was not difficult to determine who was in a smoking cessation class or making use of the recreation center, but agreed it would be harder to measure off-campus activities. Ledger asked if greater pressure on faculty and staff to participate in wellness activities could lead to free campus recreation membership. There was general agreement that benefit would be well-received.

Bradford noted the university only keeps 50% of increased tuition during the first year of higher enrollments. The rest goes back to the university system. He said the following year, the university's base budget includes all of the previous year's increases, plus 50% of any additional gains. This year, instead of a small deficit there may be an excess of about \$1.5 million to be applied to the projected higher shortfalls in the second year of

the budget. That excess revenue, plus sustained enrollment increases and a favorable utility cost allocation from the Regents, should prevent a deficit next year.

Moeller said last week's premiere at the Ross Media Arts Center of a new documentary on German immigration issues produced by students in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications was spectacular and delightful. She enjoyed the interconnectedness of the various disciplines within and outside the college. Bradford said he was very impressed with the student responses to questions from audience members following the documentary, and that it was another indicator the university has quality undergraduate students. Hachtmann thanked everyone for attending the premiere.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Report on Board of Regents Meeting

Bradford asked if everyone had seen news reports that the issue involving Prof. Belot had been settled. Discussion ensued about the media coverage of the entire process. Bradford noted Prof. Belot's salary continues through the spring semester of 2008, but Bradford said he was unsure if Prof. Belot is allowed on campus during that time. Bradford assumes Prof. Belot would probably want back into his lab to take any personal items and research notes. Bradford said he doesn't know how this settlement will affect Prof. Belot's future career. Since the settlement is with the Board of Regents, Bradford thought it a bit odd that the only comments from university officials noted in media accounts were from Chancellor Perlman, but suggested that perhaps the Board members declined comment.

Bradford said he forwarded to the Executive Committee scans of print-outs of the slides from the meeting. He said indicators set by the Regents show UNL faculty salaries have worsened compared to the university's peers, dropping almost another full percent. UNK and UNO are at the midpoints of their peer groups, largely because of salary arbitration. UNMC went down as well, though Bradford says some of their faculty members' income comes from their private practice groups, and since that information is unavailable to the public, it is hard to know the true effect. Bradford said some universities may adjust those percentages, making it hard to compare one institution against another.

Bradford led discussion of assessment processes used for undergraduates at UNL, noting that participation is relatively low. Participation is voluntary and doesn't affect students. Bradford says the results show seniors are better in ways we would hope (for instance, their ability to focus more on analytical skills rather than simply memorizing facts) yet he was concerned how low some of the indicators are (for instance, the small number who reported having had a discussion with a member of a minority group). Moeller asked about results on research experiences for undergrads. Bradford said there was nothing specific on that issue, but there was a question on whether students had written a paper of at least 20 pages. The freshmen response rate on that question was around 29% but the rate for seniors was only 48%. He noted some departments like hard sciences seldom require papers of that length. Ledder questioned the freshmen figure. Lindquist asked how students are notified of and encouraged to take the survey and whether it was

random. Bradford said students self-selected whether to take the survey, so it is limited in its validity. Moeller said sampling would be a big issue in that case.

Bradford said the Board discussed a voluntary system of accountability – getting institutions to report some mandatory information about their campuses with room for some personalized information as well. Moeller said this came out of the US News & World Report rankings of universities and a concern for the lack of accountability of the data used in those rankings. Ledder asked if there is data on average class size. Bradford noted examples where it did. Ledder wondered what percentage of classes contained over 100 students. Bradford said he believes the community college association is working on a similar system of accountability.

Bradford said the Regents heard a report on hiring and retention of women and people of color and how the university is doing on reaching employment goals – overall and by campus. Bradford said UNL tends to be slightly below its peer group though employment percentages of women and people of color are gradually increasing. He noted that for faculty of color there is a much greater gap between UNL and its peers, at 14.21% for UNL compared to 17.01% for the peer group. Ledder said that's actually pretty high given the ethnic make-up of Lincoln. Moeller noted that international faculty don't count in the percentages.

Bradford said Regent Ferlic gave a presentation on hiring and retention of minority faculty, and some of the wording bothered Bradford. He said Regent Ferlic started with a discussion of “mutant genes” and drew comparisons to minority populations, saying that you need mutant genes to help an organism survive a shock to the system. Bradford continued that Regent Ferlic referred to minority groups as “racially disadvantaged” and that the university retains a higher percentage of Asian faculty because they are “more stoic.” Moeller asked if the media representatives were there to hear Regent Ferlic's comments. Bradford said they were and he was surprised nothing was noted in news accounts of the meeting. Moeller asked if Chancellor Perlman had any reaction to the comments. Bradford said he e-mailed the Chancellor and that the Chancellor didn't say much in response. Fech asked whether Regent Ferlic might have been implying that minorities might face tough disadvantages in the community or job market, and Bradford said Regent Ferlic explained he had chosen not to use the term “minorities” since in the world view, what we might consider as a minority group is not actually in the minority. He said he believes Regent Ferlic meant well but that he used poor word choices.

5.2 Proposal Concerning Diversity Charge

Bradford said the question has been raised of how broadly the committee reviewing the proposal should construe the scope of the policy. Bradford said that according to Prof. Moshman, the committee will focus on the academic side of the issue. Bradford noted that Chancellor Perlman mentioned recruitment and retention of diverse faculty in his State of the University address and suggested the committee start with that. Bradford said that is ok with him, but that the committee should not be limited to that aspect. He wondered if it is possible to separate retention from the climate issues.

5.3 Discussion of Meeting with GEAC

Bradford met with the GEAC general education committee last Friday to discuss comments on proposals 3 and 4. He reported it is clear the rules on college voting will continue to require a unanimous vote, and that the committee doesn't think the proposals will gain college approval otherwise. He reported it is also clear the committee agreed with the Executive Committee's concerns that the assessment and recertification procedures were too vague. The committee also appeared to agree that the Senate should approve the proposals because of the need to amend the syllabus of the Curriculum Committee, though Bradford said he didn't think the proposals would be in completed form in time for the Senate's October meeting, particularly if there is another round of comments.

Bradford also reported some differences of opinion about who should be in charge of assessing the new general education program, with the possibility of a new ACE assessment committee, or possibly making assessment part of the university curriculum committee, perhaps as a sub-committee. He said the GEAC committee appears to favor a separate ACE assessment committee though at least one committee member from CBA suggested using the university-wide assessment committee for this purpose rather than creating a new one. The university assessment committee's composition includes Deans, administrators, and faculty. It includes the university's assessment coordinator Jessica Johnson, and Dean of Undergraduate Studies Kean chairs it. Ledder said that doesn't sound like a faculty committee.

Bradford said he was contacted by a member of the GEAC committee asking the Senate's view on whether the university assessment committee was the proper body to conduct ACE assessment. Bradford said he responded that he would ask the Executive Committee, but his personal opinion was there would be a better feedback loop if an ACE committee also handled program assessment. Bradford also said he doesn't know who appoints the university-wide committee, and there is no Senate representation on it. Moeller said she was involved when that committee was first created, and that it has become more of an administrator-driven group. Ledder says ACE assessment needs to be conducted by faculty, not administrators. Lindquist recommended against using the university-wide committee, and in favor of an ACE assessment committee, though Ledder worries making assessment part of the university curriculum committee might scare people from agreeing to serve; that the work load there is heavy already, and that people should be chosen for assessment who specifically want to work in that area. Ledder is also uncertain there needs to be equal representation from all colleges on the assessment committee, though Moeller said she thinks the committee needs to have people knowledgeable from each academic area in order to be able to do appropriate assessment.

Bradford asked if there was general agreement among members of the Executive Committee that the campus assessment committee should not also be the ACE assessment group. Moeller liked a layered process, with different people collecting data and then faculty doing the review and evaluation. She said we should look to groups on campus with special interests and expertise in teaching and learning such as the Academy

of Distinguished Teachers. Ledder suggested we might not be clear on terms – whether we were discussing assessment at the course level or program level. Bradford said program level assessment is a compilation of what is done at the course level. Ledder said he favors a recertification program where nobody says no – either yes, or ask for specific revisions before approval. He thinks it will be rare for a course not to be recertified. Bradford will draft a proposed response and let us review it before he respond to the committee member.

5.4 University Driving Policies

Fech has been asked by colleagues if the Senate would revisit the university's driving policies, particularly penalties for violating the policy. Bradford said he has sent Fech a link to the current policy that may respond to some of those concerns. Fech will review that information and see if more discussion is needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, September 19 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held at the 420 University Terrace, Room 202. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Rick Alloway, Secretary.