

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Alloway, Bradford, Fech, Flowers, LaCost, Ledder, Lindquist, Moeller, Rapkin

Absent: Bolin, Hachtmann, Prochaska Cue, Zimmers

Date: Wednesday, January 16, 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

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

2.0 Graduate Student Association [GSA] (Amber Epp, Frank Moore, and Marcus Natta)

Epp stated that the GSA began two years ago with seven graduate students who wanted to create a sense of community for graduate students and to advocate issues relevant to them. She noted that graduate students often play a dual role being both a student and an employee of the university. She stated that the organization soon grew and a legislative assembly was established with representatives from almost every graduate program on campus. She stated that there is great attendance and participation when the assembly meets.

Epp reported that last year the GSA spent most of its time building the organization and building relationships on campus with ASUN, the Office of Graduate Studies, and the Vice Chancellors of Academic Affairs and Research. She noted that this year the GSA is focusing more on programming, particularly with social and professional development programming.

Epp stated that the first week of April is National Graduate Student Appreciation Week. She reported that during this time graduate students are recognized, awards are presented, and various events take place. She stated that the GSA would appreciate it if announcements were made at the March Senate meeting about the appreciation week and what events are taking place.

Epp stated that the GSA's Quality of Life Committee is working with the task force on childcare. She noted that the primary concern for graduate students is affordability. She pointed out that the task force has a tough job balancing what they want to offer and affordability. She stated that graduate students are also interested in the childcare facility

providing part-time services. She stated that the GSA is excited to be able to have a voice on the task force.

Epp stated that the GSA is interested in the university's health insurance plan, particularly for dependent care. She noted that the Senate has given support for domestic partner insurance coverage and she was wondering whether there is a university committee working on dependent care.

Bradford stated that there is a UNL Employees Benefits Committee but he does not think they are working on spousal or dependent care. He noted that the last attempt made on partner benefits was an attempt to expand coverage to any adult living with the employee. He pointed out that this attempt failed.

Epp stated that the Quality of Life Committee is working with Executive Associate Dean Weissinger on health insurance. She noted that most of the concerns are from graduate students who have children. She pointed out that if both parents are graduate students they have no health coverage for their children and have to pay outright for services. She stated that the GSA is looking at how peer institutions are dealing with the situation but they are being realistic because the health coverage is not often provided at other institutions.

Epp reported that in November the GSA passed a resolution calling for an ad hoc task force be developed to determine the need for initiating campus-level, competitive travel and research grants for graduate students. She stated that if a department cannot provide funding for a student there is no access at the campus level for funding. She noted that many of our peer institutions have campus level funding for graduate students for travel.

Moore stated that the GSA brainstormed and came up with reasons why they felt it was important for graduate students and the university to provide funding. He pointed out that the obvious reason is that the funding could be used for graduate students to travel in order to assist them with their research. He stated that having campus level funding could help to attract and retain more graduate students.

Moore noted that the GSA resolution does not make recommendations on how the funding could be provided. It is simply a request to Graduate Studies to take a look at the idea to see if it could be done.

Moore reported that the GSA met with VC Paul to discuss the possibility of campus level funding and he agreed that it was a good idea but data is needed to determine how much is needed. Moore reported that VC Paul also feels that the decision to provide funding should come from the adviser. Moore noted that each department varies in the amount of funding that is available and how accessible the funding is to advisers. He stated that VC Paul wants to discuss the issue with his colleagues before deciding whether to set up a task force. He noted that VC Paul felt that funding should be in place before an ad hoc committee is formed. Moore stated that the GSA would like to get some feedback from the Senate to see if they would support the idea.

Moeller stated that the funding situation is similar to that of the faculty. If you have external grants you have funding. She noted that in her college, Education and Human Sciences, there is money available for graduate students to present their research at conferences. She noted that research is conducted with faculty members and it seems to be a contradiction if a graduate student is working on research with a faculty member who is not actively engaged in research. She questioned how a graduate student doing independent research could get access to funding without a mentor. Rapkin pointed out that there may be someone willing to support a graduate student doing research independently.

Epp stated that while most graduate students are getting some funding, there are others that are not receiving any funding. She stated that most of the students have a major adviser but not all of these advisers have access to funding.

Lindquist noted that there are foundation awards such as the Layman Awards for faculty members. He suggested that the GSA ask if this money could be opened to graduate students. Moeller stated that she thought most of the Layman funds were going towards research funding rather than travel. Lindquist stated that it is getting more difficult to get funding for travel. Flowers pointed out that the same thing is happening with federal grants.

Moeller stated that she likes the idea of having something equivalent to the Layman funds. She noted that the funding would enhance the mission of the university.

LaCost suggested that the Research Council look into this. Bradford stated that he doesn't think funding needs to be in place before creating a task force to look into the issue. He pointed out that the task force could look at alternatives as well. He noted that the biggest problem will be in finding the money for the grants.

Flowers suggested that the task force could provide some good easy links where graduate students could get funding. He noted that the Graduate College might have some links. Moeller stated that a compilation of a list of available resources for graduate students would be good to have. She pointed out that the task force could investigate the available resources in different disciplines.

Lindquist stated that a substantial amount of research dollars are used for graduate student funding. He noted that it could be argued that some of it should go towards travel.

LaCost noted that the Chancellor stated in his state of the university address the need to expand the number of international graduate students. She pointed out that providing travel grants would possibly be an incentive for these students. Bradford stated that it would be a good idea to include someone from International Affairs on the task force.

Rapkin stated that he believed it is a worthwhile objective to pursue although the GSA might not be able to achieve it as they described. He pointed out that it might be difficult to identify those departments that do not have enough funding to support travel for graduate students. He suggested that the GSA consult with the University Foundation to see if funds would be available there. Moeller suggested speaking with the Alumni Association as well.

Epp stated that the GSA would like to speak to the Senate about the idea. She stated that she does not know if it would be worth pursuing if the Senate is not supportive of the idea. Bradford stated that the GSA could at least present an option to the Senate.

Moeller noted that an audit would need to be done of each department to see if funding is available for graduate student travel. She stated that this could be done by having each graduate student representative check with their department.

Natta stated that the GSA reviewed the campus committees and thought that there were some that could use more graduate student representatives. He noted that these committees are the Commencement, Convocations, Grading & Examinations, and Libraries Committees. He stated that they would like to add a graduate student position to the Commencement Committee and indicate on the Convocations Committee and Libraries Committee that one of the student positions will be for graduate students.

Moore stated that he has served on the Libraries Committee and found it to be a very eye opening experience especially when he learned the cost of serials. He pointed out that graduate students have a different sense of how the Libraries operate from undergraduate students. He noted that graduate students know the importance of the Libraries and what the goals are. Bradford stated that proportionately graduate students use the Libraries much more than undergraduates.

Ledder stated that he can see a strong case for having a graduate student representative on the Libraries Committee. Bradford pointed out that the same thing can be said of the Commencement and Honors Convocation Committee because commencement ceremonies are different for graduate students.

Moeller stated that one of the problems with committees is finding people to serve on them. She noted that including graduate students might help in finding people to work on committees.

Epp stated that GSA is working with ASUN and Marlene Beyke, Director of Administration for Student Government, when putting out announcements for students to serve on committees. Epp stated that she is working with Beyke to identify graduate students to serve. Epp noted that the GSA legislative assembly is very active and are willing to participate.

Bradford stated that the Committee on Committees is the Senate committee that will look at this proposal. If the Committee on Committees approves of adding the graduate students then it will go to the Senate for approval.

Fech asked if ASUN would lose some seats on committees with the proposal. Ledder stated that a graduate student could just be added. Epp stated that the GSA would like to just add a graduate student position or designate a student position as a graduate seat.

Epp thanked the Committee for its support and said that the GSA would be willing to discuss any issues that the Senate thinks is relevant.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 MLK Freedom Breakfast

Griffin noted that there are four tickets left for the MLK Freedom Breakfast that will be held on Friday, January 18th. The Committee suggested that she send a notice out to the Senate to see if anyone is interested in a ticket.

4.0 Approval of 1/9/08 Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes as amended.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Sustainability Commission

Bradford reported that he is working with ASUN President Solheim to draft a syllabus for the Sustainability Commission. Bradford noted that he thinks he has convinced Solheim to change the name to the Commission on Environmental Issues. Bradford stated that he thinks the faculty, staff and students on the committee should be voting and anyone else on it should be non-voting. He stated that possible representatives would include people from Athletics, Housing, Facilities and Landscape Services, Campus Recreation, the Lied Center, the Chancellor's representative, and a college Dean.

Alloway asked if someone from the Campus Unions would be on the Commission. Rapkin suggested that there be someone from Parking as well. Moeller suggested having someone from the Lincoln community on the Commission.

Bradford noted that he has been using the structure of the Chancellor's Commission on the Status of Women as a model for this Commission. He stated that the Commission on Environmental Issues would advise the Chancellor where appropriate. He stated that when the syllabus is drafted he will bring it back to the Executive Committee.

Alloway stated that Facilities should be encouraged to speak with the custodial staff about environmental issues.

5.2 IRB

LaCost reported that she could not find anything in writing about a new policy stating that the IRB staff will determine whether a project is of sufficient quality. She stated that she has heard that a colleague's IRB proposal came back with comments of insufficient

quality written on it by the IRB staff. Bradford asked if she could verify whether this is accurate and if so she should report back to the Committee so they can look into the matter.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Procedures for Appointing New Deans

Bradford stated that UNL Bylaw 2.7 specifically states that “whenever a new academic administrative position is being considered, the Chancellor shall consult with the Academic Senate and ASUN as to whether or not the new position is desirable and whether or not the position should be filled in accordance with the provisions of Section 2.4.2 of these UNL Bylaws.”

Bradford noted that the Senate was not consulted when the new Dean of Students position was created. He stated that he plans on raising an objection at the Board of Regents meeting when the Board looks at the Dean of Graduate Students position because procedures have not been followed.

Bradford stated that the Committee needs to discuss the issue with the Chancellor at its next meeting.

6.2 Proposed UNL Bylaw Changes

LaCost stated that after reviewing the proposed Bylaw changes she wondered who evaluates the Dean of Graduate Studies. Bradford stated that the evaluation process would need to be conducted by either Academic Affairs or the Office of Research. He noted that every faculty member in the Graduate College and who works with graduate students should be contacted about the evaluation and should be given the opportunity to provide feedback.

Bradford stated that he reviewed the UNL Bylaws and nowhere does it state who the Deans report to. Therefore, the description of the Dean of Graduate Studies should not be required to have this information. Moeller stated that it is widely known that in the university structure the Deans report to Academic Affairs and the VC of IANR.

Bradford noted that the motion to change the Bylaws does not come from the Executive Committee. He pointed out that it was presented to the Committee by the Chancellor but did not come to the Senate from the Executive Committee. Professor Ledder moved and Professor Leiter seconded approval of the motion at the December meeting.

Ledder pointed out that the Chancellor asked the Committee whether we preferred the language in the proposed changes and the Committee agreed. Bradford noted that the change was made to reflect what is actually happening.

Ledder stated that if the Bylaws do not specify for the other Deans who they report to then it should not be required in the section for the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, January 23 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in 201 Canfield Administration. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Rick Alloway, Secretary.