EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Guevara, Steffen

Date: Wednesday, May 28, 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.

1.0 Call to Order
Nickerson called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2.0 Announcements
2.1 Executive Committee Retreat
Nickerson reported that he and Bender met to discuss when the Executive Committee retreat might possibly be held. He noted that he and Bender saw some benefits to having the retreat earlier this summer so the Executive committee could identify issues to work on during the summer and to begin planning for next year.

2.2 Faculty Lines for Merged Electrical Engineering and Computer and Electronics Engineering Departments
Nickerson stated that he heard that $800,000 will be available for new faculty lines in the merged Electrical Engineering and Computer and Electronics Engineering department. He wondered if that would be enough money for new faculty members given the amount of money needed for startup costs. Wysocki stated that the startup money is not included in the $800,000. He noted that this funding would probably cover about five faculty lines. Nickerson stated that this is significantly less than the 20 positions mentioned to the Board of Regents. Wysocki pointed out that there was no time frame on when the 20 positions would be added.

3.0 Approval of May 14, 2014 Minutes
Ruchala moved that the minutes be approved pending clarification of a statement made by Director Mitchell regarding the descriptions needed for recertification. Rinkevich seconded the motion. The motion was approved with one abstention.

4.0 Unfinished Business
4.1 Proposed Changes to ACE Documents
Nickerson noted that the UCC ACE Subcommittee is recommending minor changes to ACE Governance Document Four. He pointed out that these changes are minor and reflect changes to the campus structure. He noted that the UCC ACE Subcommittee did not want to put substantive changes in the Governance Document because it would
require the approval of the Colleges. He stated that the more substantive changes are with the creation of a new clarification document which provides the faculty with new guidelines on a simplified ACE recertification process. He stated that he felt the guidelines were a good response to the concerns he raised at the Subcommittee’s meeting in December and he believes the document is an attempt to try and simplify the process of recertification.

Woodman stated that he is concerned that the guidelines are not reflected in the governing document and he believes that there is still the same duality as currently exists. He stated that until we get the changes made to the governing document we are still going to have continuing issues. He stated that the big issue with recertification is about trust and the belief that faculty cannot be trusted to ensure that courses continue to meet the ACE outcome. He stated that someone who is more knowledgeable about a field should do the recertification, not someone from outside the department. He pointed out that if department chairs were asked to recertify courses it would resolve many of the problems.

Nickerson stated that he thought Director Mitchell agreed that the modified procedures for ACE recertification allows departments to funnel the recertification to a person designated by the department. Woodman pointed out that one of the issues is the individual faculty time that is required for recertification and faculty members should not be expected to complete a new recertification form for each course that is submitted.

Woodman stated that he is concerned that without changes to ACE Governance Document Four the UCC ACE Subcommittee, as it gets new members over time, will interpret the guidelines differently than originally intended. He pointed out that changing the Governance Document would insure that the same procedures and processes are followed. Griffin noted that changing the Governance Document will require the approval of all of the colleges.

Nickerson suggested that the Executive Committee tentatively approve the guidelines in order to allow the UCC ACE Subcommittee to function over the summer while members of the Executive Committee try to incorporate the guidelines into the Governance Document.

Wysocki stated that it should be required that the Faculty Senate needs to approve any changes to the document. Griffin pointed out that when the ACE program was first created the Senate argued that it should vote on all of the documents pertaining to ACE, but the Chancellor pointed out that there is a state statute that says that each college has control over its’ own curriculum. She noted that the Senate voted to endorse the ACE governing documents and encouraged faculty members to vote for approval of the program. Sollars suggested that the Executive Committee should work in collaboration with the UCC ACE Subcommittee to make changes to the Governing Document. This collaboration would require the Senate to vote on the Document. Joeckel stated that the Executive Committee should pursue making changes to the Governance Document. He suggested that the UCC should be sent a written reminder pointing out that it is a Senate committee and the Senate Executive Committee wants to take definite action on changing
the Governance Document. Konecky suggested that the letter ask the UCC ACE Subcommittee to rewrite the Governance Document and incorporate the guidelines into it. Nickerson stated that the documents should be presented to the Senate at the September meeting. Woodman suggested that the next time a committee is constituted to make changes to the ACE documents that the committee be charged with modifying the document to make the process more efficient and simple.

Sollars volunteered to participate in revising the Governance Document. Woodman also agreed to serve on an ad hoc committee. Nickerson suggested that there be a representative from the UCC ACE Subcommittee and recommended Professor DeFusco. Wysocki stated that Director Mitchell should be advised of the plans to have an ad hoc committee that will seek to incorporate the guidelines into the Governance Document. Nickerson stated that he will write a letter to the chair of the UCC and Director Mitchell informing them of the ad hoc committee and the plans to incorporate the guidelines into the Governance Document.

Purcell asked if students are passionate about the ACE courses. Woodman reported that most students don’t know whether their courses are ACE courses or not. Joeckel stated that he has heard negative comments from students about the ACE courses. Sollars pointed out that she tells students that the ACE courses are a huge opportunity for students to explore other subjects and they seem to like it. Woodman stated that ACE courses are typically not meant for students majoring in your area until they reach ACE outcome 10 which is a capstone class for a major.

4.2 Guidelines Regarding Non-Tenure Track Faculty Members
Woodman stated that he will work with Rudy to develop the guidelines. He suggested that there needs to be some level of communication among the non-tenure track faculty members which will allow them to share information on best practices, how departments interact with non-tenure track faculty members, and what we are dealing with in terms of the diversity of interactions for non-tenure track faculty members in departments and colleges. He asked how Extension’s communication is set up. Purcell reported that there are listservs for each district, for all counties, for extension specialists, and another for all extension educators. Joeckel asked if there are other best practices that could be included. Woodman stated that information on committee service and voting should be gathered.

Woodman stated that the Executive Committee needs to conduct a follow up survey this fall. Rudy asked if an IRB approval was obtained for the first survey. Nickerson stated that the Executive Committee did get IRB approval.

Ruchala noted that a question for new tenure track faculty members is what kind of information they received during new faculty orientation regarding faculty governance and faculty rights. She wondered whether the Senate needs to be more involved with new faculty orientation. She noted that she has the sense that there was a time when rights and governance for faculty members was stronger and there was more mentoring of junior faculty members. Konecky pointed out that this can vary depending on the
department and college. Nickerson suggested that the Senate providing more information at the new faculty orientation (scheduled for August 20) should be a goal for the Executive Committee this year.

Ruchala pointed out that several tenured faculty members even attended the non-tenure track faculty forum. She suggested the Senate have more forums on issues such as academic freedom and faculty governance and to promote participation by faculty members on the Senate. Nickerson stated that these are good goals that should be discussed further at the Executive Committee retreat.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Proposed Revisions to Regents Bylaws Section 2.1
Nickerson stated that it has come to his attention that the Regents have proposed changes in Chapter 2, Section 2.1 of the Regents Bylaws pertaining to the selection process of senior administrators. He noted that in March the Board hurriedly approved a change in their policies which allowed them to set up the two search committees for a new president. He pointed out that then Senate President Guevara was unable to make the March 21 meeting due to illness, and he had to leave the Board meeting early to teach, so the change in the bylaw pertaining to the search process for vice chancellors and deans was not made apparent. He stated that there should be as much faculty participation as possible in the search process for senior administrators, particularly for a dean.

Wysocki suggested that some of the state legislators should be contacted to put pressure on the Regents to not make these changes to the Bylaws. He pointed out that the press should also be informed of the proposed changes. Bender suggested contacting the city editor of the Lincoln Journal Star.

Nickerson reported that the change to allow the formation of two committees to work on the search for a new president is already a completed deal, but changes should not be made that would impact searches for senior administrators on the individual campuses.

Nickerson asked if the Executive Committee wants him to make a presentation to the Board at the May 30 voicing concerns on the proposed changes and how they would impact each of the campuses. The Executive Committee unanimously agreed that he should make the presentation.

Wysocki suggested that the other Big Ten institutions’ search processes should be reviewed to see if we are the only ones that would have this kind of process in place. If not, we might be able to get some support from the other Big Ten schools. Nickerson stated that the changes may be similar to those occurring at Purdue. Wysocki pointed out that Purdue is just one of 13 schools in the Big Ten and the other institutions’ search policies should be reviewed.

Nickerson stated that anyone with concerns and comments should send them to VP Maurer. Purcell suggested that a letter be drafted that could be sent out to the whole
Senate and other listservs on campus. The Executive Committee worked on drafting a letter stating that it opposes the changes because they delete significant sections of the bylaws pertaining to searches for Vice Chancellors and Deans by:

1) Restricting faculty participation in the selection of senior administrators for their respective campus.
2) Eliminating the requirement that the members of an advisory committee of faculty and student representatives shall be selected from lists of faculty and students submitted respectively by the heads of faculty and student governments.
3) Eliminating the requirement that the advisory committee shall assist the appointing officer in the review of applications and supporting materials submitted by or on behalf of candidates being considered for the position.
4) Eliminating the requirement that the advisory committee shall submit a list of recommended candidates for consideration by the Board or appointing officer.
5) Eliminating the requirement that the name of the person appointed to any senior administrative position must appear on the list of recommended candidates submitted by the advisory committee.

Griffin stated that she will forward the letter to the faculty.

5.2 Meeting with Interim President Linder
Nickerson reported that Interim President Linder is scheduling meetings with the Faculty Senates of each campus and asked whether he should be scheduled to meet with the full UNL Senate or the Executive Committee or for both. The Executive Committee decided to ask Interim President Linder if he would meet with both groups sometime in the new academic year.

5.3 Committee Appointments
Postponed due to lack of time.

5.4 Proposed Revisions to UNL Bylaws
Nickerson reported that Bender will be taking the lead on the effort to review and suggest changes to the UNL Bylaws. He stated that he would like to get this done during the summer, but the Executive Committee can discuss this in greater detail at an upcoming meeting.

6.0 New Business
6.1 Student Code of Conduct Policy on Sexual Assault
Woodman stated that he is concerned that there is only one sentence in the new Student Code of Conduct describing sexual assault. He pointed out that the other Big Ten schools have a much more descriptive explanation of sexual assault. Sollars asked if there is the possibility that the limited description of sexual assault might suggest that it is not taken seriously here.

Sollars reported that the issue of sexual assault is emerging at all institutions due to the federal SaVE Act and changes might need to be made at a later date once campuses
become fully aware of what the Act entails. Purcell noted that the university may already have a group looking at this issue as it could pertain to Title IX funds.

Konecky pointed out that how the new Student Code of Conduct gets promoted and discussed could make a difference in students understanding what is considered sexual assault. Griffin noted that the Chancellor had stated at a Senate meeting this spring that the SaVE Act will require training for all employees on campus and there could be other changes that will make the campus community more aware of sexual assault and what actions should be taken. Konecky suggested that Dean Hecker be contacted to see what future changes are being proposed in how the Student Code of Conduct will be promoted on the campus.

Ruchala moved that the meeting be adjourned at 4:58 p.m. The motion was seconded by Rinkevich and approved. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday June 11, 2014 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in 201 Canfield Administration Building. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Tad Wysocki, Secretary.