

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

**Absent:** Guevara, Joeckel, Konecky, Sollars

**Date:** Wednesday, October 15, 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

Nickerson called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

### 2.0 Announcements

#### 2.1 Meeting with CIO Askren

Griffin reported that CIO Askren will be meeting with the Executive Committee on November 19.

#### 2.2 Best Practices in Course Scheduling

Nickerson reported that Sollars attended the meeting of the Academic Planning and Scheduling Advisory Group (APSAG) and gave him a copy of the best practices in course scheduling report. He noted that the APSAG would like the Executive Committee to comment on the document. He stated that this will be on the Committee's agenda next week.

#### 2.3 Meeting with UNMC Faculty Senate President

Nickerson reported that the UNMC Faculty Senate President and President Elect want to visit with the Executive Committee because they had heard good things about the way the UNL Faculty Senate works. He pointed out that it is desirable to have greater interaction with UNMC and better communications between the Faculty Senates on each campus is a good step in that direction.

#### 2.4 Upcoming President's Newsletter

Nickerson stated that he and Bender are considering devoting most of the next Presidents' newsletter to the non-tenure track faculty survey that will be sent out later this semester. He noted that in addition to getting information on non-tenure track faculty members, the Executive Committee would like to establish some best practices which can be shared with the departments.

#### 2.5 Meeting with Associate to the Chancellor Nunez

Nickerson reported that he met with Associate to the Chancellor Nunez to get more information on the VSIP and the search for a new SVCAA. He stated that Associate to

the Chancellor Nunez said that the search committee for a new SVCAA will be heavily populated with faculty members.

Nickerson stated that Associate to the Chancellor Nunez confirmed that the VSIP is a mechanism to redirect university resources, but the intent is to replace faculty who retire with tenure track faculty members. He noted that Associate to the Chancellor Nunez said that this should be evident with the recent faculty hires on East Campus and the statement made by the Chancellor in his State of the University address about plans to hire 50 new tenure track faculty members.

Rudy asked if the faculty lines will be redirected towards different colleges and departments. Nickerson stated that, in part, this is the intent of the VSIP.

## **2.6 Meeting with Intercollegiate Athletics Committee Chair Professor Hawks**

Griffin reported that the Executive Committee will be meeting with Professor Hawks on October 29. Nickerson noted that he wants to meet with Professor Hawks, Professor Potuto, UNL's Big Ten Faculty representative, and Associate Athletics Director Leblanc to establish a dialogue with Athletics to ensure that UNL is doing things correctly in regards to NCAA regulations. He pointed out that he does not have any urgent complaints or fears, but it is clear that there are some major issues with some of the other Big Ten schools in how Athletics are handled. Rudy noted that Athletics is a small part of the academics here, but it plays a huge part in our reputation.

## **3.0 Approval of October 8, 2014 Minutes**

Purcell moved for approval of the minutes as revised. Bender seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

## **4.0 Unfinished Business**

### **4.1 Request from University Health Center Concerning Notes for Class Absence**

Nickerson stated that he would like to see the request from the Health Center completed for the November 4 Senate meeting and suggested that a subcommittee be formed to revise a student absence form for use. Steffen stated that he liked the simplicity of the University of Arkansas form, but suggested adding language that referenced our Student Code of Conduct section on attendance. Nickerson stated that it would be a good idea to include language that the form does not override an instructor's policy on class attendance.

Rudy pointed out that the Senate has a policy for excusing students for university sponsored activities, religious holidays, and bereavement. He suggested that the student absence form be included in the existing policy. Nickerson asked which website should house the form: Student Affairs, the Health Center, or the Senate. Wysocki suggested that the form could be located on ASUN's website. Griffin noted that the form could be located on the Student Affairs website, but a link could be available on the Health Center and the Senate websites. Steffen pointed out that any faculty member could incorporate a link to the form in their syllabus.

Steffen agreed to draft a form for the Executive Committee to review next week.

#### **4.2 Possible Spring Senate Meeting on Nebraska Innovation Campus**

Griffin reported that she looked into having a Senate meeting on Innovation Campus this spring but was informed that the cost would be \$350. She pointed out that there is no cost to the Senate for using either of the Student Unions. Rudy stated that given this information he withdraws his request to have a meeting on NIC.

### **5.0 New Business**

#### **5.1 Review of October Senate Meeting**

Nickerson stated that he thought that the information provided both on distance education and the reaccreditation process was interesting. He noted that the Board of Regents really is interested in pushing distance education. Purcell reported that she, along with Director Cotton and Professor Weitzenkamp, will be meeting with Heath Tuttle, Director for Learning & Emerging Technologies and Analytics, in November to discuss Extension courses being offered online.

Bender stated that he is troubled by the enthusiasm of some administrators and Board members in regards to distance education. He said they seem to embrace it as if it is some panacea for the university. He noted that he has a student who is taking two courses, one is an online course, the other is a synchronized graduate seminar course in which the students can participate electronically and see each other. She informed him that she does not like the online course because you don't feel like you are part of a class where you can communicate immediately with the instructor. He pointed out that it is one thing to get students enrolled, but there are components of online courses that need to be thought out more carefully.

Wysocki stated that we could be risking our reputation and we don't want to be known just for distance education. He noted that MIT or Harvard can afford to put as many courses as they like on distance education because it won't affect their reputation, but for many smaller universities it may damage their reputation. Nickerson pointed out that he does not believe that distance education will be the main component of the courses for the university. He stated that the goal of increasing enrollment to 30,000 students is to have these students on campus. He thinks the administrators and the Board members hope that students taking distance education courses will want to come to campus.

Steffen pointed out that it is important to conduct an assessment on the value of a campus-based education. He noted that students will be competing with others who have received their degrees through online courses, but there are critical aspects that are missing with only taking courses online. For instance, being on campus provides students with personal contacts that could help project a student's career. He noted that online courses are important to people who live in rural areas or someone who can't come to campus for a variety of reasons, but there is still value to a campus-based education.

## **5.2 Possible Topics for Senate Open Mic Discussion**

Nickerson reported that he and Bender thought the first open mic discussion could be on whether instructors encourage the use of laptops in their classrooms and whether they feel this could be interfering with student's learning. He pointed out that there has been some research that shows that students do not perform as well when they take notes strictly on a computer. He stated that Woodman has seen this happening in his class and has banned the use of electronics in his classes.

Ruchala stated that this is an interesting topic and something most instructors have to make a decision about. She reported that she has students read electronic materials outside the classroom and they can bring a laptop into class to look at these materials, but if she catches them on another website while in class she will count them as absent. Wysocki pointed out that it depends on the subject matter and the mode of electronic transportation. He stated that he provides students with PDFs and encourages them to add notes to the PDFs while in class. Steffen stated that it would be good to have an introduction to the topic that would cite the research that is being done on the learning efficiency with the use of laptops in the classroom. Ruchala stated that the question is how instructors teach the students to use the technology effectively in the classroom and how instructors themselves use technology in the classroom.

Rudy stated that he will contact Professor De Ayala, chair of the Educational Psychology department, to see if there is anyone in that department who could present some brief information on research that is currently being done on how computer use in the classroom impacts student learning.

## **5.3 Discussion on Chancellor's State of the University Address**

Nickerson reported that it is Associate to the Chancellor Nunez's opinion that we will more than likely have an interim SVCAA. Bender pointed out that it will depend on when a search is started for the position.

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

Nickerson reported that at the Regents meeting the Board stated that it wanted to make sure tuition is kept affordable which was an overriding concern of the other Big Ten schools at the CIC Faculty Governance Leadership Conference and is compatible with the land grant mission of the university.

Nickerson stated that the Board of Regents approved the funds for renovating CYT Library and finalized the merger of the Computer Electronics and Engineering department and the Electrical Engineering department. He reported that other business matters included the approval of a business agreement with Cingular wireless to put a new sound system into the stadium. He noted that Cingular is paying UNL \$37,000 for the year. He stated that other business matters were the refinancing of a bond for UNO which reduced the rate from 4.9% to 2.9% saving the university \$2.8 million. He stated that the Board renegotiated an arrangement with IMG Multimedia for media rights on athletic events. He reported that the media rights agreement was put in place in 2008 for 13 years, but fortunately we could renegotiate the agreement after a six year period. He

stated that the Board of Regents renegotiated the agreement for the remainder of the time period which gives the university an additional \$21 million. He noted that being in the Big Ten has made us more attractive to the media. Purcell asked if the university receives the \$21 million or whether it all goes back to Athletics. Rudy stated that he thinks the university gets some of the money but most of it stays with Athletics.

#### **5.5 Alleged Title IX Violation**

The Executive Committee discussed the situation and Nickerson reported on his conversation with Associate to the Chancellor Nunez about the situation.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, October 22, 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 Tad Wysocki, Secretary.