

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Fech, Franti, Hachtmann, Konecky, LaCost, Lindquist, McCollough, Prochaska-Cue

Absent: Bradford, Rapkin, Schubert, Zimmers

Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2009

Location: 201 Canfield Administration

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 3:03 p.m.

2.0 SVCAA Couture

2.1 Update on Proposed English Proficiency Requirements

SVCAA Couture reported that she has answers to some of the questions that the Executive Committee has regarding the proposed changes to the English proficiency requirements. She stated that the Admissions Office has found that only a small number of international students state that they have graduated from English-speaking high schools. She stated that the changes that recommend that we accept graduation from an English-speaking high school as demonstration of English proficiency are more likely to benefit students that already here in the United States but who have indicated that their first language is not English. She stated that she does not think there will be any problems properly identifying international high schools that teach courses in English.

Franti suggested that the policy say domestic high school to distinguish from international high schools. SVCAA Couture pointed out that there are international high schools that offer courses in English and we would want to apply these criteria to the students from these schools.

Prochaska-Cue stated that she knows of a high school in Tajikistan that teaches courses in English but when some of these students were brought here they had difficulty because they could not write or speak English very well. SVCAA Couture stated that Admissions has a published list of international high schools that teach courses in English. She stated that she will ask about the qualifications that are required to make this list. Prochaska-Cue noted that another point with some international high schools is that students can get a diploma if they have the money. SVCAA Couture reported that this is an issue that the administration is trying to guard against and it is a particular concern for graduate student enrollment. She noted that the Graduate Studies Office is aware of this and looks to ensure that a student is capable of being in a graduate program here and has earned degrees from accredited institutions.

Franti wondered if there was a rating for certifying these international high schools. He pointed out that this would verify the legitimacy of the English program in these schools for everyone. SVCAA Couture stated that she will check this out.

SVCAA Couture stated that all credit courses that are proposed to be a part of the Intensive English Program will go to the University Curriculum Committee for approval.

SVCAA Couture stated that colleges and departments will still have the potential for making specific requirements for their programs. She stated that she is urging all colleges to send faculty representatives to the March 5th meeting on the English Proficiency Requirements so that they can review whether their own departments might need to adjust their requirements. She pointed out that the English Proficiency Requirements policy has not been examined for a long time but should be done periodically to see if we are doing the best job that we can for these students. She stated that she does not want faculty members to think that the administration is assuming the responsibility of setting a particular acceptance score for departments. She noted that national experts will be speaking at the March 5th meeting and she would appreciate the Senate's help in making departments aware of this meeting. She pointed out that this is a faculty issue and one that the faculty will have to respond to in the long run.

SVCAA Couture stated that a flyer has been sent to deans and chairs of departments on the March 5th meeting but she will forward one to the Senate Office. She noted that the experts speaking at the meeting will be here all day to answer questions and educate faculty members on how to set the English proficiency scores. Prochaska-Cue stated that she will announce the meeting at her department meeting and will encourage senators to do the same.

SVCAA Couture stated that efforts are already in place with Student Affairs and with International Affairs to give international students a better orientation on UNL. She reported that the Writing Center on campus is going to give more support to these students as well. She noted that the present international student enrollment is 2.7% at the undergraduate level. She stated that the administration is hoping to raise this and noted that we are low compared to other Big 12 schools. She pointed out that in order to recruit more international students we need to have support systems in place.

SVCAA Couture stated that the English proficiency situation will continue to be monitored and the plan is to have a good set of activities in place to ensure that international students get a good education at UNL.

2.2 Update on Proposal to Adopt Best Practices to Recruit and Retain a Diverse Faculty

SVCAA Couture reported that she received the Executive Committee's response on the proposal. She noted that she will be meeting on February 26th with Assistant to the Chancellor Crump, Associate Vice Chancellor Jacobson, and Associate Vice Chancellor

Fritz to discuss all of the recommendations and suggestions made by various groups on the proposal.

SVCAA Couture noted that one of the primary concerns of the Executive Committee is the lack of direction in the area on sustaining diverse faculty members. She stated that consideration is being given to making a recommendation to deans that they conduct a third year review interview for faculty members on tenure track lines. She pointed out that there needs to be more attention paid to how various units are handling third year reviews. She reported that there will be a posting on the Academic Affairs website that shows how all colleges now address the third year review. She asked that anyone with specific ideas on this topic let her know.

SVCAA Couture pointed out that each department has its own culture and is working through faculty recruitment issues. She noted that some practices that work well for one department might not work well for another department. As a result the idea was not to get too prescriptive with the proposed best practices. She stated that departments will need to adopt the best practices that will work for them.

SVCAA Couture noted that the Executive Committee was concerned about intervention of the search process. She stated that the described search process currently allows for administrative intervention at any time and the proposal is not looking for any additional intervention. She reported that the proposal provides flash points for deans and chairs to use to pay more attention to how they conduct searches.

SVCAA Couture stated that the definition of diversity used in the proposal is the one defined by the Board of Regents. She pointed out that no arbitrary numbers are going to be picked for departments to try and achieve. She stated that what is being asked is for departments to pay attention to the pools of available candidates as defined nationally and to demonstrate that they have paid attention.

Fech stated that it is unclear what is meant in the proposal by reviewing beyond the candidates. SVCAA Couture stated that one way of paying attention is knowing what percentage of Ph.D. graduates are minorities and what efforts are being made to seek out these applicants. She stated that the administration wants to see some evidence that a department has acted on the information that it has regarding the availability of diverse candidates. She noted that departments are simply being asked to demonstrate that they have given some thought to creating a diverse faculty. Franti asked if these forms of evidence can be clearly established. SVCAA Couture stated that departments will simply be asked if they have looked into the data to see if they know about the available minority candidates. She stated that there needs to be some evidence in the department's and dean's planning that they show responsiveness to the issue of diversity. She noted that this information is not currently collected.

Fech pointed out that the proposal does not want to be too dogmatic about how departments can show responsiveness because the situation for recruiting a diverse faculty differs so much from department to department. SVCAA Couture stated that the

administration has learned that if you pay attention to an issue people are responsive to it but one size does not fit all. She stated that the administration is learning, based on information from experts who have looked at this specific issue nationally, that certain levels of prescriptions do not guarantee success.

Franti stated that it is still unclear what the definition of diversity is in the document. He noted that the first part talks about women and people of color yet later on in the document the language refers to minorities without specifically stating what constitutes a minority. He pointed out that people have different impressions of what is diversity. He suggested that the Regent's goal on diversity be clearly stated in the proposal. He noted that diversity could be intellectual, political, or cultural. SVCAA Couture agreed that diversity has various definitions but for the purpose of the document diversity is defined by the Board of Regents. She stated that she will make sure that the Regents' definition is clearly defined in the document. Fech pointed out that the same language for diversity needs to be consistent throughout the document. SVCAA Couture noted that this is a good point and will see that this is corrected in the document.

Franti asked if the faculty advisory committee mentioned in the document is going to be kept. SVCAA Couture stated that the administration would like to have a faculty advisory committee and is seeking individuals who might be interested in serving on this committee.

Franti stated that he does not think the faculty advisory committee should exist because he does not think it is effective. He asked how the administration is going to get faculty to agree on diversity. SVCAA Couture pointed out that the aim of the faculty committee is to assist us in ways of handling the four different activities highlighted in the proposal. She noted that there have been groups within the university that have researched what best practices will succeed. She stated that the administration is looking for people who have interest in this area and have examined the issue. She reported that she sees the faculty advisory committee as a means to provide useful information to departments.

Prochaska-Cue asked when SVCAA Couture needed nominations of faculty members for this committee. SVCAA Couture stated that she would like to have them in a couple of weeks. Prochaska-Cue stated that she will make an announcement about it at the March 3rd meeting.

Franti asked if the proposal has been approved yet. SVCAA Couture stated that this is an administrative proposal that has been discussed at two or three deans' retreats and has been presented to the Academic Planning Committee and to the Senate Executive Committee. She noted that it is an administrative proposal to augment practices that already exist and it is designed to assure that all of our search practices are the best that we have.

Franti asked when it will become a final draft. SVCAA Couture stated that the intent is to have it completed after the February 26th meeting with a move towards implementation by the end of the semester.

McCollough asked if anyone has to vote on the proposal. SVCAA Couture stated that it is an administrative directive so it does not require a vote.

McCollough stated that it is unclear in the document who will be doing the scouting for the departments. She noted that minority candidates often attend conferences that some people in departments might not normally go to. She stated that it does not appear that money will be provided for members to go to these different conferences to help scout out potential candidates.

SVCAA Couture reported that the proposal is not a policy document. It is simply an effort to assure that we have support for our faculty and making the best effort that we can to get a diverse faculty. There is no call for any intervention beyond what is currently in place.

McCollough asked who is going to cover the scouting. SVCAA Couture pointed out that every department does when it is looking for new people. She noted that departments have control over how to use their resources to get diverse people.

Franti stated that the administration might have trouble getting the faculty to buy into this proposal. He pointed out that two previous efforts on diversity failed. He stated that this is a new approach of creating diversity without defining what it is. SVCAA Couture stated that it is not creating a new definition of diversity because the document is using the definition defined by the Board of Regents. Franti stated that he is talking about the perception of diversity. He noted that it means more than how the Regents define it. He pointed out that the faculty members in his unit are more diverse now, since many of them come from different countries, than ever before but it wouldn't count because they are not women and people of color. McCollough suggested that the proposal refer to these specific groups throughout the document. SVCAA Couture stated that she will have the document modified to make it clear that the document addresses diversity as defined by our Regents.

2.3 Budget

Prochaska-Cue noted that the forecasting board will be meeting soon. SVCAA Couture pointed out that what the board says could have ramifications for the university. She reported that the Chancellor will be meeting with the Academic Planning Committee tomorrow.

Prochaska-Cue stated that in reviewing the Procedures to be Invoked for Significant Budget Reallocations and Reductions she is wondering what step of the process we are in. SVCAA Couture suggested that the Executive Committee speak directly to the Chancellor about it.

Prochaska-Cue stated that faculty members are confused as to why some departments are being asked to develop scenarios of higher percentage budget cuts. She asked what the rationale is for this. SVCAA Couture stated that a formula was developed by Vice

Chancellor Jackson in consultation with the Chancellor. SVCAA Couture stated that the different percentages include the assigned minus amounts that departments were given this year. She noted that not many departments have paid this amount off, as a result the assigned minus is part of the calculations which could account for the differences in the percentages.

Franti asked why across the board cuts are being considered when vertical cuts are to be made. SVCAA Couture pointed out that although each department is to consider budget reduction scenarios, it does not mean that each of the scenarios they purpose will in fact take place. She pointed out that this is a study being done so information can be gathered on what could be cut and what the ramifications would be if the university must deal with significant reductions. She noted that the legislature will not decide on their funding for the university's budget until the end of May or later so nothing is definite at this time. The exercise is being done so the university can have some ideas of what to do and what ramifications there will be if we receive a large cut in the budget.

Franti asked why Programs of Excellence are off the agenda when it comes to possible budget cuts. SVCAA Couture stated that this is the Board of Regents decision.

2.4 Other Issues

SVCAA Couture reported that a lot of good things are happening on campus. She stated that she recently attended three accreditation visits and indications are that they will all be successful. She stated that it was pleasant to hear the teams say such complimentary things about the faculty and students of UNL.

SVCAA Couture stated that the campus is making real strides in international work particularly in the past few years. She noted that many faculty members have been involved to make this success.

McCollough stated that members of her department have worked in India and other countries but wondered who can be of assistance to help establish communications with professors in other countries. SVCAA Couture stated that Associate Vice Chancellor Wilson and Associate Vice Chancellor Fritz can help with this drawing people together who are working in the same areas of interests but at other universities.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Parking Advisory Committee Minutes

Prochaska-Cue reported that the Parking Advisory Committee has approved an increase in parking fees of up to \$2.50 a month. She noted that Professor Albrecht, an appointed faculty member, voted against the increase. McCollough stated that she recalls hearing that the increase in fees would be continual because of the construction of the garages. Prochaska-Cue stated that Professor Albrecht reported that the increase in a couple of years will be much larger.

4.0 Approval of 2/11/09 Minutes

McCollough moved and Konecky seconded approval of the minutes as amended. Motion approved.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Life Sciences Review

Prochaska-Cue noted that a letter from Dean Waller was sent to IANR faculty about the life sciences review. Lindquist stated that the faculty involved with the review team should be given the charge along with the questions that were asked regarding the life sciences programs. Prochaska-Cue stated that the issue will definitely be on the agenda when the Executive Committee meets with the Chancellor on March 11th.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Resignation of Professor Ledder from Executive Committee

Prochaska-Cue stated that due to a class conflict and other commitments Professor Ledder is resigning from the Executive Committee. She noted that his term on the Committee was to expire in April. She stated that she will try to appoint someone from the senate to complete the remainder of his term.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:48 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, February 25th 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.