

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bolin, Fech, Flowers, Konecky, McCollough, Prochaska-Cue, Rapkin, Shea, Stock

Absent: Franti, LaCost, Lindquist, Schubert

Date: September 2, 2009

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

Fech called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Perlman, SVC Couture, VC Owens

2.1 Proposed Revisions to the Conflict of Interest Policy

Fech asked the Chancellor if he could provide some clarifications on the proposed revisions. Chancellor Perlman noted that he has not had the opportunity to review the proposed policy in detail, but the major changes are to reduce the language in the policy and to have each campus develop their own policy. The campus policies will have some recordkeeping component to them. He noted that there is currently no recordkeeping on cases of conflict of interest. He pointed out that no major changes leap out in the policy.

Chancellor Perlman reported that the new policy has a provision for institutional conflicts of interest. He stated that most of this would be in the research enterprise. He noted that details of the campus policy will be determined at the campus level. He stated that, to a certain degree, we already have a conflict of interest policy in regards to federal guidelines which VC Paul has reviewed.

Chancellor Perlman stated that President Milliken wants to have a new policy completed by November so he is looking for quick feedback on the proposed changes.

Fech stated that the timing is right to update the policy with the plans for Innovation Campus because there might be some kinds of ventures that might cross the line with respect to conflicts of interest. He noted that the Executive Committee has a copy of the proposed revisions and will discuss it at next week's meeting.

2.2 Update on the Best Practices to Recruit and Retain a Diverse Faculty Policy

SVC Couture noted that the Executive Committee and other groups previously reviewed the best practices initiative and the plan is to have it implemented this year. She reported that the first step was to appoint the faculty advisory committee. This committee met for the first time yesterday. She stated that this committee plans to solicit, from interested

groups named in the initiative (Chancellor's Commission on the Status of Women, Chancellor's Commission on the Status of People of Color, GLBT, and the Faculty Senate) views that should be considered by the deans when they are adopting practices for a diverse faculty. She stated that the goal is to give a report to the Deans Council in December. She stated that concurrently, workshops are being held in conjunction with the Advance initiative (creating an environment for the STEM programs to thrive in) that will also be helpful in identifying best practices.

SVC Couture reported that for the first Advance workshop, the plan is to have the Recruit-NE Committee present information to department chairs regarding where pools of candidates are available for recruiting. The Promote-NE Committee will report their findings on best practices. She stated that the workshop will be rounded out with a theater performance by a group from Cornell University who demonstrate the kinds of dynamics that are involved in faculty search committee meetings. She stated that there will be two following workshops with experts in the field of recruiting a diverse faculty.

SVC Couture stated that the deans have been asked to develop best practice strategic plans by spring. She stated that there will be opportunities for the deans to talk with the advisory committee prior to their writing the plans.

SVC Couture stated that the idea is to try and link the best practices with the Advance project. She noted that one requirement of the Advance initiative is that there be specific strategies in place to help recruit women in the STEM fields beyond the tenure of the grant.

2.3 Life Sciences Curriculum

VC Owens reported that he and SVC Couture just met with Deans Manderscheid and Waller to discuss this topic and they are both ready to begin. They will be assisted by Associate VC Fritz and Associate VC Wilson. VC Owens noted that there will be discussions with faculty in CASNR and Arts & Sciences as well as with some professors in Engineering and other units with faculty active in the life sciences. He pointed out that one of the positive aspects of this life sciences curriculum reform is that the task will be narrower than the general education reform effort and, therefore, potentially could be less complicated to accomplish.

SVC Couture noted that there was a faculty forum last year on the life sciences review and there were some discussions at the forum on how we can create a core curriculum that would prepare students for a variety of majors within the life sciences. She stated that the administrators felt that the process used for the ACE general education curriculum has worked well and the two deans will be using a template of the elements of this process to model a process for developing a life sciences curriculum. She reported that there will be a lot of discussions with the faculty to get input on the curriculum once the process is announced.

Fech noted that there have been a number of concerns about the collaboration on the life sciences efforts. He stated that the Senate and the faculty realize this is an on-going

project and want to be interactive with the administration on the creation of the curriculum.

2.4 Update on Deans Searches

Fech asked for an update on the three dean searches. SVC Couture stated that the campus has been very busy with these three searches with some effort taking place each day. She stated that the search committee for the Dean of the Law College, headed by Dean Manderscheid, met with the faculty of that college yesterday. She stated that Professor Zellmer will co-chair the search committee.

SVC Couture stated that Dean Allen, chair of the search committee for the Dean of CBA, has talked with the CBA faculty. She noted that this committee is working with a commercial search firm which she hopes will do a good job of marketing UNL.

SVC Couture reported that Dean Oliva is the chair for the search committee for Dean of the College of Journalism and Mass Communications. He has met with the faculty of the college.

SVC Couture advises that anyone with suggestions for deans of these colleges should contact the chairs of these search committees.

2.5 External Letters of Review for Promotion and Tenure

Fech noted that the issue of external letters was part of the life sciences review. VC Owens stated that the life sciences review committee's advice is that departments across the UNL campus should use external letters of review for promotion and tenure evaluations. He pointed out that there were some units in the Institute that did not require them in the past. He stated that this is the only university where he worked where external letters were not required for all promotion and tenure considerations.

Flowers stated that the Executive Committee discussed the disparity that occurs between departments in the total number of external letters that are required. He pointed out that some units are insisting on a large number of external letters. Konecky noted that it was stated that one department was requiring 14 external letters. Flowers stated that this is imposing on people to write a lot of letters and when this large a number is required, the letters are not effective. He pointed out that some letters work well while others do not. He questioned what kind of effect these many letters would have on the decision, and there is a concern with balance and effectiveness. He stated that some kind of framework from the administration is needed so people have some kind of guidelines to use.

SVC Couture stated that most departments have three external letters but there are some departments that require a few more, often this is when someone does interdisciplinary work. She noted that on occasions, the faculty member going up for promotion might solicit letters on their own to include in the evidence. She stated that she does not recall any case having 14 letters. She noted that it is important to have external letters because they provide a lot of information and it also lets others know about our university. She stated that she would double check to see what is required by each department.

Rapkin noted that it is a trend nationally in the top universities to ask for 12 – 15 letters of reference. He pointed out that this kind of requirement here would create increasing levels of difficulty of getting external letters because people would become overloaded with these kinds of request.

McCullough stated that she recently heard in a meeting that a faculty person in a department was told they needed seven outside letters, and if being promoted to a full professor the letters of reference would need to come from other full professors. SVC Couture stated that she can understand why it would be helpful to see what others of a particular rank feel about the work that is being done by a faculty member. McCullough pointed out that it should not be a concrete expectation. SVC Couture stated that she will see if this is going on and have discussions with the deans about what is reasonable and appropriate to expect regarding requirements for outside letters. Stock stated that he can understand requiring four or five letters but it becomes more perfunctory after awhile. SVC Couture noted that there may be cases, for instance, where seven letters may be requested with the hope that four would actually be received.

Shea stated that there ought to be a fairly strong UNL wide policy on promotion and tenure that can be looked at closely by the administration to see if the policy is being followed. He pointed out that there are so many differences between colleges and deans that it can cause confusion. He stated that strong reasons should be given if a department deviates from the policy.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he would be a little uneasy about creating such a policy. He pointed out that promotion and tenure is a faculty matter. He noted that the campus administration has to approve what a faculty member does and this is how the minimum standard is set. He stated that the minimum standard could be enforced. He stated that when SVC Couture reads a file she expects to see some external letters but he doesn't feel that we should put a cap on what the number of letters should be.

Shea stated that the issue needs to be sorted out, is it faculty asking for all of these letters or is it the administration? He noted that what he is hearing is that faculty members are saying that too many letters are being required.

SVC Couture reported that she has had discussion with the deans about promotion and tenure and her office does send out some framework about how the process works. She noted that she has not seen what she would regard as excessive numbers of external letters and not a single faculty member has brought the issue to her during the time she has been at UNL, but she agreed that the issue does warrant discussions with the deans.

2.6 Budget Cuts and APC Hearings Updates

Fech noted that the next round of budget cuts will be on September 18th. He stated that he knows the university is working hard to find jobs for those who have lost positions but wondered how many were able to find a different position. Chancellor Perlman stated that he knows that three or four of the people have decided to retire, and one or two have

found employment outside the university, but there are still a substantial number who have not found employment yet. He noted that there is a person in Human Resources who is working with these people to try to find them a position.

Fech stated that there is some issue revolving around the technicians in IANR who are slated for possible cuts. He noted that the cut was procedurally handled in IANR but wondered how the hearings will go on these proposed cuts. VC Owens stated that he has not heard any news yet specifically about this proposed cut and the upcoming hearings and that most of these specific cuts will be handled at the department and unit level. He stated that there will be some technicians who are not working in areas that are competitive for grants and it may be difficult to find funding for them. An example might be teaching technicians and it might be necessary for them to be funded entirely on state funding while others who are working in grant competitive areas, such as research technicians, might be put on higher percentages of grant funding to help support, for example, the teaching technicians. It will primarily be up to departments and units to determine exactly how the technician will be paid. He pointed out that he does not think there will be a sudden reduction of technicians and the process will be phased over a period of two or three years. He stated this will give people a reasonable amount of time to gear up and become even more competitive with grants and contract funding.

Shea stated that the number of personnel cuts that has been stated is 18, but in fact there could be more people depending on how units address the required reduction. VC Owens stated that this could be played out this way but not necessarily. He noted that the deans thought very carefully about this proposed cut. He stated that the other option was to make cuts immediately but he felt this was too harsh and too difficult on individual technicians.

Chancellor Perlman stated that some state funding will be taken away from some programs but they will continue through outside funding. He noted that there is the potential for a significant number of people to be impacted by such cuts but we do not know exactly how many at this time.

VC Owens pointed out that the State Forester has been very successful at obtaining grant and contract funding and it is entirely possible that the Arboretum could possibly even grow under his direction in UNL's Nebraska Forest Service.

2.7 Ousted Fraternity Building – what becomes of the property?

Chancellor Perlman stated that nothing has been announced about the property at this time. He pointed out that, for the most part, the houses are owned by the fraternities and sororities, not the university so what happens to the building is up to them. He noted that in the past a fraternity rented out its house to students while it was suspended. He stated that there are university regulations that have to be followed though. Konecky asked when a decision will be made public. Chancellor Perlman stated that he believes it will be made soon.

Chancellor Perlman reported that an interesting transaction is being presented to the Board. This transaction is being requested by the Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity to exchange the land the fraternity house sits on with the parking lot at 17th and R street. He stated that if approved by the Board of Regents the university would tear down the existing house. He stated that the transaction, given the size of the two parcels, looks like one in which the university is not getting fair value but we have imposed a list of criteria that would have to be followed on the land being given to the fraternity which would reduce the fair value of the land.

Chancellor Perlman noted that the existing multi cultural center will be torn down and it would be helpful to get this corner cleaned up. He stated that the idea would be to put parking spaces for visitors in the area since it is close to admissions.

Fech noted that this will mean that more parking spaces will be lost. Konecky asked if parking will be reimbursed for the lost parking. Chancellor Perlman stated that it would be trading parking spaces, although not for faculty and staff parking which is what will be lost. He noted that the new multi cultural center did cover the expense of lost parking. He stated that he realizes this is a sensitive issue since we are currently down to the lowest number of available parking spaces in the past five or six years. He pointed out that when the Antelope Valley Project is completed the university will regain some parking spaces.

2.8 Issues on the Horizon

SVC Couture noted that the International Program Advisory Council (IPAC) has sent a draft proposal around with suggested benchmarks for international programming goals. She stated that the reactions to it have been interesting and she is certainly pleased to have received some bold and forward looking reactions to it. She noted that there seems to be a great deal of interest in international programs, and in response to suggestions received, the plan is to add more people to the Council.

SVC Couture stated that another ongoing effort is the college strategic plans. She stated that deans are being asked this year to set benchmarks for their strategic priorities. She stated that the success of the plans therefore might be measured by how the benchmarks are met. She noted that the priorities of the plans are not being changed, the deans are being asked to develop tactics and strategies for reaching their benchmarks.

VC Owens reported that Dr. Bruce Dvorak in the Departments of Civil Engineering and biological Systems Engineering has agreed to serve as the interim director of the Water Center. He stated that a national search will be conducted for a new director. He reported that once a permanent director is hired it will be determined how the Water Center will work with any international water program efforts.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the conference he attended on water in Sweden was very interesting. He stated that he interacted with water institutes around the world and it became clear that we do have a role to play. He reported that our delegation met with UNESCO's educational research program to discuss agricultural water and think there is

the potential to form a good relationship with them. He noted that UNESCO's educational research program teaches more graduate students than any other place in the world but there is very little focus on water and food systems education. He stated that there might be opportunities to partner with them. He reported that people from the State Department are interested in connecting UNL with other people around the world on water issues. He stated that if resources and leadership can be located we could have a spectacular program here.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Efforts to Fill Open Senate Seats

Fech reported that there are approximately 14 senate seats that need to be filled. He stated that he has contacted the chairs of the departments of these open seats to encourage participation in an election for the positions. He stated that two departments have already identified a senator and he hopes to get more.

4.0 Minutes of 8/26/09

No significant changes were made to the minutes.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Research Advisory Board

Fech reported that he received a message from VC Paul who stated that the Senate has a faculty representative to the Board because the chair of the Research Council, who is appointed by the Senate, also serves on the Board. The Committee agreed that the chair of the Research Council should meet with the Executive Committee to get more information on what the Board is doing and who the members are.

5.2 NU Online Worldwide

Fech noted that he sent the Committee his notes on his meeting with President Milliken and asked if there were any further questions. Bolin pointed out that there are already some very good on line courses at UNL but these courses require a tremendous commitment. She stated a lot of ongoing support is needed for online courses. She pointed out that one of the potential problems with the NU Online Worldwide program relates to territorial problems between the campuses, i.e. who will teach what courses.

Fech noted that there is the opportunity for branding with the program. He stated that it was pointed out that UNL and UNO are fairly well staffed for these kinds of courses but UNK is not.

Flowers stated that there are a lot of unanswered questions that need to be addressed before faculty member get on board with the program.

Prochaska-Cue stated that it will be interesting to see how the Regents will look at student credit hour production with these courses.

6.0 New Business

6.1 University Disability Program

Fech stated that he was dismayed to read the report that came from UNO on the disability program. Flowers noted that basically an employee would not get anything for participating in the program because of the health care costs that the employee would have to cover if they go on disability.

Fech reported that he has asked Greg Clayton, Director, Benefits & Risk Management, about UNL's policy and if it is the same. He noted that a big change in the policy was made when former President Smith separated the two pools for health benefits.

Prochaska-Cue stated that it goes back to the fact that the university is self insured and the pool is made up of the current employees. She pointed out the disability policy is not an insurance policy as the industry would see it.

6.2 Conflict of Interest Policy

Fech asked the Committee to read the report for next week's meeting.

6.3 Budget Reallocation/Reduction Procedures Revision Committee

Prochaska-Cue stated that the committee met this morning and received their charge. She stated that meetings are set for the next few weeks with the plan to meet every week from the end of September through November 11th. She stated that the committee will be reading over the current procedures as well as the draft procedures written by Beck, Shea, Rosson, and Scholz a few years ago.

Prochaska-Cue stated that the goal is to forward with the changes in the procedures, but to suggest changes that are reasonable and that would hopefully be approved. She stated that two major focuses would be to get more involvement of faculty and staff in the process and to get staff and students on the APC subcommittee that looks at the cuts. She stated that the other goal is to provide more transparency in the process.

Prochaska-Cue stated that she hopes to have a document completed by Thanksgiving.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, September 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 David Rapkin, Secretary.