

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Bradford, Fech, Hachtmann, LaCost, Ledder, Lindquist, Konecky, McCollough, Prochaska-Cue, Rapkin, Zimmers

**Absent:** Franti, Schubert

**Date:** Wednesday, January 21, 2009

**Location:** 201 Canfield Administration Building

**Note:** These are not verbatim minutes. They are a summary of the discussions at the Executive Committee meeting as corrected by those participating.

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### 1.0 Call to Order

Prochaska-Cue called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

### 2.0 Chancellor Perlman, SVCAA Couture, VC Owens

Chancellor Perlman apologized for not attending the January 13<sup>th</sup> Senate meeting. He noted that he was attending the funeral services of Emeritus Professor Robert Knoll.

#### 2.1 Budget

Chancellor Perlman reported that there is a process called the “Procedures to be Invoked for Significant Budget Reallocations and Reductions” (<http://www.unl.edu/ucomm/chancellor/19930210realloreducproc/index.htm>). He stated that the process takes a considerable amount of time which can create an awkward situation for us. He noted that the Governor recommend a budget but the Appropriations Committee must make its recommendations on the budget and the process usually does not conclude until late May. The Board of Regents will finalize the university’s budget at the June meeting and the fiscal year begins July 1.

Chancellor Perlman pointed out that since the required procedures take a long time to make significant cuts he is starting the process. He reported that he has met with the Academic Planning Committee and the Chancellor’s Cabinet (Senior Administrative Team, Faculty Senate President, ASUN President, and others) to begin the process.

Chancellor Perlman stated that APC has been provided with a preliminary budget framework and has until February 2<sup>nd</sup> to make recommendations on it. He reported that sometime after February 2<sup>nd</sup> he will publish the document in a public setting. He pointed out that the university is watching developments in the legislature and waiting for the Forecasting Board’s report so the university is unsure what will happen with the budget.

Chancellor Perlman stated that process calls for proposed budget cuts to be reported to him. He then determines what cuts should be made and gives his recommendations to the APC. The APC will review the recommendations and will then hold hearings for those

units that are planned to be cut. The hearings will allow the identified units to justify why they should not be cut. He noted that after the hearings the APC will make its final recommendations to him.

Chancellor Perlman reported that he has spoken with deans and directors and described the process. He stated that he has asked the Vice Chancellors to start the process of developing proposed budget cuts which are due by March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

McCollough asked if the components of the university system will work together to eliminate duplicate programs at the campuses. Chancellor Perlman stated that the Board might consider this a good idea but the Chancellors have looked at this before and discovered that there is really not much savings in cutting duplicate programs.

Chancellor Perlman stated that there are two things different this time with budget cuts than in 2003. He noted that last time if an academic program was cut 50% of the savings went to the other campuses but this would not happen this time. He pointed out that tuition is the other changed factor. He stated that if we increase enrollment at UNL, every dollar from the additional tuition will come back to us but the same thing goes for UNO and the other campuses.

Bradford noted that the Governor stated that he is being cautious with his proposed budget. He asked if the Governor has said anything about the second year of the biennium if the economy improves. Chancellor Perlman stated that he believes the Governor acknowledged that the legislature can take another look at the budget in the second biennium. He noted that it is difficult to say what will happen by then and changes at the federal level could have impacts on the budget.

Bradford asked if someone is going to take into account that the Forecasting Board is consistently too low in its projections. Chancellor Perlman stated that we still have six months left in this fiscal year and no one knows for sure what will happen. He pointed out that tax receipts were down in December and while there is a cash reserve the legislature needs to be careful with it.

Prochaska-Cue reported that she has started receiving suggestions from the faculty about budget cuts and asked if she can pass them onto the Chancellor. He stated that he would like some advice and that she should forward the notes to him if there are suggestions.

## **2.2 Draft Proposal on Best Practices to Recruit and Retain a Diverse Faculty**

Prochaska Cue reported that the Executive Committee discussed the proposal and she has summarized the concerns of the Committee. SVCAA Couture stated that she will take a look at the suggestions.

SVCAA Couture noted that the Executive Committee has concerns with the definition of diversity that was used in the proposal. She reported that the definition used is the one defined by the Board of Regents. She noted that the advisory committee discussed in the proposal would work like any advisory group. The faculty members and administrators

serving on the advisory committee would be doing it as service work which is considered part of their responsibility so no additional costs would be incurred.

SVCAA Couture reported that in terms of hiring new faculty members there are opportunities within our budget for doing this although she noted that it might be more difficult to do this year. Fech pointed out that the Committee was questioning whether funds would be available for recruiting. Prochaska-Cue stated that the Committee wondered whether faculty members would be encouraged and funded to attend conferences they normally do not attend in order to recruit diverse faculty. SVCAA Couture noted that every search has a cost and she would be happy to discuss search plans with deans. She stated that her initial response is that if sending faculty members to conferences would allow departments to come up with a diverse pool, this should be included in the recruiting plan.

Prochaska-Cue noted that the Committee is concerned that the section on sustaining diverse faculty members was limited.

SVCAA Couture stated that she appreciates the thoughtfulness and the effort that went into the response. She noted that she will review the suggestions and show them to the deans.

### **2.3 Issues on the Horizon**

SVCAA Couture reported that the university is beginning to recruit more international students and students who are U.S. citizens but whose native language is not English. She noted that currently there are several ways for students to demonstrate English proficiency at the university but some of these are problematical. She pointed out that the university's English placement exam is old and does not demonstrate English proficiency appropriately.

SVCAA Couture stated that when some issues began to arise about English proficiency her office decided to take a look at it to see how we state requirements, if we are clear about them, and how our requirements compare to other schools in the Big 12 and nationally. She reported that after doing some research it was evident that some Big 12 universities handle things differently by allowing students to demonstrate their proficiency in a variety of ways. She noted that some students can handle some courses while they are taking classes to strengthen their English skills. She pointed out that this issue primarily affects undergraduate students.

SVCAA Couture stated while doing research on how other universities deal with English proficiency it became clear that there were enough differences to cause us to take a look at our own requirements and to make some potential changes. She noted that the Advisory Board also did a report on the variability of English proficiency across universities and the suggested recommendations in changing our requirements is derived partly from the Board's findings. She stated that in the past the English proficiency requirements were negotiated between Admissions and Academic Affairs but this is an

issue that has impacts across the campus so she felt that others should review the proposed changes.

SVCAA Couture stated that the idea is to potentially offer some credit to students taking intensive English program courses. She pointed out that the credit could be applied to graduation but colleges would have to decide whether those credits would apply towards a degree.

SVCAA Couture stated that consideration is being given to dropping the use of ACT English and SAT critical reading scores because they do not provide information about students' listening or speaking skills. She stated that if a student brings evidence of English proficiency, the TOEFL score will be used to place the student in English classes. She pointed out that her office is working directly with the English department on this issue.

SVCAA Couture stated that there are plans to bring in an expert on English as a second language to review our current requirements and to help us set the TOEFL cut off scores. She noted that an expert will be coming to campus on March 5<sup>th</sup> and she welcomes people to attend the discussion and to learn more about TOEFL.

SVCAA Couture reported that the following demonstrations of English proficiency are being considered: TOEFL, IELTS, UNL English Placement Exam, graduation from a high school where English is the language of instruction, two years of coursework at a college where English is the language of instruction. She noted that currently some of these demonstrations are allowed but not all of them and students are considered on a case by case basis. She pointed out that in the past graduation from a high school where English is the language of instruction has not been allowed.

SVCAA Couture stated that student athletes are the only group of students that are not offered conditional admission if they cannot demonstrate English proficiency. She stated that the reasoning for this is unclear but she suspects it is because they could not take advantage of their scholarships if they are admitted but cannot register for credit courses. She noted that it seems unreasonable to have restrictions for one group of students and not another.

Bradford asked if students would be accepted if they graduated from a high school where English is the language of instruction but the high school is in a country whose native language is not English. SVCAA Couture stated that under the proposed changes, these students would be accepted under this circumstance but the courses taught in English must be across the board and not just taught in one or two courses.

McCollough asked if the English department has enough instructors to handle the additional students who might be required to take the intensive English program courses. SVCAA Couture stated that it can be handled and she is working with the English department to move a portion of the Intensive English Program into a credit-based program.

Chancellor Perlman stated that while the recent incident with one of our student athletes brought the English proficiency issue to the administration's attention the principle that we consistently have used in thinking about changes is that all students should be treated the same, that is student athletes should receive no special benefits nor incur any special disadvantages. He noted that the athletes have a particular issue to deal with because they cannot get their scholarships if they don't take courses for credit. He pointed out that he believes these changes to the English proficiency requirements will help students move along more quickly through their coursework and will help with the budget. He stated that in particular he is considering all of the Chinese students who will be coming to campus soon and the university needs to be positioned correctly for the new world of global education. He noted that no one seems to know who or when the current requirements were established.

Ledder stated that he would like to see us track students to make sure that they aren't doing poorly in the courses. He stated that he was unsure about using graduation from a high school where English is the language of instruction as a demonstration of proficiency. Chancellor Perlman stated that he knows of a case of a student athlete who flunked the TOEFL but came from a two year college here in the U.S. and had a B+ average in his courses.

The Committee agreed to review and discuss the proposed changes at next week's meeting.

Chancellor Perlman reported that he will be traveling extensively during the month of February, primarily to India where there are universities that are interested in engaging with us, primarily in the fields of engineering and agriculture.

### **3.0 Announcements**

#### **3.1 Internal Committee to Review the Cancellation of Dr. Ayers' Visit**

Prochaska-Cue reported that five people have confirmed that they will serve on this committee. They are: Professor Bryant, Educational Administration; Professor Rapkin, Political Science, who will represent the Senate; Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics; Professor Moshman, Educational Psychology; Emeritus Professor McShane. She reported that Professor Bryant will chair the committee.

Prochaska-Cue stated that she has asked that the committee have a report completed this semester.

### **4.0 Approval of 1/14/09 Minutes**

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

### **5.0 Unfinished Business**

#### **5.1 Faculty Salary Survey**

Prochaska-Cue reported that the survey will be discussed at next week's meeting.

## **6.0 New Business**

### **6.1 Policy on the Health Center Writing Absences for Students for Class**

Prochaska-Cue noted that enough instructors must require absences from the Health Center in order for this to be an issue. Ledder pointed out that many instructors are very strict about attendance in class.

Prochaska-Cue reported that other Big 12 schools' policies requiring written absences vary with their policy requiring written absences. She noted that at the University of Iowa the students can print off their own excuses from the web, the University Kansas only requires a written notice after three days of absence, and the University Oklahoma states that it is an issue between the instructor and the student.

Prochaska-Cue stated that the University Health Center is proposing that "clinic medical staff will provide the student with written documentation, at the time of an appointment, when a student is determined to be contagious or too ill to attend class and the provider recommends that the student not attend class."

Bradford pointed out that all the form does is to verify that the student went to the Health Center. He questioned whether this is separate from whether a student is too ill or contagious to attend a class. Fech wondered if the form is filled out before or after the student is treated. Ledder stated that the policy and the procedure do not align with each other. He noted that the policy states that the form is to be used when the student is contagious and too ill but the procedures do not state when this is determined. Prochaska-Cue noted that the form only verifies that the student has an appointment. She pointed out that we do not want to provide students with an absence if they have not been treated. Konecky stated that the form does not document that the student has been treated.

Prochaska-Cue stated that the message sent to her indicates that the Health Center will continue to provide notes if students are truly contagious or impaired. The message continued that some professors require a form saying that they have gone to the Health Center and the form would validate the visit.

Ledder stated that it seems as if the Health Center is taking on a burden that they don't need to do. He suggested that the form have two boxes that could be checked. One would state that the student is contagious and the other would state that the student is too ill to function in class. Konecky noted that doctors will write on a prescription form that a student is unable to attend class due to an illness for students in the Lincoln Public Schools.

Rapkin stated that he is concerned that there is no mention of absences from an exam. He noted that the form should differentiate between missing a class and missing an exam.

Prochaska-Cue suggested that Dr. Guest, Director of the Health Center, be invited to speak with the Committee about the form.

## **6.2 APC Draft on Budget Reduction Document**

Prochaska-Cue reported that the APC approved their budget reduction document with some additions. She noted that she asked the Committee to include the word outreach in areas of the document where appropriate.

Bradford asked if the Senate is being asked to sign off on the document because he opposes it. Prochaska-Cue stated that the APC did not have further discussion on this.

Prochaska-Cue reported that the joint committee of APC and the Senate to review the Reduction in Force procedures has been put on hold. She noted that the APC will not have time to work on revising the document because they will be dealing with the budget cutting process since it has been invoked by the Chancellor.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:36 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, January 28th 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 David Rapkin, Secretary.