

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bolin, Bradford, Fech, Flowers, Hachtmann, La Cost, Ledder, Lindquist, Moeller, Prochaska Cue, Zimmers

Absent: Alloway, Rapkin

Date: Wednesday, September 19, 2007

Location: Faculty Senate Office, 420 University Terrace

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 3:02 p.m.

2.0 Dr. Hawkey, Director of Registration and Records

2.1 Releasing Grade Distributions

Bradford stated that the Committee wanted to talk with Hawkey about UNL releasing grade distributions to pickaprof.com.

Hawkey stated that a number of years ago pickaprof filed a freedom of information complaint in order to get access to grade distribution for courses. The agreement made between UNL and pickaprof was that UNL would provide grade distributions when there is a course with multiple sections and with an enrollment of 15 or higher. This amounts to approximately 350 courses for the fall semester. He reported that when pickaprof has made a request for the grade distributions UNL has complied. He noted that the distributions were given for academic years 2004-05, 2005-06, and fall of 2006-07 but no request has been made for this last spring semester.

Hawkey pointed out that pickaprof claims to provide great information on professors but they really don't. He noted that a person has to join in order to get access to all of the information they have but the company does not have information on all courses at UNL. He noted that pickaprof does have an agreement with Nebraska Bookstore. This is an agreement that allows pickaprof to expand its services by offering a textbook exchange program.

Hawkey stated that in terms of grade distribution, they are not released in raw forms outside of the university. He noted that departments receive grade distributions but the distributions are not kept in any written form by the Office of Registration and Records.

Bradford asked what the basis is for not releasing grade distributions for single instructor courses. Hawkey stated that the university's general counsel ruled that the distributions are used in the evaluation process of an instructor and are therefore considered part of the personnel file and are considered privileged information.

Bradford stated that the Law College posts the grade distribution for courses. Hawkey pointed out that this is not a practice done in most colleges.

Prochaska Cue stated that she teaches a course each fall semester that has only one section and yet when she went to pickaprof she was able to bring up the grade distribution for the course. Hawkey stated that this is not possible because he checked to see if the grade distribution for that particular course was given to pickaprof and it was not. He asked if she joined pickaprof. Prochaska Cue reported that she did not join. Hawkey pointed out that Prochaska Cue did not see the actual grade distribution for that course. He noted that unless a person joins as a member of pickaprof they do not get access to grade distributions.

Fech asked if the point of pickaprof is to determine which instructor is easier. Moeller pointed out that students making this decision based solely on grade distribution are making an assumption. She noted that grades are also a reflection of the pedagogy a professor uses that may improve achievement significantly. Hawkey noted that in some cases written reviews are given about the professor. He pointed out that these are supposed to be policed by pickaprof and any derogatory comments are supposed to be removed.

Fech asked if it costs students to join pickaprof. Hawkey stated that there is no cost involved. Fech noted that the program might be beneficial to some students if there is a professor who will only give one A each semester.

Hawkey stated that pickaprof has made a co-marketing agreement with Facebook so students can meet people who are taking the same course. He pointed out that they are advertising that students can find friends who want to take the class together. LaCost noted that there is a high level interest in the grades that a professor gives.

Bradford stated that when the grading system was changed Hawkey gave an analysis of the grades. Bradford asked if the grade distribution stayed the same. Hawkey noted that there was no significant change in the grade distribution with the new grading system.

Fech stated that he recalls there being problems with senior checks and an instructor not being able to give a lower grade in a course than what was reported during the senior check. Hawkey stated that if his office is aware that a grade is coming in late they will work with the professor but they need to be concerned with the student as well. He noted that since the change in the final exam schedule there has not been as many problems.

3.0 Announcements.

No announcements were made.

4.0 Approval of 9/12/07 Minutes

The minutes were approved as amended.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Forums of ACE Proposals

Lindquist reported that only a small group of faculty members attended the forum on East Campus. He noted that they raised similar issues to those raised by the Executive Committee. Moeller reported that a group of approximately 30 faculty members attended the City Campus forum. She stated that the two main topics of discussion at the City Campus forum was what body will be responsible for the oversight of the ACE program and the unanimity voting issue. She stated that there was also discussion about how to deal with waivers which are not addressed in the proposals. Bradford noted that this was raised in the GEAC meeting. He noted that this is being considered by GEAC.

Moeller reported that recertification was another issue that was raised. She noted that it is clear that there is still a lot of work that needs to be done on proposals 3 and 4.

Moeller stated that a richer discussion may ensue from a panel consisting of campus experts on assessment. Representatives from departments and the Senate could be invited to the discussion.

Bradford stated that he thought there would be greater participation in the discussion but he thought it might be happening by email but this is not occurring either. Flowers pointed out that some people are perceiving proposals 3 and 4 as not being far enough along. He stated that when course lists surface and people see who will benefit then issues of procedures and assessment will start to rise. Moeller stated that having some sample courses of what constitutes an ACE course would be helpful.

Bradford asked if there was any discussion on the revisions that have been made to proposal 1. Lindquist stated that the issue or recertification came up a few times and someone raised concern about whether the new program would work with DARS. Moeller stated the advisors had a lot of specific questions.

Moeller stated that the question was asked whether proposal one would need to be voted on again since it has been revised. Bradford stated that there would need to be a vote on the proposal. He noted that the ACE committees are hoping to get proposals 3 and 4 out by October 15th.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Review of the Changes to ACE Proposal 1

Bradford asked if the Committee saw any problems with the revisions to proposal 1. Ledder stated that outcome 3 still needs some tweaking but he believes the ACE committees are planning to do this. Moeller stated that overall she thinks the revisions look good. She noted that there were not many objections to the changes at the forum.

Flowers stated that there could be some discussion on outcomes 4 – 6. Ledder stated that at present some courses could meet two outcomes and it will be up to the student to decide which outcome a course will meet. He pointed out that there is the difficulty of how the student records will be kept to know which course is meeting specific outcomes.

He noted that if one course is made a default outcome then it would simplify the recordkeeping; the student would then submit a form to choose the other outcome.

Moeller noted that Janovy reminded the faculty that the ACE courses represent only 30 credit hours out of a total of 128.

Ledder stated that he thought it was an excellent meeting at the forum and has the feeling that there is now a consensus that will be reached. Moeller agreed. Ledder noted that both sides of the argument for the ACE program seem to be working towards a compromise. He stated that he thought the FAQ's were really good. Moeller reported that there was discussion on having a checklist for departments to use when they are trying to get a course listed as meeting the outcomes. She noted that one of the purposes of the ACE program is to get students more involved in the learning process and to assist students in understanding, articulating and demonstrating what they have learned and are able to do at the end of a course, internship, or degree at UNL.

Ledder stated that he believes there will be a lot of improvements with the ACE program. He stated that there will be intellectual honesty that is now lacking with the IS program since some of the courses in the IS program no longer qualify as being an IS course. He stated that he believes that simplifying the process for students will be a tremendous improvement. He pointed out that allowing flexibility in the program is important too and allowing off campus activities to count needs to be included in the program. He noted that the program will give us a way of communicating our success to our constituents.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, September 26 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.