EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent:

Date:  Tuesday, March 29, 2016

Location:  201 Canfield Administration

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
Bender called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

2.0  Announcements
No announcements were made.

3.0  Approval of March 8, 2016 Minutes
Nickerson moved for approval of the minutes. Motion seconded by Dawes and approved by the Executive Committee.

4.0  Report on Big Ten Faculty Governance Conference
Bender reported that he and Woodman attended a meeting of faculty leaders from the Big Ten to discuss what constitutes the faculty purview. He stated that this varies from university to university, but there was a general agreement that the faculty should have final say on academic matters.

Bender reported that another issue discussed was due process, in particular with connection to Title IX issues. He stated that some of the universities had concerns with the professionalism of the investigations, and the investigators, in Title IX matters and whether faculty members can make an appeal in these cases. He noted that UNL seems to be in a better situation with the handling of these investigations than a number of other schools where there could be adverse actions towards faculty members. He reported there was also discussion about academic freedom and how it pertains to faculty members speaking out on social media.

Woodman noted that the keynote speaker was a faculty member from Northwestern University who had been accused of a Title IX violation because of a publication she had in the Chronicle of Higher Education. He reported that she said she was not informed about what the charges were against her, questioned without the presence of a lawyer, and told if she didn’t respond to the questions it could be held against her. He pointed out that a climate of hostility was created because she published an article. He stated that part of the problem may be the 60 day time frame for investigating allegations of
violations that is mandated by Title IX regulations. As a result, there may be numerous subsequent lawsuits against universities creating a rush to judgement because of the need to adhere to that time frame.

Lee noted that the federal law does not lay out the due process and allows universities to set up their own procedures. Bender stated that Title IX is pretty limited and basically states that there will not be discrimination based on gender, but the Department of Education is putting more pressure on universities about what must be done with the investigations.

Bender stated that there is interest in making the conference a more permanent event and pointed out that this, as yet not named group, is separate from the CIC Faculty Leadership Conference that was held in the fall. He noted that the idea is to open the conference up to faculty leadership outside of the Big Ten and pointed out that faculty members from UCLA, Berkeley, and Virginia also attended.

Woodman noted that the CIC was not involved with this conference. Purcell asked what the difference is between the CIC faculty leadership conference and this faculty leadership conference. Woodman reported that this conference emerged from the CIC not wanting faculty groups to respond to the issue that occurred with the hiring of the new President at the University of Iowa while under the aegis of the CIC banner. He stated that the faculty have more freedom to express concerns independently while being part of the proposed new group. He pointed out that the Provosts from each of the Big Ten schools provide money to support the CIC. He noted that the University of Michigan, where the recent conference was held, funded most of the costs of the conference.

5.0 Executive Committee Meeting Summer Schedule
Griffin noted that the Executive Committee will begin meeting every other week during the summer and asked if the Committee wanted meetings to remain at the same time and day. The Committee agreed to continue meeting at 2:30 on Tuesdays.

6.0 VC/Interim SVCAA Green/Chancellor Perlman
6.1 UNL Impacts of Legislature’s Decision on Maintenance Funding Package
VC Green reported that the Appropriations Committee did not approve the University’s request for $400 million over a ten-year period to address maintenance issues and instead recommended that the University continue getting what we have already been receiving. He stated that over a ten-year period this will give us about half of what we had requested. He stated that President Bounds thinks that he might be able to find another $30 million that can be devoted to renewal projects. As a result, not all of the prioritized renovation projects will occur. He reported that President Bounds has started working with the campuses to determine what the priorities will be for each campus, and renovation on the Engineering building will be the number one priority for UNL. Next on the list will probably be Mabel Lee Hall and Henzlik Hall.
Lee asked if the renovation of the old Business College building will be removed from the list of priority projects. VC Green stated that the renovation of the first floor of the Business College building, renovation of the third floor of Hamilton Hall, and renovation for the Food Industry Building for classroom space will all be put further down on the project list.

VC Green stated that he did not know what the total package will be for the renovation of the Engineering College and Mabel Lee, but he expects that some funding will need to be raised to complete both projects. He pointed out that nothing will be definitive until the Governor has signed the legislation and Central Administration informs the campus of how much funding they will receive.

Rudy asked what happened with the $25 million request last year for Nebraska Innovation Campus. VC Green reported that last year it was tabled and a separate study resolution was made by the Legislature. He noted that the original bill was separate from the University’s budget request and was to help support the next generation of buildings on NIC through an “evergreen” fund. He stated that the study was conducted last fall, but the Legislature chose not to consider the additional funding at this time. He noted that it may still come out of the Legislature at some point. Rudy asked if it will be difficult to move NIC forward without this money. VC Green stated that it will just take longer to get the campus completed without the additional “evergreen” fund.

Nickerson asked if there are any plans to move any other University departments out to NIC. VC Green stated that there are no plans at this point to do so. There are several new partnerships under development, including potential work with the College of Journalism and Mass Communications, the College of Business Administration, and the department of Computer Science and Engineering.

Rudy asked if the University was able to retain the research products when ConAgra left. VC Green stated that we retained the research collaboration and we have not lost any commitment from ConAgra. He pointed out that the equipment and lease space associated with ConAgra is already in place.

6.2 Can Extension Specialists be Paid for Providing Outside Consulting on Matters Not Related to their Job Description

Purcell asked if an Extension Specialist, whose position description has totally changed, can be paid for providing consulting services on his/her former responsibilities. VC Green stated that he would think so, but he would need to see the specifics of the case to be sure.

6.3 Extension Search Committee Process

Purcell asked for clarification on the Extension search process – it seems in several cases where the search committee begins the process, but the final decision is made by one person. VC Green stated that this seems to be unusual because the search committee should advise the hiring official who the acceptable candidates are for a position. He noted that the search advisory committee reviews and screens the applicants, narrows the
list down to final candidates and forwards a list of acceptable candidates to the hiring official for evaluation for hiring, usually through an interview process. Reisbig asked if the hiring official can hire someone not recommended by the search committee. VC Green stated they cannot unless the initial search does not result in a successful hire and resulted in a failed search. Then the hiring process could either move forward with a completely new search, or, by evaluating targeted candidates.

6.4 Issues on the Horizon
VC Green noted that the major issue facing the campus is the upcoming leadership transition. He pointed out that it is not just because of a new Chancellor coming on board, but the ensuring number of senior leadership positions which will need to be filled. He indicated that he thinks that we are well positioned to move into this team building efficiently and successfully in the coming year.

VC Green reported that enrollment for the fall semester is still tracking upward and we will get a final fix on the numbers in about 30 days when enrollment deposits are finalized. He noted that we are looking at a 300-350 first-time freshmen increase and efforts have already begun with planning the instructional needs for these additional students. Most of the planning has been done with the College of Arts & Sciences in finalizing their budget for temporary instruction in the fall because that college will have the greatest increased teaching load to accommodate these students. Woodman asked if online courses are being considered to help with the increased enrollment. VC Green stated that policies are being considered for “bottlenecked” courses and the Deans will be informed of the policies for financing these online courses by the end of the semester.

Rudy asked Chancellor Perlman whether he feels the issues raised by the Black Lives Matter event have been dealt with. Chancellor Perlman pointed out that there will always be the need to deal with the issues that were raised, but he believes the students involved feel that his letter on proposed changes is acceptable and they are already seeing some of the recommendations taking place in the academic units. He stated that a diversity officer has been hired in Human Resources, but the overall diversity coordinator position still needs to be filled. He noted that he originally thought that the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance would be able to lead the effort with this position, but the demands of Title IX do not make this feasible.

7.0 Presentation of Gift to Chancellor Perlman
On behalf of the Faculty Senate, Bender presented the Chancellor with a gift to thank him for his many years of service as Chancellor.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:38 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, April 5, 2016 following the Faculty Senate meeting. The meeting will be held in the East Campus Union, Arbor Suite. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Allison Reisbig, Secretary.