

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bolin, Bradford, Fech, Flowers, Hachtmann, Ledder, Moeller, Prochaska-Cue, Zimmers

Absent: Alloway, LaCost, Lindquist, Rapkin

Date: Wednesday, January 23, 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 3:09 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Perlman

2.1 Thompson Learning Communities

Bradford asked if the Chancellor could briefly tell people about this. Chancellor Perlman stated that he just learned more about it six months ago. He reported that the Foundation has been offering scholarships through a donation from the Buffet Foundation to needy students from Douglas and Sarpy Counties. He stated that these students apply to the Foundation for the scholarship usually after being encouraged to do so by their high school guidance counselor. He reported that there have been quite a few of these students at UNL but he believes the students can attend any state institution.

Chancellor Perlman noted that the scholarships are approximately \$3000 a year or more. He stated that the Bright Futures program is a similar effort in Omaha to philanthropically raise money so that all students can go to college.

Chancellor Perlman stated that Central Administration and others want to build more support for these scholarship programs. He reported that the idea is to increase the number of these students and to create a structure on the three undergraduate campuses to assist these students. He stated that UNL, UNO, and UNK were invited to develop a structure to support these students and the idea is to do this by creating learning communities. He pointed out that we know that students are more successful if they are pulled together in their first year and become involved in learning communities.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the Buffett foundation has been supporting these scholarships for some time although the Buffett family did not want to have this publicized. He stated that the Buffett family was finally convinced to let this fact become public in the hopes that it will encourage more people to participate.

Fech asked if it is a needs based scholarship. Chancellor Perlman stated that this is correct although most of the scholarships go to students who are right above the tier of

students who are eligible for Pell grants. He pointed out that this is great for us because it enables us to capture those good students who might not have the financial capacity to attend the university.

Bradford noted that there are 62 new students attending the university on these scholarships this year and there are a total of 160 currently in the university system. Another 76 are scheduled to attend next year.

Ledder stated that it is good that these students who are not eligible for Pell grants are being targeted. He pointed out that if you are below a certain financial level you can qualify for all kinds of grants but if you are right about that level you don't qualify for any. Bradford reported that President Milliken discussed this at the Board of Regents meeting and pointed out that we need to get these students.

2.2 UNL Bylaw 2.7 – New Academic Administrative Positions

Bradford stated that while reviewing the UNL Bylaws he ran across section 2.7 that states that whenever a new academic administrative position is created it should be subject to search committee rules. He pointed out that he does not think this occurred with the Dean of Students position that was recently created.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the Bylaws state that he is to consult with the Senate about whether the position is even warranted. He noted that he apologized the last time he discussed the Dean of Students position with the Executive Committee and stated that it was his fault that he did not view this position as a new one. He stated that he thought of it as a new title and a reorganization of the Office of Student Affairs.

Bradford stated that this seems to be more of a search committee issue. The question is once this person leaves will this position be subject to a search committee in the future. Chancellor Perlman stated that he has no doubt that a search will be conducted.

2.3 Issues on the Horizon

2.3.A Diversity Committee

Chancellor Perlman noted that the Diversity Committee is scheduled to write a report and present it to the Senate in March. He stated that the administrative representatives on the Committee resigned with his blessing which he hopes is not an insult to the Senate. He pointed out that the administrators both felt that serving on the committee was not productive use of their time because the discussions were a philosophical debate rather than creating a document that would provide guidance for creating a diverse faculty.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he understands why some people were upset with the original diversity document and he believes that having a conversation on campus regarding academic freedom as it relates to diversity is important to have. He pointed out that he does not think that what an instructor says in a classroom is completely immunized from sanction. He noted that while academic freedom does protect you in your employment relationships there are still certain laws,

such as sexual harassment laws, that must be followed. He stated that what is said can also create a bad environment. He pointed out that at some point there is a difference between expressing ideas that are controversial with expressing ideas in a way that makes students uncomfortable and interferes with the learning process.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he had hoped the Diversity Committee could give direction on how we could diversify the campus through recruitment and retention. He stated that the senior administrative team is moving forward to develop its own plan on how to accomplish this goal. He noted that a survey is going out to departments to ask what their best practices are on recruiting a diverse faculty. He reported that there is an advisory board in Washington D.C. that is working on specializing issues that are related to higher education and their input has been sought on this issue. He stated that he is hopeful that there will be a plan developed by the end of the semester that the campus can interact on.

Bradford noted that the Diversity Committee has seemed to focus on the issue of academic freedom. He pointed out that it was this section of the original draft document that was the most troubling to faculty members.

Moeller noted that several years ago she was asked to chair a committee that looked at best practices for recruiting women. She stated that a report was given to the Senate but nothing has come of it. She pointed out that the report listed a whole list of strategies that could be used.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he is not looking to develop anymore policies but rather to develop a set of guidelines to assist departments when recruiting. He pointed out that climate does matter. He noted that he is a strong supporter of academic freedom but there is a sense that some faculty members believe that they are under no obligation to regard the learning climate and they need to pay attention to the fact that speech can have an impact on the climate. He stated that he thinks there should be some conversations with the faculty about how to teach controversial questions without creating an uncomfortable climate.

Ledder asked if the Chancellor thinks there is a sense on campus among women and minorities that there is a problem on campus. Chancellor Perlman stated that he does not get the same level of concern that he had seven years ago but he thinks for students with different sexual orientation it is still very significant.

2.3.B Computing on Campus

Chancellor Perlman reported that he noticed the discussion the Executive Committee had on campus computing recently. Flowers stated that the Computational Services and Facilities Committee (CSFC) has been attempting to get better coordination of computing on campus for about a decade. He noted that the CSFC is meeting on Friday and he will be getting feedback concerning the discussion that he had with the Executive Committee. He stated that UNL is

unique in that there has been little direct communication between Information Services and the Office of Research. He pointed out that the campus needs the ability to grow in the area of high technology and to accomplish this there needs to be better coordination at a higher level.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he is very supportive of this idea and the administration has been doing some things along these lines. He stated that there needs to be discussion between the CSFC and the administration on the subject.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he has asked the advisory group in Washington, D.C. to look at best practices for information technology at other institutions. He noted that SVCAA Couture and VC Jackson spoke with the advisory group this morning and they were both very enthusiastic about the conversation. He noted that the advisory group will be coming to campus for a conversation and he will clearly want to have the CSFC engaged. He noted that he is not happy where we are now.

Chancellor Perlman pointed out that things happen so quickly in different fields and he has this feeling that there is a disconnection between information technology and what an institution needs to be doing. He noted that UNL will not be known as a great university because of great informational technology but because of the work of the faculty and information technology helps the professors to be great.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he recently read about Arizona State University outsourcing their student email system and he has had discussions on doing this here. He stated that he was surprised to learn that the technology assistant in Canfield is already working with the College of Business Administration (CBA) to do this outsourcing.

Flowers reported that he and others have experienced some inconvenience and difficulty accessing files and software for classroom teaching, when sections of his classes have been assigned to classrooms for which technology is locally controlled by a college or unit that is not associate with information services. He pointed out that this should not be happening. Instructors should be able to use the equipment as needed in order to teach their courses as best as they can. He stated that this is another area where there needs to be coordination.

Chancellor Perlman noted that he read there was some concern about when to engage the administration in conversations about this issue. He stated that he wants the CSFC to know that there are already conversations occurring at the administrative level and he thinks it would be helpful to have the CSFC speak with the administrators.

Flowers stated that it is encouraging to hear this and he will let the CSFC know.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the issue is complex because Varner Hall is also involved in information technology. Flowers stated that a lot of people have fears of Varner Hall's involvement because of the problems with SAP and LotusNotes, two systems that were pushed onto the campuses.

Bradford stated that he hopes that the administration is getting more input into obtaining a new SIS system than the faculty. Flowers noted that the online survey about SIS was very disappointing. Bradford stated that the survey wouldn't interact with his browser.

Flowers pointed out that having a better structure and coordination of information technology at UNL might give us a much stronger voice in discussions with Varner Hall. He stated that we might be able to articulate our needs better.

Chancellor Perlman stated that many people did not like SAP when it first came on board but it was necessary to have this kind of software. He noted that it doesn't do everything that we need but it is better than other programs that are available. He pointed out that we are one of the last institutions to be using LotusNotes.

Bradford asked if there has been any consideration of moving the faculty emailing system to something like Google. Chancellor Perlman stated that it is not being considered now because it is not just a matter of outsourcing due to the other functions associated with LotusNotes. He stated that Microsoft Exchange is a program that many institutions are now using because it is faster than LotusNotes and not as complex. He pointed out that this is a decision that Varner Hall will need to make.

Chancellor Perlman stated that as far as the SIS, the first decision that will need to be made is which system to buy. He noted that the Governor wants a one platform system for the state colleges and the university. He pointed out that the big fight will be over what elements of the system we get that Central Administration will pay for and what we want that the campus has to pay for. He noted that a new system will have to be accommodated.

Moeller asked if there was some kind of advisory group that meets regularly with the Chancellor to give input on computing needs. Flowers stated that this has been discussed by the CFSC. He pointed out that someone needs to represent informational services and computational services.

Flowers stated that one concern is that having a Chief Information Officer could be seen as a very top down approach. Bradford stated that many people would feel that no decisions are needed to be made on computing issues at the lower level but decisions need to be made concerning super computing.

Bolin stated that the Libraries are interested in this issue and would like to be part of the discussion. She noted that, during the 1990's in particular some universities tried organizational arrangements in which the library and computer center were aligned or merged in some way. Those arrangements were almost universally unsuccessful and have nearly all been reversed. The Libraries are a faculty unit which is part of Academic Affairs, reporting to the SVCAA, which is a widely-accepted "best practice." She said she had written an article on library and computer center organization at land grant universities, and had gathered some other information on IT organizations at public research universities. Flowers asked if she could get a copy of these studies to him so he can give it to the CFSC.

Moeller stated that Professor Mitchell of the College of Journalism and Mass Communications has been hired for overseeing the implementation of the ACE program. Ledder suggested that she be invited to come speak with the Executive committee to see how they are planning to implement the program.

Bradford stated that consideration of who is going to be on the implementing committee is just beginning. He stated that it would be nice to have someone from the Senate sitting on the committee so the Senate could be kept aware of what is going on with the implementation process.

Bradford stated that it is his understanding that there is going to be a Director of General Education which will be a permanent position and that an internal search will be conducted. The question arose if there really needs to be another administrator. The Committee wondered why one of the Associate Vice Chancellors or Dean Kean could not take on this responsibility. The Committee agreed to discuss this issue with SVCAA Couture on February 20th.

3.0 Announcements

No announcements were made.

4.0 Approval of 1/16/08 Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes as amended.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Diversity Committee

See 2.3.A above.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Emeritus Policy Draft

Bradford stated that he asked SVCAA Couture why he received the draft document so late when it needs to get input from the Senate. He noted that Varner Hall asked for feedback by the end of the month but he is planning to ask for more time. He stated that

he wants to take this to the full Senate in February. He stated that he sent the document to Emeritus Professor McShane to share with the Emeriti Association.

Fech asked what the major concerns are with the document. Bradford stated that one concern is the lack of the faculty in awarding emeritus status. Flowers and Griffin noted that currently the decision to award emeritus status is first made by the department. Bradford stated that the draft policy makes it clear that the status is awarded by the President or the Chancellor. He noted that nothing states that the departments are involved.

Fech pointed out that the only place where the departments are involved is under the section "Special Privileges." Bradford stated that once the status is given, it would be up to departments to decide what special privileges the retired professor can have.

Bradford pointed out that the policy does add that service work can be grounds for granting emeritus status.

Bradford stated that another concern regards emeritus faculty being given library privileges. He stated that he thinks it appropriate for any retired faculty member to have access to the Libraries.

Bradford stated that 3.B states "Official retirees and communications will be accommodated to these ends, using, where necessary, the United States mail" is being deleted. Fech pointed out that it does not cost anything to keep these people informed electronically.

Ledder stated that the sentence about continued access to the library be deleted because it is stated later on in the policy that they can have full access.

6.2 Report on Board of Regents Meeting

Bradford stated that the Board came out with a resolution supporting the development of an Innovation Campus at the state fair park. He noted that the Board did not take a position on where the state fair should be moved to.

Bradford stated that the Dean of Graduate Studies position was discussed and he raised the issue of there not being a search to fill this position. He noted that Regents Hawks suggested developing a process for a waiver in situations where the person currently serving can be appointed without a lengthy search process.

Bradford reported that the Board had a resolution on the affirmative action initiative. The Board urges people not to vote for the initiative and pointed out the good public policies that are already in place. He noted that Associate VP Withem gave a factual discussion about the process of the initiative and Associate General Counsel Maurer gave a report on the possible effects the initiative could have if it is approved.

Bradford stated that there was discussion on tuition increases. He noted that ASUN President Solheim wanted to reduce the percentage of tuition increases for upcoming years and encouraged the Board to come up with something that would not put such a burden on students. Bradford noted that the Board pointed out that they have to keep funding the university. They also provided information on how our costs compare with other institutions.

Bradford stated that there was preliminary discussion about the 2008-09 budget. He noted that there is a strong possibility that there will be tuition increases. He noted that the deficit is strongly loaded to this year's budget. He pointed out that last year's student enrollment increase gave UNL a good chunk of additional money. He stated that this will make it easier to provide salary increases.

Ledder asked if there was any discussion of faculty reductions. Bradford stated that any time he has talked with the Chancellor he has indicated that he can deal with the deficit without cutting faculty.

Bradford pointed out that if this is the way the Governor supports the university in good years you can imagine what will happen if the economy takes a downturn.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, January 30 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.