

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Anaya, Bender, Guevara, LaCost, Nickerson, Reisbig, Rinkevich, Ruchala, Woodman, Zoubek

**Absent:** Purdum, Schubert, Wysocki

**Date:** Wednesday, December 12, 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.

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### 1.0 Call to Order

Guevara called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

### 2.0 Associate VC Goodburn

Associate VC Goodburn noted that her last meeting was cut short with the Executive Committee due to lack of time, but it was an interesting discussion that developed into deeper conversations. She wanted to give the Executive Committee an update of plans for this spring semester.

Associate VC Goodburn pointed out that the campus is trying to increase six year graduation rates, provide richer academic experiences, and improve retention rates. She reported that we are improving these rates incrementally and fairly consistently. She stated that efforts are being focused on first year retention rates because research has shown that students who stay through their junior year have a 90% graduation rate. She stated that about 16% of the freshman class does not return and 7% of the sophomore class leaves. She noted that the retention rate across the colleges varies. She pointed out that the undecided undergraduates have the lowest retention rate and efforts are being focused particularly on this group of students. She noted that nationally undecided students are at the highest risk of leaving college. She noted that this makes sense given the cost of higher education since many parents/students do not want to pay for college if they are unsure about their career goals.

Associate VC Goodburn reported that although transfer students are not calculated into the six year graduation rates, we are looking into retention rates for these students because we care about their academic success and want to recruit them. She stated that one of the key priorities for spring is to create new programs within the Exploratory and Pre-Professional Advising Center. She stated that pre-professional advisors from Arts & Sciences were merged with the advisors for undecided students in the Exploratory Center to coordinate efforts. She stated that course planning and scheduling are being prioritized and undecided students are being provided assistance to help them determine which college they should enter. She stated that the Center is now being renovated.

Associate VC Goodburn reported that a probation recovery program is being created specifically for first year and transfer students. She noted that about 10% of these students are on a level one or two probation by the end of their first academic year. Woodman asked if these students are notified that they are in danger of being on probation at the end of their first semester. Associate VC Goodburn stated that the students are notified by a letter and are told to contact their academic advisor. She stated that she is working with Assistant Dean for Student Success Bill Watts, and Assistant Director Katie Kerr of the Exploratory Center to develop a program that will be more proactive with students on probation. She noted that some students might need to meet weekly or biweekly with tutors and advisors. She pointed out that if we can help these students early enough we can get them back into the success stream. LaCost asked if students are ever counseled out of college. Associate VC Goodburn stated that sometimes this occurs, but often they just need to change the program they thought they wanted. She noted that it is difficult for some students to hear that they are not suited to a particular discipline and sometimes there is pressure from parents to be in a specific program. She stated that students on academic probation will receive a letter on January 2. She reported that some students may need to retake a course or be advised that the career path they have chosen may not be the best for them. She pointed out that some students who have been counseled out of the university eventually come back after they have gone to a community college and taken courses that make them more academically prepared for the university and these students are usually successful in finishing their degrees.

Associate VC Goodburn reported that admissions for undecided students were down last year so this year we are being very aggressive in recruiting these students. She pointed out that being an undecided student is not a bad thing and UNL is a great place for students to explore the different academic programs that are available. Woodman asked if the idea is to get these students focused on a career path quickly. Associate VC Goodburn stated that she thinks Admissions may have been trying to get students to declare a college when they were applying for admission, but some students do not see the relevance in taking prerequisite classes if they are undecided in what their major is going to be. Guevara pointed out that undecided students often receive very general advising and this might explain why these students don't feel as guided as other students. Associate VC Goodburn stated that last year the advisors in the Explore Center developed a program that enabled students to shadow people in careers and to meet with faculty members in particular fields to explore careers in particular disciplines. She stated that the idea is to provide these students with wrap around services that will help advise them beyond just what courses they should take. She reported that students can take interest surveys through Career Services that will help identify areas of interest.

Guevara noted that earlier this semester Woodman received an email message from a student who was extremely upset that he was misadvised during new orientation to take a class that he did not have the prerequisites for. He stated that some students feel that they are not given as much help once they are here. Woodman stated that enrollment should have not allowed the student to enroll for the course because he was not qualified to take the class since he was a freshman and the course requires sophomore standing. Reisbig

pointed out that when we migrated to MyRed enrollment lost the ability to catch students who did not have the proper requirements for courses. Guevara pointed out that he wound up having to manually admit students into one of his courses because of the MyRed program problems. Ruchala asked who is responsible for developing the Enroll program. She noted that in CBA Enroll is relied on heavily and she has not heard of any problems with the program at all even though CBA has many courses that have prerequisites. She wondered if the problem with Enroll lies within a college because she thinks the college determines exactly how the enrollment screens run. She stated that these screens are looked at very carefully in CBA and other colleges might want to check to see who is responsible for managing the Enroll screens.

Associate VC Goodburn reported that last spring UNL piloted a module from the National Survey of Student Engagement which asked students 20 questions relating to advising and 75% of those who responded are happy to very happy with the advising they have received here. She noted that some of the questions asked if an advisor counseled on study abroad, academic policies, class scheduling and planning. She noted that the full NSSE survey will be distributed in the spring to first year students and seniors and will further give us a much better sense of our advising services and what areas may need to be improved.

Associate VC Goodburn stated that the use of MyPlan by colleges can be used to identify times of high demand for advisors because the program shows peak and low usage times. She noted that during times when advising demands are slower, advisors can do more career exploration with students. Nickerson asked if advisors inform students of the availability of tutoring services on campus. He stated that these services should be centralized and made much more public to the students. He pointed out that students often find out about these services when it is too late and it would be much more helpful if they could find out about the services earlier in the semester.

Nickerson noted that he teaches large enrollment courses and he has noticed that enrollment is 20% less for this year than for the past 10-15 years. He recently heard that the reason for this is that students are having difficulty in getting student loans. Associate VC Goodburn stated that debt is a concern for many parents, but she does not know if this is impacting enrollments in particular courses. She stated that she has noticed across the board the proliferation of AP courses in high schools. She reported that this year over 700 students came in with either dual enrollment or AP courses in English and the English department saw significant decreases in enrollment because the students have already taken an equivalent course in high school. She stated that Academic Affairs is trying to get a handle on analyzing what the top ten AP and dual enrollment courses are that students are bringing with them from high school. She noted that this information will allow us to manage our first year course scheduling better. She pointed out that one of the impacts of students entering the university with a number of AP courses is that it can disrupt the student's first year experience on campus. LaCost said that a recent study conducted in her department shows that this increase in AP courses is not going to change. Ruchala noted that taking AP courses that are equivalent to a semester results in a significant cost savings for people. Associate VC Goodburn pointed out that high

schools are nationally ranked in part on the number of AP courses they provide and there is a lot of pressure on these schools to offer these courses so they can move up in the rankings. She stated that the university is finding out that some students taking some AP courses are not as well prepared as they should be for college level courses. She stated that the argument is that AP courses will save money, but in some case it doesn't because the student has to take the college entry-level course in order to acquire the skills needed for advanced courses. Ruchala pointed out that accreditation agencies need to make sure that the high schools are grading the students properly. She noted that some colleges might accept the AP courses as elective courses. She reported that CBA decided what AP courses are acceptable for a major compared to giving credit for a general education course. She stated that her daughter was able to save an entire semester at college by taking AP courses and she would encourage parents to have their children take these courses. She noted that recent articles in publications are saying that people are increasingly looking at three year degrees instead of four year degrees.

Associate VC Goodburn reported that the MyPlan early warning system will be available to instructors in the spring. She stated that during the spring semester the flag and kudos features on MyPlan will be available to all instructors. She noted that there are two types of flags that can be used. Instructors can send an automated email message notifying a student that there is concern about his/her academic performance. She reported that once a student receives three flags, whether it is from one course or several courses, the student's academic advisor is automatically notified. The advisor is informed of what kind of difficulty the student is having so appropriate action can be taken. She pointed out that using the flags is totally optional, but the campus wants to get services to students who are having difficulty as quickly as possible. She stated that the kudos flag allows an instructor to inform a student that they are doing a great job and students like getting the kudos flag. She reported that a story will be published in an upcoming Scarlet issue notifying all instructors about the ability to use the flags in MyPlan. Woodman asked if group messages can be sent to students through MyPlan. Associate VC Goodburn stated that flags can be sent manually or automatically through MyPlan, and currently a few professors are piloting the automatic process based on the Blackboard grade book but the bugs still need to be worked out of this system.

Reisbig asked if there is a way to get a student's photo on the course roster or is this option only available to advisors through MyPlan. Associate VC Goodburn stated that instructors can see a picture of the students through the attendance tool when they get their course roster and attendance records can be maintained. She noted that some instructors like to familiarize themselves with students before the course begins. Woodman asked if attendance can be taken through a clicker system. Associate VC Goodburn stated that this is a question for those who manage the Starfish system.

Associate VC Goodburn reported that a big project this spring is to consolidate the academic support services and to make them more visible. She stated that the University Libraries is going through a de-selection of their books and journals since many things are being moved to electronic format. As a result a lot of space will be available in the Libraries and Interim Dean Busch is working with SVCAA Weissinger to discuss the

possibility of developing an academic union located in Love Library. She reported that a retreat will be held on January 4 to brainstorm the idea and to identify the services that would be housed in the academic union. She noted that the focus is on academic support services including education abroad, undergraduate research, and possibly the Explore Center. She pointed out that most tutoring services are decentralized and there are other resource centers, such as the writing center, that are not centrally located. She stated that the idea is to make the area visible for all students to use. She stated that a tentative project for the first floor of Love north is to create an academic learning commons. She stated that the Sasaki Consultants have been providing feedback on how to reinvent the libraries to make it a central location.

Woodman asked if the administration is envisioning something similar to the Nebraska Student Life Complex for student athletes. Associate VC Goodburn stated that she would love to see something similar to this complex. Woodman asked if a budget was going to be provided to hire tutors. Associate VC Goodburn stated that there is the Student Support Services in the TRIO office, but there are eligibility requirements and a limited number of students can be accommodated. She noted that a meeting was held this summer with representations from chemistry, mathematics, modern languages, and the writing center to identify needs. She stated that overall we need to have more tutors and we need a more intensive academic consulting service.

Guevara stated that it seems like the university is unwilling to provide full service assistance to the students. He noted that with the Spanish tutoring center the grant money awarded for this project could only be used for remodeling the room. Associate VC Goodburn pointed out that the department had stated that it had the funds to hire the tutors. Guevara noted that there was misrepresentation on the grant and it was unclear that the funds could not be used for hiring tutors. He stated that tutoring needs to be directed more to the students. Associate VC Goodburn stated that the question is who should direct the development of tutoring because currently it is uneven in departments. She noted that the writing center tutors are required to take a class before they become a tutor and they must conduct undergraduate research on their undergraduate consulting and are required to read up on best practices for tutoring. She pointed out that other tutoring centers might just have a teaching assistant holding office hours. She stated that the administration is trying to get a handle on the tutoring centers across the campus.

Anaya asked about East Campus and whether a similar academic learning commons is being considered. Associate VC Goodburn reported that VC Green is working with Interim Dean Busch to reimagine the use of space in the CYT Library. She stated that the idea is create a common space for learning on East Campus.

Associate VC Goodburn reported that colleges have been asked to submit first-year course plans for all majors. She stated that the Enrollment Management Council and Registration and Records will be developing a predictive model for first-year course enrollment and the plan is to send reports to the departments in early spring to help them plan for the number of students that will be taking their courses. She reported that pilot “course bundles” for particular majors are being tested to help students avoid scheduling

conflicts. She noted that Life Sciences is one program that will be piloting the bundle. She noted that the Associate Deans and all advising leaders have been very receptive to this idea and the intent is to help with enrollment management. She stated that the idea is to have the first year plans in place, but the hope is to have four-year-plans that will be in the bulletin by 2014. She pointed out that this can help students plan beyond their first semester on campus and gives the students a sense of what a four year plan can be, although the plan is not set in stone.

Guevara asked if students are notified that they have already reached 130 credit hours. He pointed out that there are students who don't want to graduate in four years. Associate VC Goodburn stated that currently this kind of notification is not in place. She stated that in the spring a report was created that looked at all of the graduates to see how many credit hours they had in each college. She reported that the average number of credit hours for students who graduated from Arts & Sciences is approximately 138. She noted that many universities are becoming more aggressive in encouraging students to finish their degrees on time. She pointed out that as we become more strategic on data we might be able to be more proactive in prompting students to finish.

Woodman asked if the four year plan will take into consideration classroom size and enrollment limits of courses. He pointed out that while he understands letting seniors and juniors register first for courses, it creates a problem because some wait to take courses that are intended for sophomore students. Associate VC Goodburn noted that we need to get a handle on these kinds of courses. She stated that it could be an issue of needing to have additional sections of some courses. She stated that up until now we haven't been able to systematically track these kinds of things. It works if the lab is not a separate course. However if the lab and lecture components are separate courses then it does not work.

Associate VC Goodburn reported that this year after priority registration closed a student who did not register for classes was sent a message to remind them to enroll. She pointed out that we need to be more aggressive in getting students to register during priority registration. She noted that departments can now program courses to allow a number of students to be placed on a waiting list for courses. This allows departments to be more proactive in enrolling students and provides a sense of demand for courses. Woodman stated that an issue with this would be for courses that require dual enrollment, a course section along with a lab.

Associate VC Goodburn reported that the campus is trying to be proactive with transfer students. She stated that focus groups were formed to hear the concerns of transfer students and it was learned that their problems are more social than academic, especially for those starting in January because they have missed all of the new student orientation programs. She reported that there has been discussion about developing a learning community for transfer students and there is interest in having a residence hall with people more their age. She stated that efforts are underway to get transfer students socially connected. She noted that there will be a kickoff reception on January 9 for transfer students and transition mentors are being created. She stated that 42 people are

being interviewed for 10 transition mentors. These mentors will be attached to incoming transfer students to help the student get acclimated to university resources during their first semester. She noted that many of the transfer students talked about how overwhelming it was to come here from a smaller college. Woodman asked if transfer students have a high dropout rate. Associate VC Goodburn stated that the probation rate for transfer students after a year is 7%.

Associate VC Goodburn stated that because of the increase in faculty responsibility and use with MyPlan, faculty will probably hear more things about students who are dealing with problems that need intervention by others. As a result, the administration is looking to see how the “referral system” in MyPlan might be implemented. To develop the referral system, decision trees need to be in place that provides information on where these students should go in order to get help. She stated that discussions will be held with all associate deans to see if a person has been identified in each college who can look at crisis problems to make sure that parameters are very clearly defined in how to handle crisis problems and to provide students with help. She stated that the administration hopes to have everything in place by the end of the spring semester.

Nickerson asked if undeclared students are more likely to drop out of college. He noted that he is happy to see undeclared majors because he sees them as students who are willing to be molded when they get to the university and he finds them to be the most interesting students. He suggested that there be more intriguing courses that would interest these students and these students should be informed of what careers are available to them if they major in a certain discipline. Associate VC Goodburn stated that she has had discussions about this with Director Mitchell of the General Education program and they talked about having a research exploration course where students could come and hear professors talk about their research and learn what is possible in working in a particular field. She noted that many students do not know there are so many dimensions to the different disciplines. LaCost asked if Career Services offer sessions on what students can do with their major. Associate VC Goodburn reported that Career Services has worked with some departments on this. She stated that Career Services is open to expanding their services to others than juniors and seniors.

### **3.0 Announcements**

#### **3.1 Chronicle of Higher Education Request**

Woodman reported that he was contacted by a reporter from the Chronicle of Higher Education who wanted to discuss issues on non-tenure track faculty members. He noted that the reporter also wants to talk to tenure track faculty members and asked if anyone would be willing to speak to the reporter. Guevara stated that he was contacted too and is willing to speak about the issue but the reporter wanted to have the information by Saturday and he is in the midst of grading final exams.

#### **3.2 No Meeting Next Week**

Griffin reminded the Executive Committee that there will not be a meeting next week.

### **4.0 Approval of 12/5/12 Minutes**

Ruchala moved for approval of the minutes as revised. Reisbig seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

## **5.0 Unfinished Business**

### **5.1 Student Bereavement Policy**

The Executive Committee reviewed and made some minor revisions to ASUN's suggested bereavement policy.

### **5.2 Update on Charge to University Curriculum Committee Regarding Proposed Changes to ACE Governing Document #4**

Guevara pointed out that a lot of people feel very strongly about ACE and the Executive Committee wants to first address the issue with multiple section courses, however, the issues go beyond just the multiple section courses. He stated that the whole recertification process is troublesome, but fixing the problems with the multiple course sections is a good first step. Nickerson noted that he does not think people are against the ACE courses in general, it is the recertification process that is the problem. He noted that all of the people, except for one, that spoke at the Senate meeting were all against the recertification. He stated that the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) should be charged with seeing if it can make recommendations on taking care of the problems identified. Reisbig pointed out that there is a difference between removing the recertification process and making revisions to deal with the problems associated with multiple section courses. She pointed out that the question will be whether each of the colleges will need to approve substantive changes if any are made to ACE Governing Document 4. Woodman pointed out that any revisions would be made to the process, not the curriculum, and the colleges should not have to vote on the process change. He noted that the ACE program would not be eliminated. Anaya stated that the process of recertification would be restructured. Guevara noted that the recertification would be occurring in the departments. Nickerson pointed out that the Senate should be able to deal with a change in the process since it goes across the colleges.

Guevara reported that he has not sent the charge to the UCC yet about revising ACE Governing Document 4. Woodman stated that the charge should include concerns about the recertification issue. Reisbig stated that clarification is needed on the process in that the majority of the assessment occurs at the department level and only a report on the assessment is provided to the UCC. Ruchala stated that the email should assert the Senates right to process a motion to make changes to ACE Governance Document 4. Reisbig stated that a suggestion to the UCC should be made to deal with the multiple section problems and the UCC should consider reviewing the recertification process to see if changes can be made.

Guevara noted that the curriculum is owned by the faculty and the Senate can make changes to curriculum processes that are unproductive. He stated that Director Mitchell wants to show there is a real certification process for accreditation purposes, but departments can provide this documentation. Ruchala stated that recertification should be returned to the departments. She noted that it is reasonable to talk about recertification to make sure that a course is still meeting the outcomes. She stated that department heads

need to be trained on what is required for the recertification process. Guevara pointed out that the criteria needed for recertification needs to be changed. He stated that samples should not be needed for every course section. Ruchala stated that the requirement of three samples from each section should be deleted.

## **6.0 New Business**

### **6.1 Review of Senate Meeting**

Guevara noted that the Chancellor asked the Senate for information on what amenities the faculty would like to see in the apartments that will be used for visiting faculty in the new parking/apartment complex that will be built at 18<sup>th</sup> and R Streets. He pointed out that the Chancellor stated that he needs this information very soon because the process is moving along quickly. Bender suggested that the apartments be comparable to the Embassy Suites. Nickerson stated that there should be wireless internet connections and a kitchenette available. Reisbig noted that the survey for faculty members seeking information on visiting professors will not be sent out until early January. The Executive Committee agreed that Schubert should send an email message to the Chancellor stating that the apartments should be comparable to the Embassy Suites and notifying the Chancellor that the survey will be sent out in the beginning of the spring semester which will provide further information.

### **6.2 Spring Executive Committee Schedule**

Griffin stated that the spring meetings will not begin until January 9 and she will send out the complete schedule to the Executive Committee.

### **6.3 Spring Guest Speakers to Senate Meetings**

The Executive Committee decided to invite CIO Askren and Associate Vice Chancellor Larkins to speak to the Senate during the spring semester.

### **6.4 Information Technologies and Services Committee (ITSC)**

Woodman reported that comments were made by an Information Services person at the ITSC meeting that the information he provided on the KACE program to the Executive Committee was not adequate. He questioned who would control the guidelines for the use of KACE. He reported that at the ITSC meetings the number of people from Information Services far outweigh the number of faculty members. Griffin noted that this is an important committee that faculty members should have a significant voice on and pointed out that it is a Faculty Senate committee. The Executive Committee agreed to invite Professor Hartke, chair of the ITSC, to meet with the Executive Committee to discuss the concerns.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, January 9 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.