

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bender, Guevara, Joeckel, Nickerson, Rinkevich, Rudy, Sollars, Steffen, Woodman, Wysocki

Absent: Anaya, Konecky, Purcell

Date: Wednesday, March 11, 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 3:03 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Science Olympiad

Nickerson reported that event assistants, preferably people who are post docs or faculty members, are needed for the Science Olympiad which will take place at UNL May 15-16. He noted that this is a nation-wide competition for the best high school and junior high school students from all 50 states. He stated that the event will bring approximately 7,000 people to Lincoln. He reported that there will be a STEM Exposition (booths and exhibits designed to advertise your department, discipline, or sub-discipline) and both East and City campuses will be involved. It should be a great opportunity to recruit good undergraduate students. He noted that more information will soon become available, but if anyone is interested in volunteering to help they should contact Professor Claes, from Physics & Astronomy at dclaes1@unl.edu.

3.0 Approval of March 3, 2015 Minutes

Joeckel moved to approve the March 3, 2015 minutes. Motion seconded by Rinkevich and approved by the Executive Committee.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 Chancellor's Commission on Sustainability Nominees

Nickerson reported that two faculty members have indicated interest in serving on the Sustainability Commission and he will appoint them to the Commission.

4.2 Revising Professional Ethics Statement

Nickerson noted that the Executive Committee is considering revising the Faculty Senate's Professional Ethics Statement. Rudy noted that the preamble lists AAU documents and Board of Regents bylaws and questioned whether these document have changed since the Statement was written in 1990. Joeckel stated that the preamble could be shortened quite a bit. He noted that some quality research needs to be conducted to make sure the documents listed in the Statement are still in existence and are referenced

correctly. Bender noted that the AAU documents still exist, although they have evolved. He stated that he believes it is worth including reference to these documents because the University has signed on to support the ideas outlined in the documents.

Joeckel noted that the Statement is very lengthy and wondered if there were more direct ways to phrase what it states. Nickerson questioned how enforceable is the document. Bender pointed out that the Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee can hold people accountable for their actions, which could go all the way to revocation of tenure for professional misconduct.

Steffen stated that he is concerned with the Chancellor's comment that the Statement already bans a relationship between a faculty member and an undergraduate student. He noted that Harvard University only bans a relationship if there is a power differential between a student and a faculty member, i.e. the student is taking a class from the instructor or is being supervised in any way by the instructor. He pointed out that the document needs to clearly define when relationships should not exist. Wysocki asked how the Statement would deal in a situation where a faculty member's child is studying in the same department where the faculty member is employed. Steffen stated that someone else would have to monitor the work of the faculty member's child.

Guevara pointed out that it has been established that faculty members should not do certain things, and if a faculty member engages in professional misconduct it should go to the Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee. However, care needs to be given because administrators could hijack some procedures to force faculty members to act in a particular way which could impact faculty rights.

Nickerson suggested that the Executive Committee simplify the document and get it ready to introduce to the Senate in the fall. Steffen noted that the document reads well, but it could be shortened. He pointed out that reintroducing it would help to educate the faculty. Joeckel stated that the document should be helpful to the faculty and suggested that it might be good to highlight points. Guevara suggested having a bullet list of pertinent points that the faculty need to follow. Nickerson stated that there could be a shortened, bullet point version of the document that also provides a reference to the complete document. Steffen pointed out that the Senate President's newsletter is a good venue for educating and reminding the faculty of their rights and responsibilities.

4.3 Non-tenure Track Faculty Members Survey – Research Professors

Woodman reported that 51 research professors responded to the non-tenure track faculty survey. He noted that many of the responses were fairly positive to the survey questions although some interesting patterns did emerge. He stated that 53% responded that they had more than a semester notice of their contract renewal. Rudy noted that several participants stated that they did not get a letter of appointment, but they were on a grant and did not seem to be bothered by the lack of an appointment letter. Woodman pointed out that these faculty members usually have a very defined contract. Rudy agreed and said that the responses indicated that some of the research professors did not seem

uncomfortable that they weren't on a tenure track or had a multi-year contract, as long as the revenue stream was steady.

Rudy stated that 38% of the research professors who responded reported that they did not receive an annual letter of evaluation and 67% said they were not informed in writing of how they will be evaluated. Nickerson pointed out that some chairs might not be aware that research professors can be promoted. Woodman questioned whether not receiving an annual evaluation would have an impact on a research professor's ability for potential promotion. He wondered if the principal investigator of a grant or a director of a center overseeing the research professor is the person who conducts an annual evaluation. Rudy noted that there were a few comments stating that the research professor thought they were being compared unfairly with other faculty members. Joeckel pointed out that this is an endemic problem, particularly in departments with multiple-disciplines and joint appointments.

Woodman reported that most of the respondents did not know about faculty rights. He thought this might have to do with the disconnection research professors feel with the university, perhaps because many of them are here for only a short period of time. Rudy stated that a high percentage of the respondents did not see themselves as part of the faculty. He noted that 70% said they could participate in faculty meetings, but only 50% had any voting rights.

Rudy reported that 50-70% of respondents were involved in department and college service and the responses indicated that even new research professor hires were involved in service work. He noted that there seems to be a stable workforce of research professors who understand their position, but two-thirds of those who responded did not consider themselves a faculty member. He wondered why they don't feel like a part of the faculty. Nickerson stated that it could be due to the way tenured faculty members treat them. Sollars suggested that the language of the survey, "fully recognized faculty members", might make respondents think they are not part of the faculty because they are part-time or here on a limited contract.

Rudy reported that there were comments from some of the research professors that they would like to receive clarification on their roles and duties. He noted that many of them are asked to do work outside of their jobs. He asked why these faculty members would be asked to do service work if it is not written into their responsibilities and apportionment of duties. He stated that this issue should be addressed.

Rudy noted that the research professors were the most complex group in terms of the diversity of their appointments. He suggested that the Executive Committee might want to summarize the trends from the non-tenure track survey. Woodman pointed out that the 2014 survey definitely indicates an upward trend from the 2012 survey.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Agenda Items for SVCAA Weissinger

The Executive Committee identified the following agenda items for the meeting with SVCAA Weissinger next week:

- Crisis with temporary teaching funds for departments in Arts & Sciences and base budget for colleges to cover loss of funds from distance education revenue
- Update on merger of the Colleges of Fine Arts and Architecture
- Spacing in PKI for UNL departments
- Tenure problems with joint appointments

5.2 Nominees for Executive Committee Elections

Nickerson reported that no nominations have been received for new Executive Committee members. The Executive Committee suggested sending an email message out to all Senators encouraging people to run for election to the Executive Committee, President Elect, and Secretary.

5.3 Tenure Problems with Joint Appointments

The Executive Committee discussed possible problems that may exist with faculty members receiving tenure when they have a joint appointment. Bender stated that the Senate needs to be concerned with the process that is use, and the application of criteria for promotion and tenure. Steffen noted that faculty members should be informed of what they need to accomplish in order to receive tenure. He questioned whether there is a hazard with joint appointments because the two different groups of faculty members may be using different criteria when evaluating for promotion and tenure. Nickerson stated that there should be an examination to see if there is a pattern of difficulties with faculty members with split appointments receiving tenure. If so, we needs to ask how this problem can be addressed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:21 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, March 18, 2015 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in 201 Administration. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Tad Wysocki, Secretary.