

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bradford, Fech, Franti, Hachtmann, Jackson, LaCost, Lindquist, McCollough, Prochaska-Cue, Rapkin, Schubert, Zimmers

Absent: Ledder

Date: Wednesday, October 1, 2008

Location: Faculty Senate Office

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

Prochaska-Cue called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

2.0 Professor Bryant

2.1 AAUP

Prochaska-Cue stated that there has been some discussion about AAUP lately and a number of people have indicated that they didn't understand what the AAUP does as an organization.

Bryant reported that he has just completed his term as President of the State Conference of AAUP. He stated that there are six institutions which are part of the Nebraska State Conference: UNL, UNO, Creighton University, Hastings, Midland Lutheran, and Wesleyan. He noted that there are two kinds of AAUP chapters: a collective bargaining chapter and the conference chapter. He pointed out that UNO is the only collective bargaining chapter.

Bryant stated that UNO has a lot of members in the AAUP and in fact it is the UNO chapter that generates most of the money for the Nebraska Chapter. He noted that UNL has been struggling for years to have an AAUP presence on campus. He stated that in the past it used to bother him that the faculty were not more actively involved in AAUP here but he realized that the Faculty Senate does a lot of what AAUP does except for collective bargaining. He pointed out that the campus has benefited a lot from AAUP and some UNL faculty members have held prominent positions at the national level of the organization but he is unsure if there is an active group of members on campus at this time.

Bryant stated that one question that needs to be considered is whether the Senate wants to do anything about possibly revising AAUP here. He noted that Hastings is very active and so is Midland Lutheran.

Bryant stated that the national AAUP organization is struggling whether they are a collective bargaining group or a conference group. He noted that they are having financial difficulties and currently the organization is being run by a professor in Illinois who is making efforts to reorganize the AAUP.

Fech asked if Dana College has shown any interest in becoming a member. Bryant stated that the Nebraska State Conference extended an invitation to Dana College for them to join but they have not expressed any interest.

Lindquist asked if Bryant could spell out the difference between the collective bargaining side and the conference side of AAUP. Bryant reported that since the federal government defines AAUP as a collective bargaining unit there are many forms that must be filled out by the State Conferences. He noted that in order to have elections for officers a paper ballot has to be sent to the home address of all members. He stated that the collective bargaining thrust of AAUP has created a lot of burdens on what should be simple matters.

Bryant reported that the membership in AAUP has gone down significantly, probably by 30% even though the number of people working in higher education has increased.

Lindquist asked for further explanation of the State Conference. Bryant stated that the State Conference is composed of a group of chapters but it is not a collective bargaining unit. He noted that membership to AAUP is voluntary and cost approximately \$125 a year. He pointed out that the fee is problematical and that he has tried to get the national chapter to give members a break on the dues.

Bradford asked if the AAUP members from UNO pay the same amount. Bryant stated that he thinks faculty members at UNO pay more because they are a collective bargaining unit.

Lindquist asked what the conference chapter can do for an individual member. Bryant reported that the Academic Rights & Responsibilities Procedures come from the AAUP. He stated that there is the possibility of assistance from AAUP if someone in the administration did something terrible to the faculty or an individual faculty member. Other than that he is not sure that there are a lot of particular benefits of being a member.

Prochaska-Cue noted that the journal includes information about cases of infringement on academic freedom at other universities which gives you a bigger picture of what is going on around the country. Bryant noted that the journal provides data as well.

Lindquist asked if there were distinct differences between advocacy units and collective bargaining units. Bryant stated that there is. As a State Conference Chapter members can go and participate in the national conference which usually deals with membership and how to increase it. He reported that he has never attended the collective bargaining conference but has heard that the AAUP is talking about the possibility of merging with the AFL-CIO.

Bryant noted that the AAUP reviews a list of institutions that have been proposed for censure which usually occurs when the administration is trying to or has fired someone without due process. He pointed out that there is a long list of these institutions and over a period of time being on the list has negatively impacted the institution in being able to recruit and retain people.

Bradford asked if there are only a few Research I schools that are collective bargaining campuses. Bryant stated that there are only a few and this is a real issue. McCollough asked if a campus could be a collective bargaining unit without being unionized. Bradford stated that collective bargaining and unionization are essentially synonymous.

Prochaska-Cue pointed out that in the last 10 years she has seen a move to make universities more like a business. She stated that this is a real concern because universities are not a business. Bryant stated that guest speakers are still brought in at the state conference meetings.

Prochaska-Cue stated that the AAUP has served as a watch dog for academic freedom. She noted that it is independent of any university and can act independently.

Bradford asked if the AAUP has any contact with AFCON (Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska). Bryant stated that the only contact is that many members belong to both of these groups. He noted that AFCON looks at academic freedom for everyone, not just institutions.

Franti noted that the collective bargaining proposal wasn't passed 25 years ago at UNL. He asked what the proposal was and why it didn't pass. Bryant stated that he believed what happened is that the UNL campus saw how well UNO was doing with faculty salaries and decided to try and unionize so that it could have a stronger voice in the matter. He noted that the Law College decided it would organize independently from the rest of the faculty. Bryant asked if the Law College agreed to accept AAUP as a bargaining unit. Bradford stated that the College went to court over it but he didn't believe AAUP was their bargaining unit. Bryant stated that he is not sure how far the interest was in the AAUP at the time. Prochaska-Cue stated that there was a vote of the faculty on whether to become a member of AAUP. She stated that it is her understanding that the vote was close. She noted that at the time there were more contentious issues between east and city campus. Bryant pointed out that recognizing the two different cultures of the campuses would be critical if the faculty wanted to consider joining the AAUP. Rapkin stated that he understands there was a sense that the interests of the faculty were not being actively supported by the administration at the time of the vote.

Bryant asked why the Committee was interested in the AAUP now. Prochaska-Cue stated that Bradford's exit speech as President of the Senate stirred some faculty members to suggest that the Senate take a look at AAUP again, particularly since UNO is getting higher salary increases.

Bryant suggested that the Executive Committee not act on this unless it really wants to do it because the first hurdle will be to get by the Chancellor. He stated that the Committee will really have to battle for it. Bradford asked for clarification about the Chancellor being a hurdle. Bryant stated that if the Senate is going to do something that the Chancellor is going to fight then it needs to be willing to fight strongly about it. He stated that AAUP would probably be delighted to help strategize and would probably be willing to put workers here in Lincoln.

Franti asked if the AAUP bargains on behalf of the staff. Bryant stated that he suspects they might but he is not sure. He stated they often have their on separate bargaining units. Griffin noted that there is an organization called 9to5 that works on behalf of staff employees.

Bryant stated that when he served on the Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee (FCAC) he found it to be disturbing because no one on the committee was pushing for the faculty. There was this consensus that faculty salaries should only be at the midpoint of our peers. Bradford stated that the university tries to stay up to par with UNO and UNK but in the meantime we are falling further behind our peers. Bryant stated that he did not think the FCAC was an effective means of arguing for faculty salaries. Bradford stated that the FCAC and the Senate are arguing in support of faculty salaries but these groups cannot force the issue whereas a union can.

McCollough noted that she hears from many faculty members throughout the campus that they are upset about their salaries. She noted that the “stars” are being rewarded well but those that are doing a good job are not.

Prochaska-Cue stated that at the last Board of Regents meeting information was distributed that UNMC in two years will be getting closer to the midpoint of their peers but at UNL we are moving further away from the midpoint.

Fech asked if anyone had ever worked on a unionized campus. Bryant stated that he did not work at a university but as a public school teacher he was unionized. Fech stated that he heard from a faculty member who worked on a unionized campus in Canada that it was a positive experience. Franti stated that at unionized campuses the union decides how much the increases will be rather than the dean, Chancellor or unit head. He noted that there is usually not a big difference in the salary increase between members. He noted that unionized campuses have more flexibility in raising the salaries of groups of people who are well below what they should be getting paid.

Schubert asked where the incentive would be to work harder if everyone was to get the same amount of salary increase. He stated that it sounds somewhat socialized. Bradford pointed out that experience does appear to support this because merit increases are minimal when a campus is unionized and there are problems in retaining top faculty members. He noted that for people who do not have the option of moving, being unionized could be better.

Schubert suggested that pressure needs to be placed on the administration about faculty salaries. He wondered how money goes down to people who are not the stars of their department. Bradford stated that he thinks there are other negative effects of unionization but if the political action isn't supporting the general people than unionization may be the way to go. Schubert stated that mechanisms are needed that distribute the funds fairly. He pointed out that both types of professors are needed; those that bring in research grants and those that bring in the students.

Bradford noted that the FCAC is an advisory committee only and half of the members are administrators. He stated that even if a review process of salary increases could be created the administrators would probably reject it because they do not want to be restricted. He pointed out that the distribution of the money is not the main concern rather it is that there is not enough money and this is a legislative decision. He stated that some of the Regents and administrators are not pushing to get more money for faculty salaries.

Prochaska-Cue noted that if, for example, a department gets 4% for salary increases but wants to give some of its faculty members more than 4% than they take it from others in the department. Bryant stated that the FCAC tries to bump up the amount but the distribution is determined by the administrators. Bradford pointed out that the FCAC has nothing to do with the total number but with the distribution of how much goes to the departments, Deans, Vice Chancellors, and Chancellor. Bryant suggested that one avenue for improvement might be the FCAC and how it functions. Bradford noted that the FCAC has some effect on how the salary money can be distributed. He stated that the real problem is that we only get 4.5% for salary increases when we really need 7.5% or more.

Fech stated that the last good increases came in the 1980's, and we had a good run of three years in a row. Bradford stated that people shouldn't be surprised if we see a cut or at least no increases next year.

McCullough asked if the university lobbyists are trying to increase faculty salaries. Bradford stated that he thinks there is some lobbying going on but he thinks it is fair to say that it is not a high priority of the lobbyists.

Fech asked if the FCAC considers benefits other than salaries. Bradford stated that it does now because of the change in the Employees Benefits Committee which now has the faculty members of the FCAC serving on it. He pointed out that other benefits are really determined in Central Administration.

Griffin asked what is happening with the Wellness Program. Prochaska-Cue reported that she will be meeting with President Milliken in two weeks and will ask about it.

The Committee thanked Professor Bryant for meeting with them.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 October 7th Senate Meeting

Griffin confirmed that Professor Schneiderjans will be speaking at the October 7th Senate meeting in support of the Nebraska Civil Rights Initiative.

4.0 Approval of 9/24/08 Minutes

McCullough moved and Bradford seconded approval of the minutes as amended. Motion approved.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Research Policy on Professional Misconduct

Prochaska-Cue reported that she met with Chancellor Perlman last week and he suggested that the Executive Committee work directly with the Office of Research to resolve the problem. Griffin noted that she contacted Dan Vagird, Compliance Officer, and Associate Vice Chancellor Espy to schedule a meeting with them and she is waiting for a reply.

5.2 Information Technology Survey

Prochaska-Cue thanked Franti and Jackson for their input and work in getting the response from the Committee together. She noted that the survey was sent over on Tuesday.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Report on Meeting with Chancellor Perlman

Prochaska-Cue noted that she met with the Chancellor briefly and pointed out that no administrators are available to speak to the Senate on October 7th. She stated that the Chancellor suggested Vice Chancellor Franco. She stated that given the short notice it would be best to invite Vice Chancellor Franco to speak at another meeting since there are many things that Student Affairs is doing. Griffin noted that the UNL Bylaws states that the Chancellor is to meet with the Senate Executive Committee twice a month although one of those meetings can be waived if he speaks to the full Senate and the Committee is to meet with the Vice Chancellors bimonthly.

6.2 Report on the Dialogue on Student Engagement

LaCost stated that the people who attended were very enthusiastic but only a small number of people showed up. She stated that many people were focused on issues related to what the administration should be doing to free their time so they can spend more time with students. She noted that after reviewing the National Student Survey Engagement statistics there was not much time for people to really address the issue of how to engage students. She stated that a summary will be written of what was discussed. She stated that the hope is to move forward to allow people to come together to pursue the topic further.

LaCost reported that one participant stated that he teaches approximately 300 undergraduate students a week and the students come to him asking procedural questions

about the university. These kinds of questions should be addressed by someone else and there needs to be better information for undergraduate students.

6.3 Survey on Faculty Salaries

Franti asked if the Committee was going to do anything more about the faculty salary issue. Bradford pointed out that publicity can help. McCollough suggested meeting with the university lobbyist. Prochaska-Cue stated that this would be a good idea.

Franti pointed out that we are supposed to be a top research university but the salaries aren't equivalent to a top research university. He stated that he would like to learn more about the FCAC, what the role is and what it could be in the future. Bradford stated that the bylaws would need to be changed in order to make it a more powerful committee. He stated that he did not think that committee is the answer but the Senate might want to create its own separate faculty committee. LaCost stated that a faculty committee could direct the members of the FCAC on issues relating to faculty salaries.

Lindquist noted that as a faculty we have become quite complacent. He stated that a more forceful vision of what the faculty expects might be needed. He pointed out that in a way the Senate is a bargaining unit for faculty salaries. Bradford stated that the Senate cannot be a collective bargaining unit but it can be a voice for faculty salaries. Rapkin suggested that we demand that our administrators be a stronger voice for faculty salaries. He pointed out that there are two ways in which market forces play into faculty salaries. One is that a faculty member does well and gets offers from other universities. The other is when a market outside of education, such as businesses, vies for professors for employment.

LaCost noted that the compression issue is the biggest problem in many units. Bradford stated that the mobility of a person plays into this.

Franti suggested that the Committee get a broader consensus from the faculty on how they feel about salaries. He pointed out that this will help determine whether people really want the Senate to pursue this issue. The Committee agreed that conducting a survey of the faculty would be a good idea. Prochaska-Cue asked the Committee members to each bring one question for the survey to next week's meeting.

Franti wondered why the goal is to get faculty salaries only to the midpoint of our peers. Rapkin asked if there was any data generated over a period of time about the elusive midpoint of our peers' salary. Bradford reported that Dr. Nunez has some information.

Prochaska-Cue stated that she will ask President Milliken whether the change in the peer group for the administrators' recent salary increases has any implication for the peer group for faculty salaries.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, October 8th at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office.

The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and David Rapkin, Secretary.