EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Guevara, Ruchala, Woodman, Wysocki

Date: Wednesday, July 9, 2014

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 3:02 p.m.

2.0 Announcements
No announcements were made.

3.0 Approval of June 11, 2014 Minutes
Steffen moved for approval of the amended minutes. Purcell seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

4.0 Unfinished Business
4.1 Executive Committee Retreat
Griffin reported that the annual Faculty Senate Executive Committee retreat will be held this year in the Wick Alumni Center on Thursday, August 21.

Nickerson stated that he wants Executive Committee members to come to the retreat with fresh ideas for the Senate goals for the 2014-15 academic year. Rudy asked if the idea is to bring major issues of concern or to bring action items. Nickerson stated that the members should bring both. He noted that the themes are usually recorded in the goals, but action items are needed to go with the themes. He pointed out that any issues that the Senate should address should be brought forward.

4.2 Update on Appointments to Enrollment Management Council and Academic Scheduling and Planning Advisory Committee
Nickerson stated that he is pleased that SVCAA Weissinger agreed to have a Faculty Senate representative on critical committees to help bolster communications between the administration and the Senate. He reported that in response to this agreement he is appointing Sollars to serve on the Academic Scheduling and Planning Advisory Committee.

Nickerson stated that he is still undecided as to who should be appointed to the Enrollment Management Council which meets during the same time period as the Senate
Executive Committee, although the Council only meets a few times a year. He noted that the Enrollment Management Council is working to increase enrollment through all aspects of the university. He stated that he believes serving on the Council is worthwhile because if student enrollments increase more faculty members can be hired. He noted that the first meeting of the Council will be on September 24 from 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Joeckel questioned how the Council can get much work accomplished in such a short period of time. Rudy wondered if there are subcommittees of the Council that do a lot of the work. Joeckel suggested that some inquiries be made as to the time commitment that would be involved. Sollars reported that the campus blueprint for the Enrollment Management Council was very elaborate. She suggested that the Senate representative could act as a liaison and just report back to the Executive Committee rather than being involved in all of the work of the Council.

Joeckel asked if SVCAA Weissinger was envisioning the Senate representative as serving as a full committee member on the Council. Nickerson stated that he assumes that the person would be a full Council member. He noted that very shortly after SVCAA Weissinger informed Associate VC Goodburn and Dean Cerveny that there would be a Senate representative on these committees he received an enthusiastic welcome from both of them.

Griffin stated that she will get more information on the Enrollment Management Council for the Executive Committee concerning the time commitment needed to serve on the Council.

4.3 Update on Revising UNL Bylaws
Nickerson reported that Bender is leading the effort on revising the UNL Bylaws. He noted that he and Bender have met twice to have basic discussions on the Bylaws and agreed that there should be a subcommittee to examine the Bylaws in as much detail as possible. He noted that the proposed revisions would be given to the Executive Committee to review and would eventually go to the Senate.

Bender pointed out that it will probably take a couple of months to review the Bylaws and suggest changes. He noted that he believes that it will probably be late October before it is given to the Chancellor for input.

Nickerson stated that he is trying to get clarification from the General Counsel regarding the Board of Regents Bylaws and how they interact with the UNL Bylaws. He pointed out that no revisions to the UNL Bylaws can be made that will contradict the Regents Bylaws.

Steffen agreed to serve on the subcommittee with Bender.
5.0  New Business

5.1  Report on Meeting with President Linder

Nickerson reported that he attended an orientation session for the Faculty Senate Presidents at Varner Hall on June 20 which he said was a good opportunity to determine how we can have better communications with the Board of Regents and with Central Administration and he believes it went a long way in building trust. He stated that Corporation Secretary Maurer conducted the first section of the meeting and the first idea discussed was to have a yearly orientation for the four Faculty Senate Presidents.

Nickerson stated that a luncheon meeting was held with Interim President Linder and he had hoped the question about how the Regents and campus Bylaws interact would be discussed but it did not come up. He pointed out that we might have multiple meetings with Interim President Linder and noted that he will be speaking to the Faculty Senate at our September 9 meeting.

Nickerson stated that another positive aspect of the orientation was that the four Faculty Senate Presidents were able to meet and got to know each other and he believes that they can work together on issues. He reported that the Senate Presidents learned about how the Board operates, the various subcommittees of the Board, and how to approach Board members. He noted that it was said that Faculty Senate Presidents or anyone else who wanted to lobby the Regents should draft letters several weeks ahead of time and send them to Corporation Secretary Maurer and then she would send them out to the Regents.

Nickerson stated that aspects of communication were discussed with Interim President Linder. He stated that some faculty members at UNL were surprised with certain Board events that happened over the past couple of years, such as requiring only 120 credit hours for graduation. He pointed out that Corporation Secretary Maurer assured the Senate Presidents that the Chancellors meet with the President regularly and the Vice Chancellors for Academic Affairs meet with the Provost regularly. He pointed out that we need to find a way to tap into these information streams. He wondered if there are subcommittee minutes that are available. Steffen suggested requesting a list of items that the Faculty Senates should be alerted to. Nickerson stated that he would approach Corporation Secretary Maurer to see if it would be possible to get the agenda and eventually the minutes from the Board’s subcommittees. Steffen noted that if this is not possible a request should be made to get the discussion topics.

Nickerson reported that Interim President Linder is going to co-chair the P16 Committee which emphasizes pre-school training so students are better prepared for when they get to college. He wondered whether the other co-chair for the P16 Committee will continue to be the governor after the election of a new governor.

Nickerson stated that he asked Interim President Linder about the relationship between academic research and funding from businesses and how the University plans to control the interface with companies. He noted that Interim President Linder chaired a committee on university and industry relations formed by Central Administration, but he has never seen any report from this committee.
5.2  Follow up Poll on Non-tenure Track Faculty Members Survey
Nickerson noted that this is an issue that the Executive Committee will need to deal with this year. He pointed out that two years ago the Senate conducted a survey of the non-tenure track faculty members and they were told that a follow-up survey would be conducted. He stated that the survey will see if things have changed for these faculty members, but new questions may also be asked depending on what the Executive Committee would like to accomplish. He noted that he is hoping that Woodman will take the lead on the follow-up survey.

Rudy asked if the first survey received IRB approval. Nickerson stated that it did. Rudy asked if it went to Central Administration for approval. Nickerson stated that it did not because this was a survey of the Senate’s constituents.

Nickerson stated that the primary goal is to protect non-tenure track faculty members, but the question is how this can be done without interfering with college and department bylaws. Rudy stated that he would like to work with Woodman on the follow up survey. He suggested that the Executive Committee should come up with definitions or examples of best and worst practices. He noted that some non-tenure track faculty members do not want to be involved with promotion and tenure decisions, but there needs to be some basic standards so non-tenure track faculty members are treated decently. Nickerson pointed out that it will need to be approached delicately and the Executive Committee should discuss the goals at its retreat.

Joeckel pointed out that with the first survey there were calls to make the results available and this needs to be addressed with the second survey. He stated that we need to make it clear beforehand that the specifics of the survey will not be made public. Steffen noted that the best way to address this is to make a statement with the survey that the results will be tabulated.

Nickerson stated that he is flexible on whether the same questions should be used or whether new ones should be added. Joeckel stated that it makes sense to use the same questions. Nickerson stated that the Executive Committee wasn’t entirely clear on what it wanted to do with the results from the survey. The Committee knew that there was a problem for some non-tenure track faculty members, but not the extent of the problems. He stated that now that the Committee has a better idea as to the extent of the problem it can decide what approach to take and how this can guide us in the design of the poll.

Rudy stated that informal discussions amongst some non-tenure track faculty members have suggested that a shaming approach should be taken with departments that treat non-tenure track faculty members poorly. Steffen noted that if a department has a large number of non-tenure track faculty members any changes in their participation in department matters could change the politics in a department.
5.3 Monthly Newsletter from President and President-Elect
Nickerson reported that he is thinking of having a brief, one-page newsletter to inform the faculty about what the Senate is working on. He noted that so many times people ask what the Senate is doing and what it does for the faculty and whether they should be involved with the Senate. He stated that he thinks the Senate needs to communicate better with the faculty as a whole. He noted that UNO has been sending out a brief newsletter once a month for about a year. He thought it would be good to have something similar here at UNL and thought it would be better to have it come from both the Senate President and President-Elect. He stated that he is thinking of starting it with the beginning of the academic year to welcome people back and to inform them that Interim President Linder will be speaking to the Senate on September 9. Steffen stated that he thinks this is a good idea and suggested having some bulleted points with links to more detailed information.

Nickerson stated that anyone with ideas or suggestions should contact him or President-Elect Bender.

5.4 Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee – Extension Appointment Needed
Nickerson reported that he and Griffin have been working on identifying faculty members to serve on various committees but an Extension faculty member is needed to serve on the FCAC. Purcell stated that she will gladly serve on the Committee.

Griffin pointed out that a non-tenure track faculty member is also needed, although it is possible that the Extension person could serve as a dual representative since that person is a non-tenure track faculty member. Nickerson stated that anyone with ideas of a non-tenure track faculty member to serve on the FCAC should let him know.

5.5 Agenda Items for Chancellor Perlman and SVCAA Weissinger
The Executive Committee identified the following agenda items for the meeting with the administrators on July 30:

- Contraceptive coverage given SCOTUS decision
- Projection on budget and enrollment
- Do the enrollment numbers indicate any possibility of restoring salary increases?
- Our budget situation
- Update on the President Search process
- Mechanisms in place to accommodate increased enrollment in core courses, is it monitored, and ability to get resources to departments to cover the increased enrollment?
- Overview of the University of Maryland and Rutgers – how might we partner with them in the future (academically) and impacts of them joining the Big Ten.
- Upcoming Academic Initiatives for the Upcoming Year
The meeting was adjourned at 4:34 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, July 30, 2014 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.