

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Guevara, Joeckel, Purcell

Date: Wednesday, October 22, 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 3:03 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Deans Council Working Group on Distance Education

Nickerson reported that he attended the first meeting of the Deans Council Working Group on Distance Education where there was discussion on designing a revenue sharing model for true distance education revenue. Woodman asked what the Council means by true distance education courses. Nickerson noted that the term refers to true distance education students, those students who only take online courses and don't come to campus. He suspects that the working group is in response to the impacts of the recent changes made in the distribution of the online revenue.

Nickerson reported that another goal of the working group is to determine what programs UNL wants to make investments in for online programs or courses. He stated that he welcomes any feedback on this issue since he is the only faculty member serving on the working group.

Nickerson stated that VP Niemiec and Executive Director Barber also attended the Deans Working Group on Distance Education. He reported that they were asked whether switching from Blackboard to another Learning Management System would affect online courses and they said it would not. He noted that VP Niemiec stated that switching would not create a problem and it would be easy to switch the courses, but there would be difficulties if all four of the campuses did not switch over to the same LMS.

2.2 VSIP

Nickerson noted that the VSIP is attracting some national attention. He reported that he was asked some questions from Investor's Business Daily about the program and the article may be printed next week. He stated that one of his interests is how the VSIP will effect tenure density and how the tenure track lines will be redistributed.

2.3 Executive Memorandum #25

Nickerson reported that Interim President Linder asked the Senate Presidents to distribute a memo with the updated Executive Memorandum #25. He noted that the updated memorandum provides a straight warning to faculty/staff/students about traveling to Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. He pointed out that the memorandum includes links to both the CDC Travel Health Notices and the US State Department travel warnings and alerts website.

2.4 Title IX Language for Syllabi?

Nickerson reported that he received a message from the UNO Senate President regarding a statement that is being drafted by Central Administration for inclusion on all university course syllabi. He noted that the language refers to Title IX and the UNO Senate President stated that, as currently written, the statement would not be approved by the UNO Senate. He pointed out that he has not heard of the statement and suggested that faculty keep alert on this issue. Woodman suggested that Nickerson get more specifics from the UNO Senate President.

3.0 Approval of October 15, 2012 Minutes

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

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 Student Absence Form

Steffen reported that he took the best portions from the student absence notes⁵ being used by the University of Iowa, the University of Arkansas, and the University of Saskatoon to create a form for use here at UNL. He noted that he included the citation from our Student Code of Conduct (sections 4.2 a, item 7 and 4.2) regarding misrepresentation to avoid academic work which could result in an academic sanction such as a failing grade. He stated that he wondered whether our University Health Center (UHC) could validate if someone had an appointment. Konecky pointed out that HIPPA rules are very comprehensive and this could not be done.

Woodman asked whether the UHC has any policy on its website about class absence notes. Nickerson pointed out that having the UHC put a statement on its website stating the class absence notes will not be given out after the fact, i.e. for students who did not visit the UHC will ill, is part of the expected outcome of these efforts. He further stated that it was his understanding the UHC would still provide notes for students who had visited UHC while ill. Sollars noted that the UHC is probably waiting for the Senate to act on the matter.

Sollars stated that the faculty should be notified that notes will no longer be provided by the UHC for students who come in only to get a note, but a form can be used as an alternative. Wysocki stated that he thinks the form does not have any value and questioned how the form is stronger than the student making a statement to him. Sollars pointed out that the student must sign the form and in doing so the student acknowledges that if they are lying just to avoid academic work they could get a failing grade. Steffen

stated that the form could be made stronger by requiring an RA or a faculty member to sign it. Nickerson pointed out that students going to the UHC for treatment can still receive a note. Woodman agreed that a form would be useless. He noted that he has a link to the Senate's Student Absence form on his syllabus, but has never seen any student use it even though he has had over twenty thousand students in the past. He suggested that a stronger statement needs to be made in the proposed form about the student needing to adhere to the instructor's class attendance policy, and that the use of the form is merely for communication and consideration and is not, by itself, a sufficient excuse.

Konecky stated that the first step will be to communicate to the faculty that the UHC will no longer be providing a class absence note to students who have not been seen by a UHC staff member. Nickerson stated that this information could be put on the UHC website. Sollars suggested that Student Affairs should have this information as well. Nickerson stated that the form could be put on the Student Affairs website. Woodman pointed out that this is not an approved form and that it probably would need full Senate approval. Sollars noted that the form is not a requirement, it just provides an option for faculty members who require an excused note for a class absence.

The Executive Committee revised the form and will review the final draft at its next meeting.

4.2 Questions for Professor Hawks, Chair of the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee

Nickerson noted that he wants to have a meeting with the chair of the IAC and eventually Professor Potuto, our faculty athletics representative to the Big Ten, to learn more about the interfacing of athletics and academics at UNL. The Executive Committee identified the following questions:

- 1) What does UNL do with student athletes that are recruited that do not fit the academic profile of UNL?
- 2) What is done to help student athletes on campus?
- 3) Are their specific courses and majors where there is a large number of athletes?
- 4) Who has oversight on whether some faculty members might be overly accommodating to student athletes?
- 5) How do they insure that the tutors are staying within their boundaries as a tutor?
- 6) Is there a guarantee that a student athlete can keep their scholarship to finish their degree should they be injured?

Nickerson noted that the idea is to get general background information on what they do academically for the student athletes and there are no real concerns.

4.3 Update on Non-Tenure Track Faculty Survey

Woodman reported that he has started the IRB process and received some suggestions from some non-tenure track faculty members for additional questions to the survey. He noted that most of the questions have to deal with how long a person has been in their

position and whether they have been informed of promotion avenues. He stated that he will send the Executive Committee members an updated list of questions.

Nickerson asked when the survey will be sent out. Woodman stated that he would like to get the approval done by mid-November. Nickerson stated that he will announce it in the upcoming Presidents' newsletter. He stated that he wants all non-tenure track faculty members to feel welcomed and wants to compile a list of best practices that will be sent out to departments and colleges. He noted that the Senate cannot dictate to departments and colleges that they follow these best practices. Konecky pointed out that the Senate could promote the best practices.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Best Practices in Course Scheduling Report

Sollars noted that the report has been approved in principle by the Deans Council and the idea is to roll it out gradually, but the Enrollment Management Council (EMC) wants to get as much faculty feedback as it can about it. She stated that the EMC asked that she bring it to the Executive Committee and that it also goes to the Senate for feedback from the faculty. She reported that it has been given to department chairs and they are supposed to be providing feedback as well. She stated that anyone who wants to provide feedback should send it to either herself or Nickerson and they will compile the comments and get it back to the Enrollment Management Council.

Nickerson stated that the report does not address the commuting problem that exists for students that have classes on one campus immediately followed by another course on the other campus. Sollars suggested that this issue should be part of the feedback. She noted that there has been discussion regarding transportation between the campuses. She pointed out that an interesting proposal is to have an express bus between the campuses for certain times of the day. She noted that the EMC is also discussing what to do with scheduling of classes on the Innovation Campus.

Woodman asked what the connection is between the national averages and the concept of best practices. Steffen pointed out that he wants what works best for our students, regardless of what are considered the national best practices. Sollars stated that the idea is to determine what would be the best practices for UNL. Steffen reported that he have some unique issues here with the two campuses. He stated that there are several courses that have just two sections which are taught back-to-back which can really impact students' schedules. He suggested that one of the sections should be taught on each campus so it does not take up so much of the students' schedule.

Ruchala pointed out that recognition needs to be given to that fact that there are other pressures working on programs, such as internships being available for 8-week time periods and the pressure to have more 8-week courses. She stated that there are innovations that take place in colleges and departments that need to be accommodated here. She stated that colleges and departments might need to get increased control over some set rooms that they control for scheduling. Sollars noted that this has been discussed with the deans along with who has control over the rooms. Konecky pointed

out that this speaks to the inventory of classrooms and the need for larger classrooms. Woodman stated that he likes the idea of having flexibility in scheduling courses, but faculty members need to realize that scheduling courses during peak times that do not match the regularly scheduled class times can disrupt the students' schedules. Sollars noted that faculty members would have to make sure that their course time does not interfere with other courses. She pointed out that faculty members would have more flexibility with their schedule if they have the course later in the afternoon.

Nickerson stated that individual faculty members shouldn't have to reserve their own classrooms. He stated that each department should have one person that coordinates the classrooms. He asked if this was discussed as a possibility. Sollars stated that the discussion was more about who has control of the rooms.

Sollars stated that the document needs to go out to the Senate. Griffin stated that she will include it in the November Senator's packet. Nickerson stated that he will make an announcement about the document and ask Senators to share it with their colleagues.

Rudy asked if there is any way that faculty members requesting a new course proposal can be encouraged to schedule the courses at a later time of the day. Sollars stated that there are no plans to dictate course scheduling, but if an instructor wants something squirrely with a course they may have to do it in the afternoon.

5.2 November Senate Meeting

Nickerson noted that Director of Benefits, Greg Clayton, will be speaking to the Senate. He stated that the first open mic session will be held and the topic will be Technology in the Classroom – The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. He noted that the Senate meetings are open to the public and other faculty members are encouraged to attend the meeting.

Woodman suggested that the University Health Center be asked to provide an official statement saying that they will no longer be providing class absence notes to students who do not see a member of the medical staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, October 29, 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.