

**FACULTY SENATE  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**DATE:** Wednesday, September 17, 2014

**PRESENT:** Bender, Joeckel, Konecky, Nickerson, Purcell, Rinkevich, Ruchala,  
Rudy, Steffen, Woodman, Wysocki

**ABSENT:** Guevara, Sollars

**LOCATION:** 201 Canfield Administration Building

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**1.0 Call (*Nickerson*)**

Nickerson called the meeting to order at 3:06 p.m.

**2.0 Chancellor Perlman/SVCAA Weissinger**

**2.1 Effects of Change in Distance Education Tuition – Hardship for Some  
Departments**

Nickerson stated that he has been trying to find out what happened on the redirection of the tuition funds for distance education. He noted that the Chancellor and SVCAA were very upfront since it was determined that changes needed to be made to how the distance education tuition was distributed. However, some departments are suffering major budget cuts and saying that they have not been given sufficient notice regarding the impact on their budgets. He asked if there are any plans to do something about the problem the change has made to these departments.

SVCAA Weissinger pointed out that last October she began talking to the deans about the changes needed in the distribution of the distance education tuition revenue. She started engaging the deans by providing them details on how the distribution of the revenue could be changed so the campus budget would not be negatively impacted. To lessen the impact on the colleges for the loss of distance education revenue, colleges would receive 35% of their 2014 fiscal year distance education revenue. The 35% increase would be added to the permanent college base budget.

SVCAA Weissinger noted that 75% of the distance education money that was going to the colleges and departments was actually from UNL registered students who choose to take the course online rather than sitting in class. As a result, the economy of this system of distributing the distance education tuition imploded on us causing a campus budget deficit. She pointed out that years ago colleges used to get one time money that they could use for different things like travel, new computers, etc. She stated that many chairs, especially those in the College of Arts & Sciences, do not have this kind of money so some of the department chairs figured that if they had digital classes they could obtain more cash. She stated that to soften the loss of the distance education funds money was given to increase the permanent budget of the college and this money could be used to hire people. She pointed out that it is up to the deans to decide how much money goes to each department in the college.

Nickerson stated that he spoke with administrators in Arts & Sciences and they thought that the change would be phased in over a three year period. SVCAA Weissinger noted that there was some discussion early last year about this, but by the first of this year it was clear to the deans that this would not happen. She pointed out that during this time there has been a leadership transition in Arts & Sciences which could attribute to the misunderstanding. She reported that the Faculty Senate and the Academic Planning Committee insisted that the problem with the distribution of the distance education revenue be resolved. She noted that some chairs realized that they could make some money for their departments if they changed the way some courses were delivered to the students.

Nickerson noted that the Board of Regents has consistently talked about boosting distance education and Vice President Niemiec will be speaking to the Faculty Senate on October 7 about distance education. He stated that he has heard that 21 distance education courses have been cancelled since the change in the distribution of the revenue. SVCAA Weissinger pointed out that it is important to distinguish between on-campus technology delivered courses and true distance education courses. Students in true distance education courses never step foot on campus so they never pay UNL tuition.

SVCAA Weissinger noted that there are very sound academic reasons for the faculty to govern the curriculum for their department and there are good reasons for delivering the content of a course electronically; for instance, it frees up classroom space and allocates larger blocks of time for scholarly activities. However, the previous way of distributing the tuition from the online courses created a false economy. She stated that it is disappointing that a small number of the online courses have been cancelled. She stated that she looked at the list of these courses and noted that most of them are 300-400 level courses. She stated that she assumes that these courses had low enrollment and that the departments were making decisions on how best to use their resources. She pointed out that we have to deliver our curriculum like we promise, and it would be disappointing to learn that departments cancelled courses based on fiscal decisions. She stated that the administration is very interested in increasing distance education courses and there are positive benefits to offering these courses.

Chancellor Perlman stated that there will be an announcement about a committee that will be formed to see what kind of resources are available for us to tap into the true distance education market.

Rudy asked if the new dean was made aware that some departments in Arts & Sciences would have serious impacts to their budgets with the change. SVCAA Weissinger noted that the formal announcement about the re-budgeting occurred during the transition in deans, but Dean Francisco is perfectly capable of dealing with the situation and is managing the budget of the college well. She pointed out that he has also proven that he works very well with the chairs of the departments. She stated that she was sorry she had to take recurring revenue away from departments that found a way to make money, but the change was something that the campus had to make.

Joeckel noted that SVCAA Weissinger made the assumption that the distance education classes that were cancelled were not meeting the minimum enrollment. He asked if there was data to support this conclusion. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she assumed that based on the course numbers it was determined that the courses could be offered less frequently. She pointed out that many of the departments that offered the distance education courses have significant money from the distance education revenue that they carried forward in their budget. She stated that because the money came in so unexpectedly the departments accumulated the money and she made an agreement with the departments that the money could stay in their budgets beyond the end of the fiscal year (June 30). She said that while the revenue stream may have dried up, there are still significant pools of money in these departments, and in most instances there is two to three years of accumulated funds.

Joeckel asked if there could be any unanticipated problems for students managing their courses to get their degrees and wondered if market research has been done on this issue. SVCAA Weissinger pointed out that market research on distance education classes has focused on students who are not on a campus. She stated that she knows all of the chairs and heads and would be disappointed if they made a decision to cancel a course that they knew would be harmful to students' programs. She pointed out again that she knows that departments do have cash in their budgets to deliver the courses for their programs.

Woodman asked if there was any correlation between lack of funds and the courses cancelled. SVCAA Weissinger does not know this, but she does have a list of the cancelled courses. Purcell queried whether the deans were asked if the change in the distribution of the distance education funds was going to create a problem for students taking the online classes. SVCAA Weissinger stated that a list of the cancelled courses was sent to the deans along with the reassertion of our goals. She pointed out that she was assured that our students could still graduate in four years and it is the dean's job to manage the budget for their college.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he isn't surprised that some of these courses have been cancelled. He noted that if you have an opportunity to have a core course that can be taught online and that would create some additional revenue, you would offer the course, but if you have space in a classroom you might cancel the online course. He pointed out that you cannot pull money from one place and put it into another place without having some negative consequences. He stated that if it comes down to the fact that people are in the position that they can't offer an essential course because of resources, there is 35% more money in the dean's office to deal with the problem.

SVCAA Weissinger noted that the operating funds for some of the departments in Arts and Sciences is much slimmer than in many other departments on campus and with the online courses these departments were able to find a way to earn some extra money so she understands the disappointment of these departments. She stated that she trusts the value of the College of Arts & Sciences and the dean and chairs that they will deal with this situation.

Woodman reported that a memo was sent stating that departments in Arts & Science would only receive \$50 per online student and a maximum of \$15,000 per semester for the online courses which is a drastic cut from \$300,000 that some departments were making. He pointed out that this was not announced until July 11. SVCAA Weissinger stated that the temporary instruction budget in Arts & Sciences is very large and complex and the \$15,000 may be a program to seed funding. Nickerson noted that the dean is also funding a position in psychology.

## **2.2 Update on Health Center**

Rudy asked if the feasibility study includes the management of the Health Center, the building of a new facility, and whether there will be campus-wide service. Chancellor Perlman reported that UNMC is going to operate the Health Center and will take a year to review everything but eventually a set menu of programs to provide services to students will be offered. He stated that he would be surprised if the Health Center just provides the same services as it currently does. He noted that there is some interest on UNMC's part to combine the Health Center with the new Nursing Building that will be constructed. Nickerson asked if the new Health Center building is still planned for the parking lot south of the Beadle Center. The Chancellor stated that it is still being planned for that location and a series of shadow studies have been conducted to determine if a building located on the lot will not cast a shadow on the greenhouses.

Rudy asked if the Health Center will expand its other services to the campus community. Chancellor Perlman stated that he knows that there is an interest in doing that.

Nickerson stated that the idea of combining the Nursing Building with the Health Center sounds like a good idea. Chancellor Perlman reported that the Health Center staff are very happy with UNMC's staff and how things are being handled.

## **2.3 1% Salary Funds Available to Fix Discrepancies**

Nickerson reported that at the recent Faculty Senate meeting Interim President Linder reported that there was a 1% fund set aside to fix salary discrepancies and asked the Chancellor for further information about this money. Chancellor Perlman noted that the Regents are working on the biennial budget now and they are proposing a 1% increase in salaries in the budget, in addition to whatever across the board salary increase is approved. He pointed out that traditionally the Regents do not include the salary increase in the budget because they have to wait to see what the Governor's recommended increase for state employees is going to be. He noted that the 1% is a special request to address serious differentials in salaries. He stated that this would have to occur at UNL or UNMC because UNK and UNO have salary contracts. He pointed out that this request is surfacing as an important matter that needs to be addressed. He reported that there is also a \$20 million request for other programs related to economic development activities such as Engineering and Innovation Campus.

## **2.4 5% Administrative Fee**

Nickerson noted that some units are getting hit with a 5% administrative fee and asked where the money is going and the overall theme for its use. Chancellor Perlman noted

that the 5% fee is really quite traditional and some auxiliary units have been paying the fee for years while others have not. He stated that auxiliary units that were not paying the fee have recently been assessed with the fee in order to make it fair to the other units that have been paying it. He stated that Athletics has been assessed the fee since 1991. He reported that the money comes into his office and is allocated out for campus priorities. He noted that there are no continuing revenue sources that flow into his office or Academic Affairs and this money allows them to advance campus priorities.

Chancellor Perlman noted that all of the auxiliary units incur university costs such as the use of the business and finance accounting systems. He reported that the auxiliary units have to be self-supporting because they are not tuition based. He realizes there may be some negative unintended consequences for some units, but the Vice Chancellors can invest the money where they see there is a priority.

Woodman noted that lab fees, as stated in the Regents bylaws, can only be used for specific reasons associated with the labs. He reported that the Special Fees Committee, which reviews requests for special fees, is very restrictive and does not approve these fees easily. He pointed out that departments cannot ask for an increase in lab fees to cover the 5% tax that is now being assessed. He asked what options units have to deal with the impact of the tax. SVCAA Weissinger noted that labs have associated costs to the campus such as accounting systems and labor costs. She pointed out that originally the 5% fee was not budgeted into the lab's budget and this has been acknowledged with the deans. She stated that this is another complex transition, but many of these auxiliary units have a cash reserve that will help them with the transition. She realizes that the 5% fee will hit some departments harder than others, but it should only be difficult for this year. Woodman pointed out that the money used to pay the 5% tax was going to be used for maintenance on the labs because his department does not have other resources to help maintain the labs. He stated that units should be allowed to build the 5% into the special fees request because in reality this money is going to the administration. SVCAA Weissinger pointed out that raising the special fees would be difficult to justify to Central Administration and ASUN would probably get involved. She stated that she believes departments can handle the 5% fee.

Nickerson asked what departments should do if they feel that their effectiveness will be destroyed because of the 5% fee. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she has discussed this with the deans. Nickerson asked if the departments should go to their dean to address the problem. SVCAA Weissinger stated that they should go to their dean, although she believes valid arguments against the tax are fairly rare. She understands that this will be a difficult year because of it being a transition period. Chancellor Perlman noted that he would be surprised if this is a long term problem.

## **2.5 Likelihood of January Salary Adjustment Now That Enrollment is Over 25,000**

Chancellor Perlman stated that increasing the salary pool in January is in the front of his mind and he is hopeful that he can do this, but revenue accounting is much more delayed than enrollment accounting so he does not know where the revenue stands. He stated that

the question is whether the students are all paying full tuition. He stated that he will keep the Executive Committee informed as he gets more information.

## **2.6 How Are Tech Fees Attached to Credit Hour Being Used**

SVCAA Weissinger reported that there was an increase from \$7.35 per credit hour to \$9.25 in technology fees which ASUN was enthusiastic about. She pointed out that UNK and UNO are already assessing a \$10 per credit hour fee. She noted that it is clear that UNL has fallen behind other campuses in technology and the fees are being used by ITS for core support of academic computing. She noted that Academic Affairs received some of the funds which have been used to support computing in Brace Hall, in chemistry labs, and in general purpose classrooms. She stated that the base allocation is still in place, but the additional revenue allocates \$1 million to ITS while the rest will be distributed as some additional income to the colleges and Academic Affairs. She pointed out that ITS is significantly underfunded.

## **2.7 Non-tenure Track Faculty Members in Centers – Do they have home departments and/or a limited contract?**

Nickerson stated that the Executive Committee is exploring the idea of having a Senate representative from the various Centers on campus. He noted that most of the faculty in Centers are non-tenure track and do not have a tenure track home. He stated that there is an idea to have a Senate district that is composed of all the non-tenure track faculty members in the various Centers. SVCAA Weissinger noted that for these faculty members their organizational affiliation is the Center and including them in the Senate would be a good way to enfranchise them.

Steffen noted that the Executive Committee originally discussed the idea as a way to fill vacant positions on the Senate, but realized that these faculty members might have unique concerns and problems that the Senate is not currently addressing. SVCAA Weissinger pointed out that the bylaws do consider these employees as faculty members. She stated that her office could provide a list of the Centers.

Rudy asked if the Centers have a dean. SVCAA Weissinger stated that each Center reports either to a dean or a vice chancellor.

## **2.8 Upcoming Issues**

Chancellor Perlman reported that UNL has had its largest enrollment in 32 years, 29% of these students are non-resident students, international students are now 10% of the total student body, and 12.6% of undergraduate students are of color. He noted that non-resident students are traditionally from South Dakota and Iowa, but over the past ten years the number of students from these states have stayed constant. He reported that the largest increase in non-resident students have been from the states of Illinois and Minnesota which is where we have been spending a lot of our resources to recruit. He stated that a smaller number of students are coming from Kansas, California, Colorado, Missouri, Texas, and Wisconsin.

Chancellor Perlman reported that in terms of international students China leads the countries with the most students attending UNL followed by Brazil. He noted that we

have seen significant increases in the number of international students and we are working hard to attract even more students. He stated that Malaysian students are starting to come back, India is 4<sup>th</sup> and Oman is 5<sup>th</sup> and we have a special agreement with this country. He pointed out that it is important for us to diversify while we have the opportunity.

Nickerson asked if we can anticipate the number of students from Turkey being on the list soon. Chancellor Perlman said that we are working hard with them to recruit students. He noted that they have a program that does support Turkish students studying abroad, but the largest program is with the European Union. He reported that a program has just been started with the U.S. and we have recently signed an agreement with them. He stated that we should see an increase in students from Turkey in the next two or three years.

Steffen noted that the agreement with Brazil causes some difficulty with the Veterinary program because their program is different than ours, although their students are very good. Chancellor Perlman pointed out that there are always some challenges that need to be dealt with. He reported that Associate Vice Chancellor Wilson has been selected as one of the few representatives from the U.S. to go to Brazil to discuss student exchange programs. He noted that Vice Chancellor Green has been down there and he will be visiting there as well. Chancellor Perlman reported that an agreement has just been made with China for a food science program which will bring in about 50-60 students but not for a few years.

Rudy asked if our recruiting footprint has changed. Chancellor Perlman stated that it has and we are now recruiting in the states of the other Big Ten schools. SVCAA Weissinger noted that Dean Cervený and his staff have built the recruiting efforts up in these states.

Woodman asked how much the student services budget has increased in the past years. SVCAA Weissinger stated that it has increased a lot, but the Admissions Office has been underfunded although it has been performing beyond their expectation. She pointed out that a lot of the budget is for the purchase of media and the hope is that the cash costs will eventually be decreasing. She noted that she is confident that they are not over spending.

Chancellor Perlman reported that another good point about enrollment is that the number of students coming to UNL has increased in every single county in Nebraska. SVCAA Weissinger noted that this is very important to us and the only way to have investment money to hire faculty members is through increased enrollment. Steffen pointed out that the media campaigns now airing during sporting events are a lot more attractive to the students. SVCAA Weissinger noted that a firm in Lincoln called Archrival is now doing the media ads which have helped us considerably.

Chancellor Perlman reported that the President's search is still continuing.

### **3.0 Announcements**

#### **3.1 Letter to Daily Nebraskan Editor**

Nickerson reported that he, Bender, and Woodman wrote a letter to the chief editor of the Daily Nebraskan regarding the inaccuracies reported last week in the article on the Faculty Senate meeting. He stated that he received a very nice response from Jacy Marmaduke stating that there will be a full retraction of the article and that the DN will enact a policy requiring reporters to record the meetings. He noted that the editors will then review the recordings to ensure that the article is accurate.

#### **3.2 AAUP Meeting**

Nickerson reported that he attended the UNL chapter meeting of the AAUP and was happy to note that the chapter is alive and functioning. He stated that officers were elected at the meeting. Bender stated that people from other universities and colleges attended the statewide meeting that was held on the same day at the City Campus Union.

#### **3.3 Faculty Senate Seats**

Griffin reported that the departments of Chemistry, Economics, Entomology, and Ag Leadership have all identified faculty members to serve on the Faculty Senate.

#### **3.4 Communications with Other Senate Presidents**

Nickerson reported that he contacted the other Senate Presidents regarding the possibility of switching from Blackboard to a different learning management system. He noted that there are people at UNL that would like to consider a program different from Blackboard, but he found out from some of the responses he received that the situation is more complex than he thought and there was great concern about transferring to a new system. Woodman pointed out that the other campuses' faculty senates were asked to participate and provide input regarding a change in the learning management system but did not respond. He noted that Canvas and Desire to Learn, the other learning management systems reviewed, have reasonable and good transferring systems because they wouldn't exist if they didn't. He reported that many of the Big Ten schools have changed and gone away from Blackboard.

Nickerson stated that UNO claims that the drug and alcohol policy of the university is causing some turmoil. He noted that he is not sure what this is about and will try to get more information on it.

Nickerson reported that language regarding the sexual misconduct policy is being proposed for all course syllabi. He stated that he thinks this might be required system-wide and will try to find out more about it at the upcoming Board of Regents meeting.

### **4.0 Approval of September 10, 2014 Minutes**

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

### **5.0 Unfinished Business**

No unfinished business was discussed.



## **6.0 New Business**

### **6.1 CIC Faculty Governance Conference – Topics for Nickerson and Bender**

Nickerson noted that he and Bender will be attending the CIC Faculty Governance Conference next week. He asked if there were any particular topics that they should try to discuss with the faculty members from the other Big Ten schools. Woodman suggested they ask other attendees what their experiences have been with switching to a new learning management system. Also, what has their experience been with reporting systems similar to TIPSPrevention.

### **6.2 Follow-Up Discussion on Discussions with the Chancellor and SVCAA**

Nickerson stated that he thought he might be unsatisfied with the discussion the Executive Committee had with the administrators regarding the change in the distribution of distance education tuition, but he thought they explained the situation well. Joeckel stated that he was bothered by the fact that no one looked carefully into what courses were being cancelled and suggested that some research on this might be good. Konecky pointed out that the curriculum belongs to the college so SVCAA Weissinger has to stand back from making any decisions on the courses that are offered.

Joeckel wondered whether the courses increased overall revenue even though the students were not true distance education students. He questioned whether some of the students just take these courses because they could take them at a different time. Konecky pointed out that students like the flexibility of the schedule of the distance education courses.

Nickerson noted that there is tremendous diversity in how the money went to the departments with some departments actually being able to save money. Wysocki reminded the Executive Committee that all of UNL's employees paid for the deficits that were created in the campus operating budget due to the tuition shortfall because a portion of the faculty/staff salary increase went towards the deficit. Woodman pointed out that the real issue is what the deans have done with the 35% increase in their budget.

Rudy questioned whether the Executive Committee knows if any of the student's program of study have been interrupted because of the cancellation of courses. Konecky noted that the SVCAA assumed that department and colleges would have caught this if it had occurred. Rudy wondered if we could ask the College of Arts & Sciences advising center if any student's course of studies had to be amended because of the cancellation of courses. Woodman pointed out that most of them were 300-400 level courses and probably many of them are electives and wondered if this would affect the breadth of education a student would receive. Nickerson noted that SVCAA Weissinger trusts the deans to identify any serious damages that may occur because of the change and she thinks she has provided the deans with the resources to rectify any problems. Joeckel suggested that faculty members who have raised their concerns should contact their deans. Nickerson noted that he has spoken to Associate Dean Pilson in Arts & Sciences who said they are trying to identify areas where real hardships are being felt and are trying to correct the problem.

The Executive Committee agreed to monitor the possibility of having a salary adjustment made in January.

**6.3 September 24 Executive Committee Meeting**

Purcell moved that the September 24 Executive Committee meeting be cancelled since Nickerson and Bender will be gone. Joeckel seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee will be held on Wednesday, October 1, 2014 at 3:00 in the Faculty Senate Office. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator of the Faculty Senate, and Tad Wysocki, Secretary.