EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bender, Guevara, Nickerson, Reisbig, Rinkevich, Sollars, Woodman, Wysocki, Zoubek

Absent: Anaya, Joeckel, Ruchala, Schubert

Date: Wednesday, November 6, 2013

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 3:01 p.m.

2.0 CIO Askren
2.1 Plans for Blackboard
CIO Askren reported that the university is in the middle of a three year contract with Blackboard and he has asked the help of the Senate’s Information Technologies and Services Committee (ITSC), of which Woodman is chair, to determine whether we should continue using Blackboard or possibly switch to another program. He noted that Blackboard is used system wide and although it is considered the gold standard, he wants to gather faculty input as to whether this program is meeting our needs, and it is also very expensive. He stated that the idea is to bring in two or three other competing companies to campus along with Blackboard to give presentations on their programs. He noted that one of the companies would be Canvas which is a cloud solution that has had considerable success and has the reputation of being more innovative. He reported that Information Technology Services (ITS) wants to get the faculty perspective on these different programs.

Guevara asked if there is a big price difference between Blackboard and the other companies. CIO Askren noted that some universities are moving off of Blackboard because of the price and possibly one third of the cost of it could be reduced by going to a different program. He pointed out that we are always looking to be more cost efficient, but the primary driver in the decision process needs to be the capabilities of the program. He stated that it is important that we get feedback from the faculty during this reconsideration process.

CIO Askren reported that some of our peer institutions have been vigorously pilot testing some of the newer programs available and they are at the point that some of their faculty members are teaching on different platforms. He noted that we want to get their feedback to see what they think of these programs.
Bender asked how difficult it would be to move content from one program to another. CIO Askren stated that this is one of the things that we would need to determine. He reported that as an example the University of Maryland moved off of Blackboard to Canvas and saved over $200,000 annually in the process, but we would want to find out how difficult it is to move everything over. He pointed out that we can learn a lot from the other schools’ experiences. The vendors have programs for moving content over to help with the transfer. He noted that there are some other questions that we need to consider such as what the functionalities are of the other programs and are there some things we can do in the other programs that we can’t do in Blackboard and do these differences matter.

Bender asked if these other programs have any ties to textbook publishers. CIO Askren stated that his sense is that the larger publishing companies are trying to cover the whole field, but other companies are just trying to go out on their own with a new program and in some cases state that a learning management system may not be necessary in some of the programs. He reported that Blackboard Learn costs us $500,000 a year. Nickerson asked if there are additional costs with Blackboard. CIO Askren stated that the system wide cost for Blackboard software is approximately $700,000 a year, of that we pay $500,000 for the learn component. The additional costs are for Blackboard Analytics and the Learn Module. He noted that most of these costs are paid out of student technology fees. Woodman stated that we also need to ask how much of the capabilities of Blackboard are used. CIO Askren stated that he thinks it is a good thing for us to have a standardized product throughout the university and he thinks that the economics of the higher education LMS market may bring down the cost of Blackboard in the future.

CIO Askren reported that the other companies will probably be brought in for their presentation sometime early next semester.

2.2 Centralized Printing – Impacts on Faculty Members
CIO Askren reported that ITS is not interested in disrupting faculty printing but is looking at additional options for centralized administrative printing. He stated that the question is whether we are as efficient as we could be with our printing. He noted that one area is to look at student printing in the computer labs. He pointed out that it is not only costly but students want the capability of printing from mobile devices and they need a collaborative space to discuss group projects and to do some printing.

CIO Askren wanted to emphasize two areas: this is not an effort to get printers out of the faculty offices, but departments and colleges may benefit by having centralized printing options to reduce administrative costs and should consider some staff centralized printing because it could save considerable money. Guevara pointed out that his department has done centralized printing for teaching assistants and lecturers who are on the same floor and a relatively short distance to the printer. So far it is working well and is economically beneficial. He stated that the printing goes to the photocopier and that there are setting for privacy printing if desired by each user each time printing is needed. CIO Askren noted that these kinds of savings are retained in the departments and colleges and units should consider doing this if it is feasible.
2.3 Microsoft Outlook Concerns

Guevara reported that he has been informed that sometimes logging into Outlook can be a little slow. CIO Askren stated that anyone experiencing this difficulty should contact the ITS help center so their staff can better determine where the problem lies. He pointed out that it could be the result of a faulty outlet jack. He noted that the syncing with the cloud to update folders can take a little time, but waiting to log into Outlook is a different thing that should be fixable. He stated that people having this problem should contact their local IT person or the ITS help desk.

CIO Askren stated that known issues with Microsoft tend to be with the MAC 2011 Outlook Client and related calendaring. He stated that most of the bugs have been resolved, but if there is something that cannot be fixed locally a help ticket is sent to Microsoft and they usually respond quickly.

CIO Askren reported that Microsoft is now saying that if you are a Windows user using Outlook you must have the latest version (2013 for Windows and 2011 for Macs) in order for it to function well. For web users the version required to access Outlook will no longer be supported on the Windows XP operating system after April as they are discontinuing XP support. He pointed out that Firefox and Chrome browsers should still be able to access Office 365 on XP after that date.

Zoubek asked about issues of getting logged out of the web version of Outlook. He noted that someone told him that they would go through the process of logging out but the program would not actually log out. Reisbig stated that when going through the web Outlook it will tell you that you are logged out when in fact you are not. CIO Askren stated that this is not supposed to happen and he will check on this. Reisbig noted that it used to work. CIO Askren stated that there was a major upgrade to Outlook this summer and this may be a bug in the upgraded version. He stated that there is strong technical support for Outlook and they are highly motivated to have it be successful. He reported that he will also ask the help center to look out for these concerns. He stated that IS disseminates information through their newsletters and will find other ways to communicate information, but in the meantime if anyone has issues they should contact the help center or send him an email message. Nickerson noted that faculty members might be reluctant to call and complain if there are some delays in getting access to Outlook because they might think this is a trivial issue. CIO Askren noted that we have found dozens of bugs in Outlook over the past two years and almost all have been fixed but people should contact the help center if they have any problems.

CIO Askren reported that he believes ITS client services have improved, but they are always interested in additional feedback and ideas on new services. He noted he and Lance Perez have sent a new IT survey to deans, directors, and department heads this week. David Woodman and the Faculty Senate ITSC helped develop the survey. He stated that he and the ITS staff really appreciate peoples’ responses. He noted that IS takes complaints very seriously and wants to address any problems.
2.4 Update on KACE Replacement Program

CIO Askren reported that the contract with KACE is expiring next month and ITSC has been working to look at the functionality and privacy concerns of programs that are similar to KACE but that have more options to turn off features that can be invasive. He noted that the company that owns KACE did not show interest in providing additional privacy so a RFP was issued to look at the market place to choose a different program. He stated that two products, Casper which is currently being used in the Fine Arts, and Microsoft SCCM have been selected by the evaluation team. He noted that both of these programs have environments that are flexible in how much information they collect. He pointed out that this program is optional for faculty members to use and there will be an opt-in process that is being developed by the implementation team. Ian Cottingham from the Raikes School is on the team and his input as a member of the ITSC has been very valuable. He stated that he welcomes any input on this issue. Reisbig asked at what level the opt-in will be available. CIO Askren stated that in working with David Woodman and the ITSC he would like it to be an individual faculty member’s decision. Woodman pointed out that if faculty members want software to be easily downloaded to your computer it would be beneficial to opt into the program. CIO Askren suggested that he and David Woodman may wish to work together to communicate with Academic Affairs and the deans on the related issues.

Sollars pointed out that the Chancellor had previously stated that there might be incentives and disincentives for departments/units depending on whether they chose to use productivity tools like KACE and asked if this will still be true. CIO Askren believes that with the new program that we have the right approach and more people will be willing to opt into it given the improved flexibility. He pointed out that all universities face similar security issues and having this kind of program strengthens our security in terms of being able to more effectively patch software vulnerabilities. He noted that as a peer example at the University of Minnesota they are using a similar program which some faculty members are using, but he believes it is mostly administrators using it. The point being that our peers are using the same technology and that it is most often widely used with administrative computers and that it is optional with faculty.

Nickerson asked if the CIC takes a concerted view of what its member institutions are doing individually or whether there is more of an umbrella approach. CIO Askren stated that the CIOs are interested in working together when there are opportunities, but that there isn’t a focus on using common policies. CIO Askren is very interested in having more of the CIC universities come together to do aggregate purchasing. He stated that it is not done very often but he would like to see more of it because of the buying power will result in lower prices and better terms and conditions.

CIO Askren stated that he thinks it makes sense to support the policy suggested by the ITSC because it allows for optional use. He plans on reaching out to Academic Affairs and Deans collectively to both inform them of the ability for people to opt-in and to make them aware of how important it is to the faculty. He stated that he is aware of how long the Senate has discussed and worked on this issue.
Nickerson asked if all colleges are represented on the ITSC. Woodman reported that not all colleges but there is wide representation. Nickerson stated that having a member from each college on the ITSC could help disseminate information. CIO Askren agreed and stated that he has learned that information does not always travel up from the senior leaders within colleges and being able to disseminate information in multiple ways is helpful.

Woodman noted that are two partitions of communications: the Deans, Directors, and Chairs may receive information from ITS, but the local IT people can also talk to the Dean. He pointed out that in the Libraries and in CBA faculty members were not given the choice of whether to have KACE on their machines. CIO Askren stated that security is one of the biggest concerns and it is difficult to address security concerns in a decentralized system, although he believes that a research institution should have a decentralized system of ITS resources. He pointed out that there are different models in the colleges of how they deal with these kinds of issue and each college can choose how much it wants to invest in security. He stated that the bottom line is that some IT people talk directly to the Deans while other people do not have that direct input. He stated that it would help him if we could make some kind of joint request or update to Academic Affairs on what the situation is in the various colleges. He suggested that the ITSC could do some brainstorming about it.

2.5 Windows XP
CIO Askren reported that there is a significant user base on campus with about 8% of Windows users still on XP. He noted that there was recently an article in UNL Today about Microsoft discontinuing support of XP in April, 2014. He stated that about half of the XP users have sufficient hardware which can be upgraded to Windows 7 which is free due to our campus agreement. He stated that ITS realizes that there are some faculty members running locally developed or lab software that requires XP. He reported that many peer universities are not allowing or planning to allow XP on any machines that are on their network because of security concerns. He stated that there is already talk in the media about hackers developing new exploits to break into machines with XP after support ends in April. If this happens it could compromise other machines as well if the hackers getting into our network. He stated that ITS is looking at several different ways to address the problem although it is a challenging issue. He noted that there are some people with very old PC’s that are using even older operating systems that will be very vulnerable. He reported that it is possible to put these machines on a separate network segment behind a firewall. He stated that another option is upgrading the operating system and ITS will assist local IT support staff with this. He reported that he is asking Purchasing to negotiate with vendors to see if the cost of getting the CPU can be driven down to about $500 for an appropriate replacement machine.

Griffin suggested that information be made available to the XP users on what specs are needed to be able to upgrade to Windows 7. CIO Askren stated that there will be information available on the web and the help center can assist with this. He noted that ITS wants to make the transition as easy as possible. He reported that the other part of this issue is that Microsoft is now saying that it won’t support Outlook on those
computers running XP. He stated that he hopes faculty members with very old machines will be able to get some funds that will allow them to upgrade.

Nickerson suggested that IT people within units can identify those people who need to upgrade and speak to them. Woodman asked if the network has the capability of keeping track of all of these people. CIO Askren stated that there is some registration information but there is not a lot of information as to who is on the network as we do not have client software installed as a requirement due to privacy concerns.

2.6 Licensing Negotiations with Adobe and Other Programs
CIO Askren reported that Adobe is now leasing the software through annual agreements rather than having perpetual licenses as there has been in the past. As a result, it is now required that Adobe Creative Suite must be purchased every year. He stated that information gathered shows that there are some colleges that are very heavy users of Adobe. He pointed out that parts of the Adobe suite are considered superior to other competitors programs. He reported that the university has signed a system-wide three year deal with Adobe for approximately $350,000 a year and after receiving input from the UNL community he worked with Procurement to allow people to purchase Adobe Suite for $10 a month through Eshop. He pointed out that this is less than the $30 a month or more that Adobe would cost if we did not have the agreement. He stated that a lot of universities are now saying they will move off of Adobe because of its new pricing but the campus felt that we really needed to have the Adobe contract because so many people use it on campus. We will work system wide to continue to assess whether to continue with the Adobe agreement after the three years is up.

CIO Askren stated that he believes UNL purchasing is doing very well in negotiating additional savings for departments on IT products and services. They are experts as strategic sourcing and he’s certain they would welcome feedback on their services and Eshop.

CIO Askren stated that the IT survey will be coming out soon asks for feedback on many areas and asked people to please fill it out. Other news is that we are increasing our network connection to the Internet to 100 gigabyte which will be done in June. He noted that we received an NSF grant to assist with this cost.

CIO Askren reported that we will need to replace a lot of our routers and firewalls to address the Conversation IPv6 which is a new international standard for network addressing. This will be a large investment and will be completed in the year ahead.

CIO Askren stated that we are continuing to increase the density of wireless service on campus. He asked that if anyone knows of dead spots on campus or is experiencing slow performance to please contact the help center or to let him know directly.

CIO Askren reported that new lecture capture solutions are now being piloted with faculty as this infrastructure is important as we continue to work to provide strong technology solutions in the classrooms. He stated that this testing is being done with the sponsorship of
Associate VC Perez, and that we are also working with associate VC Perez on testing apple TV networking on a half dozen classrooms on campus.

3.0 Announcements
3.1 Next Generation of MOOC
Sollars reported that those interested in the next generation of MOOC should check the website MCB80x.org.

3.2 ACE Ad Hoc Committee Update
Nickerson stated that he will be trying to pull the members together for a meeting next week. Guevara noted that the UCC Ace Subcommittee has initiated contact with the colleges regarding possible changes to the procedures.

4.0 Approval of October 30, 2013 Minutes
Reisbig moved for approval of revised minutes. Rinkevich seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

5.0 Unfinished Business
5.1 Update on Petition Request
Guevara reported that the professor who asked about supporting a petition regarding moving the texts from the Libraries sent it out on Saturday to Deans and Directors and that SVCAA Weissinger recently sent an email message to Deans and Directors with some relevant information that included a copy of the petition that had been forwarded to her. He noted that some Chairs and Directors have forwarded the petition to the faculty in their colleges and other faculty members can forward it to their colleagues as well. Guevara reported that the SVCAA indicated that she welcomed the conversation about the library.

5.2 CIC Survey
Item postponed.

6.0 New Business
6.1 Agenda Items for Chancellor Perlman, SVCAA Weissinger, and VC Green
The Executive Committee identified the following agenda items:
- Concerns of courses being considered for profit only
- How would changes in apportionment change the evaluations of a faculty member
- Insight into the resignation of the PKI director and how will a new director be hired
- Current status of hiring a new director of biotechnology
- Update on Deans searches
- Request for Faculty Senate President Elect to be included in CIC Academic Leadership Program as done by other CIC universities
- Hiring updates for IANR faculty
- Process for reserving hotel space on east campus
- Housing for undergraduate students on east campus
- Follow up with library changes – Love and CYT
- Rural Futures Institute and Conference feedback
- Concern about reallocation of lab space
- Changes to flexible spending accounts

6.2 **Changes to KACE Policy**
Woodman noted that the Senate approved a policy about KACE but the language now needs to be substituted since KACE will no longer be used. He stated that he substituted generic terminology for the words KACE but the changes now need to be approved by the Senate. Griffin noted that since this is coming from a Senate Committee it can bring a motion to the Senate to make the changes at the December meeting. The motion will then be voted on at the January meeting.

6.3 **Review of Senate Meeting**
Nickerson stated that he thought Dean Busch did an excellent job of presenting the changes to the Libraries and felt that she and the other administrators who attended the meeting listened carefully to the concerns that were raised. Reisbig noted that Dean Busch had stated that the federal documents housed in Love South will now be moved to accommodate the books that faculty and students in Art & Art History are concerned about, but she wondered if those people using the federal documents have been notified that these will be moved to the storage facility.

Guevara stated that another issue that a number of people are concerned with is whether there will be adequate space for quiet areas for studying.

6.4 **Congratulations to Professor Wysocki**
The Executive Committee warmly congratulated member Wysocki for recently being awarded Professor of Poland.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, November 13 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in 201 Administration Building. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Toni Anaya, Secretary.