

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bender, Joeckel, Konecky, Nickerson, Purcell, Rudy, Sollars, Steffen, Woodman

Absent: Guevara, Rinkevich, Wysocki

Date: Wednesday, January 7, 2015

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 3:06 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Survey of Non-tenure Track Faculty Members

Nickerson reported that Woodman has asked that the Committee move forward with the next step of the survey by reviewing the responses received. Griffin noted that there have been 316 responses to the survey.

2.2 4-H Students and Online Education

Nickerson reported that he recently spoke with Vice President Niemiec (Distance Education and Director, Online Worldwide) about whether it is possible to get 4-H students involved with UNL online courses. He noted that VP Niemiec said that it will be difficult because the courses these high school students would take are all non-credit. He stated that VP Niemiec told him that it is being worked on, but this is a long term project and the real solution will be complex and will require cooperation from all stakeholders involved.

Woodman pointed out that faculty members can offer zero credit courses online and wondered what the difference is between a zero credit course and a non-credit course. He wondered if the courses for 4-H students could be set up as a zero credit hour course. Nickerson wondered whether the 4-H students could access courses through the high school online program. He pointed out that this issue has not been forgotten and is still being worked on.

2.3 Reaccreditation Update

Rudy reported that the entire reaccreditation process for this year is to generate a report that will be submitted to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and next year there will be a campus visit by the HLC's accreditation team. He noted that part of the visitation will include a meeting with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and whoever is elected this spring as President-Elect will be the sitting President when the meeting occurs. He suggested that whoever is elected as President-Elect should become involved

with the reaccreditation so he/she will be knowledgeable about UNL's report and the work that has taken place during the process.

Nickerson asked if we are doing anything different with the reaccreditation process from the last time it was done. Joeckel pointed out that it is dramatically different from our last reaccreditation. Rudy stated that the HLC wants to know that we have compliance and wants to see the integrity of the academic process to ensure that we are utilizing a self-assessment process for the campus.

Rudy stated that he thinks program assessment is occurring, but he is not sure that it is being done in all units. For instance, there are different expectations for graduate students from department to department which can make it difficult to assess the programs. He pointed out that with undergraduate programs there is an assessment program in place, but we need to show that we are actually using the data from these assessments to change and improve the programs. He noted that many departments were creating new programs rather than looking to see if they could amend existing programs. Sollars stated that she is serving on a committee that is considering changing the assessment program for undergraduate programs. Rudy stated that the report will show where the gaps are, but we have ample lead time so that changes can be implemented before the campus visit.

Sollars stated that she is on the reaccreditation committee that is looking at student learning and one of the criteria is to look at the curricular structure and the ACE program. She noted that another component will look at faculty hiring to determine if we have enough faculty members to meet the mission of the university. Nickerson asked if the committee will look at the overall effectiveness of the ACE program. Sollars stated that her group is going to be reviewing the ACE program to make sure all of the components of it are present.

Rudy noted that the process is much better this time and is in an open format. He stated that the report only has to be 100 pages and the criteria will be set and available online. He noted that the report can include URL links to UNL websites to demonstrate that we are meeting the criteria. He reported that a subgroup of the committee he is on will be ensuring that we are in compliance with federal regulations.

Joeckel stated that he is on the mission committee and the members of this committee have been asked to look at six types of documents, including the strategic compass and the Chancellor's State of the University Addresses for the past several years. Rudy noted that the mission and the vision of the university should be front and center and not buried in documents. Nickerson stated that for him the question would be how does UNL's mission compare to other land grant institutions and if it has changed over recent years. Joeckel pointed out that his committee will need to show evidence on how we are accomplishing the mission of the campus.

Woodman asked how assessments are going to be done, at the department or the college level. Rudy stated that the charge from the HLC is that the university is responsible for

assessment plans. He noted that the procedures in one college might be different from another college, but examples of assessment can be provided. He stated that while the campus can show that everyone does assessment, there is no uniform procedure on how it is done. He pointed out that all curricular and co-curricular activities are supposed to be assessed. Nickerson asked what are considered co-curricular activities. Sollars stated that any experiential experience, such as participation in UCARE, ROTC, etc. are considered co-curricular.

Joeckel noted that the promotion and tenure documents and procedures as well as tracking the hiring of faculty members in IANR's Phase I hiring will be reviewed along with the strategic plans of colleges for assessment guidelines. He reported that an administrator on the reaccreditation team stated that it was very good to get input from the Faculty Senate on the reaccreditation process.

Joeckel stated that he, Rudy, and Sollars will provide additional updates on the reaccreditation process as they develop.

3.0 Approval of December 3, 2014 and December 10, 2014 Minutes

Joeckel moved to accept the minutes as revised. Purcell seconded the motion. The motion was approved with one abstention.

Steffen moved to accept the minutes as revised. Konecky seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 January Senate Meeting

The Executive Committee discussed agenda items for the January 13 Senate meeting.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Replacing Professor Ruchala on Executive Committee

Nickerson noted that Professor Ruchala has resigned from the Executive Committee. Griffin pointed out that Ruchala's term on the Committee expires at the end of April so a temporary replacement is needed until the elections are held in April. The Executive Committee discussed possible Senators who could replace Ruchala.

5.2 ARRC Response to Charge on Conflict of Interest

5.3 Review Extension Conflict of Interest Statement

Nickerson stated that due to lack of time and the need to review these documents carefully the Executive Committee would address these agenda items at its next meeting.

5.4 ARRC Information on the Senate Website

Joeckel noted that he is highly empathetic to the cause of graduate students and he would like to see a statement that clarifies that graduate students can file a complaint with the ARRC. Nickerson suggested that the language emphasize who can bring concerns to the ARRC.

Woodman asked where graduate students go to defend themselves. Bender stated that a graduate student could file a complaint with the ARRC. Woodman asked if anyone can bring a complaint to the ARRC about a faculty member. Bender stated that if the complaint is a case of grievance, violation of academic freedom, or professional misconduct a complaint can be filed by anyone.

Sollars noted that there are several links on the Graduate Studies website referring graduate students to procedures for general appeals on academic matters. Joeckel wondered if it would be possible to put a link to the ARRC webpage on the Graduate Studies website.

Konecky suggested that a charge be given to the ARRC to put together the necessary information for the Senate website. Bender and Nickerson volunteered to develop a charge for the ARRC to create a statement regarding this issue.

5.5 Review Executive Committee Goals 2014-15

Nickerson noted that the Executive Committee has accomplished several of its goals already, but work on the UNL Bylaws may not be completed this academic year. Griffin pointed out that due to the complexity of revising the UNL Bylaws it might be more productive to do this during the summer months when the workload is not so heavy for everyone. Steffen suggested that when the effort gets underway on the Bylaws that each person on the subcommittee take a section to review and suggest revisions.

Nickerson stated that the Executive Committee is progressing on the other goals, but if anyone wants the committee to specifically address one of the goals soon they should let him or a member on the Committee know.

5.6 Partnering with Academic Planning Committee on Their Goals

Nickerson suggested that this agenda item be postponed until a later date when we can meet with the Chair of the APC and the Senate liaison to the APC.

5.7 Inefficiencies and Ambiguities in State Auditing for Travel Reimbursement

Nickerson noted that at the December Senate meeting there was discussion about suggesting a bill to the unicameral on behalf of the university that would modify the requirements for reimbursement for travel. He noted that this may be the only way to reduce the workload and stress for faculty members who are traveling on university business. Purcell noted that the bill would need to be introduced by a state senator.

Bender stated that one of the arguments to support such a bill is how much money has been spent in auditing the university as opposed to how much was actually misused. Steffen stated that there should be evidence to show how much it costs to track all of the employee expense voucher forms. He suggested that information should be obtained on our peer institutions and whether they receive a per diem. Another question that should be addressed is what percentage of federal per diem would Nebraska state employees need to receive.

Joeckel noted that the bill is an effort to reduce unnecessary government work. He asked whether such a bill would apply to other state employees or whether we need to make an argument why the university employees need to be different. Nickerson stated that the university employees should not be treated differently than other state employees.

Joeckel suggested that the bill could simply ask for a reversal of the current policies. He pointed out that the previous policies seemed to be reasonable. Steffen stated that we need to get financial data to show whether or not the current policies really save any money.

Nickerson noted that any proposed bill that the Executive Committee could write would be changed by others along the approval process. He stated that he will continue to explore the possibility of writing a proposed bill and will talk further with Steffen and Rudy about it.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, January 14 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.