

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Bolin, Ledder, Moeller, Rapkin

Date: Wednesday, January 9, 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 3:04 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

No announcements were made.

3.0 Approval of 12/12/07 Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes of 12/12/07.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 UNL Strategic Compass

Bradford noted that he sent the Committee a draft of the letter that will be forwarded to SVCAA Couture giving faculty input on the Compass. He stated that he will be asking for further comments at the Senate meeting and will modify the letter accordingly.

Lindquist pointed out that the Compass is not well written for a document that is slated to be a major guide for the University community. Sentence structure and the structure and flow of many paragraphs are awkward. He questioned why a new document was even written when the document listed as Appendix B is much more clearly written and says much the same thing as the Compass. He stated that the way the document was organized doesn't make much sense. He noted that a strategic plan needs to begin with who we are and what our goals are and then develop from there. He pointed out that any strategic plan should be founded on our mission, or our core purpose. Our vision is what we are hoping to accomplish in the future. Therefore, the Compass itself should be an outline of what our vision is and how we plan to get there. He also stated that outreach/extension needs to be explicitly included in the document.

Lindquist stated that the document discusses the investment of resources in the "invest in Excellent" section where it says "continue to focus on outstanding programs through competitive allocation of existing resources...", but it is unclear whether it refers to all of the existing resources at the University or some portion of those resources. If the former,

then there are questions of where the core mission of the University and current areas of excellence fit into the investment scheme. If the latter, then there are questions of how much new investment the document is referring to. Essentially, how do we define “new investment” when we are talking about “existing resources”? Alloway stated that there needs to be a prioritization of resources.

Lindquist made further suggestions for rewording several of the bulleted points under the “Maximize Resources” section.

4.2 Academic Dishonesty Committee

Bradford asked what the status of the Academic Dishonesty Committee is. Flowers stated that he and Ledder wanted to get the policy regarding the use of the Safe Assignment program completed before activating the Academic Dishonesty Committee. He stated that they are ready to pursue the development of this committee.

Alloway reported that he has heard that a notice on the front page of the Blackboard course management software says that Safe Assignment will not accept documents created with the latest version of Word. Flowers stated that he has also heard this.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Implementation of ACE Programs

Bradford stated that the Senate needs to keep watch on how the new ACE program is implemented to make sure that what was promised will occur. He stated that he believes getting the program implemented is now up to the Curriculum Committee. Griffin noted that the Curriculum Committee is scheduled to give their report to the Senate in January and it would be a good time to ask about the implementation. Flowers suggested that the Curriculum Committee be reminded to keep the Senate informed as to the progress of the implementation process.

5.2 Computing Issues at UNL (Flowers)

Flowers stated that for a long time the Computational Services and Facilities Committee (CSFC) has felt that there needs to be better coordination of computing on campus. On behalf of the CFSC, Flowers presented a draft outline of an administrative model of computing services incorporating a Chief Information Officer for campus-wide coordination and oversight of all aspects computing at UNL. This model was conceptualized by CFSC on the basis of issues that members of the committee, as well as site visitors from our recent accreditation team and others have observed, and also by examining how several other Research I institutions have organized information and computing services at their campuses. These issues include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) In our current unusual administrative structure, Information Services is not connected with the Office of Research, currently the Computing and Information Services Associate Vice Chancellor reports to the Business Vice Chancellor and the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Vice Chancellor for IANR, but not to Research even though research computing, and special applications such as

visualization and supercomputer based modeling are becoming increasingly important aspects of multidisciplinary research.

(2) Our distributed entrepreneurial approach to computer development within individual units, departments and colleges, while remarkably efficient in some aspects, has led to inefficiencies in such areas as site license acquisition, and communication of common expertise across the campus.

(3) There have been instances, notably in instructional classroom and teaching technology, where facilities developed by different departments or administrative entities have led to difficulty in using software or sharing information and files from general purpose servers administered by other units, etc.

(4) Planning for changing needs in connectivity infrastructure (ports, cable, etc. – particularly those needs associated with research computing) has occasionally been problematic.”

Flowers reported that historically the oversight at UNL has evolved over a period of time but with no real changes in administrative positions. He pointed out that there is virtually no input from the Office of Research and yet computing is vital to most research work. He noted that none of the overhead money from federal grants goes back to contribute to information services.

Flowers noted that dynamic changes have occurred in computing services. He stated that software site licenses would be handled much better if there was someone to coordinate them. He stated that if the university is going to be competitive in research there definitely needs to be coordination of computing services.

Flowers pointed out that the model envisioned by CFSC is not to have a coordinator who would “control” everything, but would provide some needed organization of computing issues. He stated that finding the appropriate administrative changes to accomplish these objectives, in the view of the CFSC, might be approached by establishing exploratory conversations that include administrations (including key Vice Chancellors, and eventually the Chancellor, faculty and staff who have key interests in computing and information services issues, and current Information Services staff and administration to explore the viability of such an administrative model or alternatives to it in order to move forward.

Flowers stated that the Chief Information Officer should report directly to the Chancellor, SVCAA, and VC of IANR. He noted that currently Associate VC Hendrickson of Information Services reports only to VC Jackson. He stated that Information Services deals mostly with the structuring and wiring for computing but they are never involved in the ground floor of planning computing on campus.

Flowers stated that there needs to be a level of conversation with the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors about this proposal. He pointed out that the computing system on campus functions but is limited in growth because of the lack of coordination.

LaCost noted that she wanted to add some computing capabilities in her college and looked at some of the computing systems in CBA. She stated that she was amazed to see what is common practice in CBA is not happening in her college. She pointed out that if there was a good leader for computing services that person would know where the computing facilities are on campus that faculty members need in order to teach some of their courses. Flowers stated that the person could also be informed of places where computing is not working properly.

Bradford asked if discussions should begin with the Senate first or with the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors. Flowers stated that the CFSC is inclined to favor conversations with administrators very early in the process since they may have different perspectives on some of the problems. He noted that they may have different perspectives on some of the problems. He pointed out that it is important that there be collaboration between the faculty and the administrators from the beginning to determine if the campus should have a Chief Information Officer.

Bradford suggested that Flowers and other members of the CSFC could make a presentation to the Senate regarding this issue. He noted that this would provide some feedback about the issue.

Bradford stated that he is sympathetic with some of the concerns but he does not want Information Services controlling all of computing and the policies associated with it. Lindquist agreed. Flowers stated that the CSFC has the same concern and does not want a top down system established.

Fech asked if the goal is to get all of the information systems people together without creating a bureaucracy. He asked if the idea is to enable these people to communicate with each other and the campus without anything being too dictatorial. He pointed out that there is a lot of waste in computing on campus.

Lindquist stated that the CSFC should put into words what is the best way to put all of these people together to coordinate computing on campus. Otherwise it seems that the Committee is just asking for another administrator. He pointed out that people may fear that an administrator would come in who will dictate what is going to happen with computing across the campus. He noted that the best thing might be to develop a plan on how to discuss coordination of computing on campus. He stated that the entrepreneurial approach to computing has worked quite well on campus but there has been a lot of duplication and more spending than we need because of this approach.

Flowers stated that there needs to be a dialogue about the issue that involves both the faculty members and administrators. Alloway pointed out that the dialogue needs to continue on an on-going basis because of the diversity of computational needs across the

campus. He wondered if there was a way to create a council that could be decision makers and who could solicit responses. He asked how this is working at other institutions. He noted that he would be in favor of something similar to the Research Council. He suggested that it could be composed of people from Information Services around campus as well as appointed faculty members. He stated his concern with centralizing the authority into one position was the possibility that the person could make sweeping policy decisions with no checks or balances.

Bradford noted that most departments can afford computing needs except for very high end computing. Flowers pointed out that there are still problems with cabling and there are no standard policies in place about this. Bradford stated that he can see the need for coordination on the super computing side of things and wondered if this could be done without impacting office computing. Alloway stated that he is not convinced that coordination is not needed at the lower level as well. He pointed out that there could be issues that the faculty members are not aware of.

Bradford suggested that the Committee could ask the Chancellor to create an ad hoc committee that would include VC Paul and some of the Deans as well as faculty users to discuss the issue. Flowers suggested that some of the members of the CSFC be on it as well.

LaCost noted that there have been technology luncheons where attendees can learn about equipment or software. She stated that this kind of sharing of information has been very helpful.

Bradford stated that the problem should be presented to the Senate so a dialogue can be started. Flowers stated that he will report back to the CSFC the discussion with the Executive Committee.

5.3 Institutional Review Board (IRB)

LaCost reported that faculty members in her department are concerned with statements made by the IRB staff claiming that they will assess the quality of a research project. She pointed out that these people are not in the position to assess the quality of a research project and this is typically done by a review committee within a department or college. She pointed out that a full review board might have the expertise to make this determination. She reported that her department was told that VC Paul and the IRB have the right to determine the quality of a research project.

Bradford asked her to check further into this and report back to the Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:19 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, January 16 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.