

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bradford, Fech, hachtmann, LaCost, Lindquist, McCollough, Prochaska-Cue, Rapkin, Schubert, Zimmers

Absent: Franti, Jackson, Ledder

Date: Wednesday, October 15, 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

Prochaska-Cue called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Chancellor's Commission on Environmental Sustainability (CCES)

Prochaska-Cue reported that Franti had sent her an email listing the members of the CCES. She pointed out that not all members of the Commission are voting members but the faculty, students, dean, managerial/professional, and office/service staff have voting privileges. She stated that the Senate provided a list of eight faculty names and the Chancellor then selected four faculty members to serve on the Commission. She noted that she will ask the Chancellor at next week's meeting when the Commission will be officially announced.

2.2 Changes to Blackboard

Griffin reported that Heath Tuttle of Information Services will be giving a presentation at the November Senate meeting on the changes that are going to be made to Blackboard. Specifically, these changes will affect the grading component of the program.

2.3 Concerns with Student Email System

Prochaska-Cue announced that Associate Vice Chancellor Roeber will be meeting with the Executive Committee next week to discuss concerns that have been raised about confidentiality and the student email system.

3.0 Approval of 2/20/08 Minutes

McCollough moved and Fech seconded approval of the minutes as amended. Motion approved.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 Faculty Salary Survey

Prochaska-Cue noted that Bradford suggested in an email message that it was not an appropriate time to survey the faculty about salary issues. She stated that Rapkin

suggested that we quietly probe into how salary increases are distributed. Lindquist pointed out that no matter when we conduct a survey on faculty salary issues there will be some people who will perceive it as the faculty being greedy. Bradford stated that he is not sure how a survey will be interpreted right now. Schubert stated that his spontaneous reaction is to do a survey. LaCost pointed out that doing a survey when emotions are heightened could lead to data being more at the margins although it could be good time because people are aware and thinking more about their finances. She noted that a question could be asked on the survey as to whether faculty members are more interested in benefits rather than salary increases.

Schubert noted that there is a gap between UNL faculty salaries and its peer institutions and suggested we ask questions about issues surrounding faculty salaries. Rapkin stated that it may not be an opportune time to be asking about raises when the economy is in the state it is in.

Fech noted that some citizens of the state might see a request to increase faculty salaries as guaranteed greed. He pointed out that many people, particularly those who own a business, do not have the guarantee of getting a paycheck every week or month.

LaCost stated that the salary issue has direct links to the unionization issue. Rapkin pointed out that history has shown that if a problematic working situation persists, the number of members to labor organizations increases dramatically. Bradford pointed out that faculty members could go two more years of not getting much, if any, of an increase if the state does not raise the university's budget for the next biennium. He noted that if inflation continues in the economy it could trigger faculty members' desire to become more unionized.

Rapkin stated that he thinks the issue of how salary raises are distributed is a worthwhile issue that should be looked at. Prochaska-Cue noted that faculty members can get good evaluations but end up with a raise that is significantly below the cost of living because of how the funds were distributed in their departments and colleges. McCollough pointed out that the process to distribute faculty salaries is not transparent. Rapkin noted that there is a continuum with one end representing 100% of increases being awarded for merit and the other end of the continuum is that everyone receives the same increase. He wondered if there is another dimension that is used in determining how the raises are distributed. Bradford pointed out that the administrators determine the distribution. LaCost stated that she is amazed at the amount that the deans keep back. Bradford noted that this is often done to deal with discrepancies of salaries within the college.

McCollough asked how merit is defined. Prochaska-Cue pointed out that it is very subjective. Bradford noted that administrators might hold money back because one department may be very low in comparison to its peer at other institutions.

Fech asked if faculty members can receive a bonus. Bradford stated that this is against state law and most faculty members would agree that they would rather have the increase put into their base salary.

Prochaska-Cue noted that faculty members don't perform at the same level all of the time because they can have projects starting and stopping over the course of a few years. As a result, some professors might be judged as not performing at a high level but in fact they may be in the midst of working on a project.

Bradford wondered if people know how the process of distributing salaries works in their departments. Rapkin stated that the Committee could work on making the process more transparent.

Fech asked who the administrators are for establishing the distribution. Bradford reported that VC Owens and SVCAA Couture are responsible and they provide a level of detail about the distribution in their email to the faculty about salaries.

Rapkin pondered whether it would be useful to urge the administration to forgo merit raises next year given the light of the poor economy and what will likely be a small amount of money available for increases. Prochaska-Cue stated that a question for the survey could be whether faculty members prefer a merit increase or a cost of living raise.

Lindquist pointed out that the Committee seems to be in favor of conducting the survey. He suggested that the Committee come up with a set of questions and perhaps get some help with the survey. He noted that in the meantime we can ask the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor and SVCAA what they are thinking in terms of salaries.

4.3 Office of Research Policy on Professional Misconduct

Prochaska-Cue stated that she spoke with Associate to the Chancellor Poser about the specific concerns the Executive Committee has with the policy. Prochaska-Cue stated that she told Associate to the Chancellor Poser that one area of concern is the lack of faculty involvement in the committee investigating the charge and there is no mention of the Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee. She stated that she does not think the policy needs to be totally rewritten but it does need modifications. She stated that there should be a committee of faculty members and people from the Office of Research to draft the revisions.

Prochaska-Cue announced that either the Chancellor or Associate to the Chancellor Poser will be attending the November 5th Executive Committee meeting.

The Committee discussed other issues that will be raised at the November 5th meeting.

4.4 Academic Honesty Committee (AHC)

Griffin reported that the Academic Honesty Committee met for the first time this semester today. The AHC will be chaired by Professor Bicknell-Holmes.

4.5 ACE Program Implementation

Hachtmann reported that the ACE committee reviewing proposed courses for the ACE program has now received a large number of proposals from Arts & Sciences. She stated that the ACE committee is reviewing 30 course proposals per week.

6.0 New Business

6.1 November Senate Meeting

Bradford noted that an Executive Committee member will be resigning from the Committee. He suggested that the election to replace this person be declared as an emergency motion so we could vote on it at the meeting.

6.2 October 22nd Executive Committee Meeting

Prochaska-Cue noted that visitors from Tajikistan will be attending the meeting. She asked the Committee what other items should be placed on the agenda. The Committee agreed to ask about the Environmental Sustainability Commission, faculty salaries and how allocated, metrics of success, and updates on the child care center and wellness program.

6.3 Cross Listed Courses

McCollough pointed out that there has recently been a change in the policy regarding credit hour production for cross-listed courses. She stated that now if a student signs up for a course under a major that is different from the one that is teaching the course, the department actually teaching the course will not receive the credit hour production. She questioned when this change in the policy occurred. She pointed out that the implications of this policy are not to offer cross-listed courses. She stated that many departments are now pulling out of having cross-listed courses. The Committee decided to inquire about this with SVCAA Couture.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:42 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, October 22nd at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in 201 Canfield Administration. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and David Rapkin, Secretary.