

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bradford, Fech, Franti, Jackson, LaCost, Lindquist, McCollough, Prochaska-Cue, Rapkin

Absent: Hachtmann, Ledder, Schubert, Zimmers

Date: Wednesday, August 27, 2008

Location: 201 Canfield Administration 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

Prochaska-Cue called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Perlman/SVCAA Couture

2.1 Faculty Salaries

Prochaska-Cue stated that the Executive Committee discussed faculty salaries at its recent retreat and how UNL salary increases have lagged behind the unionized campuses. She noted that UNL salaries have never caught up since the year when no raises were given during the budget crisis. Bradford stated that the discussion also included how UNL is lagging behind our peers in faculty salaries.

Chancellor Perlman stated that figures on salary increases can be interpreted in a variety of ways. If you look at the salary percentage increases we have not fallen behind our sister campuses and in fact over the last four or five years we are a percentage point above UNO and UNK. He noted that if we are measuring the ability to catch up with our peer institutions than we are in fact further behind. He stated that we might be able to catch up a bit to our peers this year.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the numbers that the administration uses are averages and they are very different across the campus. He pointed out that there are some departments where faculty salaries are actually above their peers. He stated that if there was more money available, faculty salaries would be the top priority. He noted that it is also the Board's priority but the reality is that there are other costs that must be dealt with.

Fech suggested that improvements could be made by broadening benefits such as tuition remission or retirement plans. He stated that improvements to some of the benefits could make the campus more attractive when we are hiring. He noted that some of these improved benefits may not cost much. Chancellor Perlman stated that improvements in the benefits would not be costless and the question is where people want the money to go: salaries or benefits?

Chancellor Perlman stated that we are often able to respond to counter offers if a faculty member receives an offer from another university and the merit based salary system allows us to keep faculty members we do not want to lose. He stated that faculty salaries are definitely a concern and a priority.

Bradford stated that you can't compare our outliers to the average of our peers; you have to compare our outliers to the outliers of our peers. He stated that he does not think it is fair to say we have some people making a lot more than our peers without looking at our peers' outliers. Chancellor Perlman stated that the campus has worked hard to be responsive to keep people here and to hire those we really wanted to hire. He noted that faculty salaries are one measure of our ability to be competitive but it is not the only way.

Chancellor Perlman pointed out that on unionized campuses merit increases play a very small role, if any, and as a result they lose people because it is difficult for them to compete with other universities in terms of salary.

Lindquist noted that the discussion at the retreat was that it was the Executive Committee's responsibility to continue to stress the importance of faculty salaries. He stated that he did not think the Committee was looking for an immediate answer to the problem. Chancellor Perlman stated that the Senate should continue to keep pressure on this issue.

Franti noted that IANR uses a complex equation when giving out merit raises and it rewards those who perform at the highest level. However, those who do a good job and meet their expectations are not part of the merit pool. As a result their pay increase has been negative in regards to real dollars in the economy. He pointed out that this does not create an incentive to work harder and asked if the merit system is broken or if these people who meet their expectations can be paid out of a different pool.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he does not know other pools that could be tapped. He noted that it can be discouraging when you look back at what has happened over the last several years with the university's budget from the legislature. He stated that over the past ten years the legislature has never fully funded the actual salaries and benefits of the university. The difference has been made up with tuition and savings when they can be made. He pointed out that there are no easy answers to the problem. He stated that it is clear that the impact falls onerously on people who are judged in the middle level of performance ratings and this group's salary does not run as high as you would hope. He stated that he does not like some of the formulas used for merit increases by some departments and he has commented about this but others feel that the formulas are good.

Bradford stated that he thinks a lot of people misunderstood his comments made at the April 22nd meeting regarding faculty salaries. He pointed out that the one of the things a union would do is to increase the overall wage pool but unionization can have a negative educational effect. He wondered how long the people in the middle performance range are going to keep sacrificing their personal financial needs for their students' educational

interests. He stated that a lot of really good people are being hit negatively by the low increases in faculty salaries.

2.2 Affirmative Action Initiative

Fech stated that the Committee is just looking for an update on the issue. Chancellor Perlman noted that he senses there is some uneasiness with the university not having a more active role against the initiative but there are serious legal limitations on what the university can do politically. He stated that he thinks the right groups have come out against it: the Lincoln and Omaha Chambers of Commerce and the 2015 Group.

McCollough asked how the initiative will impact the university if it passes. Chancellor Perlman stated that symbolically there will be some impact and it will more than likely make recruiting harder and we could possibly lose some faculty members over it. Beyond this if the federal law requires affirmative action in hiring than we can certainly have some institutional aspects of allowing us to have a diverse pool of candidates. He noted that there are ways in which you can increase your chances of having a diverse student body without using race as a factor. He pointed out that some current scholarships and programs might need to be altered. He stated that we recently applied for a federal grant to increase women in science and if awarded, it would require us to make some specific decisions on gender but this would be a federal contract and would fall under federal guidelines.

Rapkin asked if the initiative will cause the most difficulty in recruiting and hiring. Chancellor Perlman stated that it probably would. He pointed out that the university is under federal obligations to increase faculty diversity in the hiring pools but the administration cannot intrude in faculty decisions once the pools are established.

Rapkin asked if the recent Advisory Board report on diversity provides any guidance on how to cope with affirmative action bans. SVCAA Couture stated that it was notable that some of the administrators from the other participating universities in the report considered this subject to be one of their top concerns. She pointed out that the report has several good suggestions of best practices and there are various ways we can look at some of our practices. She stated that the administration will actively look at suggestions in the report and will work with the Deans and Chairs to implement some of these best practices.

Rapkin asked if Nebraska is the only state moving forward of those being targeted for the initiative. Bradford and Perlman stated that Colorado is still dealing with it.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the Supreme Court approved diversity as an appropriate goal in higher education and allowed race to be a factor in hiring and recruiting a few years ago. He noted that even when it was approved people believed it would be for a limited time.

2.3 Update on Childcare Facility

Prochaska-Cue asked where we are on the facility. Chancellor Perlman stated that bids for constructing the facility will open towards the end of September. He noted that the facility will be located at the Whittier building. He stated that things seem to be moving along and VC Franco is heading a committee that has been helpful in developing the interior plans for the facility.

Prochaska-Cue suggested that the Executive Committee might want to meet with members of the committee to look at the proposed plans.

2.4 Upcoming Issues

Chancellor Perlman reported that there will be a set of public meetings about the development of the Haymarket area. He noted that the development has some indirect implications for the university. He stated that improving the Haymarket area will increase the social and culture life of Lincoln and could help with recruiting students and faculty members. He reported that the public meetings to discuss the plans for the Haymarket development will be in the west stadium lounge at 5:00 p.m. on September 3rd with everyone invited to attend.

Chancellor Perlman stated that some national firms with significant credentials have provided the university some interesting information in regards to the Innovation Campus. He reported that it is now time to sit down and look at the options for the site and the university needs to go to the Board of Regents about payments for the property.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the total enrollment looks to be up but the entering freshmen class is down a bit. McCollough stated that she recently read that enrollment at the community colleges has increased significantly. Chancellor Perlman stated that this has typically been the case. He noted that there is a new scholarship at Southeast Community College which guarantees no tuition for those students eligible for Pell grants. We also have this scholarship but we need to figure out how to market it. He stated that the long range demographics of high school graduates in Nebraska will be challenging for the university.

Franti asked what the status is of the Chancellor's Commission on Environmental Sustainability. Chancellor Perlman reported that he has all of the members set for the Commission except for the student members. He noted that ASUN should be getting this figured out soon.

Franti asked how accessible the Commission will be to faculty and student input. Chancellor Perlman stated that he hopes the Commission will be very accessible.

Jackson asked the Chancellor and the SVCAA for their impressions regarding campus progress towards implementation of the ACE program. He asked if enough courses are being submitted for approval. SVCAA Couture stated that there was a little bit of concern with the original number of courses submitted because the ACE Committee has not seen a lot of input from the College of Arts & Sciences. She understands that Dean

Manderscheid recently held an excellent retreat with his chairs about it and the expectation is that the ACE Committee will be receiving a lot of requests from Arts & Sciences. She noted that it was probably good not to have too many proposals this summer because it gave the Committee an opportunity to carefully review and ask for revisions, if necessary, on the first proposals. She stated that she is confident that the implementation is on track.

Chancellor Perlman stated that information technology on campus is still a critical issue that needs to be addressed. He stated that meetings are being held with people across the campus to see what their feelings are about Information Services on campus. He noted that a survey will be coming out regarding information technology. SVCAA Couture stated that a number of stakeholders have been identified and the administration is inviting them to provide feedback through the survey. She noted that the deadline for submitting responses is September 30th.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he is inviting the Senate Executive Committee to have a conversation about the survey. He pointed out that we don't have a bad system but we are asking if we can do it better. He stated that a shift in the system would have to be demonstratively better in order to change things because he certainly doesn't want to make things worse. He noted that there are probably some things that could be done better at the campus level such as a common e-commerce site. He reported that a student on campus developed one this summer for the campus. He stated that there are some issues regarding information technology that will probably be more controversial than others but there are a lot of different questions that need to be asked. He noted that he is not trying to save money from IS but rather allow it to more effectively address the things we should be doing that we can't afford at this point.

3.0 Announcements

No announcements were made.

4.0 Approval of 7/16/08 and 8/13/08 Minutes

Lindquist moved and LaCost seconded approval of the 7/16/08 minutes. Motion approved. Franti moved and Fech seconded approval of the 8/13/08 minutes. Motion approved.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Charge to Academic Honesty Committee

The Committee worked on revising the charge to the Academic Honesty Committee. Prochaska-Cue reported that ASUN is forming a committee to look at this same issue. She stated that there will be several students on the faculty committee to provide input. Bradford suggested that one of the students be a graduate student. It was agreed that a statement be included that specifically states that the committee is not looking at the Safe Assignment policy.

Fech reported that he recently met with the instructor who coordinates the Library 110 class. He stated that the course teaches the students how to conduct basic research and

how to use the library but only one piece of the course deals with plagiarism. He noted that students do not have to pass each part of the course in order to pass and they can flunk the plagiarism section of the course and still receive a passing grade. Furthermore, Library 110 is not required for some colleges and programs. He stated that Professor Bicknell-Holmes would be happy to meet with the Committee to discuss the issue further.

5.2 Executive Committee Goals

The Committee revised the draft set of goals for 2008-09.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Faculty Members Needed to Special Fees Committee

Griffin reported that three faculty members are needed to serve on the Special Fees Committee. The Committee identified possible people to serve.

6.2 Possible Motion on Affirmative Action

Prochaska-Cue asked the Committee about how best to present the issue to the Senate. Lindquist suggested bringing people in from both sides of the issue to speak at the October Senate meeting. He stated that a motion can be made from the Senate at the meeting. Bradford stated that he will check with Joel Pedersen, General Counsel, to see if the Senate can take a position on the initiative.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, September 3rd at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and David Rapkin, Secretary.