

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Alloway, Bolin, Bradford, Fech, LaCost, Ledder, Moeller, Prochaska Cue, Rapkin, Zimmers

Absent: Flowers, Hachtmann, Lindquist

Date: December 5, 2007

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

Bradford called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

2.0 Diversity Committee (Professor Moshman)

Moshman reported that the committee was appointed last spring by the Faculty Senate. At that time Professor Haller, English, chaired the committee but he retired in late spring. Moshman stated that he then stepped in as chair. He noted that most of the work done by the committee in the spring consisted of determining what the committee needed to do. He stated that the committee decided to focus on the academic aspect of diversity since the committee was dominated by faculty and students.

Bradford pointed out that the committee decided that the proposed plan presented to the faculty the previous fall should not be used. Moshman stated that the committee decided that it needed to start fresh with a new plan. He reported that this fall the committee has been discussing more substantive issues about diversity and it became apparent that there are real differences of opinions on the committee. He pointed out that because of the differences of opinion it will be harder to reach an easy consensus on the diversity plan.

Moeller asked if the two students were still on the committee. Moshman stated that they are still listed as members but they have not been actively participating.

Moshman stated that the committee realized that even if they could get a majority vote on the committee in approving a plan, the committee thought it would be better to include an analysis of the disagreements that the committee members had about specific points. He noted that the committee is moving towards a better understanding of what they are disagreeing about.

Alloway asked if Moshman was surprised with Associate to the Chancellor Crump's resignation from the committee. Moshman stated that he was surprised with the form that the resignation took. He noted that she thought she would be appointed as an ex-officio member since she is not a faculty member.

Bradford asked if the committee is still planning on submitting a document to the Senate by early March. Moshman stated that this is still the intent.

Bradford noted that the Chancellor is particularly interested in the recruiting and retention aspects of a diversity plan. He pointed out that this may be one of the contentious issues that the committee will have to deal with.

Fech asked if there is a problem if we do not get student input on the plan. Moshman stated that he did not know but he has sent out messages about scheduling meetings and the students have not responded.

Rapkin asked what some of the contentious issues are. Moshman stated that how the search process should work is one clear issue where there are differences of opinions. He noted that there are four models that could be used. He stated that there has been a lot of discussion regarding opportunity hires and the committee received data on these hires. He stated that the committee has reached an agreement that opportunity hires are very common and it is a legally accepted practice that the Board of Regents agreed to. Bradford stated that the data should be included in the diversity committee report.

Moshman noted that it was Senator Foley who was able to get the data on the opportunity hires because the university was reluctant to provide this information to the committee. Ledder noted that if the university is engaging in these kinds of hires that it needs to admit doing so. Alloway pointed out that if opportunity hires are a policy then the university should not be reluctant to provide data on them.

Zimmer asked what the size of the draft document will be. Moshman stated that he thinks it will only be a few pages.

Moeller stated that the plan needs to look at ways to recruit and retain faculty members. She pointed out that she knows of at least two major times when a significant number of faculty members have left the university. She noted that there has to be some model programs of recruiting and retention at other universities that could be looked at.

Ledder stated that he would like to see data on what fraction of UNL hires are dual career hires. He pointed out that dual career hires can be an opportunity hire because often what happens is that both people need to be offered a job in order to get the person that is being sought by a department. Moeller stated that she is not sure that opportunity hires are necessarily a diversity problem.

Moshman stated that he does have some figures on opportunity hires. He stated that from 1998-2004 there was a total of 301 faculty hires, 61 of these are listed as opportunity hires which is defined as a position being filled without a search being conducted. He noted that 18 of the 61 hires were spousal hires. Bradford wondered how many of the spousal hires were tenure track. Ledder stated that one of the superstars in his department was an opportunity hire.

Alloway asked if the affirmative action initiative petition has come up in the discussions of the committee. Moshman stated that it hasn't really been discussed because the committee is operating under the current law. He noted that there has been some talk that the Regents Bylaws on affirmative action is archaic.

Rapkin asked if the committee has attempted to shift the focus of the committee to a diversity of ideas rather than just a diversity of people. Moshman stated that the university's definition of diversity does include ideas. Bradford noted that it is an ideologically diverse committee.

Prochaska Cue pointed out that opportunity hires are not just about hiring women or minorities. She noted that there are some departments where males are preferred hires.

Moshman stated that even if the affirmative action initiative amendment is passed it will not rule out all forms of affirmation action.

Ledder pointed out that an important thing to recognize is that even if there were no problems with diversity there are some disciplines where there would still not be an equal number of women and men employed.

Moshman stated that the committee will give a report to the Senate sometime in the spring semester.

3.0 Announcements

No announcements were made.

4.0 Approval of 11/28/07 Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes as amended.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Academic Freedom Issue

Bradford reported that the individual involved with the issue does not want to pursue the matter. He suggested that the Committee could send a letter to the Dean expressing concern about someone interfering with the instruction of a class. The Committee agreed to do this. Bradford stated that he will draft a letter.

5.2 Comments on Research Faculty Guidelines

Bradford stated that he will pass on the comments to SVCAA Couture made at the Senate meeting regarding the guidelines. Moeller asked what the comments were. Bradford stated that some research faculty members may not be able to accept a promotion because there is not enough money in the grant to pay both the increased salary and retain the employee at .50 FTE. If they drop below .50 FTE they will lose their benefits.

Bradford stated that another comment was about requirement for service. In order to be promoted above an assistant research professor position should have done some service work. He noted that there is really nothing in the guidelines about service work.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Course Evaluation Timetable (Alloway)

Alloway stated that he has been having conversations with students and faculty members regarding the automated on-line course evaluations. He reported that there are complaints that students are being solicited to do the evaluations when there is still a fifth of the semester left. He noted that students have complained that they are receiving notifications to complete the evaluations every 48 hours.

Bradford asked if this is a university-wide system for undergraduate courses. Moeller stated that it is a pilot program and only some departments and colleges are involved in it.

Alloway stated that he has called about the evaluations and the people testing the program want feedback on it. He noted that instructors cannot access information on the evaluations until their grades are submitted.

LaCost pointed out that most course projects are not due until the end of the semester and it is not fair to ask students for feedback on the course before they complete their projects. Alloway stated that one of the reasons for trying to get the evaluations done before the end of the semester is due to the fact that many students leave as soon as they are done with finals.

Ledder stated that he objects to badgering students to complete the evaluations. He noted that some students don't even come to classes so how can they write an accurate evaluation of the course. Alloway pointed out that haranguing students might cause students to have a negative feeling towards the instructor. He stated that the return rate on these evaluations has been poor.

Alloway stated that one benefit of the on-line evaluations is that instructors received feedback on their courses more quickly.

Ledder stated that there should be a limit to the number of times a student is contacted about doing an evaluation.

6.2 Committee on Committee Issue

Bradford stated that Associate to the Chancellor Poser asked him if there is any value of her being on the Committee on Committees. Bradford noted that former Associate to the Chancellor Howe was a standing member of the committee and provided a lot of useful information. Bradford stated that Poser's concern is that she does not know as many people as Howe does and she is not sure she would be a value to the committee at this time, but perhaps in four or five years she would be.

Griffin pointed out that it would be good for Poser to remain on the committee because it will give her the opportunity to learn more about the many committees on campus, what they do, and how they operate. Poser will also get the opportunity to work and meet more people on campus.

6.3 Need New Members on Committees

Bradford stated that he needs to find a faculty member to serve on the Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee for the spring semester to replace Professor Stezowski who recently passed away.

Bradford reported that he needs to find a faculty member to serve on the Computational Services and Facilities Committee for an 18 month term. He noted that one of the faculty members had to resign due to other work responsibilities.

Bradford stated that Professor Schubert, Electrical Engineering, has volunteered to serve on the Telecommunications Advisory Committee. Bradford stated that he needs someone else who would be interested in serving and they need not be knowledgeable about telecommunications.

He asked members of the Committee to let him know if they know of anyone for these committees.

6.4 UNL Strategic Compass

Moeller asked who the audience is for this document.

Bradford stated that his concern is that although the administration has said that the document has no significant operative effect, the document itself in Appendix A states that it will have an operative effect. He noted that the listed priorities will also have an operative effect.

Alloway asked if this was a new document. Bradford stated that the document came out of an ad hoc committee recently but has not been approved by the faculty.

Ledder stated that the use of the word engagement contradicts the mission of the university. He pointed out that the university is engaged in teaching, research, and service but we don't engage in engagement. Bradford stated that he thinks there is an attempt in the document to use the word engagement to cover internal service work and external service work which is usually considered as extension. Ledder stated that the term engagement is too vague and should not replace specific terms. Zimmers pointed out that in Appendix B teaching, research, service, and extension are all used.

Moeller questioned the use of the term engagement. Prochaska Cue stated that this was raised at the IANR luncheon the other day. She stated that the thought is that it is an expression that was used by the Kellogg Commission.

Ledder pointed out that if the document was presented to citizens in western Nebraska they would ask where outreach is mentioned in the document. Moeller stated that the words outreach and service should be used instead of the word engagement.

Bradford stated that in the section listing UNL's mission it ought to say "prepare our students" because the university does not just teach young adults anymore. He asked why the document is just pertaining to undergraduate education. He pointed out that the document does not list graduate education and service. He noted that the two overarching priorities were never voted on and questioned who determined these as the only two priorities.

Prochaska Cue stated that another distinguishing factor of the document is that it does not mention that UNL is a land grant institution. She noted that outreach and extension are a big part of being a land grant institution. Ledder stated that there needs to be another paragraph that discusses outreach. Alloway pointed out that with the state fair issue in the news, outreach and extension should be a vital part of the document.

Bradford stated that in the section on priorities and research it only mentions UNL's involvement in agricultural research. It does not mention all of the other research that is going on at UNL. LaCost noted that while the arts may not increase productivity of people it does enhance their lives and it should be included in there as well. She stated that international education is another important priority that should be listed.

Moeller recommended that these suggestions be forwarded to SVCAA Couture.

Rapkin stated that if this document is a compass he hopes he never gets lost in the woods with it! He stated that there is a carelessness of terms used throughout the document with the terms morphing from the beginning to the end of the document.

Bradford asked that each of the Committee members send their concerns and suggestions to him before the holiday break. He noted that the second forum on the document isn't until January 24th.

Bolin reported that SVCAA Couture presented the document to the Academic Planning Committee but it has not discussed it yet.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, December 12 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Rick Alloway, Secretary.