

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Alloway, Bradford, Fech, Flowers, Hachtmann, Ledder, Lindquist, Prochaska Cue, Rapkin, Zimmers

Absent: Bolin, LaCost, Moeller

Date: Wednesday, February 20, 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

Bradford called the meeting to order at 3:06 p.m.

2.0 VC Owens/SVCAA Couture

2.1 UNL Strategic Compass Update

Bradford asked where things are going from here with the update. SVCAA Couture reported that a summary of the comments obtained from the open forums is just being completed and will be posted on the SVCAA website. She stated that she believes the Chancellor will want to meet with the administrative team to meet to respond to the comments made by the academic community. She noted that the Strategic Compass will be given to the Senate Executive Committee when it is revised. She stated that the Chancellor is out of town and she is not sure what the schedule is for getting the document completed. Bradford asked if it will be this semester. SVCAA Couture and VC Owens stated that they thought so.

2.2 Committee Service

Bradford noted that he recently spoke at the Deans and Directors meeting to ask them to encourage faculty members to participate in committees on campus. He pointed out that the Committee on Committees has been having problems for a number of years in getting people to volunteer. He noted that it has been particularly difficult to get some categories of faculty members such as younger faculty. He stated that it is very difficult to get some of the top researchers involved in committee service and they would be particularly helpful on some committees. He stated that anything that could be done from the Vice Chancellors' offices to encourage faculty participation would be helpful.

Vice Chancellor Owens noted that the problem is not only at this institution but at others as well. He stated that the demands and expectations on faculty members and all of the work it takes to be good in the classroom, research, and engagement leaves little time for faculty members to do other things.

Bradford stated that the Senate tried to cut down on the number of committees last year by merging several of them together but the decrease wasn't significant. He pointed out that some of the committees may not be very representative of the campus because of the lack of participation. He noted that both he and Moeller talked about the value of committee service work at the new faculty orientation. He stated that he is unsure what kind of forum could be used to get the same information out to the more senior faculty. He pointed out that it is really important to get good people for committees such as the Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee and the Academic Planning Committee. VC Owens stated that he will talk to his department chairs about this.

SVCAA Couture stated that she would be happy to invite Bradford to come and speak to the Deans Council about the issue. She suggested that he could also talk about the importance of some of the committees and the deans could encourage their chairs to get faculty to participate. She noted that she does not think there is a conflict between department and university service work that might keep some faculty members from participating. She asked if there was a deadline date for the current call of volunteers and whether it is different for each committee. Griffin explained that the deadline date for the Academic Planning Committee, Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee, and the Academic Rights & Responsibilities Panel is earlier than the other committees because the ballot to elect people to these committees needs to be presented to the Senate at the February meeting. She stated that the Committee on Committees works on finding volunteers for all of the other committees through the spring semester and anyone can submit their name during this time. SVCAA Couture stated that she would be glad to send out a follow up reminder to deans and directors.

Rapkin noted that it was important to consider the context of service work because there is community service, college level service and national service. He pointed out that many people are serving on committees at these different levels. He stated that service work counts for 10% in some colleges which in fact is not much at all and is not much an incentive to get people to participate. In regards to junior faculty members, many are being advised to steer clear of excess service and minority faculty members are besieged with people requesting them to serve.

Bradford pointed out that participation really seems to vary by discipline and college. He wondered if some of the deans might be discouraging service work and not giving as much credit for it.

SVCAA Couture stated that she feels that the benefit of doing service work is in getting to know other people from across the campus. She pointed out that we do not want to overburden junior faculty with work but at the same time doing committee work is a great way to get quickly acquainted with other faculty members and how the campus works.

Bradford noted that with the emphasis on interdisciplinary research these days doing committee work is a great way to meet other people who you could possibly collaborate with.

Bradford stated that he will draft a letter and send it to SVCAA Couture and VC Owens encouraging faculty members to participate in service.

2.3 Draft Emeritus Policy

Bradford asked if the Vice Chancellors had any idea what the motivation was behind the proposed revisions. SVCAA Couture stated that she thinks there was some concern that there was an unevenness across the campuses regarding the opportunity people have to become an emeritus professor.

SVCAA Couture reported that she forwarded the comments to Varner Hall made by the Senate along with additional comments from Associate VC Jacobson. She stated that she believes Varner Hall wants consistency of the policy across the campuses and there was concern that some decisions regarding emeritus status were arbitrary.

VC Owens stated that he does not recall there being much controversy about emeritus status in the Institute. He stated that he is not certain that everyone who retires requests it. He noted that he does not remember any cases where it was denied. SVCAA Couture pointed out that this could possibly happen.

VC Owens wondered about someone not officially retiring from the university but moving to another university. He stated that if the person meets the basic criteria for emeritus status he does not see a problem in awarding it to the person if the department recommends that action. He stated that he knows of recent cases of the award of emeritus status under this circumstance on the UNL campus.

Bradford noted that he spoke with the Emeriti Association and they felt that there are some people who fall through the cracks in getting emeritus status. SVCAA Couture stated that she believes this is why Varner Hall wants to regularize the process.

2.4 Issues on the Horizon

VC Owens reported that since the tragedy at Northern Illinois University there have been more inquiries from parents, students, and others regarding safety here at UNL. He stated that he thinks the campus is doing well to ensure safety but no one can predict what is going to happen.

Bradford stated that he understands that Northern Illinois University's alert system was exclusively computer based. Ledder pointed out that the problem was localized and even if the police could have gotten there within two minutes they couldn't stop the violence that occurred.

VC Owens stated that safety issues need to be discussed on campus. Rapkin asked if the university has any policies on the micro level. He pointed out that there is a campus wide policy but what about what to do at the level where these incidents occur. He asked should people try to swarm the person or curl up on the floor hoping to avoid being a target. He noted that this is very difficult to say in advance.

SVCAA Couture stated that the UNL Alert website has a lot of good information on personal safety and how to respond to different situations. She noted that information is also being put on the website for faculty members as well and Dean Kean is putting up information on how to handle a class after a tragic incident has occurred. She stated that the administration is trying to figure out the best way to create a faculty resource about safety.

SVCAA Couture reported that Varner Hall has given a tentative sign that there may be some money available for Programs of Excellence for next year. She stated that UNL administration deliberated how to handle a call for proposals because of the uncertainty of the funding. She noted that UNL decided to collect concept papers from the Deans and Directors who will solicit these proposals from faculty. She stated that more information will be made available to the campus about POE funding when the Chancellor knows more about the situation.

Bradford asked what would happen if the Legislature does not appropriate the \$10 million for SIS. VC Owens stated that it would be terrible amounting to the same as a budget cut because the University has no choice but to replace the current system. He stated that the trends indicate that the Legislature will approve the requested funding. The question is whether they will appropriate the total amount requested.

Zimmers asked if all of the money will be needed upfront. VC Owens stated that he did not think so. He thinks it is good that the state colleges have decided to come into the system. He noted that they might have been a little hesitant due to the size of the university but politically it is a good move in order to gain Legislative support for the appropriation. He pointed out that we have no choice but to get a new system because we will no longer have support for our current one. He reported that there is a very active committee with representatives from all four campuses and the state colleges working on coming up with the actual requirements for a new system. He noted that UNL probably has the greatest needs because it is the most comprehensive university in the state.

Alloway asked for a program update on the Confucius Institute. SVCAA Couture stated that there are two instructors here from China and they are teaching Chinese language to adults and children. She also talked about UNL's partnership with Xian Jiaotong University. She stated that about four hundred undergraduate students will be coming from XJTU after they complete their first two years in China, when the program is fully in place. She reported that UNL might expand to another campus in China. The campus being considered is a highly ranked university with a focus on agriculture and natural resources.

SVCAA Couture stated that Professor Lou, Director of the Confucius Institute, is planning for UNL students a non-credit summer course on the martial arts which could include a tour of China to learn more about the martial arts; funding may need to be secured before this could become a possibility.

SVCAA Couture stated that the Institute wants to have UNL faculty and LPS teachers involved with the possibility of touring China. She noted that opportunities are being discussed with businesses that might be interested in having Chinese language courses taught at their facilities. She noted that if anyone knows of anyone who might be interested in the Institute to let her know. She stated that the Provosts/Chief Academic Officers from the Big 12 Schools will be coming to campus and she is going to try and have those Big 12 Directors of Confucius Institutes meet with them at UNL.

Alloway asked how the merged veterinary program with Iowa State was going. VC Owens stated that it is going very well. He noted that the President of the Texas Veterinary Medical Association is on campus today to look at the program to see if it would be helpful to Texas schools. He pointed out that Texas only has one veterinary program.

VC Owens stated that on an international note a group of faculty members is going to Costa Rica to look at possible student exchange programs with two universities there. He noted that such a program might be popular with students here and he is hopeful that the trips will result in an agreement that will benefit students from UNL and Costa Rica. He pointed out that many U.S. citizens have homes in Costa Rica and is an extremely safe country and it would be good to have an exchange program with universities there.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Presentations on Student Email System

Bradford asked if anyone attended the Google student email presentation. Flowers stated that he attended the presentation although it was not possible to compare it to anything just yet.

Flowers noted that Google wants to provide more than just email service. He stated that one question asked at the presentation was what kind of impact will there be if the faculty and staff have a separate email system from the students. He stated that the Google sales person stated that there is no problem sharing email lists.

Alloway asked if Google was pushing gmail as the client. Flowers stated yes but they are interested in global applications as well. He reported that one of the major universities cited as a client was Arizona State University. Bradford noted that a number of universities have gone to outsourcing their student email system.

Ledder asked who will make the decision on what system to go with. Bradford stated that the outsourcing is for UNL and he is not sure if there is a committee looking into this but eventually the decision will need to be made by Chancellor Perlman and VC Jackson.

Alloway asked if the outsourcing is only for students. Flowers stated that at this time it is just for students.

Ledder noted that one of the benefits of gmail is that it is the friendliest to blind people. Bradford stated that it also has one of the best spam screeners as well. Flowers stated that this is one of their strong selling points.

Alloway noted a potential problem with outsourcing is that since Blackboard sends email to the "bcc" address line rather than the "to" line users of some email programs like Hotmail have email sent from Blackboard end up in their spam folders. . Flowers stated that the sales rep from Google stated that they would be willing to work on fixing this problem.

4.0 Approval of 2/6/08 Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes as amended.

5.0 Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was discussed.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Veto of ASUN Resolution to Increase Libraries Fees

Bradford stated that he believes ASUN may override ASUN President Solheim's veto of an increase in student fees to help support the Libraries. Bradford noted that Solheim did have a good point in his veto that research should be paying for more of the Libraries cost since many of the journals are more research oriented.

Alloway stated that the history of increase in student fees provided by Solheim was a compelling argument. Fech noted that students pay approximately \$1100 in student fess a year which is a lot for most students.

6.2 Senate Elections

The Committee brainstormed on possible candidates to run for election to the Executive Committee.

6.3 Senate Open Seats

Bradford pointed out that there were a number of open seats on the Senate that he would like to see filled. He noted that having a representative on the Senate provides good communications between departments and the Senate.

Ledder stated that a good point to serving on the Senate is that it helps to fulfill your service requirement. Flowers noted that serving on the Senate gives people the opportunity to meet a diverse group of people. Fech pointed out that serving on the Senate does not require a lot of work and is visible service. Bradford stated that faculty members thinking about going to other institutions in the future should consider serving on the Senate because at many other schools the Faculty Senate is a powerful entity and service on it is highly valued.

6.4 The Year's Remaining Work

Bradford noted that there are two months left to the semester and he asked if there was any work that the Committee needed to complete during this time. Ledder pointed out that the Committee has not dealt with the issue of academic dishonesty. He wondered whether the moment has passed for working on it. Bradford stated that there is a lot of faculty support for making stronger policies regarding academic dishonesty.

Rapkin noted that there are different cases of academic dishonesty but reporting them can take so much time to do. He stated that it would be helpful to have some kind of concrete guidelines to tell you what to do but there needs to be some flexibility built into it for unusual circumstances. He stated that junior faculty members have come to him for guidance on issues of academic dishonesty.

Flowers pointed out that a lot of people don't report cases of academic dishonesty because of all the hoops they have to go through to do it. Alloway agreed and stated that it is a messy situation.

Rapkin noted that given technological changes academic dishonesty constantly changes. Bradford stated that one means of cheating these days is through texting on cell phones. He noted that he has a policy in his syllabus that cell phones must be turned off in class.

Bradford asked if the Committee felt that a new committee should be formed to work on academic dishonesty. The Committee agreed and Flowers and Ledder stated that they would serve on the committee but not in a leadership capacity. Bradford volunteered to serve on the committee as well.

Ledder stated that there needs to be a clear definition of academic dishonesty. He noted that there need to be safeguards in the policy to avoid penalizing students who committed academic dishonesty due to ignorance. Alloway stated that the educative component of this issue is a big part of it. Ledder stated that if faculty members want strict policies they need to enunciate them to the students.

Rapkin stated that having some kind of boilerplate describing what constitutes academic dishonesty would be helpful. Ledder noted that some universities have fairly detailed statements with categories describing examples of academic dishonesty.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, February 27, 2008 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.