

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Guevara, Joeckel, Nickerson, Reisbig, Rinkevich, Ruchala, Schubert, Sollars, Woodman, Wysocki

**Absent:** Anaya, Bender, Zoubek

**Date:** Wednesday, February 26, 2014

**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 p.m.

### 2.0 Announcements

#### 2.1 President's Search Advisory Committee

Guevara reported that he received a letter from Regents Hawks requesting the nomination of two UNL faculty members for the President's search advisory committee. He noted that the Board of Regents will ultimately select who will serve on the search advisory committee. The Executive Committee discussed what would be the best way to solicit nominations. Guevara stated that he will send an email message to the Faculty Senate asking for nominations of people to possibly serve on the search advisory committee. Sollars suggested that nominations include a brief list of experiences to demonstrate why someone would be a good candidate for the advisory committee.

#### 2.2 ACE Subcommittee

Nickerson reported that he has still not had a response from the University Curriculum Committee's ACE Subcommittee regarding the proposed changes to the ACE procedures. Guevara stated that he will contact Professor DeFusco about this issue.

#### 2.3 Student Code Conduct Document

Reisbig reported that the ad hoc committee did not realize that there would be a second legal review of the proposed new Student Code of Conduct, but Associate General Counsel Maurer conducted a more thorough legal review of the document and made some changes. Reisbig noted that the changes are not substantial and are legal in nature. She noted that the document with these changes will be presented to the Senate for a vote on March 4.

#### 2.4 Non-tenure Track Faculty Forum

Woodman reported that the forum for non-tenure track faculty members has been moved to April 18 because Associate VC Perez was not available to speak on March 7. He stated that in addition to Perez, Professor Jacobson, former Associate VC of Academic Affairs, will be speaking at the forum along with Professor Bender, Chair of the

Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee, Professor Moshman, member of ACLU and the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska and past recipient of the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award, Professor Laurie Thomas Lee, recent recipient of the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award, Professor Julie Schleck a member of the AAUP will also be speaking at the forum. He noted that the forum will be held in Love Library South auditorium beginning at 2:30.

## **2.5 Merger of Electrical Engineering and Computer and Electronics Engineering**

Wysocki reported that the Academic Planning Committee has put on hold the possible merger of the Electrical Engineering and Computer and Electronics Engineering programs. Schubert pointed out that the faculty members of Electrical Engineering voted against the merger.

## **3.0 Approval of 2/19/14 Minutes**

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

## **4.0 Unfinished Business**

### **4.1 Revisions to Senate Rules**

Guevara noted that at last week's meeting he suggested changes to the Senate rules to expedite the electronic vote in cases of emergency. He pointed out that his suggested revisions include giving the Executive Committee permission to vote electronically. He stated that one of the major changes is to revise the deadline period from five days to three days.

Nickerson stated that he is in favor of the changes. He noted that there is the perception that the Senate acts too slowly on things and he is in favor of anything that will allow the Senate to vote more quickly on issues.

Wysocki moved that the suggested changes be presented to the Senate for a vote. Nickerson seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

### **4.2 Friendly Amendment to Motion to Oppose LB 1018**

Nickerson noted that Bender provided a suggested friendly amendment to his motion to approve LB 1018. The Executive Committee agreed to the friendly amendment. Nickerson stated that he would make the friendly amendment at the March 4 Senate meeting if Bender was not available.

## **5.0 New Business**

### **5.1 Unauthorized Changes to the College of Engineering Bylaws**

Schubert reported that a vote is currently being conducted on behalf of the Dean among faculty members on policies for hiring and promotion for Professors of Practice. The policies will become part of the promotion and tenure documents, and will amend the Engineering bylaws. These policies grant executive powers to the Dean for all future modifications of the hiring guidelines for Professors of Practice, and which include the qualification criteria for hiring into such faculty positions. Schubert stated that the

language granting executive power to the Dean was secretly introduced within a modified version of the policy documents currently up for vote, and that faculty members were not informed about these changes. He stated that he thinks secretly changing documents during the voting process is highly inappropriate for setting governing standards. He stated that he requested clarification from the Dean as to why a) the policies were introduced for vote without prior introduction to the faculty allowing for discussion, and b) the language providing executive power appears in violation of the bylaws because faculty members would have no say in maintaining the academic and scholarly standards with which candidates can be selected by the Dean. The Dean responded that he thinks he has that power, and that he also thinks a faculty vote on such hiring policies is not actually needed, but nonetheless has asked for a vote. He pointed out that this has caused tremendous discussion and concern among the faculty members in the college because it usurps the department's input into these decisions.

Schubert stated that the governing section in the bylaws is being changed. The changes eliminate the college promotion and tenure committee's role in recommending promotion and grants the Dean executive power. He noted that this is against the college bylaws that were recently approved by the faculty of the Engineering College. He stated that the approved Engineering bylaws require broad faculty discussion within the departments on promotion and tenure decisions as well as approval from the college promotion and tenure committee.

Ruchala pointed out that the Senate could entertain a motion to support the faculty of the College of Engineering should they elect to have a vote of no confidence in their dean. Guevara stated that it sounds as if the trust in the dean has disappeared because of these recent actions. Schubert agreed and stated that there are numerous conversations indicating significant turmoil within the college.

## **5.2 Report on Board of Regents Meeting**

Guevara reported that a presentation was made by Terry Hartle, Senior Vice President, American Council on Education concerning where education stands with Congress and the Executive Branch in regards to higher education. He noted that there is a drive to have Congress allow the administration to use ranking to determine federal funding for a university. He noted that the implications of this would be tremendous because it is extremely difficult to rank institutions, even when comparing peer institutions because universities have different charges. Nickerson pointed out that rankings oftentimes are based on established reputations from 5-10 years ago or more, and have nothing to do with work that is currently being done within an institution. Guevara noted that the criteria used in ranking cannot be consistently applied.

Woodman pointed out that rankings are often related to the success of graduates in the job market, not based on the work that is currently being done at a university. He also pointed out that the student loan availability would also be linked to these rankings. Guevara noted that the institutions that would need the most help would be ranked the lowest to receive funding under this ranking plan. He pointed out that this could cause great disparity for colleges and institutions that are in underrepresented areas.

Joeckel asked how likely it is that this ranking system will be implemented and how soon it could occur. Guevara stated that it is extremely likely that the current administration could use the ranking system, but currently the ranking system is not tied into the funding that Congress provides. He stated that Congress has not approved the funding aspect of the ranking system.

Nickerson asked if it is possible to get the Powerpoint presentation. Joeckel asked if the Senate can do anything about this issue. Guevara stated that he thinks that it is up to the Board to act on the matter. Nickerson suggested that the Executive Committee might want to meet with several of the Regents to discuss this issue.

Joeckel pointed out that the funding does not just pertain to research funding. This would impact Pell grants and other federal money.

### **5.3 Attaining Tenure at UNL**

Guevara stated that he was asked by a reporter to discuss attaining tenure at UNL by a Daily Nebraskan reporter who pointed out that Regents Policy 4.3.1 states that the goal is to reduce the number of tenured lines at the university. He noted that the policy was reaffirmed in 1991 and 2003 and was alarmed to learn of the policy. The Executive Committee agreed to discuss this issue with the Chancellor at their March 12 meeting.

### **5.4 Report on Interview of the Candidate for Dean of Arts & Sciences**

Guevara noted that seven Executive Committee members attended the interview and they had a good discussion with the candidate.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:42 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Toni Anaya, Secretary.