

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Present:** Bender, Dawes, Joeckel, Konecky, Lee, Nickerson, Purcell, Reisbig, Rudy, Sollars, Steffen, Vakilzadian, Woodman

**Absent:**

**Date:** Wednesday, April 29, 2015

**Location:** 201 Canfield 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.

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### **1.0 Call to Order**

Bender called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

### **2.0 Chancellor Perlman/VC Green/SVCAA Weissinger**

#### **2.1 Rationale for moving Electrical & Computer Engineering department to rented space.**

Bender reported that faculty in Electrical & Computer Engineering were told there was lack of space in PKI and they will be moved into a rented facility. He noted that the faculty is concerned that this will become a permanent space for them and questioned whether the building is suitable for labs. SVCAA Weissinger stated that PKI is full and UNL has made promises to grow the engineering faculty and student body in Omaha, to accommodate the growth in the Scott Technology Building, the closest space that could be located that would suit the needs of the department, has been rented. She noted that 12,000 square feet of office space, and space that can be configured into the needed labs has been rented. She reported that there have been a variety of discussions regarding the move including whether certain functions or classes should be located in the building and eventually the decision was to move the entire department so it can stay together. She pointed out that there is a five year lease and that this is a high quality space.

Bender stated that there is concern that the move is punitive because some members of the Electrical & Computer Engineering department resisted the merger of the two departments. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she has not heard anything about the plan that would indicate that it is punitive. She noted that our colleagues at UNO are very good and are well led. She stated that the planning for the move has been taking place for six or eight months now. She pointed out that this is not a permanent move and at one point portable classrooms were being considered instead of using the Scott Technology Building.

Woodman asked if there is a long lasting solution to the situation. SVCAA Weissinger stated that Engineering is going through considerable changes and she believes the college is making good out of the situation. She stated that incredible plans are being made that will position the college for decades to come, but noted that change can cause

some anxiety for people. She pointed out that she believes the college is in a better place now than it was a year ago.

Vakilzadian asked if there are any plans for long term space for the UNL and UNO joint engineering program. Chancellor Perlman noted that funding will be needed to accommodate all of PKI. He reported that the idea of having a major building program to create a combined Engineering and Life Sciences building on the existing Textron property in Lincoln is being explored. He noted that having this joint building could provide considerable expansion for both the Life Sciences and Engineering. He suggested that the building expansion could go as a package to the legislature.

SVCAA Weissinger reported that currently a space assessment study in the current Engineering complex is being conducted to see how the space can be best optimized. She stated that the Engineering faculty are going to grow and both office space and lab space will be needed. Vakilzadian pointed out that classroom space is also a real issue.

## **2.2 Status of New Hires in Electrical & Computer Engineering**

SVCAA Weissinger reported that Engineering is looking at 17 hires including new positions and some replacements. She noted that every department in Engineering is doing a lot of hiring, although it is not clear when they will all get filled. Nickerson noted that former Senate Secretary Wysocki was concerned about the funding for all of these positions. SVCAA Weissinger pointed out that she does not approve a search unless adequate existing funds are available.

## **2.3 Possible 60% Cut in Funds for Temporary Teaching Hires for Some Departments in Arts & Sciences**

Bender reported that Past President Guevara is concerned that Modern Languages & Literature is not going to be able to staff all of its courses because of budget cuts to their temporary teaching fund. SVCAA Weissinger pointed out that the distribution of department funding is a college matter. She noted that deans are aware that they have increased enrollment. Nickerson stated that Guevara had reported that all of the courses were full and asked if there was any chance that some departments could get more funding to cover their courses. Chancellor Perlman pointed out that the budget will be tight next year because of VSIP. SVCAA Weissinger stated that deans can ask for help if they need it. Bender stated that he understands that this is a college problem, but if there is inadequate staffing resulting in language courses being cut it will affect many students in other colleges and programs where language courses are required. VC Green reported that he attended a council leadership meeting last week where Dean Francisco was explaining this issue saying that he is basically reallocating the money to non-temporary lines. He suggested that the Executive Committee visit with Dean Francisco to discuss the issue.

## **2.4 Outcome of Deans Distance Education Tuition Committee**

SVCAA Weissinger stated that she received a report from the committee which recommended another formulaic approach to getting a portion of the distance education tuition dollars to departments. She noted that she will not recommend exactly what the

committee suggested because it would drain too much of the campus tuition revenue. She stated that the only surplus revenue that could be employed would come from new students. She stated that she will recommend to the Chancellor and VC Green a formulized program to partner with colleges that think there is a market to build and attract students with an online program. She pointed out that the true distance education market is very crowded, but the administration will help conduct a market research to see if there truly is a market for a program, including conducting pricing research to make sure that we are charging a maximal tuition. She stated that if the research shows that there is a market then a unique deal could be made with the department which would benefit the department and attract new students. However, if the online program doesn't work it would more than likely be discontinued. She noted that colleges can expand our expertise, attract new students, and make money doing it, but these courses will need to be more strategically framed.

## **2.5 Status of Extension Educator Conflict of Interest Guidelines**

VC Green reported that Dean Hibberd has worked with the Extension Advisory Board on revising the document and a draft will come back to the Senate, probably in the fall. Woodman asked if the guidelines will apply to all university faculty. VC Green stated that it will only be for Extension Educators. He noted that these will just be guidelines, not a policy document. Purcell asked if the document will need to go to the General Council. VC Green stated that it will not.

## **2.6 Update on Salary Increases**

Chancellor Perlman reported that there are two issues in regards to the salary increases. The first is the legislature will start to look at the general budget tomorrow. He noted that a possible impact could be the Revenue Forecasting Commission's report if it indicates that there could be \$50 or \$100 million less in the state budget than previously thought. He stated that most people think the core budget of the university appears to be in pretty good shape, although no tuition increase or salary increase has been announced. He said that his educated case is that there will be a 3% salary increase and a tuition increase of under 3%, but the actual numbers will depend on a number of decisions that need to be addressed.

Chancellor Perlman stated that UNL's budget will depend on our enrollment. He noted that he told President Bounds of his commitment to give back to the faculty and staff the amount of their scheduled increases that was used to cover the budget shortfall last year. He reported that President Bounds understands the situation and is willing to work with him on it. He stated that the best scenario is that UNL employees would get a 3% increase plus an additional amount into the salary pool.

Bender asked if there is some sense in the legislature that the faculty are overpaid. Chancellor Perlman stated that he does not think senators feel that way. He noted that there is a senator that has requested an Excel spreadsheet on all salaries, which is available on our website, to review. He stated that he believes most senators understand the competitive nature of attracting and retaining good faculty and staff members. Bender pointed out that the argument to support salary increases could be made more

forcibly if the median salaries were used rather than the average salary. Chancellor Perlman stated he believes this is done when comparing our salaries with our peers.

Lee asked what the explanation is for the projected downturn in revenue. VC Green stated that the crop economy is significantly down and all services associated with agriculture are expected to be down. Lee asked if this is a long term trend. VC Green stated that this is cyclical and he thinks the Revenue Forecasting Board may be over estimating the downturn. Chancellor Perlman noted that if the Pacific Rim Trade agreement passes it could have a positive impact on the state's economy.

## **2.7 Timetable for Administrative Hires**

Chancellor Perlman stated that the Chancellor's search will be first and probably won't start until September. He noted that it wouldn't make sense to search for a new SVCAA until a new Chancellor is in place.

## **2.8 Update on the Merger of Fine and Performing Arts and Architecture Colleges**

Chancellor Perlman reported that the proposal to merge the two colleges will go to a committee of the Board of Regents with the assumption that it will be placed on the June Board of Regent's agenda. However, the proposal will be withdrawn if it is believed that the Board will not be favorable to it. He noted that either way, a decision will be made in June. He pointed out that there are at least 37 other universities that have colleges housing the arts and architecture and they have been successful. He stated that the reality is that if the merged college is not approved Architecture will be without leadership for another three years due to the transition in administration.

## **2.9 Timeline for the Next Step of the Office of Civil Rights Report**

Chancellor Perlman reported that the Office of Civil Rights investigators will be back on campus in the fall when they will speak to a lot of people on campus. He noted that the OCR knows what our policies are and there will be additional policies in place by the fall so he thinks we are making good progress.

## **3.0 Announcements**

No announcements were made.

## **4.0 Approval of April 22, 2015 Minutes**

Joeckel moved for approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Purcell. Motion approved.

## **5.0 Unfinished Business**

No unfinished business was discussed.

## **6.0 New Business**

### **6.1 Follow up Discussion on Above Agenda Items**

#### **Merger of Fine and Performing Arts and Architecture**

Lee stated that a Senator from the School of Music told him that some faculty members are concerned with the name of the proposed merged college because it does not capture the notion of fine and performing arts and architecture will actually be the smallest department in the college. He asked how the department of Community and Regional Planning fits within the newly formed college. Joeckel pointed out that there was some limited effort to move the faculty members from that department into the School of Natural Resources but nothing came of it. Nickerson noted that SVCAA Weissinger previously stated that any tenured faculty member could request a move to a different department at any time if they wanted.

Lee asked why it was difficult to find a dean for the College of Architecture. Woodman noted that the last search for a dean resulted in an offer being made, but his family did not want to move to Nebraska. Lee pointed out that regardless of the outcome of the merger a director will need to be found.

#### Cut in Funds for Temporary Hires

Woodman stated that Guevara believes that this is a serious issue that threatens departments' ability to cover courses. Lee stated that the loss of the distance education funds probably has played a part in the shortage of funds, but how departments manage their money needs to be considered. He noted that there are permanent GTA lines and some non-permanent lines and some units manipulate the funding for these lines. Nickerson pointed out that when the distance education tuition was taken away from departments SVCAA Weissinger gave the colleges a significant amount of permanent money to make up the loss in the college budget. Lee noted that some departments rely more on GTA's to teach, but other departments might be facing a different situation. Nickerson stated that if some of the temporary positions were changed to Professors of Practice it would be better. Joeckel suggested that the Executive Committee should pursue the issue further with Dean Francisco. Steffen noted that if classes are cancelled, particularly if they are already full, it will create a real problem for students. Lee pointed out that some courses need to have a small enrollment in order to be effective and increasing enrollment in them is not an option.

Steffen stated that when the loss of distance education tuition to departments was raised earlier with SVCAA Weissinger she explained the formula that would be used to provide funds to the colleges and she was confident that they would have the necessary money to cover the courses. He pointed out that if departments are short on the temporary instructor funds it was a decision made at the dean's level. Lee noted that Dean Francisco seems to want more professors of practice rather than temporary instructors. Steffen questioned whether there is a way to determine the true distance education students from those on campus. If so, a formula could be based on the true distance education tuition revenue.

The Executive Committee agreed that Bender should contact Dean Francisco or Associate Dean Minter to discuss the issue further.

## **6.2 Summer Executive Committee Schedule**

Bender stated that the Executive Committee is scheduled to meet with Chancellor Perlman and VC Green twice during the summer. He noted that if items for the agenda are limited a meeting may be cancelled. He stated that the Executive Committee will hold its annual retreat sometime in August.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:12 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Allison Reisbig, Secretary.