

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Alloway, Bradford, Hachtmann, Fech, LaCost, Lindquist, Moeller, Rapkin

Absent: Bolin,

Date: Wednesday, March 12, 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 3:02 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

No announcements were made.

3.0 Approval of 3/5/08 Minutes

The minutes were approved as amended.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 Motion on Diversity Committee Report

Bradford stated that Professor Orey, Political Science, is here to speak about his reason for resigning from the Diversity Committee.

Orey stated that the Committee had meetings periodically. At the meetings it was typical for one of the members to offer some commentary related to opportunity hires and then someone else would speak in opposition to the original comment. Other members would chime in and the topic would be entertained for some time. He noted that most of the time the meetings were an exercise in intellectual discourse. He stated that he would challenge some of the comments made on the empirical level because blanket assumptions would often be made without any empirical evidence to support it. He noted that there were some exchanges made through email.

Orey stated that meetings would typically center on the issue of opportunity hires although some other issues, such as sexual orientation, were discussed. He reported that conversations would go in the direction of questioning what an inclusive environment would look like and how it could be a zero sum gain.

Orey stated that he had the expectation that the chair would draft the report and it would reflect the minutes of the meetings as well as any feedback on the draft. He noted that a draft was circulated to the committee members. He stated that the final document was

the chair's perspective. He pointed out that the report did not include any empirical evidence and he informed the chair of the committee that he would not be able to stand by a report that would make such unfounded statements. He stated that the report did not include any of the progressive presentations that were made as they relate to issues of diversity hiring.

Orey stated that the report was to be redrafted after he made comments on it and he thought some of the information from the minutes of meetings would be included. He noted that at one point the chair asked that everyone provide comments of what they would like to see in the report but he was asked to wait until the final draft was presented. He pointed out that working on the Committee became very time consuming.

Orey stated that his resignation was based on the fact that he did not feel he could support the report as it was written. He stated that he would have liked to see a report that reflected his and other members' perspectives which could have been obtained from the minutes of the meetings.

Moeller asked if the committee at any time discussed the actual purpose of the committee, which was to look at best practices for recruiting and retaining minorities. Orey stated that the general purpose of the committee was fairly broad and was about diversity on campus. LaCost asked if anyone ever came up with ideas for recruiting or were the same things being discussed over and over again. She stated that it seems like the focus and principle of the Committee developing a plan didn't occur. Moeller stated that it sounds like this was never made clear in the meetings.

Orey stated that the report seems to have been written by two people on the Committee and they may have been in the minority viewpoint of the Committee.

Rapkin reread Bradford's letter to the chair of the Diversity Committee and pointed out that the letter specifically states that the Committee should focus on recruiting and retention of faculty members. He asked if anyone has the impression that just a couple members of the Committee dominated the discussions. Orey stated that the first meeting he attended the direction of the discussion went straight to opportunity hiring and the chair was very clear about his views on the issue. Orey stated that the report may have been written in tandem with another Committee member.

Orey pointed out that the discussions were civil. He noted that he felt compelled to offer an opposing or different viewpoint on diversity issues but in the end it wound up taking too much energy. Rapkin stated that it sounds like the discussion focused on the downside of pursuing diversity. Orey stated that there were opposing views presented at the meetings.

Rapkin asked if there was any effort to try and bring the Committee together to arrive at a consensual position of offering different views. Orey stated that there was some overlap in what the Committee felt that diversity should look like. He pointed out that the Committee might not come to a consensus because of divergent perspectives. He stated

that he thought the different perspectives would have been reflected in the report but they weren't.

LaCost pointed out that the charge of the Committee has not been met. Ledder noted that the Committee seemed to spend all of its time working on a policy rather than developing a plan. Rapkin stated that there is nothing concrete in the report on which to make a policy.

Orey stated that the purpose of having a diverse committee is to include diverse perspectives but the problem is that the report is monolithic in its presentation. He stated that he challenged the Committee with the history of diversity on campus. He noted that the goal is to move the campus to where there is an increase in diverse people.

Ledder pointed out that the lack of a diverse body of candidates when hiring makes it difficult to have diverse hires in some academic areas. Orey noted that in some instances, particularly in the social sciences where the candidate pool is larger, it does mean something to minority candidates when a department has descriptive representation and race and gender does matter in some instances. He stated that empirical evidence shows that diverse people have a tendency to conduct work relating to their diversity. He pointed out that the contribution of what a person can do for a department gives them a better chance of getting hired.

Bradford stated that one problem UNL has is getting people to come to Lincoln because there is such a small minority population here. He suggested that this needs to be included in the report.

Moeller noted that UNL is having some success in recruiting, but that retention seems to be problematic. She stated that when she first formed the Committee she asked them to look at best practices and even provided the Committee with websites of other universities with best practices. Bradford noted that even within UNL there are some departments that are doing better at recruiting and retaining diverse faculty members.

Ledder stated that there are several reasons why someone might leave the university but the most troubling would be those that leave because they do not like the environment here. It would be helpful to know if that is happening. Orey noted that critical mass is important in retaining people. He stated that one best practice is to bring in cohorts. Moeller noted that this has been suggested for female faculty members as well and it has been successful at other institutions. Moeller stated that the cohorts do not have to be in the same department. They can have similar interests in their research. She stated that important in retaining people is that they have someone they can talk and discuss their work with. Orey agreed and noted that white males and white females have this to a certain extent but it is more limited for faculty members of color.

Ledder asked if there were any mentoring groups on campus for minority faculty members. Orey stated that he is not aware of any, just the mentoring in his own department.

Bradford pointed out that these are the questions that the Committee should have asked. He thanked Orey for coming and speaking with the Committee.

The Executive Committee discussed a motion drafted by Rapkin regarding the Diversity Committee report and whether it should be introduced at the April 1st meeting as an emergency motion. Bradford stated that, based on the arguments made so far, he will not rule it as an emergency motion.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Report on Board of Regents Meeting

Bradford stated that the Board took up the motion opposing the Affirmative Action petition again because of arguments that it was not properly placed on the agenda the previous month. He noted that people spoke in favor of the petition but the UNMC and UNO Faculty Senate representatives both stated that their Senates took a position opposing a similar legislative resolution. He stated that after Professors Harbison and Schneiderjans spoke in support of the petition he pointed out to the Board that he does not think their comments were representative of a majority of the UNL faculty. He also told the Board that the UNL Faculty Senate does plan to address the issue. He reported that the Board voted unanimously to oppose the petition.

Bradford stated that the topic of how far faculty salaries have fallen behind our peers was discussed. He noted that we are 5.7% behind our peers and full professors are 6.5% behind in salaries. He stated that entry level faculty members are not as far behind with their peers.

Bradford reported that the UNL ACE program will be featured at a national conference on general education.

Bradford stated that the Board also reviewed the UNL Bookstore contract. He reported that UNL negotiated a contract with Follett. Bradford stated that there were two bidders, Follett and Nebraska Bookstore. The decision was based on the markup the company was going to charge for books and how much of a payment the university would get. He noted that the payment to the University was higher from Nebraska Bookstore but Follett paid better for used books and the cost of the books was less. It was determined that Follett had the lowest bid and UNL was able to negotiate it even lower. However, Nebraska Bookstore does not think they were given the chance to negotiate. As a result the Board wants to hear more about the bids and will not make a decision at this time on the contract.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, March 26th at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office, 420 University Terrace. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Rick Alloway, Secretary.