

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Alloway, Bolin, Bradford, Flowers, Hachtmann, LaCost, Ledder, Lindquist, Prochaska Cue, Rapkin

Absent: Fech, Zimmers

Date: Wednesday, January 30, 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 Announcements

2.1 Meeting with Computational Services and Facilities Committee (CSFC)

Flowers reported that the Chancellor and SVCAA Couture are arranging a meeting with members of the CSFC. The meeting will be informal to see what mutual concerns there are on computing issues.

Bradford asked if VC Paul should also be at the meeting. Flowers stated that the CSFC will be strongly advocating inclusion of the Vice Chancellor of Research in ongoing discussions concerning computing and information technology issues at UNL. Flowers additionally noted that regardless of any future changes in the administrative structure or organization of computing and information technology that might arise from the current concerns of faculty and administration, members of the CSFC appear to be strongly in favor of retaining the current relationship between Libraries and Academic Affairs.

Flowers noted that the CSFC are very much in favor of retaining the current relationship between Libraries and Academic Affairs.

Bradford reported that ASUN President Solheim and other students want to meet with the Committee about some computing and technology issues. He stated that he will pass the information on to the CSFC when he learns more.

3.0 Approval of 1/23/08 Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes as amended.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 Proposed Sustainability Commission

Bradford reported that he has discussed the membership of the Commission with ASUN President Solheim. He noted that originally Solheim wanted the majority of the members

to be students but that has been changed. He stated that they are still working on whether to use the word sustainability or environment. He noted that he and Solheim is interested in making sure the Commission considers the economic issues associated with sustainability efforts.

Bradford stated that he hopes to have a draft syllabus written up in a couple of weeks so he can present it to the Executive Committee. He stated that based on the Chancellor's comments, both the Faculty Senate and ASUN will need to approve the Commission before it can be formed.

Rapkin asked if the term sustainability is going to stay front and center. Bradford stated that is the issue that needs to be resolved. He noted that the word sustainability doesn't have any meaning in and of itself and the syllabus would need to describe what the Commission is supposed to do.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Possible Ad Hoc Committee on Civility & Climate

Bradford stated that the idea of forming an ad hoc committee on civility and climate came out of discussions he had with the Chancellor regarding climate issues and academic freedom. The idea is to create a statement of good practices. He pointed out that this does not mean that a person would be subject to any disciplinary action but it would inform people of ways to be civil towards each other. He noted that the Chancellor had a suggestion for including in the statement a section on what academic freedom covers and what people think academic freedom covers but really doesn't.

Rapkin pointed out that a statement or document could be perceived as coming from Ms. Manners if it is not carefully written. Bradford stated that he believes there are some people who could use a statement of best practices. He noted that the document could be framed in how to make people feel more welcomed at the university. Rapkin stated that it is a good message if framed this way although it will be hard not to be didactic.

Alloway asked how the document would be distributed. He asked if it would be posted somewhere. Bradford stated that it might be helpful to distribute it to new faculty members.

Prochaska Cue wondered if Professors of Practice are covered under academic freedom since they do not have tenure. Bradford stated that he believes in terms of AAUP standards that they would be covered.

Griffin suggested having members from the clerical and managerial/professional staff on the committee. She noted that some of these people have experienced behavior from faculty members and students that makes the working climate uncomfortable to say the least.

Prochaska Cue stated that another element to be considered is how students act to faculty and staff members. Ledder agreed and noted that particularly in how they treat female graduate students.

Ledder stated that the problem with the Gallup survey was that everyone had to do it regardless of whether your department was excelling in regards to climate issues. He noted that no matter how good a department's score was, they still had to come up with a plan on climate.

Rapkin asked if the idea is to present some general principles. He noted that endless examples could be described. He asked what some principles might be that could be raised in a non platitude manner. As an example Bradford suggested an example of two people disagreeing about a policy. They should attack the policy, not the person they are arguing with. He noted that ethics are enforceable. Ledder stated that the idea is great but he does not know if it will have much effect.

Bradford pointed out that this relates to the diversity plan but in a broader way. He stated that one of the things that bothered him about the original draft diversity plan is that it infringed on academic freedom. He pointed out that a statement could take the same basic ideas and put them into a model of how to handle situations. He noted that it could create a better community where people feel more comfortable.

Alloway asked what was next. Bradford stated that he was just throwing out the idea to see if this is something that should be pursued. Rapkin suggested having a weekly series of examples rather than a document. Bradford pointed out that the problem with this is that it wouldn't be lasting whereas a document could be posted somewhere.

Alloway stated that a document like this could be helpful to international students and faculty members who do not understand the customs of this country. Bradford stated that he suspects that there are some racial and gender issues here that relate to cultural differences.

Rapkin stated that a document would be worthwhile but it would have to be done just right. Bradford agreed and stated that care needs to be taken that it does not become a policy statement. He noted that the ad hoc committee could check to see if other universities have some kind of statement.

Flowers pointed out that the Chancellor is having the advisory council in Washington D.C. look into climate issues. Bradford reported that the council is supposed to come up with best practices at other institutions.

Prochaska Cue noted that she includes a section on civility and respect in her syllabus.

Bradford noted that there does not seem to be any objections to the ad hoc committee. He stated that he would not start the ad hoc committee until the Diversity Committee has completed its work.

5.2 Upcoming Senate Meeting

The Committee discussed what needed to be done at the February Senate meeting. Griffin noted that the Senate Redistribution Report will be given to the Senate and will be voted on in March for approval. She pointed out that this report verifies the faculty members in each department for representation on the Senate.

5.3 Differences in Benefits for 9 and 12 month Employees

Alloway and Prochaska Cue stated that they received a phone call from a faculty member asking for clarification about sick and vacation leave for 9 and 12 month employees. Prochaska Cue pointed out that on the pay stub of 12 month employees the earned sick leave and vacation time are recorded. This does not occur for 9 month employees. She wondered if this could have some kind of impact when a person retires. She noted that 12 month employees get paid for unused vacation and sick leave time when they retire.

Bradford pointed out that schedules for faculty members are much more fluid and they are not docked if they are out sick. He stated that in order for 9 month employees to get the same kinds of benefits as 12 month employees some restrictions would be placed on the faculty member. He doubted that many 9 month faculty members would want that. Ledder asked if 12 month employees are expected to come in everyday. Prochaska Cue stated that they are.

Prochaska Cue pointed out that 12 month employees cannot receive any additional money during the year like 9 month faculty members can get when they teach Summer Session classes.

Griffin noted that the benefits are listed on the Human Resources Website.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, February 6, 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.