

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bradford, Franti, Hachtmann, Konecky, McCollough, LaCost, Lindquist, Prochaska-Cue, Rapkin, Schubert, Zimmers

Absent: Fech, Ledder

Date: Wednesday, February 4, 2009

Location: Faculty Senate Office

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 Dr. Jim Guest, Director, University Health Center

2.1 Written Absence Notice for Students

Dr. Guest stated that the Health Center has been discussing this issue for a long time. He reported that the origin of the current policy is unknown but problems have risen recently due to the loss of two physicians at the health center. He noted that the Health Center receives about 150 requests a month from students for an absence form for a missed class. Most of these students call to make an appointment stating that they are not feeling well but when they come in the next day for their appointment their symptoms are gone. He pointed out that the current form merely states that the student has been at the health center. He stated that it is this type of request that the Health Center would like to eliminate.

Dr. Guest reported that at a recent meeting of health care providers of the Big 12 it became obvious that a policy on providing written absences varies from university to university.

Dr. Guest stated that there is now a new director of health information who is working on revising the form. He stated that the Health Center will not sign the form if it cannot verify that the student was sick. Bradford asked if the Health Center is still willing to verify if the student is too ill to attend class or is determined to be contagious. Dr. Guest stated that these cases will still be able to get an excused absence.

Lindquist pointed out that the paragraph under procedure about the university's class attendance policy muddies the waters a bit. Dr. Guest stated that it would be easy to remove this and noted that the paragraph was included to provide justification on the university attendance policy.

Bradford suggested removing from the form the section on verification of a visit to the Health Center. He stated that he is surprised that faculty members would want an excused absence form. McCollough pointed out that if a student misses an exam she wants some kind of proof that the student was ill.

Bradford pointed out that the form does not indicate that the student is really ill. Dr. Guest stated that this information would need to be provided on the form. He pointed out that an example is if someone has a migraine and is unable to go outside into the bright sunlight so they come in the next day to get a form.

Konecky stated that she is not sure how the proposed form differs from what the Health Center has already been doing. Dr. Guest stated that students are actually making appointments to be seen. Konecky asked if the form then validates that a student made an appointment to see a health care provider. Dr. Guest reported that students will sometimes come in for a second appointment in order to get the form. Konecky asked if the new procedure enables the front desk of the Health Center to provide the form. Dr. Guest stated that this was correct.

Lindquist stated that the new form differs from what he understands. He asked if the form is given to someone who claims they were sick or to someone who really is sick and has been seen by a health care provider. Dr. Guest stated that there will be a distinction. The Health Center will verify if the student has seen a physician. He stated that this form is in the Health Center's computer system and is ready for distribution. He noted that this would help those students who have to come in again to get a form because they forgot to get it on their first appointment.

Lindquist asked if a student can just ask to get a form. Dr. Guest stated that a student would not be able to get a form just by asking. He stated that the Health Center's electronic record would be verified to see if the student saw a physician. He pointed out that the amount of information provided on the form has to be restricted because of confidentiality laws.

Franti noted that the campus is trying to be more sustainable and asked if the form can be generated electronically and then emailed to the student. Dr. Guest reported that the Health Center does not have a patient portal yet in its computer system. He noted that the Health Center's servers are separate from the university due to confidentiality needs and health records are accessible by only five people outside of the Health Center building.

Prochaska-Cue thanked Dr. Guest for meeting with the Executive Committee.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Faculty Concerns on Life Sciences Report

Prochaska-Cue reported that she heard from the Chancellor regarding the concerns raised at the Senate meeting on the Life Sciences report. She stated that a letter has been sent out today to all IANR faculty explaining what is going on with the report. She stated that she will forward the letter to the Executive Committee.

Lindquist pointed out that there is concern for the faculty that will be affected by this report. He stated that if faculty members are expected to be involved with the review team then they should see the charge that was given to the review team as well as the questions the Chancellor asked the review team to address. He stated that IANR Senators were told at their lunch meetings that there were fourteen questions that the review team was to address, yet these have not been made public.

Prochaska-Cue noted that the Chancellor is in India and the Executive Committee will not meet with him until March 11th. She stated that she is asking VC Owens and Associate VC Fritz to meet with the Executive Committee to discuss this issue. Griffin noted that VC Owens and Associate VC Fritz will be meeting with the Committee on February 18th.

Franti stated that it sounds as if the review that is to take place has an agenda behind it. Lindquist agreed and stated that the faculty should know what that agenda is. Prochaska-Cue stated that she will email the Chancellor to see if she can get a copy of the charge and the fourteen questions. Lindquist stated that these should be distributed to all affected faculty members. Prochaska-Cue agreed, particularly if they are expected to participate.

McCullough asked if the faculty knows who will be on the review team. Prochaska-Cue stated that she will ask for this information as well.

4.0 Approval of 1/28/09 Minutes

Bradford moved and McCullough seconded approval of the minutes as amended. Motion approved.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Distribution of Reduction in Force Procedures

Griffin distributed copies of the Procedures to be Invoked for Significant Budget Reallocations and Reductions. Lindquist reported that the IANR Senators were told at the luncheon that the Chancellor requested four different budget reduction scenarios for the Institute. He stated that the Deans handed this task down to the units. Lindquist pointed out that asking each unit to develop different budget reduction scenarios is not particularly consistent with the goal of making vertical cuts.

McCullough noted that there does not seem to be any consideration of how departments could work together to possibly save money as a group. She noted that pooling some business operations might be a better way of reducing costs rather than cutting people.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Review of Senate Meeting

Prochaska-Cue noted that President Milliken stated at the Senate meeting that he would be happy to come back to speak to the Senate in April when he might have a better idea about the budget.

McCollough stated that she would like to ask the President about long distance education. She noted that long distance education helps bring money into the university yet there seems to be little funding opportunities for departments to get long distance education programs up and running.

Rapkin wondered why departments within the same college are being asked to develop budget cuts for different amounts. Prochaska-Cue noted that the Chancellor stated that departments should consider a 5% cut. Rapkin pointed out that some departments are being asked to consider less than 5% and some are being asked to consider more. Bradford suggested that Deans could be taking more of a cut out of some departments than other departments. Prochaska-Cue stated that she thinks the Chancellor gave a percent figure to the Deans to consider for a budget cut but how the figure is implemented within each college is up to the Dean. She noted that the Academic Planning Committee probably has more knowledge about what is being asked of the colleges and departments.

Hachtmann stated that she would be interested in hearing what other units are considering doing in regards to budget cutting strategies. She stated that her college is considering faculty members sharing phones to conduct university business thereby eliminating office phones. Bradford stated that one of the obvious budget cuts can be for travel but that wouldn't save much in some departments because travel is paid with private funds.

Schubert wondered where the overhead money is going from all of the grants that are being brought in. He noted that the amount of grants being brought in is up to \$106 million which generates a considerable amount of overhead, yet faculty members might be losing their office phones.

Prochaska-Cue noted that in March the Chancellor will be presenting the general budget framework. Rapkin asked what the general budget framework is. Prochaska-Cue stated that it is described in footnote four of the Procedures to Invoke Significant Budget Reallocations and Reductions. Basically the general budget framework establishes the criteria of the budget reallocation and reduction process. She noted that the Academic Planning Committee wants the recent document they passed in place for the general budget framework.

The Committee discussed the issue raised about faculty members not serving on committees. Bradford stated that he does not understand why faculty members need to know why they didn't get on a committee. He pointed out that there are many reasons why some people can't be appointed to certain committees.

Franti noted that you do not see many full professors serving on committees and they are not mentoring the younger faculty about serving on committees. Schubert pointed out that faculty members don't want to feel that they are wasting their time and most of the committees don't have any authority. Franti stated that faculty members feel they do not have the ability to have any decision on what is happening at the university. He pointed out that until people feel that they are being listened to they will not serve. Bradford

noted that this might explain the popularity of the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee because that committee has some real power.

McCollough pointed out that you can't have a democratic university if the faculty isn't involved. LaCost stated that as long as faculty members feel they have no voting power they will not be involved. Bradford noted that faculty members seem to be more involved at schools like Harvard where he believes the faculty has greater control.

Schubert noted that enrollment is up 3%. He stated that young people are coming to UNL because of the faculty, not because of the administration and therefore the faculty should have a say on what is going on academically.

Franti asked how things can be changed to make committees work. Bradford stated that it would help to minimize the number of committees but the Senate has already combined several committees. Rapkin stated that the other thing is to change the culture regarding service work. McCollough stated that this is critical but difficult to do.

Rapkin suggested trying to recruit some high profile people to serve on committees. Bradford noted that there seem to be far fewer people who are actively involved in faculty governance. Prochaska-Cue stated that she thinks it could be tied into not having an active AAUP chapter on campus. She noted that when AAUP was much stronger on campus there were more people involved in faculty governance. Konecky stated that it is part of a department's culture and until departments value service work things will probably not change. Prochaska-Cue stated that there has been a real change in the culture in the past fifteen years with service not being rewarded. She stated that in the past faculty members felt that service work was part of their responsibility. She opined that this notion seems to have changed since the university has become more of a business rather than an academic institution.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, February 11th at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and David Rapkin, Secretary.