

UNL ACADEMIC SENATE MEETING MINUTES
City Campus Union,
February 12, 2008
Presidents Steve Bradford and Ali Moeller, Presiding

1.0 Call to Order

President Bradford called the meeting to order at 2:39 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

President Bradford wanted to apologize to anyone who was inconvenienced by the cancellation of last week's meeting. He stated that he cancelled the meeting due to the poor weather conditions.

2.1 Donation from the Nebraska Cooperative Extension Association (NCEA)

Professor Zimmers, Southeast Research & Extension Center, on behalf of the NCEA presented a check of \$1100 to support the Faculty Senate Office and the work the Senate does. He noted that in the past the NCEA gave \$1000 but this year decided to increase the donation to \$1100. President Bradford thanked Professor Zimmers and the NCEA and stated that the donation was very much appreciated. He pointed out that the NCEA has been giving money to the Senate every year for some time now.

2.2 Graduate Student Association (GSA) [Amber Epp and Frank Moore]

Epp reported that the GSA started as a small group of students who wanted to build a sense of community for graduate students. She noted that last year it developed into a full assembly and now has representatives from nearly every graduate program on campus. She pointed out that as employees of the university graduate students have common interests with the faculty.

Epp reported that this past fall the GSA passed a resolution calling for the creation of a task force to examine the need for campus-level travel grants for graduate students. She stated that if the task force determines that there is a need for this kind of support the next challenge will be to see how funding could be made available. She noted that members of the GSA were lucky enough to meet with VC Paul before the break to discuss the issue. She noted that VC Paul agreed that travel and research funding is important for graduate students but he felt that the funding should come from the graduate student's primary advisor and department.

Epp stated that the GSA was hoping that the Faculty Senate would support the resolution calling for the formation of a task force. She noted that if the Senate passed a resolution it would demonstrate that both graduate students and faculty members are behind this kind of funding.

Professor Fuller, Art & Art History, asked if there is no campus-wide funding currently available for graduate student travel. Epp stated that any funding is very limited and only a few people would even qualify to apply for it. She pointed out that many of our peer institutions offer these grants.

Professor Zorn, Finance, stated that one problem with campus-wide awards of any kind is that people who know very little about specific situations are being asked to decide who is most deserving. He pointed out that these decisions are usually best made at the department level. He asked why campus-wide funding would be the best way to handle these funds. Epp stated that what they are asking for right now is just to support a task force to investigate whether there is a need for campus level funding. She noted that the details and the criteria would need to be determined later and some kind of system would need to be developed to review applications. She pointed out that not all graduate students have access to funding for travel. She reported that graduate students have stated that some departments do not have funds to help students with travel to conferences and for job hunting. She noted that this is detrimental to the careers of graduate students and also for the university if these students cannot find a job.

The question was asked if there was college level funding. Epps stated that she only knows what the graduate student representatives in GSA have been able to find out. She noted that availability of funds varies across the campus. She stated that creating the task force will help to figure out what kinds of funding needs there are across the campus. She pointed out that having this kind of funding could help in recruiting graduate students.

The question was asked how other institutions fund these travel grants. Epps stated that some universities get

funding through the graduate student portion of student fees and others have some state endowments. At other institutions the GSA provides funding at the campus level however this is not possible here because the GSA does not receive that kind of funding.

2.3 Proposed Commission on Sustainability

President Bradford reported that ASUN came with a proposal to the Senate Executive Committee to create a Sustainability Commission to advise the Chancellor on environmental issues. President Bradford stated that he has been working with ASUN President Solheim to create a draft charge for the Commission. He noted that if all goes according to schedule, he hopes to have a proposal to the Senate at the March meeting. He pointed out that nothing will happen with the Commission without the Senate's approval.

2.4 Outsourcing Student Email System

President Bradford reported that UNL is considering contracting out the student email system to a private contractor such as Google or Microsoft. He noted that there will be two presentations next week by private contractors. He stated that he will send out a notice to the Senate about when the presentations will be held.

2.5 Senate Elections

President Bradford stated that it is now the time of year when nominations need to be made for Executive Committee offices. He wanted to encourage each Senator to consider running for election. He pointed out that serving on the Executive Committee is an invaluable experience. He stated that anyone interested should contact Senate Coordinator Karen Griffin or Professor Ducey, Chair of the Committee on Committees or any current member of the Executive Committee. He stated that he wanted to encourage people to nominate someone else if they think the person would be good as President Elect or as an Executive Committee member. He stated that he would like to get a sufficient list of nominees fairly soon. He reminded the Senate that the Executive Committee does important work.

3.0 Vice Chancellor Owens

Vice Chancellor Owens reported that Chancellor Perlman was out of town.

Vice Chancellor Owens stated that the latest enrollment report is quite good for UNL because total enrollment for the spring semester is up 3.7% from last spring. He noted that increases were seen in undergraduate, graduate and professional categories. He pointed out that the increased enrollment is good for UNL and helps to pay some of the bills.

Vice Chancellor Owens noted that the State Legislature is in session. He reported that the funding request for a new student information system is moving through the appropriations process. He noted that all of the State Legislators seem to be acting favorably on it but the question is whether the full amount will be given at one time or whether it will be divided over a period of time. He stated that the Governor has called for \$10 million to be given to start the process. He reported that it was suggested that the university and state colleges partner with each other to get a single platform system. He pointed out that he does not know how easy it will be to implement this system. He noted that the state colleges will also be coming under the SAP system.

Vice Chancellor Owens reported that there is a request for additional funding for the clean up of the Mead facility. He noted that several million dollars were given last year for the clean up but an additional \$1.3 million is needed.

Vice Chancellor Owens stated that there are at least three bills in the Legislature dealing with the state fair issue.

Vice Chancellor Owens stated that there was discussion in the Legislature regarding a possible economic downturn in Nebraska. He pointed out that the university is very much a state funded university and even with the huge amounts of funding generated by the hard work of the faculty and the generosity of donors, the dollars appropriated from the State Legislature are critically important to us.

Professor Ledder, Mathematics, asked what the total enrollment is on campus. Vice Chancellor Owens stated that there are 21,599 students on campus this spring compared to 20,821 in 2007. He noted that the increase in students is the result of hard work by a lot of people on campus.

4.0 Approval of 1/15/08 Minutes

Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics, moved and Professor Leiter, seconded, approval of the minutes. Motion approved.

5.0 Committee Reports

5.1 Convocations Committee Report (Professor Streich)

Professor Streich was unable to attend the meeting. Anyone with questions on the report can contact her at astreich2@unl.edu.

5.2 Committee on Committees Report (Professor Ducey)

Professor Ducey was unable to attend the meeting. Anyone with questions on the report can contact her at mducey2@unl.edu.

Professor Leiter, a member of the Committee on Committees, wanted to bring the Senate's attention to the listing of the number of volunteers for the past several years. He pointed out that the number of volunteers is declining at an alarming rate and this is a real serious problem. He stated that there are a lot of committees on campus that do a lot of work and people are needed to fill positions on these committees. He asked the Senators to encourage their colleagues to volunteer to serve. He noted that participation on committees is rewarding and important and he is asking that the Senators help out. President Bradford agreed. He reported that he spoke at the Deans and Directors meeting urging them to encourage faculty participation as well. He suggested anyone wanting to know more about a particular committee could contact the Senate Office or someone on the Executive Committee for further information.

5.3 Honorary Degrees Committee (Professor Walklin)

Professor Walklin stated that this is a committee with a lot of experience. The combined years of experience of the faculty members on the committee total 110 years. He noted that the people who are nominated for honorary degrees are excellent and well qualified but not all names are forwarded to the Senate for approval. He pointed out that the committee screens the nominees very carefully before selecting those who will go to the Senate. He reported that three names were forwarded this year.

Professor Walklin stated that the Pound Howard award is extraordinarily competitive with all nominees being very well qualified. He reported that this year's candidates were an impressive group. He noted that Associate to the Chancellor Poser withdrew from the voting to avoid any conflict of interest. He pointed out that Herb Howe, the previous Associate to the Chancellor set precedent of withdrawing from the voting when he felt it was necessary. Professor Walklin reported that the recommendation for the Pound Howard award was unanimous.

Professor Walklin wanted to give credit to the Dean of Libraries designee. He stated that Professor Boudreau does all of the research on those people nominated to receive an honorary degree.

Professor Walklin reported that the procedures for submitting nominees for the Pound Howard award were changed this past year. Previously, all nominating materials were sent to the Chancellor's office but they now must be sent to the Faculty Senate Office. He stated that last year there was some consternation over scheduling and as a result a list of three people willing to appear to make a presentation must be included in the nomination material. He wanted to thank Karen Griffin, Coordinator of the Faculty Senate, for doing an excellent job in scheduling and arranging the presentation schedule.

Professor Walklin thanked the Senate and stated that he hopes the committee can continue serving in ways that the Senate deems necessary.

6.0 Committee Reports

6.1 Motion to Change UNL Bylaws

President Bradford stated that the Chancellor originally proposed to revise the UNL Bylaws and a motion to approve the change was made at the December Senate meeting. In January a motion was passed to have the Executive Committee further review the proposed changes. He reported that the Executive Committee reviewed the motion and agreed to approve the changes.

President Bradford stated that there were two issues with the motion. One was the deletion of language which would possibly indicate that a search would not be required to replace the Dean of Graduate Studies in the future. He pointed out that this is really a non-issue because the Bylaws specifically state elsewhere that a search must be conducted for any position of that ranking.

President Bradford stated that the second proposed change that caused consternation was the elimination of the language indicating that the Dean of Graduate Studies reports to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic

Affairs. He noted that some senators felt that the reporting authority should be clearly indicated in the Bylaws. He pointed out that the reporting line is not indicated in any other dean's position in the Bylaws and this would be the exception, rather than the rule. He noted that in a previous section of the Bylaws provisions are made for the Chancellor to determine reporting relationships. He pointed out that the Bylaws also indicate that the Senate must be notified before any changes in reporting relationships are changed for deans.

President Bradford reported that the Chancellor sent him an email stating that the primary reporting responsibility of the Dean of Graduate Studies will be to the Vice Chancellor of Research but reporting will also be made to the Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and the Vice Chancellor of the Institute. President Bradford noted that it is important to have the reporting line back to the Vice Chancellor of Research because so much of Graduate Studies involves research.

The motion was approved by a vote of 37 in favor of it.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Draft Emeritus Policy

President Bradford noted that he sent a draft of the comments to the Senate and if there are any additional comments he will include them when he sends them to SVCAA Couture.

Emeritus Professor McShane reported that he just met with the Executive Board of the Emeriti Association and they have several concerns with the policy. He stated that the Board requests that a note be put on a person's last PAF indicating whether the person has been given emeritus status or whether they were unable to get it. He noted that the Board has been trying to get a list of emeriti professors but has not been able to do so.

Emeritus Professor McShane stated that some chairs are very good about getting emeritus status for retiring professors but others are not. He stated that if application for emeritus status was not done properly it could be brought to the attention of the Chancellor as the policy suggests. A line on the PAF form would help identify if there are areas where obtaining emeritus status is difficult. He stated that if a professor is ineligible the 10 year exemption rule could be applied. He stated that it would be helpful to the Emeriti Association if a list of all emeritus professors was available to them.

Emeritus Professor McShane stated that clarification is needed on the 10 year rule and the status rule in the policy. He questioned how emeritus status is attached to a research professor or professor of practice and whether it includes librarians. He noted that he is worried about another group of people and that is the lecturers. He pointed out that there is no reason why we can't grant them emeritus status. He stated that these people do a lot of work for the university and there ought to be a way of including them into the mix.

Emeritus Professor McShane stated that having the requests of the Emeriti Association included in the policy would make senior faculty members feel better because it gives them recognition for all of their work. He pointed out that he is not asking for a motion. He noted that the old rules are problematic because they are not sufficiently clear. He stated that something that is inadequate that should be taken care of is accessibility to the libraries and office space and support not only for emeriti professors but for retired professors who continue to do research. He noted that the draft policy would make this clear. He stated that it seems reasonable to him that someone should be able to file a grievance if they are nominated for emeritus status but were denied.

Professor Weiss, Clothing, Textiles, and Design, asked if a person who has worked at the university for 22 years but leaves their position before the age of 55 would be eligible for emeritus status. Emeritus Professor McShane stated that it might be negotiated with the department chair but nothing in the policy covers this situation. Professor Weiss stated that she wanted to raise this as an issue because a person in this situation has given most of their career to the university.

President Bradford stated that administrators can be given emeritus status and there is no requirement in the policy that a person must be a faculty member. Emeritus Professor McShane noted that the previous rule was much more specific on this. He noted that the former director of the union has emeritus status and spent a lot of time with younger people in whose lives the union was very important. Emeritus Professor McShane stated that he would hate to go back to the former director to tell him he wasn't eligible for emeritus status because he wasn't a faculty member.

7.2 Ballot for Academic Planning Committee, Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee, and Academic Rights and Responsibilities Panel

President Bradford reported that the Committee on Committees was bringing the motion forward to approve

the ballot that will be sent to all of the faculty. He noted that the Senate will vote for approval of the ballot at the March meeting.

7.3 Senate Redistribution Report

President Bradford stated that the Senate Bylaws requires apportionment of the Senate every two years. He stated that Coordinator Karen Griffin put a lot of effort into compiling the report. He noted that the report shows which departments gained or lost a senator and which stayed the same.

Coordinator Griffin stated that she compiled the information from a report generated by SAP. The report included all faculty members, their FTE, title, department, and service hire date. She asked that anyone with questions please contact her and she would be happy to go over the report with them.

President Bradford pointed out that the report shows that the total number of senators has decreased from 90 to 85 although the total number of faculty members at UNL has increased. He noted that the reason why there are fewer senators even though there are more faculty members is due to the breakdown of faculty members within departments.

Professor Chouinard, Mathematics, noted that the report states that the Senate will act on it at the February Senate meeting. Professor Zorn moved to accept the report. Motion seconded by Professor Leiter. Motion to accept the report approved.

7.4 Motion on Establishing a Task Force to Look into Campus-Wide Travel Grants for Graduate Students

Professor Peterson wanted to move that we express support for the Graduate Student Association's request to form a task force to look into campus-wide travel grants. Professor Eccarius, Special Education & Communication Disorders seconded the motion. President Bradford stated that the motion will be voted on at the March meeting.

7.5 Health Insurance for Retirees

Professor Zorn stated that a colleague raised an issue about the health insurance pool for retirees being separate from that of other faculty members. He stated that the argument is that the cost for retired employees is so prohibitively high with the university that many are opting out for other insurance plans. He stated that it seems like a poor policy to have a separate pool for retirees. He pointed out that many of the former faculty members paid into the insurance plan for many years and now cannot afford the benefits of it.

President Bradford stated that he knows that several years ago the separation for retirees was made because they were paying less than the 21% that others were paying yet they were costing a lot more. He noted that any real work on this would have to be done at the University-wide level.

Emeritus Professor McShane thanked Professor Zorn for raising the issue. He noted that every emeriti professor gets out of the University's Blue Cross/Blue Shield plan because they can get insurance cheaper elsewhere. He pointed out that all of the faculty members will one day be in the same place as the retirees and it might be in their best interest to take care of the issue. He stated that he would like to get an explanation why retirees' health insurance costs are so much higher. Coordinator Griffin pointed out that President Milliken will be speaking at the March Senate meeting and it might be a good question to ask him.

Professor Peterson moved and Professor Zorn seconded the motion to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m. The next meeting of the Academic Senate will be held on Tuesday, March 4, 2008, 2:30 p.m. in the East Campus Union, Great Plains Room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Richard Alloway, Secretary.