

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Anaya, Guevara, LaCost, Purdum, Reisbig, Rinkevich, Ruchala, Schubert, Shea, Woodman, Wysocki, Zoubek

Absent: Lindquist

Date: Wednesday, April 18, 2012

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

LaCost called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

2.0 SVCAA Weissinger and VC Green

2.1 Comments on Campus Blueprint

SVCAA Weissinger reported that she saw that the Executive Committee provided feedback on the Blueprint that will lead to good conversations and she knows that Dean Cerveny and Associate VC Goodburn will be responding to the Executive Committee. She noted that they will also be meeting with departments and the colleges to discuss enrollment plans. LaCost asked if these meetings will occur soon. SVCAA Weissinger reported that they have already met with some units. She noted that they want to make sure that all of the issues and factors relating to the growth in enrollment are addressed to ensure that the Blueprint is a good plan. She pointed out that they know a lot about the various service offices on campus, but the key ingredient to having a good plan is at the ground level in the departments and colleges.

SVCAA Weissinger stated that the five goals stated by the Chancellor pivot on the goal to increase the number of tenure-track faculty members. She pointed out that we are in a good position, compared to other universities, and the decision was made to increase the tenure-track faculty so we can refit the university to meet the contemporary needs of the students and the state. The question is how we accomplish this. She stated that the reality is that tuition is the revenue stream that is most under our control. She reported that we have an advantage in that we have room for growing our enrollment while many of the other Big Ten schools are at their capacity. Ruchala stated that this all sounds exciting but it is not conveyed in the Blueprint. SVCAA Weissinger noted that the Blueprint is just a starting point for attaining our goals.

Ruchala stated that she thought the Blueprint was extremely diffuse. She noted that it talked about increments and which ones make the most sense but it did not address specific increments and what kind of resources and programs are to be involved. She pointed out that the faculty role did not seem to be as involved in the plan. VC Green pointed out that the Blueprint is only an enrollment management document. SVCAA

Weissinger noted that there are many components to achieving our goals and while we became good at managing budget cuts, we are now learning how to manage growth and the Blueprint is a step in this learning process.

Shea stated that he is glad to hear that the primary goal is an opportunity to increase tenure track faculty members. He noted that this is consistent with what the Chancellor initially said but it has gotten lost in the process of identifying how we are going to reach the goals. He noted that the growth in faculty allows for an increase in students, but it seems like things have been turned around and the emphasis is to get more students and the original message is getting muddled. SVCAA Weissinger said she takes some responsibility for this and that the administration needs to communicate plans better. She pointed out that we will not have revenue stream from increased enrollment for two or three years. As a result, we need to figure out, with a very finite amount of money, how to establish pilot programs that make everyone understand that growth doesn't mean just more of what we have been doing. She stated that we are going to invest in areas that deal with a large amount of students.

VC Green pointed out that it depends on the college that you are in. He said that IANR is spending money ahead of the curve because we are in a position to do this. However, he provided units with the best analysis of what is a reasonable enrollment target in five years. He noted that some areas will see higher enrollment than other areas and he has asked each of the units to develop a five year plan for enrollment. He reported that currently IANR is in the process of a phased hiring plan. He stated that a process is needed to meet the enrollment targets for units and while it is risky, IANR is strategically choosing to make investments now.

LaCost reported that at the Board of Regents meeting there was discussion on distance education initiatives, and one Board member wanted to ensure that distance education is part of the increased enrollment plan. She stated that the Chancellor did say that part of the increase will be due to distance education students, but she did not recall seeing anything about this in the Blueprint. SVCAA Weissinger pointed out that the faculty owns the curriculum, whether it is delivered on campus or via distance education. She stated that she does not think it is healthy to think of distance education as a separate unit from the campus. She noted that what is occurring on campus, particularly with younger faculty members, is blended courses. She stated that while students may come to campus for their courses, they want or need digital components to their learning. She stated that having virtual classrooms can also help address physical space needs on campus.

SVCAA Weissinger reported that extended education recently experienced a considerable downsizing with the loss of seven people. She stated that this enabled extended education to reorganize and now the instructional design consultants can work more closely with faculty members to develop blended courses as well as true distance courses. She stated that she thinks a lot of faculty members will get interested in delivering blended courses and while it is uncertain how much of an upside there will be with true distance learning, she believes it will be successful if there is faculty expertise and if the faculty find a value in delivering on line education. VC Green noted that

blended courses are happening across the country at some of the top universities. SVCAA Weissinger stated that the best on-line courses are driven by the passion of the faculty to deliver their expertise beyond the campus.

Woodman asked if there will be a time when Nebraska students will be turned away from the university if they meet the minimum requirements for admission. SVCAA Weissinger said absolutely not. She stated that she is an alumna of the university and she wants other Nebraska students to have the opportunity to come here. Woodman noted that this is a big issue for some of the Big Ten schools. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she is devoted to access to the university and thinks that every Nebraska student who wants to come here, and is qualified to attend the university, should be able to. She stated that she believes in a “Nebraskan’s first” philosophy in which Nebraska students are always able to attend UNL. But that even if we successfully recruit Nebraska students there is still capacity for increasing the number of students from other states and countries and there are real benefits to the state if UNL attracts talented students from across America to come to Nebraska because some will stay.

Woodman stated that both candidates for the dean of architecture were surprised that we don’t have activity based funding, that departments with larger enrollments will get more reward for their higher enrollment. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she wants to work with VC Green and the deans to develop a budget system that incentivizes and supports enrollment growth, but that we do not want to work on a campus that has a budget based on true enrollment. She pointed out that it is not beneficial when departments focus only on getting the highest enrollment so they can reap benefits. She stated that she wants to support enrollment growth in department or colleges but does not want to base budgets solely on enrollment figures. Woodman pointed out that the philosophy of this is sound, but the pragmatics of it is difficult. He noted that it is difficult when departments with large and increasing enrollments are not given additional funding to help support additional courses that are needed to accommodate all of the students. He added that it effectively punishes a department in terms of added costs for teaching assistants or faculty.

SVCAA Weissinger reported that some commitments have already been made to department and colleges that have seen some enrollment growth. Many of the investments, for the short term, have been put into TA lines, lecturer positions, and professors of practice but the goal is to increase the size of the tenure track faculty members. She noted that Arts & Sciences has absorbed much of the enrollment growth pressures of the last ten years without getting much more money. Recently the Chancellor made a reinvestment in this college to acknowledge their growth. She reported that she is interacting with the deans actively to converse with them about opportunities and needs. She pointed out that differential tuition rates have helped two colleges and consideration is being given to have another college with a differential rate.

2.2 International Housing Issue

SVCAA Weissinger noted that a response was given previously but asked if it did not address the issue. Schubert stated that it did not really address the problem. He pointed

out that if an international visitor comes to campus to give a presentation or do lab work but they do not have a certain kind of visa, they cannot be given a university ID number and Housing will not provide any room accommodation without a university ID. However, when this was pointed out to the Chancellor, the Chancellor noted that we have visitors throughout the summer who stay in the dorms who are not issued a university ID. Schubert stated that he suggested to the Chancellor that the right person needs to call Housing to convey this information. He stated that the problem is that international visitors coming in for a few days are not associated with the university and therefore can't get a university ID.

SVCAA Weissinger stated that she will be happy to look into this matter. She pointed out that some policies may not seem to make sense but often there are complex laws, Board of Regents policies, and system issues that underlie an existing policy. She stated that she would be happy to facilitate a conversation with Housing, VC Jackson, Schubert, Associate VC Wilson, and herself to see if it is possible to remove barriers that may exist. Schubert stated that the university software will not allow a Housing reservation without a university ID and in order to get a university ID a PDF file has to be created.

Schubert pointed out that the university wants to engage faculty members and students in more international collaboration but the question is where these people will stay when they come to visit the campus. He noted that it is more expensive to provide housing in the hotels downtown and suggested that a contract could be established between the hotels and the university. He stated that this is a growing issue that the university needs to address.

2.3 Evaluation Procedures for Deans

Woodman asked what kind of response rates are received on deans' evaluations when signatures are required. SVCAA Weissinger reported that the evaluation process is now web based. Woodman pointed out that some faculty members are concerned with identifying themselves for fear of possible retaliation if something negatively is said in the evaluation. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she understands the concerns. She noted that 20 years ago when paper surveys were sent out the evaluations had to be signed. Then when it went to the email system people were identified through their email address so the evaluations were not anonymous. She stated that her personal view is that anonymous feedback is not helpful. She pointed out that all of the deans being evaluated signed a waiver that they would not have access to any of the responses. She stated that when the responses are summarized she is looking for themes that appear in the evaluations that she can use to help deans be more effective. She would never share any specific feedback or information that would put any faculty member or group of faculty members in an awkward situation. She noted that many people think that the evaluation process is now different but it is only the medium of collecting the evaluations that is different and the process has never been anonymous.

Ruchala stated that she agrees with the SVCAA and she wouldn't want anonymous evaluations either, but there are people in her college that do not know the SVCAA and are not sure if identifiable comments will be given back to the dean. She suggested that

the SVCAA could make periodic visits, maybe once a year, to meet the faculty to explain what the administration is doing and what the philosophy is of the SVCAA.

SVCAA Weissinger asked if the concerns were mostly from pre-tenured faculty members. Ruchala, Woodman, and Guevara responded that some concerns are from tenured faculty members. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she has difficulties understanding the tenured faculty members' concerns with not having anonymous evaluations. Guevara pointed out that if a dean threatens to eliminate a department or there is a threat of budget cuts, all faculty members feel vulnerable.

VC Green reported that IANR instituted a new evaluation process this year. He stated that IANR deans are to give a set of integrated goals along with individual goals for their annual review. Anonymous information is then gathered but the situation in IANR is different because of the structure of the Institute. He noted that the Institute is also in the middle of transitioning all of its deans. He stated that he is very curious to see the first round of inputs.

2.4 Use of Journal Lists to Evaluate Faculty Research

Ruchala reported that her dean is revisiting consideration of using a list of journals to evaluate individual faculty members. She noted that when this was first raised in 2001-2002 the Chancellor reiterated to the Senate Executive Committee that the list would not be used for individual evaluations, but she knows from sitting on college committees that the lists are in fact being used for evaluation of a faculty member's research. SVCAA Weissinger asked that Ruchala send her a copy of the minutes where the Chancellor stated that the journal lists were not for individual faculty member's evaluation.

Shea pointed out that this is not a new issue and the concern was raised a number of times when the quality indicators list was first being established. He noted that each unit was asked to generate a list of journals as part of the process of creating the quality indicators and a lot of faculty members in the departments voiced considerable concern on the use of these lists. He stated that creating a list of journals is not a simple matter, especially for colleges and departments where there is a lot of diversity in research. He asked why any peer reviewed journal should not be treated as equal to journals that are on the list. Ruchala stated that Dean Plowman is not acknowledging that there is diversity of research in departments and departments are not being given the opportunity to have inputs on the standards.

SVCAA Weissinger stated that her sense is that using the journals in evaluations is an effort to encourage the faculty to do bigger and better research. Ruchala agreed that this may be the origin of the idea but a small group of faculty members and the dean's office are suggesting that the way to measure quality research is through publishing only in a few top journals. She pointed out that this is a limited approach which has not been thoroughly discussed, nor has there been exploration of other ways to demonstrate impact of research. VC Green suggested that journal impact factors can be used instead. Ruchala pointed out that using a list of top journals for evaluations has ideological

problems and suggests that other faculty members do not have to read and value other people's research the list becomes the criterion for reviews.

Shea stated that there is another dimension as well. If we are going to grow and strengthen areas of work, especially in interdisciplinary areas, there are not very many high impact journals currently available. The work has to be done first and then published in some of the outlets that are not in the top group to advance the work area and to hereby elevate those journals.

SVCAA Weissinger stated that she will take these issues back to the Dean's Council to have a discussion on what processes they are trying to accomplish.

2.5 Senate Survey of Non-Tenure Track Faculty Members

SVCAA Weissinger noted that chairs, deans and vice chancellors were surprised that they had not been informed about the survey and that the intention of the survey was easily misconstrued. She stated that she does not object to the survey and did not expect to review or approve it, but that she could have been more helpful in interpreting the purpose of the survey and encouraging participation. LaCost stated that the Executive Committee has discussed sharing the results of the survey and she said that she probably should have informed the administration of the survey and the intent of it. She noted that there was no intent to do anything secretive with the survey. The Executive Committee agreed to invite SVCAA Weissinger and VC Green to a meeting after the results have been reviewed to discuss the findings of the survey.

2.6 Update on Dean of Extension Search

VC Green reported that the first search was not successful and he has dismissed the search committee. He stated that the search is now moving into a targeted search. Purdum pointed out that conducting a peripheral search looks discouraging to internal candidates. VC Green noted that it is a tough time for extension administrators these days, even with Nebraska looking so good compared to other universities, because the federal climate for extension is not stable. SVCAA Weissinger pointed out that it is extremely difficult to get people to take the risk to move to another part of the country to be a dean these days because the position is inherently risky due to the uncertainty of the economy. She stated that in the last couple of years there have been cases of offers being made but the candidate declines because he/she is unsure if will be able to sell their house. VC Green stated that some people want to leave their current area but they can't because they are unable to sell their house.

2.7 Update on Dean of Architecture Search

SVCAA Weissinger reported that an offer has been made.

2.8 Why No Increase in Student Enrollment?

SVCAA Weissinger suggested that the Executive Committee meet with Dean Cerveny to discuss this issue. VC Green pointed out that there is an interesting shift in demographics with some college enrollments really going up while others are going down. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she thinks we will have a flat enrollment this year. She noted that

enrollment deposits are due May 1 and we will know more after that day. She stated that the composition of resident to non-resident students is changing.

VC Green reported that he recently had a lengthy conversation with Dean Cerveny and Director of Admissions Hunter and he was happy to learn that they are hiring an out state recruiter. He noted that the university is also considering the idea of doing more advertising in the western part of the state through billboards along I-80 and he will be working with Admissions to decide where other advertisements should be placed. LaCost noted that the University of Missouri has a series of billboards along I-70. VC Green stated that the billboards could be beneficial to us. He reported that he had a lengthy discussion with Director Hunter and she was very supportive to more effectively leverage extension educators in the state to help with recruiting. He stated that we will be facilitating extension educators to learn more about the entire campus so they can have more information when recruiting students. LaCost noted that former Executive Committee member Varner can help target specific areas for recruiting and suggested that he be contacted.

Woodman asked if there are any efforts here to facilitate recruiting. SVCAA Weissinger said that high school counselors are invited to campus to learn more about opportunities at UNL and this is being expanded to community college counselors as well.

VC Green noted that a strategy that has not been employed is to have one quality meeting in the rural part of the state in each county rather than having a recruiter go to each individual high school. He said there could be a more informative, higher quality meeting at one location that students within the county can attend. He pointed out that extension educators can really help with this kind of meeting. SVCAA Weissinger noted that we are in a very competitive race to get in-state students.

2.10 Extension Positions – How They Fit Within the Return Investment Criteria and How Do We Position Ourselves

Purdum noted that a number of extension specialists are getting ready to retire and with the discussion of return on investment she wondered how you calculate on paper the return investment criteria for extension. VC Green stated that initially he wants to begin with making internal measures to determine where IANR stands. He reported that recently a group of faculty in Agricultural Economics presented a framework on this. He noted that extension was raised in the presentation and is now in the process of updating all of the data on the research and education, and transportation systems is going to be added to the process. He pointed out decisions need to be made on where to make investments. Purdum suggested that regional emphasis be included.

2.11 Strategies for Using VSIP Money

SVCAA Weissinger reported that an RFP was sent to the colleges and proposals were due on Friday. She stated that 20-25 proposals have been submitted and administration will have to sort out how to invest at least a layer of the money for some of these proposals. She reported that there is going to be focus on some initial hires that will help us with the reputational and research expenditure goals. She pointed out that the cluster

hires in the digital humanities is the first of these kinds of hire. She noted that the CIC digital humanities summit is occurring here on campus and the other Big Ten schools have agreed that UNL is the world leader in digital research in humanities.

VC Green reported that there were 17 VSIP lines in IANR and some of them have already been reallocated and IANR is now in the process of reallocating the rest.

3.0 Announcements

No announcements were made.

4.0 Approval of 4/11/12 Minutes

Anaya moved for approval of the revised minutes. Wysocki seconded the motion. Schubert suggested some further changes. The motions were approved.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Survey of Non Tenured Track Faculty Members

The Executive Committee reviewed the history behind the creation of the survey. Schubert noted that the starting point of the discussion on non tenure track faculty was about the lack of conformity across the campus in how these faculty members are treated. He noted that SVCAA Weissinger would like a description of how the events transpired and he suggested that this be included in a memo to her.

Schubert reported that he has spoken with some research faculty members who were in disbelief that anyone at the university cared to hear their opinions about their position and how they are treated at the university. He pointed out that the information in the survey shows that there is a group of faculty members who feel that they are treated as second class citizens and we have not done anything to help them. He noted that in discussions on distribution of faculty salary increases no considerations are given to non tenure track faculty members. Guevara pointed out that there is even a third group of faculty members who are sometimes asked to teach courses at a moment's notice and have a one-class one-semester contract.

Purdum stated that an announcement needs to be made at the Senate meeting about the survey and that the Executive Committee's plans to review and analyze the responses over the summer. Reisbig suggested that the Executive Committee invite SVCAA Weissinger and VC Green to a meeting to share the analyzed responses and ask for their suggestions on how to strategize the next steps for reporting the results. Guevara stated that he did not think the Executive Committee had to strategize with the administrators. Schubert stated that the administrators should be informed of what the Executive Committee plans to do with the information gathered from the survey.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Senate Meeting

Shea stated that the Senate should be allowed to comment on the Conflict of Interest policy which is a very important document. Purdum pointed out that the document needs to be approved so it can be in place by the August 24.

LaCost noted that the Senate will also be voting on the Student Bereavement Policy which was questioned by Professor Peterson who felt that it should be included in the existing class absence policy. Shea noted that initially the Executive Committee agreed with Peterson but the ad hoc committee wanted a stand-alone document.

Woodman asked if having a separate policy would change the implementation of the policy. Purdum noted that the policy became more prescriptive. Guevara stated that he opposes the policy because nobody has asked the faculty about creating a policy that impacts class attendance. Woodman pointed out that of all of the thousands of students he has taught over the years, he has had very few students come to him about the Faculty Senate class attendance policy or filling in the appropriate paperwork associated with that policy.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, April 25 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Pat Shea, Secretary.