EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bender, Dawes, Fech, Hanrahan, Konecky, Lee, Leiter, Purcell, Reisbig, Rudy, Steffen, Vakilzadian, Woodman

Absent:

Date: Tuesday, May 24, 2016

Location: 203 Alexander Building

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 2:30 p.m.

2.0 Announcements
2.1 Student Absence Letter for Illness from University Health Center
Woodman noted that he and Purcell attended the Office of Student Affairs luncheon and part of the discussion was about the University Health Center (UHC). He reported that in the FAQs on the Health Center’s website it states that the UHC can only provide a letter if an ill student has been seen by a UHC staff member, but the UHC is interested in elaborating this policy and has asked that it put be into the syllabus policy. Griffin pointed out that this issue came before the Executive Committee several years ago and it was decided that it does not belong in the syllabus policy and it was recommended that the UHC put the information on its website. Rudy pointed out that the syllabus policy does require that the instructor’s attendance policy, if there is any, be included in the syllabus. Vakilzadian wondered how many instructors take attendance for each class. Hanrahan stated that he does because a student’s attendance can be a requirement in order for them to receive federal assistance. Woodman reported that planning for a new UHC is occurring and it is anticipated that the new building will be ready sometime in 2017.

2.2 Searches for Executive VC and Provost and VC of IANR
Woodman reported that there are plans to restructure some of administration with the Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Research and Economic Development eventually reporting to Academic Affairs. He stated that Nebraska Innovation Campus will probably still fall under the Chancellor’s supervision. He noted that the Chancellor-Elect wants to start the search process earlier than normal for the two open positions with the hope that the people will be able to start in January. He reported that there is to be a list of four finalists, unranked by the search committee and that the plan is to conduct airport interviews in August. He noted that the four finalists’ names will be published if they give permission. He pointed out that when asked for characteristics of a new VC he stated that we want people who value faculty governance.
Purcell reported that the search for the VC of IANR will follow the same procedures as for the Executive VC and Provost.

3.0 Approval of May 10, 2016 Minutes
Leiter moved for approval of the minutes as revised. Motion seconded by Hanrahan and approved by the Executive Committee.

4.0 Unfinished Business
4.1 Composition of Ad Hoc Diversity and Inclusiveness Committee
Griffin noted that the Executive Committee discussed possibly adding other people to the ad hoc committee but no formal decision was made. Lee suggested that the director of the Multicultural Center, the Women’s Center, LBGTQA + Resource Center, and International Students and Scholar Services be added to the ad hoc committee. The Executive Committee agreed to invite the directors to be members of the ad hoc committee. He noted that the idea of the ad hoc committee is to improve the campus climate, but little has been discussed concerning the relationship between the police and students of color and he believes that this is an issue that needs to be dealt with.

5.0 New Business
5.1 Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee (FCAC) Recommendations
Bender, chair of the FCAC, reported that the Committee discussed four main issues: gender equity, minority faculty, disparity between colleges and salary compression, and benefits. Lee pointed out that it would have been helpful to have the data broken down by disciplines in order to get a better idea of how far UNL salaries are behind its peers. Bender stated that this is information that could be requested the next time the FCAC meets.

Bender noted that the FCAC needs to be looking at median salaries because these are more realistic figures. He pointed out that focusing on averages does not provide an accurate reflection of how faculty are compensated. Rudy stated that it is difficult to determine departments that have had new hires versus ones that haven’t had any recent hires and looking at salaries for departments to departments is not always meaningful. Steffen noted that it would not be hard to get the median salary figures and having both the median salaries and averages would provide a better picture of how our salaries compare with our peers.

Fech asked which of these four issues is the FCAC most concerned about. Bender stated that salary compression was the biggest issue and there was a concern that the problem would make staying at UNL less attractive.

Fech noted that there was reference to tuition remission in the report to Chancellor-Elect Green. Bender stated that the FCAC is proposing an expansion of the tuition remission benefit. The Committee felt that it would not be much of a burden on the university and would be a great recruitment tool. It would be beneficial to faculty and staff members who have more than one child attending college. Steffen noted that it could help retain people at the university. Lee pointed out that it might also help to increase the enrollment
of UNL because more children of faculty and staff might choose to come here. Rudy noted that more of the costs for students is being shifted into fees and wondered if it would be more powerful if the benefit could be applied to student fees.

Bender reported that the FCAC recommended that a letter be sent to President Bounds to voice concerns about issues not raised in the report, such as benefits and concern over the reallocation of money from the health benefits pool to address deferred maintenance. Rudy pointed out that while it is nice to get a three month break from paying our medical insurance, the Regents have opted to take $15 million from our insurance pool to pay for deferred maintenance which in essence means that the employees are paying for the maintenance on buildings. Hanrahan noted that the $15 million is the university’s contribution to our health care coverage. Steffen pointed out that keeping the money in the insurance pool could help offset future increases in our health insurance.

Bender stated that another issue that the FCAC wants to have raised to President Bounds is the amount of the NuFlex credit. He pointed out that there has not been an increase in the NuFlex credit in many years and given the costs of benefits these days the NuFlex credit does not cover much at all. Steffen suggested taking a look at the percentage of how much the NuFlex credit used to cover compared to today. Leiter noted that the longer the wait to make adjustments, the greater the cost.

Hanrahan suggested that another benefit that should be considered is a daycare benefit for employees. He pointed out that having a toddler at the university’s daycare can cost up to $1,000 a month. He noted that students can get the same daycare at a much reduced cost. Leiter stated that providing a better daycare benefit would help in recruiting and hiring new people. Konecky suggested the possibility of having a wellness benefit which could help offset the cost of a gym membership.

Vakilzadian asked how our benefits compare to our peer group. Bender stated that if you compare our total salary and compensation package we are the lowest in the Big Ten. He noted that we are not doing well in terms of our benefits.

Bender asked the Executive Committee members to send the suggestions by email and he will draft a letter that will be sent to President Bounds.

5.2 Meeting with Director Susan Foster, Institutional Equity and Compliance

Griffin reported that Director Susan Foster would like to bring Associate VC Lance Perez to a meeting with the Executive Committee, but they could not meet until August 2. The Committee stated that they would like to at least meet with her at an earlier meeting to learn what the procedures are for faculty members accused of a possible Title IX violation. Lee suggested that the AAUP report about Title IX should be sent to Foster. He noted that report includes recommendations for a due process system and hopes that all universities will adopt a system. Leiter pointed out that it is important for the Senate to know what the process is and to be able to inform the faculty about it. Dawes stated that most of the information on the Institutional Equity and Compliance website pertains to victims, but it is difficult to find the procedures.
Woodman stated that he has received a complaint from a faculty member about a Title IX incident and the faculty member said he was never informed what the issue was before he attended the meeting. He stated he felt instantly disadvantaged and it was difficult to recall the specifics of the alleged incidences as a consequence. He noted that anyone who is accused of a possible violation should have the right to know what they are being accused of and be allowed to simultaneously open an Academic Rights & Responsibilities case to insure that they are being treated fairly.

Leiter pointed out that Title IX has been around for a long time and started out to promote women’s sports, but it has evolved to now include discrimination and harassment cases. He noted that the Institutional Equity and Compliance Office is not the legal office for the university and it does not involve a judicial system. Lee asked if everything that is said in that office can be referred to the police. Leiter stated that if the office is encouraging people to go to the police they may not see themselves as an office that can evoke sanctions or actions. Dawes pointed out that the office can suggest personnel sanctions.

Griffin stated that she will contact Director Foster to see if she can come in at an earlier date.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, June 7, 2016 at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Allison Reisbig, Secretary.