

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent:

Date: Wednesday, August 29, 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

Schubert called the meeting to order at 3:09 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Efforts to Streamline Promotion & Tenure Process

Schubert reported that he received emails from Professor Harbison, chair of the Academic Planning Committee, stating that the APC wants to look at the promotion and tenure process to see if it can be streamlined and asking if the Faculty Senate wanted to help with this effort. He stated that he replied to Professor Harbison asking him to identify where the problems are with the process. Nickerson stated that he thinks this is something that the Senate should be involved with. He noted that there are disparate differences in the requirements for the promotion and tenure process, particularly with external letters of support. He stated that he can understand wanting to have more uniform standards.

Schubert stated that he remembers this topic recurring numerous times and there has been discussion about the protection of tenure. He recalled the Chancellor and SVCAA stating that tenure is safe and owned by the faculty. He pointed out that the diversity of the departments has always created difficulty in trying to standardize the tenure and promotion process. He stated the departments have absolute authority over the tenure and promotion process.

Woodman asked if the dean can make the decision to streamline the process. Guevara stated that the suggestion to do this has to come out of the departments first. He noted that there are some very general guidelines available, but the process is subjective. He suggested that there could be better guidelines about whether one person has the ability to override the majority in the voting process. Woodman stated that it seems like requiring the same number of external letters could be standardized. Guevara pointed out that it really depends on the work because some faculty member's work is more external than internal. Schubert stated that it should be up to the departments to make that determination. Guevara stated that he thinks the forms being used could be standardized. He noted that the Executive Committee might be talking about two different things.

Reisbig noted that, in addition to the need to better streamline the promotion and tenure process for those reviewing files, Chancellor Perlman also commented in the previous meeting about the importance of emphasizing support for pre-tenure faculty being successful in meeting the expectations outlined for promotion and tenure. Schubert stated that his department has a committee that meets every year with pre-tenure track faculty members to help them and provide guidance. LaCost pointed out that the process varies considerably within colleges and much of it depends on who are on the promotion and tenure committee. She stated that having members from outside the department on a promotion and tenure committee can make an even greater difference in the process.

Guevara pointed out that it would be difficult to standardize the process because people have different workloads and responsibilities. He stated that tenure should be based on publications, not the amount of money that someone has brought into the university. He noted that there is an appeal process and any efforts to standardize the process should not remove the appeal process.

Nickerson stated that he thinks the Chancellor wants the faculty to have more acclamations, grants, and awards since we are now a member of the Big Ten. He noted that promotion and tenure is a huge time consuming process and pointed out that SVCAA Weissinger previously stated that the faculty created most of the time consuming problems about which they later complain, i.e. how much information is required for promotion and tenure files.

Schubert stated that he thinks tackling this subject is like opening a can of worms. He noted that some departments could lose influence in the process while others gain and he questioned what will be the outcome. He asked why the APC feels it needs to look into this issue.

Guevara stated that he agrees that we need to be aware of what the APC is trying to do, but pointed out that the faculty needs to retain control of the process. Wysocki agreed and stated that the APC should not be making uniform rules for everyone.

3.0 Approval of 8/22/12 Minutes

Wysocki moved for approval of the revised minutes. Rinkevich seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 Student Code of Conduct

Griffin reported that she received ASUN's proposed changes to the Code and forwarded them to the Executive Committee. She pointed out that the students did not indicate their changes into the existing document and instead wrote a new Code of Conduct. She stated that this format will not be accepted by General Counsel or the Board of Regents because changes need to be indicated in the existing document. Woodman noted that the new version took out the powers of the faculty to do anything about cheating or academic dishonesty.

LaCost made a motion to send the document back to ASUN informing them that the Board of Regents and the Faculty Senate will not accept the changes in the current format. Guevara seconded the motion but stated that the message should inform the students of what they need to do to correct the problem.

Reisbig noted that some universities have a policy that if an instructor finds someone cheating that the matter has to be dealt with by a separate board which she does not think is unreasonable. Woodman pointed out that a faculty member at UNL can judge whether cheating has occurred and can deal directly with the student, but a student can appeal this by going to the University Judicial Board. The Board will look into the matter and determine whether the penalty is appropriate. He stated that he likes the fact that there is an oversight process to handle cases of academic dishonesty.

The motion was approved.

4.2 Honorary Degrees Committee

Griffin reported that the suggested faculty member for the Honorary Degrees Committee is unable to serve. The committee suggested other possible members of the Committee.

5.0 New Business

5.1 September 11 Faculty Senate Agenda

The Executive Committee reviewed and revised the agenda for September 11.

5.2 Executive Committee Summer Report

The Executive Committee reviewed and revised the summer report.

5.3 Academic Integrity Task Force

Griffin reported that she received an email from Dean Hecker stating that an academic integrity task force, to be chaired by Professor Giesecke, is being formed and that faculty involvement will be needed. She stated that she did not receive information as to the charge of the task force but will forward any information when she receives it. Anaya pointed out that this task force lends itself to the Student Code of Conduct.

Guevara stated that the task force should look into the integrity of new courses that are being offered. He stated that he is concerned that courses that do not meet our academic standards are being offered in order to get more money. He noted that offering these trivial courses can destroy a department as well as the reputation of a university.

Anaya pointed out that there needs to be a balance of courses. She stated that students who have demanding courses sometimes would like a class that is interesting and informative but that doesn't require a lot of work. She stated that these courses can provide a break in the day for students.

Guevara stated that one of the problems with these trivial courses is that many departments are competing to have them. Schubert pointed out that this is the reason for

having curriculum committees, to prevent courses that are below our standards. Nickerson noted that the University Curriculum Committee is supposed to review new courses to avoid duplication.

Ruchala stated that at some point there are classes that are designed for freshmen and sophomores, such as introductory courses, and the instructors usually try to add some humor to the courses and spoon feed the students a bit more because many of them do not know how to study at the university level. She stated that we need to educate these students and explain to them that the courses they take as they advance in their college career are going to be much harder. She stated that the new students are going through a process where they are learning how to learn. Woodman pointed out that the average GPA gets better as the student progresses through the university. Ruchala noted that those who don't adjust and do better usually leave. He stated that he thinks we have some balance of courses because students can take some electives but still have their required courses.

5.4 Campus Master Plan Open House – September 12

Griffin asked the Executive Committee if they wanted to go to the campus master plan open house on September 12 to start the Executive Committee meeting. The Committee agreed and noted it could meet afterwards.

5.5 CIC Statement on Publishing Agreements

Griffin reported that the CIC sent brochures and an information sheet to help raise faculty awareness about the benefits of retaining a degree of control over the use of their published research. Anaya pointed out faculty members can negotiate with publishers for an agreement that would allow publication of the research in the general commons rather than it being restricted to the publishers' exclusive rights to disseminate and reuse faculty-authored articles. She stated that some publishers will accept the agreement while others may not but faculty members should consider negotiating with the publishers. She suggested having Paul Royster from University Libraries to speak about copyrights and faculty rights to the Senate. She stated that he could also give an update on the university repository.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, September 5 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 Woodman, Secretary.