

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Lindquist

Date: Wednesday, February 1, 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 3:03 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Update on Student Bereavement Policy

Purdum reported that the ad hoc committee working on the student bereavement policy met. She noted that the ASUN representatives are quite comfortable with amending the language of their proposed policy and including it in the student absence policy and they are working with Professor Woodward, chair of the Grading & Examinations Committee to get this done. Once drafted, he will submit the proposed changes to the student absence policy to the Grading & Examinations Committee. She stated that the intent is to have revisions to the student absence policy with the inclusion of the student bereavement policy presented to the Senate in March.

Woodman asked if the policy will look similar to what ASUN originally proposed. Purdum reported that the language will be reduced to just a few paragraphs. She stated that the idea is to have students contact Student Affairs and this office will inform instructors that a student will be absent for bereavement. Woodman noted that something similar to this is already done.

Guevara asked if the Executive Committee will see the proposed changes to the student absence policy before it goes to the Senate. Purdum said yes. She noted that she told the students that there could be heavy discussion about the policy at the Senate meeting.

2.2 Associate VP Distance Education and Director of Online Worldwide

LaCost reported that she contacted Associate VP Mary Niemiec and she will be meeting with the Executive Committee either February 22 or February 29. She stated that she will finalize the meeting tomorrow.

2.3 Migration to New Email System

Woodman reported that the faculty of the College of Arts & Sciences was recently sent a note asking for questions regarding the new email system. He believes that the College will be next in line to migrate to the new email system.

3.0 Approval of 1/25/12 Minutes

Wysocki moved for approval of the revised minutes. The motion was seconded by Schubert. Shea asked for clarification of Guevara's comment about the faculty accepting vertical budget cuts thereby allowing the Chancellor to eliminate any program whether it is part of a department or an entire department. He stated that he is concerned that people might misinterpret the comment as the Faculty Senate endorsed vertical cuts. Guevara pointed out that the faculty was surveyed during the 2003-2004 budget cuts to see if the faculty agreed with vertical budgets cuts and 68% of the respondents agreed. He suggested the statement could be deleted if it was felt that his statement might be misinterpreted. Schubert disagreed with deleting the statement. He pointed out that guests have different rights in editing their comments made during Executive Committee meetings, but Executive Committee members agree to what they say in the meeting to be recorded in the minutes. He stated that members should not come to meetings to chat and they need to think before they speak. Wysocki asked about members specifying that a comment they make is not for the minutes. Schubert stated that it is not proper for members to do this and Executive Committee members should speak as if they were speaking in a microphone in front of the entire faculty body. Shea pointed out that if the Executive Committee is working something out, ideas are going to be thrown out and not all ideas are well formulated in advance.

LaCost pointed out that the Executive Committee has discussions and the minutes state that these are not verbatim minutes. She stated that if we get to the point that everything that is stated during the meeting has to be in the minutes then verbatim minutes will need to be made. Griffin pointed out that most people would not want verbatim minutes.

Rinkevich called the question. The minutes were approved.

LaCost asked if further discussion was needed about whether people can edit their comments. Guevara pointed out that a Senate, by definition, debates and debates lead to better ideas and limitations on what a person has to say produces fewer ideas and results. He stated that while he agrees that what went on at the meeting can't be changed there should be exceptions so people can clarify what they said. Wysocki noted that if the Executive Committee starts trying to limit people's ability to clarify what they said in the meeting could lead to messy misinterpretations of what was meant. Griffin pointed out that people do not always speak as articulately as they would like and allowing members to read and clarify their statements helps to convey the intent of their comments. She noted that she tries to be as accurate as possible with the minutes but sometimes it is difficult to capture exactly what people are saying and allowing members to clarify their statements is extremely helpful to her.

Shea stated that as Secretary he feels it is his responsibility to read the minutes carefully and if there are unclear comments or statements are incorrect or information is missing then he should ask about them. He stated that he is under the impression that we want to check to make sure the minutes are clear and understandable.

Woodman pointed out that since there is already a filter when Griffin drafts the minutes, members should have a right to edit their comments but perhaps not remove comments. He stated that members should be able to re-filter and makes changes to clarify a statement rather than remove it.

Purdum stated that the Executive Committee reviews the minutes each week to make sure the language or the words represent the intent of what they want to say but there should not be the intent to remove whole conversations. She stated that removal of discussion is not acceptable and not appropriate but members should edit their comments as needed to clarify what they said. She pointed out that if statements are important enough to discuss then they should not be removed.

Shea asked how the Executive Committee wants to operate. He stated that Schubert suggested that people speak without thinking. He pointed out that he thinks before speaking although maybe not at the depth he would like because of time constraints. He pointed out the he did not regard everything being done in the meeting as being so formal that members need to practice what they are going to say before the meetings.

LaCost asked for a motion on how corrections of the minutes should be handled. Woodman made the motion that the Executive Committee members should review the minutes in order to clarify language that expresses the intent of the conversation. Purdum suggested a friendly amendment to include “removal of discussion is not appropriate.” Woodman accepted the friendly amendment, seconded by Schubert. The motion to amend the original motion was approved. The motion on the procedures to amend the Executive Committee minutes was approved with six votes and three abstentions.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 Draft of Conflict of Interest Policy – Executive Committee Response

LaCost noted that there will be two open forums coming up for faculty members to attend to voice feedback on the COI policy. She noted that comments need to be submitted to the Office of Research & Economic Development by February 24. She stated that people seem to be relatively satisfied with the document. Purdum pointed out that there are opportunities for general faculty members to make comments and she sees no need for the Executive Committee to respond. Wysocki reported that he is still waiting to get comments back from his colleagues and he will forward these to Griffin. Purdum suggested that an announcement be made at the Senate meeting about the forums. LaCost asked if the COI policy will need to go to the Senate for approval. Griffin stated that it should go to the Senate.

4.2 Survey of Professors of Practice

The Executive Committee reviewed and made suggestions regarding the questions for the survey. Wysocki suggested that there be a combination of yes/no questions and some intensity questions.

Anaya asked what the outcomes are from the survey that the Executive Committee wants to see. LaCost stated that the Committee wants to gather information to see if there are concerns across campus for people in these positions. Schubert pointed out that the questionnaire can be applied to research professors too because they face identical issues to professors of practice. Shea noted that the Committee wants to determine whether there are issues campus-wide but does it also wants to know if there are problems in specific colleges. If so, a college identifier would need to be included in the demographic information. Schubert asked if the information gained from the survey will be presented at the college level or the administration level. He believes the information should go to the Chancellor, SVCAA Weissinger, and VC Green. Wysocki agreed and pointed out that the Senate should not deal with any issues at the college level. Schubert stated that informing the administration of problems, if there are any, gives the administration the opportunity to fix them. He noted that the Senate could do a follow-up survey a year later to see if the problem still persists. Guevara pointed out that it would be difficult for an administrator to correct any problems if they do not know where the problems exist. LaCost stated that there is a fine line with getting general information and determining more specificity to get at the root of a problem. She thought that the idea was to just get a general picture of whether there are issues campus-wide for these employees. Purdum stated that she likes the idea of a follow up survey because it would help hold the administration accountable if any problems are identified. She also likes the idea of having a discussion at a Senate meeting post survey if some red flags are raised.

LaCost asked what identifying variables should be included in the survey. Anaya suggested having someone identify their rank and gender. She stated that she would be reluctant to highlight a department that is identified as having problems. She stated that people may also be discouraged from participating in the survey if they feel they can be identified.

Guevara noted that there are different categories of lecturers with some being on limited contracts and some work strictly on call. He suggested that the survey be sent to senior lecturers, professors of practice, and research professors. Woodman suggested including lecturers with 1.00 FTE. Guevara stated that a survey of other non full-time lecturers could be conducted at another time.

Schubert stated that we need to make clear what we are going to do with the results of the survey when soliciting people to participate in the questionnaire. Guevara asked who will get access to the specific data as it comes in. Schubert noted that there are very few professors of practice or lecturers in some departments/units and it would be easy to identify who responded to the survey. LaCost pointed out that if the survey is run through Survey Monkey or another surveying service, specific information on respondents will not be provided. Anaya stated that Survey Monkey encrypts the information on the respondents. Woodman stated that the Executive Committee would

get a synopsis of the data. Schubert asked if this information would be made public to the Senate. Griffin noted that the Senate conducted a survey several years ago and just aggregate data was presented.

LaCost stated that she will continue to draft the survey based on the suggestions made and will present a revised draft to the Executive Committee.

4.3 Report on Meeting about Honorary Degrees (Anaya)

Anaya reported that she met with Professor Boudreau and Associate to the Chancellor Nunez to discuss concerns about the Honorary Degrees. She stated that Nunez will look at the form for submitting nominations and see if a biography page can be included. She stated that they also discussed how the biographies can be distributed to the Senate while keeping the information confidential. She stated that it was suggested that the biographies could be put on Blackboard for Senate members only.

Anaya stated that both Boudreau and Nunez are very willing to accommodate what additional information the Senate feels is needed to get better qualified candidates for honorary degrees. LaCost suggested that Nunez could speak to the Chancellor to see what he is looking for in an honorary degree candidate. Anaya noted that they discussed sending the complete list of nominees to the Chancellor, but it was decided that the Honorary Degrees is a faculty committee and that it should make the recommendations to the Senate. She stated that one of the main concerns is the current form that is being used because it does not seem to ask for enough relevant information.

Anaya stated that they also discussed about opening up the nomination process to a year round nomination process rather than just once a year. She reported that there was also discussion on whether the call for nominations should be sent out by email. She stated that Boudreau and Nunez will take the suggestions back to the Honorary Degrees Committee for discussion. LaCost asked if Anaya will be meeting with Boudreau and Nunez again. She stated that she will continue working with them and the hope is to get the changes made before the next call for nominations.

4.4 Executive Committee Member

Griffin reported that there is a Senator very interested in serving on the Executive Committee but she needs to check with her department chair before making the commitment. She stated that the Senator will let her know if she is able to serve.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Report on Board of Regents Meeting

LaCost reported that a lot of time was spent discussing the health initiatives. She stated that Central Administration does not think they will get all of the money needed for the initiatives from the Legislature.

LaCost reported that the comprehensive plans for UNK and UNO were discussed. She noted that Regent Hawks asked if UNO is ever going to have a complete campus rather

than just separate sites. She stated that he wants to see a 15 year plan for making UNO a campus.

LaCost stated that a formal thank you was made to the Board by a woman who was greatly appreciative that the Industrial Arts Building was saved.

5.2 Report on Meeting with VP Dietze

LaCost reported that the meeting with VP Dietze was relatively short. She noted that Professor Hope is still the UNL faculty representative to the University-wide Benefits Committee and suggested that she be invited to meet with the Executive Committee to give an update on the work of the U-wide Committee. She stated that she inquired about the family medical leave policy for faculty members and was told that each campus should check with their Human Resources department. She stated that there are no new changes with the federal health bill. She reported that a change will be announced soon regarding the generic prescription program.

5.3 Senate Representative on Bookstore Advisory Group

Griffin reported that Associate VC Phelps inquired whether the Senate wants to have a representative on the newly formed Bookstore Advisory Group. She noted that three faculty members have already been identified to serve on the BAG. The Executive Committee felt that no additional faculty members were needed but appreciate Associate VC Phelps checking with the Senate.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, February 8 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.