

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Ledder, Schubert, Zimmers

Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2008

Location: Faculty Senate Office, 420 University Terrace

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 3:01 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 January Senate Meeting

Prochaska-Cue reported that President Milliken is tentatively scheduled to speak to the Senate at the January meeting.

3.0 Approval of 11/19/08 and 11/25/08 Minutes

Rapkin moved and Fech seconded approval of the minutes as amended. Motion approved.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 Chief Campus Information Officer Position

Prochaska-Cue noted that the Committee had a conversation with the Chancellor about this position at the November 19th Executive Committee meeting. She stated that questions remain as to where the funding in excess of that assigned to the Hendrickson position will come from for this position.

McCollough stated that the Chancellor feels that the position needs to be filled quickly. Lindquist stated that he believes the Committee should state that in light of the recent restrictions on hiring new faculty members, this position should not be filled at this time. He pointed out that it has been nearly a year since the position became vacant and the campus has been doing fine. Bradford agreed that this position should be subject to the hiring limitation. Rapkin asked what the adverse effects of not filling the position are because he doesn't see any. Lindquist pointed out the Committee supports the position but feels that it would be inappropriate given the current budget situation. Franti noted that the Chancellor will probably deem this position as a critical position to fill.

Bradford stated that he sees no problems with the UNL Bylaw changes that the Chancellor wants to make in regards to this position. The Committee agreed.

4.2 Faculty Salary Survey

Franti reported that he created a sample survey so the Exec could see what it would look like on-line. McCollough noted that one of the questions was somewhat problematical. Franti stated that the last question had an answer that was redundant.

McCollough reported that the colleagues she has spoken with want the Senate to conduct a survey. She stated that there appears to be a lot of frustration in regards to salaries. She wondered how administrators are reported in the statistics on tenured faculty members. She noted that it appears that there are more tenured professors teaching than there really are. She pointed out that many administrators hold a tenured faculty appointment. LaCost noted that many of the administrators do teach at least one course a year.

Prochaska-Cue stated that if we want to get the survey out soon the Committee needs to review it and discuss it next week.

Prochaska-Cue noted that the Chancellor stated that the Senate meeting that the mission of the university is undergraduate teaching and research. She pointed out that a significant portion of IANR's budget is for extension and she can understand why IANR's administration is very nervous about the budget situation since extension educators are not tenured.

Bradford asked how much extension is a required part of the university. He asked if there are specific commitments that must be made. Prochaska-Cue reported that less than 25% of IANR's funding comes from the federal government for extension programs. Fech noted that it is approximately 20%.

Prochaska-Cue stated that a few years ago extension personnel were pulled into the university budget. She pointed out that extension specialists associated with departments and on tenure track have always been a part of the university budget but extension educators are not in tenure track positions. She stated that there has been discussion in the past of trying to bring the extension educators into the tenure system which would make it more difficult to fire them.

Bradford asked if any of our peer institutions have tenured extension educators. Fech stated that extension educators at Ohio State have a choice of being in a tenure track position but not choose to do so because of the nature of their jobs.

Prochaska-Cue noted that there are about 180 extension educators. Fech stated that there are approximately 300-400 FTE's in total in extension counting partial appointments. Bradford pointed out that it would not be politically attractive to cut extension positions. McCollough asked if there are commitments with the counties for these positions. Prochaska-Cue pointed out that the extension educators are a very vulnerable group as well as some other non-tenured faculty members on campus.

Fech stated that the point is that the Chancellor considers undergraduate education and research to be the core missions of the university but that research and extension are inextricably linked and that they drive each other. The groupings ought to be undergraduate and graduate resident education/research extension as one component/service and outreach.

Lindquist suggested that the Committee meet with Professor Eckhardt, Chair of the Academic Planning Committee, to discuss what the APC is already doing in regards to any potential budget cuts.

Bradford noted that one of the real questions is what is defined as a program. He pointed out that during the 2003 budget cuts programs were defined in an arbitrary sense.

Konecky noted that during the Senate meeting the Chancellor spoke of shutting off computers to conserve utilities but the computer technology people in the Libraries have said that evenings and weekends are when critical virus protection upgrades are made to the computer system.

Fech stated that the latest state economic forecasting board report of a projected 1.1% is having a chilling effect, if this translates into a flat budget or a lower than requested budget for UNL there will be problems. We need at least a 3-4% increase just to maintain current operations. Bradford stated that there is the possibility that President Elect Obama might send aid to the states and this could help things.

McCollough asked how well the unions at UNO and UNK protect the faculty. Griffin stated that UNO and UNK received the same percentage of reduction in their budget as UNL and UNMC but they had to protect the faculty which resulted in severe cuts in other personnel and services.

Franti stated that he does not understand why the deans are asking us about not getting raises. He pointed out that the faculty doesn't make any consideration or determination on the salary raises. He asked if the faculty have any leverage with this issue. Bradford pointed out that the Senate is not a collective bargaining unit and cannot approve giving up salary increases.

McCollough stated that she would also like to hear the definition of an administrative unit as well as the definition of a program and whether there has been a growth in administration. Lindquist noted that the Chancellor also discussed combining units and asked what departments could be combined.

5.1 New Business

5.1 Health Care Flexible Spending Account

Prochaska-Cue reported that she recently looked at information from the IRS website about balances and health care flexible spending accounts. She noted that IRS regulations state that a plan can provide for up to two and a half months of leeway after the end of the year. She questioned why the university does not adhere to this regulation

since it appears to be up to the employer to decide whether this grace period should be granted. She stated that she wants to revisit this issue with someone in Benefits.

Bradford stated that he has asked the UNL faculty representative to the University Wide Benefits Committee, Professor Deb Hope, to raise this issue. He suggested that Keith Dietze, Director of University-wide Benefits, meet with us to discuss this concern.

Prochaska-Cue stated that she has questions about where the money that is not spent within the year goes.

The Committee agreed to invite Keith Dietze to a meeting.

5.2 Review of Senate Meeting

Bradford wanted to raise a parliamentary procedure. He stated that debate on a motion cannot be cut off simply by someone calling the question. He pointed out that unless there's unanimous agreement, a vote needs to be taken on whether to call the question and end the debate.

The Committee discussed the debate that was held regarding the resolution calling for an investigation of the cancellation of Dr. Ayers' visit. Prochaska-Cue stated that she will contact FIRE first to see if they will conduct the investigation. Bradford asked what she is going to do regarding the committee to look into creating procedures. Prochaska-Cue stated that she will ask for the Committee's advice.

Bradford noted that he spoke with Professor Shea, Chair of the ARRC, and they both felt that the charge could be given to the ARRC on an ad hoc basis but it is not in the ordinary scope of the committee's responsibilities. Prochaska-Cue stated that this is a possible option. The other is to appoint a committee to deal specifically with this situation. She noted that since the request to pass a resolution came from the Emeriti Association she would like to have Emeritus Professor McShane on the committee. She stated that she is considering chairing the committee. She stated that she feels that it is important to get the investigation going right away but doesn't feel that she needs to appoint a committee immediately.

Prochaska-Cue stated that she is concerned with issues of confidentiality with the investigation. She asked if correspondence with the issue is considered public record. Bradford stated that he believes it is public record.

Franti asked if FIRE would be operating under approval of the Senate and if they run into any roadblocks whether Prochaska-Cue will deal with them. Prochaska-Cue pointed out that the Chancellor has stated several times that he will cooperate with any investigation.

5.3 Emeriti Faculty Members Serving on Committees

Prochaska-Cue stated that some emeriti faculty members have expressed interest in serving on committees as non-voting members. She noted that they would bring institutional memory to the committees and they are aware of the problems of getting

people to serve on committees. Bradford stated that putting emeriti faculty members on the committees would not solve the problem of filling the committees. Also, the committee syllabi would have to be changed to make emeriti faculty committee members.

Prochaska-Cue suggested that certain committees might be specified. Fech stated that they could be helpful on committees where institutional memory is needed. Rapkin suggested trying this for a few committees before any wide sweeping changes are made to the memberships of committees. Konecky suggested notifying the chairs of the committees letting them know that some emeriti faculty members are interested in serving. Bradford noted that the committees could decide to invite someone to participate.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, December 10 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in 201 Canfield Administration. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and David Rapkin, Secretary.