EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bender, Konecky, Nickerson, Purcell, Rinkevich, Ruchala, Rudy, Steffen, Woodman, Wysocki

Absent: Guevara, Joeckel, Sollars

Date: Wednesday, May 14, 2014

Location: 201 Administration Building

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
Nickerson called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Perlman
Chancellor Perlman stated that he wanted to thank Nickerson for his participation in the commencement exercises. He noted that it has not always been clear what the Faculty Senate President’s role in the ceremonies is and in the past some President’s thought it their role to inspire the graduates, which was awkward for the invited commencement speaker who followed them. He pointed out that Nickerson did a terrific job in extending the best wishes of the faculty to the graduates, to wish them well, and to express the joy of the faculty’s interaction with the students. He noted that the Senate President’s role at commencement is limited, but important and he hopes that Nickerson’s speech will set a precedent.

Chancellor Perlman reported that the arena was nearly stressed to capacity and the logistics of getting all of the students into the arena were a bit daunting. He stated that this will need to be addressed, particularly as our enrollment grows. He noted that he heard very positive comments about the alumni event that was held outside of the arena in the Rail Yard after graduation.

2.1 Follow Up on Academic Planning Committee’s Meeting on the Merger of the Computer & Electronics Engineering Department and the Electrical Engineering Department
Chancellor Perlman noted that the APC approved the merger, which he has accepted, and the next step will be for the Board to approve it. He noted that it will be presented to the Board at the May 30 meeting. Nickerson asked if the merger will be made more attractive to the Board if there is a promise of new faculty hires in the merged department. Chancellor Perlman pointed out that there is a general commitment on the part of the dean to build the two programs and some hiring has already begun. He noted that additional hiring will occur if the dean feels that there is an investment that can be justified with the merged department and if he feels that capturing the synergies in Omaha and Lincoln will be worthwhile. He stated that the extent with which we build
the department will depend on enrollment growth and increased research. He noted that these transitions can sometimes be bumpy, but he thinks it will be beneficial to both units in the long run. He stated that part of the PKI plan includes a metric of a number of faculty members, some of which are clearly in Electrical Engineering and the Board understands that these metrics will not be achieved without additional resources.

2.2 Update on Presidential Search Committees
Chancellor Perlman noted that there are two committees involved in the Presidential search: the Outreach and Advisory Committee and the Search Screening and Selection Committee. He reported that the first committee is larger and has broad representation on it. He pointed out that the function of this committee is to work with the search firm to identify a large group of candidates. He stated that he hopes the Outreach and Advisory Committee will fulfill its initial role by the end of July. He noted that the Selection Committee will review and evaluate the candidates, select and interview the leading candidates, conduct and/or review reference checks and recommend four finalists to the Board. He pointed out that this part of the process will take longer.

Chancellor Perlman stated that Interim President Linder has told the Board that he will serve as Interim President as long as he is needed which is helpful because the Board will not be under pressure to make a hasty decision. He reported that the search process is on schedule at this time and he believes we are in good shape at this point.

2.3 Use of Salary Increases for Budget Cuts and Salary Package for New Dean of Arts & Sciences
Chancellor Perlman reported that the APC accepted his recommendations for budget cuts in their entirety with the caveat that should there be a growth in tuition revenue that it be put, to the extent possible, into the salary pool. He stated that he agreed to this, but it would not occur until he is sure that the tuition growth is available. He pointed out that there needs to be tuition growth, not just enrollment growth. He reported that deans were notified that if they could achieve administrative savings they could use the savings for their salary pools. He stated that the administration will assess the revenue we have in mid-October and if additional tuition revenue is available there could be a supplemental salary increase decision made at the end of November or in December, which would become effective January 1.

Chancellor Perlman noted that the salary package for the new dean of Arts & Sciences has a large number to it but the administration felt that the new dean is worth it for many reasons some of which are: he is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, an extraordinarily gifted chemist, has the ability to bring people to his vision, and has a fine sense of excellence. He pointed out that if you took Dr. Francisco’s current nine-month salary and escalated it to twelve months he is only making about $1,000 more than he was making at Purdue University. He noted that Dr. Francisco was very attracted to UNL.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he understands that the package does raise questions about administrative salaries and pointed out that this was an issue raised just recently by the
Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee. He noted that when the campus finds a real talent then it needs to offer a package that will make the candidate want to come here. He does not believe anything has been done differently with this search in comparison to other searches.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he had Associate to the Chancellor Nunez pull figures of the difference between the highest paid faculty members from 2004-2014 and there are some fairly significant increases in faculty salaries in some of the colleges (60% increase). However, he stated that he plans to keep an eye out to make sure administrative salaries are not escalating faster than faculty salaries and he is certainly willing to listen to the faculty’s concern on this issue. Nickerson noted that a significant number of faculty members raised the question about escalating administrative salaries and the faculty wanted to hear what the Chancellor and SVCAA had to say about this issue. Nickerson noted that UNL is not setting a precedent to keep salaries at the level offered to Dr. Francisco.

2.4 Enrollment Figures for Summer and Fall Semester
Chancellor Perlman reported that the deposits for next academic year look very strong again and opportunities remain to make those figures even stronger as some groups of scholarship offers went out late. He noted that the deadline for submitting deposits was extended and the figures do not include international students. He pointed out that the figures are looking like this is another good year on top of last year and it will help us make further increases in enrollment, although we still have a significant number of students graduating which will affect the overall enrollment figures.

Woodman stated that he has heard that a number of summer classes have been cancelled and wondered what are the summer enrollment figures. Chancellor Perlman stated that he does not have this figure and pointed out that $200,000 was cut from the summer school budget so deans may have been more cautious with course offerings this summer.

Nickerson asked if the Chancellor’s recent trip to Turkey might impact future enrollment figures. Chancellor Perlman reported that he had discussions with three universities in Turkey that focused on student exchanges, but he was primarily looking for locations for our students to go to school. He noted that we might get some students from Turkey, but he does not think there will be a large number of them. He stated that two of the universities located near Istanbul are very well financed by a corporate holding company, which are not-for-profit. He stated that these are small schools of about 5,000-6,000 students but the schools are modeled after U.S. schools and all courses are taught in English. He noted that these universities are anxious to have exchanges with us and he thinks these universities are a place where our students would feel comfortable.

Chancellor Perlman stated that in the 1950s we helped to create a university in Turkey that focused mainly on agriculture. He noted that the Turkish university still remembers us with extraordinary fondness and wants to reignite an exchange with us. Since we are regarded as the creators of the university we have a comparative advantage over other universities in establishing exchange programs and they invited us to discuss establishing
Cooperative Extension and projects that we could do jointly. He reported that he met with the Ministry of Agriculture and said he thought they would help get funding for the projects if a good proposal was written. Nickerson stated that this is good to hear and noted that he was on a number of graduate committees for Turkish students who were all very good students.

Chancellor Perlman reported that one of the reasons why the number of Turkish students at UNL has decreased over the years has been in part due to a student exchange agreement between Turkey and European countries. He stated that a similar program is being considered with the U.S., and while there has been some pushback from some U.S. universities, Nebraska has signed the agreement. Nickerson asked if there would be some faculty exchanges as well. Chancellor Perlman stated that the program would provide support for Turkish faculty members to come here on a short term or semester basis.

2.5 UNL Bylaw Revisions
Nickerson stated that the Executive Committee wants to work on updating the UNL Bylaws as suggested by the Chancellor but would like to review what changes have been suggested by the Law student who worked on them last summer. Chancellor Perlman noted that the Law student only identified sections that were replicated from the Regents Bylaws, but he would be happy to share the document with the Executive Committee.

2.6 Western Governors’ University – Impact on the University?
Nickerson noted that he heard some information about the Western Governors’ University using Purdue University library staff to grade the Western Governors’ University MOOC exams and he wondered whether there are any impacts on UNL. Chancellor Perlman stated that we are part of the Western Governors’ University but he knows of no impact to us, particularly since we have moved onto Online Worldwide.

2.7 Updates
Chancellor Perlman reported that the campus continues to move forward on the Love Libraries renovations, but funds still need to be raised for the project and the same thing is happening with the renovation of Manter Hall. He noted that the architects and the design processes are being pushed because there is some urgency given enrollment increases.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the challenging question of housing on east campus is being explored. He noted that the two current dorms on east campus have long outlived their life cycles and cannot be renovated. He stated that the question is whether there is sufficient demand for the construction of new dorms. He stated that there is some interest in keeping east campus as a vital place for students which would dictate that you need to keep dorm facilities there. He reported that this topic will be explored further over the summer. Purcell asked when Burr will be closed. Chancellor Perlman stated that it will be closed by 2017 because that is when the fire sprinkler ordinance requirements must be met.
Chancellor Perlman stated that he hoped people have the opportunity to attend the Interdisciplinary Faculty Retreat at Nebraska Innovation Campus on May 15 – 16. He noted that the retreat will be held in the renovated 4-H building which is available for any groups to use. He noted that the Alumni Association is managing the use of the building. He reported that two other projects, the four season greenhouse and the Industrial Arts Building are under construction. He stated that the renewable energy building is also up.

Wysocki asked if there was any news concerning the managing of PKI in the future. Chancellor Perlman stated that there has not been any ambiguity about our intention with the program and the Board of Regents approved a plan that brings the Institute into more traditional governance with the Vice Chancellors from UNL and UNO managing the program. He pointed out that this arrangement has occurred in the past.

Wysocki asked if a new director for PKI will be hired. Chancellor Perlman stated that the role of this position needs to be more clearly defined before any recruiting can be done. He pointed out that there will not be an independent director as there has been in the recent past.

3.0 Director Mitchell – Proposed ACE Guidelines Document and Minor Changes to ACE Governing Document Four

Nickerson noted that the issue with making revisions to the ACE documents has been discussed for a long time and the UCC ACE Subcommittee is presenting the Executive Committee with a proposed guideline document along with minor changes to the ACE Governance Document Four. He stated that he thinks the guidelines look good and should help alleviate the concerns that were raised by faculty members.

Mitchell thanked Nickerson for attending one of the UCC ACE Subcommittee meetings to discuss the concerns raised by the Executive Committee. She noted that a lot of what was said at the meeting has been reflected in the guidelines document. She pointed out that the UCC ACE Subcommittee spent considerable time trying to decide whether the proposed changes were just procedural changes or changes to the governance of the ACE program, but in the end decided that the changes were procedural and not philosophical changes.

Mitchell stated that the changes to the Governing Document are to clean up inaccurate information (remove language referring to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, etc.) and to remove the word program from page four and replace “at least three” with “a reasonable sample” of students’ products in Section VII. She noted that some faculty members want a definite amount on the student samples while others do not.

Mitchell reported that the UCC ACE Subcommittee felt it would be more helpful if a guideline document were created that clarified some of the specific questions and concerns that were raised by faculty members. She noted that the main change is that faculty no longer have to submit samples from Blackboard to CREQ. She pointed out that some of the complaints were about the difficulty of uploading samples of student work and this is due to the software, however, this could change if Blackboard is
eventually replaced. She noted that it might be a good time to switch from Blackboard with the ACE 10 outcome recertification coming up. She stated that there are some departments where the student’s portfolio is not electronic and it was agreed that these departments did not have to submit work, but these departments need to verify that samples of students work are retained in some manner. She reported that the UCC ACE Subcommittee wants to reserve the right to call on these departments to verify that samples are being retained. She noted that about 20% of the departments will be checked.

Faculty can describe their work in the recertification report briefly, as long as it explains what student work was being used and how assessment was conducted. Examples help the committee understand the type of investigation of student learning that is occurring. She noted that some departments give all of the assessment to one person to do, but in some of these cases the answer to the recertification questions were just cut and pasted from one course to the next. She pointed out that the UCC ACE Subcommittee is trying to make sure that the faculty are retaining the information that is needed but not requiring the faculty member upload all of the samples.

Nickerson asked if departments can still have a centralized person who retains the student samples. Mitchell stated that departments can certainly do this and it may actually make it less burdensome for the faculty to do it this way, but the answer to the questions for recertification need to pertain to that individual course. She stated that a problem that it was unclear to some faculty members that they must assess each ACE outcome if the course is certified for two outcomes. Woodman asked why students are not able to say they met two outcomes with one class if the class covers two outcomes. He pointed out that not allowing this puts additional pressure on the student. Mitchell agreed but noted that this type of major change would need to go back to the colleges for approval.

Woodman noted that a significant number of students transfer in and are given credit for ACE courses. He asked how UNL is making sure that these transfer courses meet the criteria of an ACE course. Mitchell stated that there have been numerous meetings with the academic officers and advisors at community colleges regarding transfer courses. She stated that if courses that are a direct equivalent with a UNL course, the student will be given credit for the course, and if the UNL course is certified as an ACE course the student will receive ACE credit for taking an ACE course. She reported that 17% of students are transfer students and it is up to the departments to make the decision as to what transfer courses are considered equivalent to UNL courses. She noted that if a course from an institution outside UNL meets the criteria identified by the department, then a transfer course is approved as a direct equivalent. She suggested that concerns about transfer credits be directed to JoAnn Moseman, Academic Transfer Coordinator.

Nickerson said that he thinks the guidelines smooth out the recertification process extensively and he is prepared to see how well it will work. He noted that when he met with the UCC ACE Subcommittee in December he had the impression that the Committee was ready to accept the idea that each faculty member could write a short paragraph describing the course and how it worked. Mitchell pointed out that there is
value in assessing a course because faculty members get to reflect about what is going on in their course. She stated that the UCC ACE Subcommittee wants to know what a faculty member looked at and what student work was collected and analyzed. She pointed out that faculty participate in numerous assessment and accreditation efforts and the questions for recertification are aligned with the Higher Learning Commission Accreditation, which will hopefully help departments go through their own accreditation more smoothly because the information will already have been collected. She stated that the Higher Learning Commission wants to know that a substantial number of faculty participated in the assessment effort. Nickerson noted that a lot of the required information for recertification is informational so the university can answer questions for accreditation.

Nickerson stated that he thinks the changes satisfy the immediate concerns of the faculty, but until we see how things work we will not know for sure. He stated that the Executive Committee would like to look at the document in more detail and discuss it at the next meeting.

Woodman questioned how the campus can have representatives from each of the eight colleges judge specific courses that are outside of their discipline. He stated that the department chair or their representative be required to certify that a course continues to meet the goals set by the ACE requirements and that this would be preferable to someone outside the field making that judgment. He asked if the members of the UCC ACE Subcommittee reviewed all of the files that came in on recertification. Mitchell stated that the members do review each of the files and take their responsibility seriously. She pointed out that there is a mutual trust that exists with these courses and the Subcommittee trusts the department but this is an oversight to make sure that the assessments are taking place and that the courses continue to meet the ACE outcome. Konecky noted that the whole department overview of these courses is a critical key and she believes the quality review should take place at the department level. Woodman stated that he applauds the work that the Subcommittee is doing but still thinks people outside the discipline cannot make as effective an assessment.

Steffen pointed out that the process is a quality assurance program. He noted that the members of the Subcommittee may not know the particular discipline but they have procedures that are in place to make sure that faculty members are following the intent of the course.

Konecky stated that a department should consider whether a transfer course from a community college meets the equivalency of the ACE program. Rudy pointed out that most of the transfer courses are with lower level courses. Woodman stated that his son was able to finish seven out of the ten ACE outcomes in two years because most of the ACE courses are introductory courses. Mitchell stated that some departments, such as English might give general ACE credit for a transfer course but not as a direct equivalent for a particular English course. She stated that the other issue to consider is whether we are in a position to not accept transfer ACE courses. Woodman stated that he thinks this can be achieved at the department level. Mitchell cautioned that we need to be careful to
assure that we don’t think the community college classes are inferior. Konecky pointed out that some students come in with college credit from their high school. Mitchell noted that the high school courses have to pass approval with the corresponding department at UNL.

Nickerson asked if either of the documents will be sent to the colleges for approval. Mitchell stated that they will not because each of the colleges are already being represented by their selected faculty member and they have been asked to speak to their colleagues about the proposed changes.

Nickerson stated that there are two other topics the Executive Committee would like to have considered that relate to the ACE assessment. He suggested that each college might have two representatives, one as an alternate member, on the UCC ACE Subcommittee so that the Subcommittee can hopefully have all colleges represented at its meetings making it more functional. He pointed out that the requirement for unanimous voting is archaic and restrictive. Mitchell noted that the first couple of years of the ACE program each college representative was very dedicated and attended the meetings. However, faculty members are so busy now it makes attendance at all meetings difficult. She stated that she was not sure whether a substitute person would work because there should be consistency over time with decisions. She stated that the argument for having unanimous voting is that every college has to have a voice in the approval of ACE courses if the college is going to accept the course. She stated that we need to solve the question of whether the faculty would be okay with their representative not being at a meeting when voting occurs. Nickerson asked who has the authority to make these kinds of changes and how colleges select their representatives.

Nickerson stated that the other topic for consideration is the function of the UCC. He noted that in the past the UCC tried to eliminate overlapping courses, but it appears that the UCC does not try to do this anymore. He questioned what the role of the UCC is now and whether there is still a function for it. He stated that it seems like the only function of the UCC is to provide a home for the ACE Subcommittee. Director Mitchell stated that the UCC handles approval of all new courses and deletion of old courses on campus. She noted that the UCC handles courses that come from the honors program and some assessment is done with these courses. She reported that the UCC also meets with the Registrar’s Office to discuss issues relating to courses. Woodman asked if the UCC approves the colleges’ curriculum committee agenda. Director Mitchell stated that the UCC looks at the college courses that come from college curriculum committees. APC evaluates majors, college curriculum committees create and change minors. She pointed out that CREQ identifies course duplication, but the UCC does not feel it has the right to tell deans that they cannot offer a course. She reported that most of the work, both for the UCC and the ACE Subcommittee, is facilitated electronically. Members convene to discuss areas where disagreement exits.

Mitchell stated that it would be helpful if the proposed clarification guidelines can be put into place soon because the ACE website is in the process of being updated and the
information can be made available to the faculty via the website. Nickerson stated that he will provide feedback back to Mitchell after the Executive Committee’s next meeting.

Mitchell reported that the bulletin will be live starting on June 1 for next year’s schedule and four-year plans will be included. She noted that this is all part of the effort to make learning more transparent for the students.

4.0 Announcements
4.1 Visit of Cecelia Conrad, MacArthur Foundation
Nickerson reported that Central Administration is taking care of hosting Cecelia Conrad from the MacArthur Foundation. He noted that there will be a reception at the Lied Center on Friday, May 16 from 3:00 – 5:00 and the university is paying the appropriate amount of attention and respect to Conrad. He stated that he spoke with Professor May who first raised concerns and reported to her that the issue has been thoroughly and successfully resolved. He pointed out that there may have initially been some miscommunications when it was unclear who should be hosting Ms. Conrad.

4.2 Follow-Up Discussion with University Registrar Morrell
Nickerson stated that he recently spoke with Registrar Morrell who told him that the classroom task force is about to make its recommendations to the SVCAA. Nickerson asked that the Executive Committee be kept informed on the report and that no plans be implemented before the Committee has a chance to look at them. He pointed out that the task force was a faculty ad hoc committee.

4.3 100 Year Anniversary of Cooperative Extension
Purcell reported that last week Cooperative Extension in the U.S. celebrated its 100 year anniversary with events taking place across the country. She stated that celebrations will be occurring across the state through the summer to commemorate the passage of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 which established Cooperative Extension.

4.4 Information Technology Update
Woodman reported that there will be a symposium on technology in Lincoln and some vendors attending will be Blackboard, Canvas, and Desire to Learn. He noted that it might be appropriate for faculty members to attend if they want to take a look at the latest technology.

Woodman reported that Information Technology Services has made Box, an online digital storage system available for faculty and staff use. He noted that people can store 50 gigs of information online. He stated that he has been using something similar, Drop Box, for a couple of years and found it to be a great way to organize your work. Konecky pointed out that there is a link to The Box on the ITS website.

5.0 Approval of 5/14/14 Minutes
Wysocki moved for approval of the revised minutes. The motion was seconded by Purcell. The motion was approved.
6.0 Unfinished Business
   6.1 Guidelines Regarding Non-Tenure Track Faculty Members
       Discussion postponed until the next meeting due to lack of time.

7.0 New Business
   7.1 Executive Committee Retreat
       Discussion postponed until the next meeting due to lack of time.

   7.2 Meeting with Interim President Lindner
       2014-Discussion postponed until the next meeting due to lack of time.

Ruchala moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:53 p.m. The motion was seconded by Wysocki and approved by the Executive Committee. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, May 28 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Tad Wysocki, Secretary.