

UNL ACADEMIC SENATE MEETING MINUTES

East Campus Union,

November 6, 2007

Presidents Steve Bradford, Kathy Prochaska Cue, and Ali Moeller, Presiding

1.0 Call to Order

President Bradford called the meeting to order at 2:38 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Progress Report on ACE Proposals

President Bradford reported that to date there have been positive responses on the four ACE proposals that have been sent to the colleges for approval. He noted that the College of Journalism and Mass Communications unanimously approved the proposals. The Academic Planning Committee of the College of Business Administration is recommending approval of the proposals to the faculty of CBA and that the Curriculum Committee of the College of Arts & Sciences is recommending approval of the proposals. He noted that the final vote will take place on December 13th by the faculty of Arts & Sciences. He pointed out that since all of the colleges must approve the proposals it will not be known until the final vote is taken whether we will have a new general education program.

2.2 Dedication of the Confucius Institute

President Bradford reported that the dedication for the Institute occurred last week. He noted that this is a great opportunity for UNL students and others in the community to learn about Chinese language and culture and will provide great opportunities for contacts and exchanges between UNL and Chinese students. He stated that anyone with an interest should get involved with the Institute. He stated that he hopes the kinds of exchanges that will take place will help alleviate political and religious suppression in China and will lead to a democratic government.

3.0 Chancellor Perlman

Chancellor Perlman reported that UNL's telecommunications contract with Windstream will be expiring in about a year and a half. He noted that the landscape of telecommunications has changed dramatically and a consultant has been hired to determine what would be the best communications for a research university. He stated that this will be a complicated but interesting process. He pointed out that there will be a committee of users looking into a new contract and he is competent that the Senate will be active with this committee.

Chancellor Perlman reported that UNO is interested in exploring the idea of having a 12 month calendar. He noted that there are some plausible attractions to this and it is being studied. He pointed out that if UNO goes forward with the calendar, there are significant reasons why it would become a system-wide calendar. He stated that there is a tentative plan but he is interested in getting a sense of what the faculty members think about changing the calendar and whether it would suit the on-going activities of a land grant research university.

Chancellor Perlman noted that UNO recently adopted a scholarship program with students from three Iowa counties. He stated that the proposal is fair and UNL has agreed that its programs that are taught in Omaha will comply with the scholarship program and tuitions will be adjusted accordingly. He pointed out that the scholarship program does not apply to UNL students.

Professor Zorn, Finance, wanted to respond to the Chancellor's request for feedback on a 12 month calendar. He stated that he was at UCLA when they tried to have a 12 month calendar. He stated that UCLA found out that the loss of summer sessions tuition was much higher than expected. He wanted to point out that students like to travel during the summer or go visit and take courses at other universities. He stated that from his experience he did not think the 12 month calendar would work well.

4.0 Approval of 10/2/07 Minutes

Professor Stock, English, moved and Professor Flowers, Psychology, seconded approval of the minutes. Motion approved.

5.0 Committee Reports

5.1 Grading & Examinations Committee (Professor Woodward)

Professor Woodward reported that the committee basically looks at withdrawals from courses and change of grades from a pass/no pass after the deadline date. He stated that each college has a subcommittee that makes decisions on these cases based on the guidelines of the committee. A summary report is then given by the subcommittee to him.

Professor Woodward stated that the numbers for withdrawals and change of grade have been about the same over the last few years. He pointed out that late withdrawals are typically due to health problems or people being called up for military duty. He stated that most of the change of grades is due to students not realizing that they needed a letter grade in order to retain their scholarships.

Professor Woodward stated that a summary of grades since the change to the grading system made in 2001 is included in the report. He noted that the grade point average of 3.07 is stable since adding a minus grade. He stated that there may have been some effect of the minus grade but it really is hard to determine how much of an impact it has had.

5.2 Research Council

Professor Smith was not available to attend the meeting to give the report. Anyone with questions should contact him at ksmith1@unl.edu.

5.3 Chancellor's Commission on the Status of Women (Jan Deeds and Professor Jacobs)

Ms. Deeds reported that the Commission is an advisory committee to the Chancellor. She noted that a few years ago the Commission was divided into three councils, one for faculty members, one for staff members, and one for students thus providing three different perspectives. She pointed out that both the chair elect and the past chair have left the university.

Professor Jacobs reported that there is an effort on campus to apply for an institutional transformation grant which would increase women in the STEM fields. She noted that Professor Holmes from Geosciences is writing the grant.

Professor Jacobs stated that issues involved with retaining women on campus are child care, stopping the tenure clock due to pregnancy, and dual career concerns. She noted that the women of the Faculty Council just met and had an interesting discussion of what would happen if UNL does not receive the grant. She pointed out that the grant is a five year, \$6 million grant which would help improve the climate in the STEM fields and on the campus overall.

Professor Jacobs reported that the Commission wants to make accessible all of the university's policies and to establish a formal mentorship program for women. She noted that the Commission is also looking into developing a recruitment committee that works with search committees.

Professor Jacobs reported that the campus has made a lot of progress in the past last year on child care. She stated that the Commission conducted a survey about child care and the results of the survey were discussed with Chancellor Perlman. A committee was then formed to look into child care and plans are now in place to open a child care facility in the summer of 2009.

Ms. Deeds stated that in January of every year a call is made for people to come forward to serve on the Commission. She stated that in particular, female faculty members are needed to serve on the Faculty Council. She noted that the Commission would like to ask the Senate for help with this. She pointed out that the Commission is looking at some specific goals for the faculty council. She asked that senators think about who they could encourage to apply for the Commission.

Professor McCollough, Anthropology & Geography, asked if the Commission is still trying to work with the Lincoln Public Schools to coordinate the university calendar with the LPS calendar. Professor Jacobs stated that efforts on this need to be reorganized. She noted that it is important to have the two calendars working together. Associate to the Chancellor Poser stated that she will try to work with LPS again on this. Professor Jacobs pointed out that it would really help if a lot of people from the campus attended the LPS Board meeting when this issue is discussed.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Motion to Approve ACE Proposals 1-4 and Changes to the Curriculum Committee Syllabus

President Bradford noted that the process for revising the general education program has been going on for the past four years. He stated that although the proposals may not be perfect they are good proposals that should get approval from the entire campus. He stated that the question is whether the ACE proposals are better than the current ES/IS program.

President Bradford reported that the Executive Committee made a motion last month to approve the proposals. He noted that the Executive Committee is substituting the motion. The new motion includes recommendation to approve the revisions to the syllabus of the Curriculum Committee. He noted that a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee will be formed to help with the initial work of approving the ACE courses.

President Bradford noted that the substitute motion does not need a second because it is being presented by a Senate Committee. He called for any debate on the substitute motion. No debate occurred. He called for the vote on approving the substitute motion. Motion approved.

President Bradford called for the vote to approve the ACE proposals 1 – 4 and the revisions to the Curriculum Committee. Motion approved. There was one vote in opposition.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Guidelines for Research Faculty Ranks

President Bradford reported that the Senate Executive Committee was given a copy of the guidelines only two weeks ago and it was the first time the Committee had seen them. He stated that the Committee was told that faculty members on the Research Council were consulted about the guidelines but the Senate was never consulted. He reported that the Committee made it clear to SVCAA Couture that the process of putting these guidelines into place was unacceptable because the Senate did not have the opportunity to review the guidelines. He reported that he informed the SVCAA that, according to the Regents Bylaws, the Senate represents the faculty on academic matters that cut across the colleges. He noted that both SVCAA Couture and VC Owens apologized for not including the Senate in the process and stated that it was not an attempt to keep the Senate out of the process.

President Bradford asked that the Senators look over the guidelines and confer with any research faculty members in their departments about the guidelines. He asked that anyone with changes or concerns please contact either himself or a member of the Executive Committee and the concerns will be raised to the administrators.

Professor Zorn stated that he is concerned that the guidelines might not be applicable to all of the colleges. He stated that he sees the guidelines as possibly superseding what is already being done by departments and colleges. President Bradford stated that SVCAA Couture was aware of this concern and stated that the point of the guidelines is to provide guidance in how promotions can be done but there would not be specific control over promotions with research positions in departments. Secretary Alloway pointed out that the document states that departments and colleges can provide further definition for promotions.

Professor Carlson, Veterinary & Biomedical Sciences, asked if the guidelines do not address the concerns raised by Professor Zorn. Professor Zorn stated that there is concern in the College of Business Administration that faculty members cannot make any objections to the guidelines. President Bradford stated that both VC Owens and SVCAA Couture agreed that the Senate should have the chance to review the guidelines and suggest revisions to it.

7.2 Peace Corps (Ariella Raley, Peace Corps Coordinator, Career Services)

Ms. Raley thanked the Senate for allowing her to come and speak about the Peace Corps. She noted that she is the current coordinator for Peace Corps at UNL and is also a full-time graduate student.

Ms. Raley stated that for the first time in 37 years the Peace Corps has the highest number of volunteers serving in 74 different countries. She reported that the Peace Corps has gone into Cambodia for the first time and has reopened in Ethiopia as well as being in Liberia. She noted that 36 UNL graduates have served overseas in the program and close to 1200 Nebraskans have been in the Peace Corps. She reported that the oldest, current serving volunteer is 83 years old so it is never too late to become a Peace Corps volunteer.

Ms. Raley stated that she wanted to discuss the benefits of serving in the Peace Corps. She reported that students can benefit financially because becoming a volunteer can defer student loans and 15% of a Perkins

loan debt will be forgiven. There is also a monthly allowance that will allow volunteers to live comfortably in the country in which they are serving. At the end of 27 months of service a readjustment allowance of \$6000 is given to volunteers. This allows them to readjust to life in the U.S.

Ms. Raley stated that other benefits include travel being provided to and from the country a volunteer is assigned to and full medical and dental coverage. This includes coverage of pre-existing medical expenses and everything medically needed during the time the volunteer is serving.

Ms. Raley stated that the training a volunteer receives is very intense and can be overwhelming and frustrating but serving in the Corps can be one of the best experiences a person can go through. She reported that the first three months of service is for training and formal language instruction. Health and safety training is also provided. She pointed out that the safety of volunteers is of the utmost importance to the Peace Corps.

Ms. Raley noted that one of the misconceptions is that the Peace Corps is 24 hours of work, seven days a week. She reported that volunteers are actually provided 48 days of vacation.

Ms. Raley stated that serving in the Peace Corps is very hard work and it's not for everyone but she encourages people to look into it. She stated that one of the benefits is non-competitive eligibility for volunteers seeking federal employment. She stated that if a volunteer is applying for a federal job their application will automatically be sent to the top of the list for review. After serving in the Corps, volunteers can get 18 months of health insurance at a reasonable price.

Ms. Raley admitted that applying to serve in the Peace Corps can be somewhat intimidating. She noted that it can take 6 – 12 months from the time a person applies to the time when they get on a plane to go to the country they are assigned to. She pointed out that approximately 12,000 applications are submitted each year but only about 35% of these applicants will be selected to serve.

Professor Wood, Classics & Religious Studies, asked if it is limited to U.S. citizens. Ms. Raley stated that it is and people must be 18 years of age. She noted that it is not required that someone have a bachelor's degree but 95% of volunteers do have one. She pointed out that another requirement might be language, depending on the region where a volunteer is sent.

Professor McCollough asked if the Peace Corps accepts married couples. Ms. Raley stated that only couples without dependents would be accepted and they must demonstrate that they have been married for awhile.

Professor Ledder, Mathematics, asked what criteria are used to evaluate applicants and are there countries that the Corps stays out of because of safety issues. Ms. Raley stated that the Corps will not send volunteers to any countries that are deemed unsafe. The reasons are usually political but can be environmental as well. She stated that some of the criteria for evaluation are age, U.S. citizenship, credentials, interest and skills, and health status. She pointed out that applicants need to get a physical exam. She noted that an applicant's legal record will also be checked.

Emeriti Professor McShane asked what kind of support volunteers have once they get to the country to which they are assigned. Ms. Raley stated that in each country that the Peace Corps serves in there is a medical officer and nurse. She noted that people can usually be treated within the country but if for some reason a volunteer needed further medical care they would be evacuated to a place where they could receive treatment. She reported that psychologists and counselors are available as well.

Ms. Raley stated that volunteers must file reports on their work. She asked that faculty members announce the upcoming general information session to their class or post the announcement on the door of the office. She stated that anyone with further questions can contact her.

7.3 Safe Assignment

Professor Woodman, School of Biological Sciences, stated that he has encountered some problems with the Safe Assignment program. He noted that recently he has been unable to access the potential source of plagiarism. He pointed out that in the large sections he teaches if a student's paper comes up as being plagiarized he is unable to determine if the paper was copied from another student's paper because the program will not provide the author's name of the paper that is in the local database. He asked if there is someone in charge who determines whether the instructor can get this information. He pointed out that initially when Safe Assignment was being considered by the campus an instructor was able to get this information.

President Bradford asked if Professor Woodman is seeking to identify the person who wrote the paper that is being plagiarized. Professor Woodman stated that this is correct. He noted that originally the name was provided to the instructor but is now protected because of privacy issues. He stated that he would like to be able to examine both papers to see just how much of the papers are plagiarized to see if there is joint compliance in copying the papers.

Professor Ledger asked if Safe Assignment still provides a report indicating how much of the paper was plagiarized. Professor Woodman stated that it does but it does not list the source of the paper. He pointed out that he does not want to make an allegation of cheating unless he is sure that this has happened.

Professor Ledger stated that he is having trouble understanding why Professor Woodman couldn't make a case for plagiarism based on the Safe Assignment report. He pointed out that there should be enough information in the report to know that a student is cheating. Professor Woodman noted that cheating is a serious allegation and he is not sure whether Judicial Affairs would accept just the Safe Assignment report as evidence of cheating.

President Bradford stated that the Safe Assignment policy that was approved controls the release of the name of the student who wrote the paper but in terms of releasing the actual paper he does not think this was prohibited in the policy.

Professor Flowers stated that it is his understanding that the information in question is retrievable but there is a policy that it will not be done as a matter of course. He stated that if there is an obvious case of copying another student's paper than he believes that information could be obtained. He pointed out that most likely a student will have accidentally submitted a paper as a rough draft and it is then put into the system.

Professor Woodman stated that he is concerned that there could be cases of students cooperating together to copy a paper. He noted that he would prefer to have easy access to the paper in the database to see if it has been copied.

Coordinator Griffin stated that Dr. Hecker, Director of Student Judicial Affairs, is scheduled to speak to the Senate at the December meeting. President Bradford stated that the issue should be raised with Dr. Hecker at that meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:43 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, December 4, at 2:30 p.m. in the City Campus Union, Auditorium. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Richard Alloway, Secretary.