

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Fech, Flowers, Franti, Konecky, Konecky, Lindquist, Prochaska-Cue, Rapkin, Shea

**Absent:** Bolin, McCollough, Schubert, Stock

**Date:** Wednesday, July 8, 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.

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### **1.0 Call to Order**

Fech called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

### **2.0 Paul Savory, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Extended Education and Outreach, and Kristin Grosskopf, Distance Education Specialist**

Fech stated that the Committee recently heard about NU's Online Worldwide but didn't know much about it. Savory reported that Central Administration now has an office, Online Worldwide headed by Director Arnold Bateman to coordinate distance education across all four campuses. He stated that this office is working on: supporting the development of cross-disciplinary courses across the campuses, developing a website that will list all of the university's distance education courses, and developing a marketing plan. He reported that two committees, the steering committee and the marketing committee, have been created to work on the Online Worldwide project. There are also community of practice groups; the Instructional Design and Faculty Support and Student Services. These allow faculty and staff members who are involved in distance education programs and support services to participate and gives them a voice in strategic developments.

Fech noted that one of the concerns with the Online Worldwide project deals with intellectual property rights with distance education courses. Savory stated that the current Board of Regents' policy on intellectual property basically stated that course materials belong to the instructor that created them but the university retains the right to use the materials for free if the instructor leaves the university. Grosskopf pointed out that one of the tasks of the Instructional Design and Faculty Support group will be to review the current policy to see if it needs to be revised. She stated that the Student Services group will work to determine the best way to allow students to seamlessly apply for on-line courses.

Grosskopf noted that most of what is being proposed with the Online Worldwide project will not impact the way professors teach a course. She pointed out that most of what is being done is behind the scenes relative to building the website. The goal is to streamline

the experience of on-line courses for students. She stated that this includes how students obtain information about distance education courses and how to register for them. She noted that efforts to date have been about how to get everything up and running without taxing faculty members. She pointed out that the Instructional Design and Faculty Support allows faculty members to share ideas about distance education across the campuses, and that they are identifying issues, concerns and procedures that will then be taken to the Steering committee in the form of recommendations. (Please refer to the Online Worldwide newsletter for a complete listing of all committee members.)

Savory stated that the key committee is the steering committee. He pointed out that he, along with several other UNL faculty members (Larry Dlugosh, Education Administration and Joan Giesecke, University Libraries) are members of this committee. He noted that the focus of the steering committee is to tackle some of the major issues such as budgeting and strategic planning. He pointed out that any proposals that may be created will ultimately go back to the campuses for consideration.

Franti asked if the basic idea was to create a single portal for students to get information on distance education courses. Grosskopf stated that the project is an effort to bring together online courses for the university. She noted that recent marketing surveys show that our course quality perceptions are comparable to those at Penn State but our course recognition is very low. She stated that the idea is to make registering for our courses easier but links to departments will be provided that will provide more specifics about courses and departments.

Rapkin stated that he thinks that many faculty members feel that distance education courses are less demanding than on-campus courses. Savory disagreed and stated that he has been teaching on-line courses for five years. He pointed out that professors need to change their format for teaching because on-line courses call for a different paradigm.

Rapkin noted that some disciplines lend themselves better to distance education than others. Grosskopf stated that this seems to be the perception but most faculty members would be surprised to find out that this often is not in fact the case. She pointed out that previously it was believed that courses requiring laboratory work could not be done online but there are now practicums that can be proctored or done from a distance and some lab kits are available for students to purchase and use at home. Savory noted that what is considered appropriate for the course will need to be defined by the faculty member.

Savory stated that it was believed that conducting chemistry courses on-line was a challenge because many faculty members believe there needs to be a lab component; however, there is now another option. There is some software that replicates the lab experience online and lab kits can be purchased that can be used in the home. He noted that some of the new software being developed is actually somewhat better than actually being in a laboratory.

Grosskopf stated that how much time a student spends on line depends on the individual. She pointed out that some students enjoy spending more time on the computers while others are restricted due to time constraints. She stated that what is helpful with online courses is letting students know when an instructor will be checking email messages and using good assistants to help in responding to students' questions as one method that alleviates some of the time demands for faculty members, but that faculty members may differ on the degree to which they are comfortable with options like this.

Shea stated that it was indicated that some things might need to be changed in the intellectual property policy. He asked what changes would be desired. Savory stated that one thing that will need to be considered is whether the policy should be changed in regards to distance education material.

Shea stated that the intellectual property rights policy is critical and an area of concern for the faculty. He noted that we have an increasing number of non-tenured faculty members who work really hard on the courses they teach but these people can be let go on relatively quick notice. Savory replied that the default of the current policy is that the material belongs to the faculty member but the university could still use it.

Shea stated that the faculty needs to have input if changes are going to be made to the intellectual property rights policy. Fech noted that not just the Faculty Senate, but college curriculum committees should have input on any proposed changes to the policy.

Prochaska-Cue reported that current university procedures call for any faculty member who developed materials for a course to provide a copy of the course materials for the university. She pointed out that she is not sure whether this happens in most cases.

Lindquist noted that it was mentioned that funds are available for developing on-line courses. Savory stated that there are two sources of money for grants. He noted that the Online Worldwide project is looking particularly to create cross-campus programs. Lindquist asked if the funds were only for online courses. Savory replied yes and pointed out that the course must have an online component.

Lindquist stated that a question that has surfaced a number of times regarding online courses is how the tuition for these courses is distributed. He pointed out that there seems to be great variety in how this occurs. Savory agreed. Lindquist asked if there will be some uniform plan of distributing tuition income for all of the campuses so departments will know how much they will receive for their online courses. Savory reported that the Regents are in the process of approving a higher tuition rate for online courses. He noted that part of the money earned from this higher tuition will go to the online worldwide program but the remainder of it will go back to the department. He stated that at UNL the Chancellor's office takes a portion of the tuition dollars and then the remaining portion goes back to the college. Lindquist pointed out that with this system it's possible that the department that has the online courses will never receive any of the tuition income.

Grosskopf stated that data indicates that \$3500 could eventually make it back to the department as just one example of one student's program outlay. She would like to return to the committee with specific figures once any tuition variances have been approved. Savory noted that the goal is for departments to receive money so that these online courses can be maintained. He reported that last year \$600,000 was generated because of tuition differentials. He stated that the Chancellor took about 5% of this money but under the new proposed model more money will come back to the departments due to the increased tuition.

Linguist stated that there needs to be more transparency with how the money is distributed. He pointed out that faculty members will decide whether or not to do online courses depending on whether they see any funds coming back to their department. Grosskopf stated that the goal is to have transparency with the funds.

Shea pointed out that how things are done in colleges varies greatly. He stated that in order to make the online program work and be acceptable to the faculty there needs to be more uniformity with the distribution of the tuition funds. Prochaska-Cue agreed but pointed out that the first problem that needs to be dealt with is the different tuition rates for each of the campuses. Savory noted that the goal is to have one tuition rate for UNL, UNO, and UNK by the year 2012.

Grosskopf reported that, even if the tuition increase is approved by the Board, our rates for online courses will still be very competitive.

Fech thanked Savory and Grosskopf for meeting with the Committee and asked that they both keep in touch with the Senate on any changes that are occurring with online courses.

### **3.0 Announcements**

Fech reported that four candidates for the Director of the Multicultural Center are being interviewed. He announced that an office will be provided in the City Campus Union for the Student Peer Financial Education Center.

Fech reported that the Faculty Senate Presidents have been invited to have lunch with President Milliken on August 7<sup>th</sup>. Prochaska-Cue noted that the President might have specific things he wants to discuss but the Presidents can also bring up questions.

### **4.0 Minutes of 6/24/09**

Minor changes were made to the draft of the minutes that were distributed to the Committee.

### **5.0 Unfinished Business**

#### **5.1 Possible Ad Hoc Committee to Modify RIF Procedures**

Fech noted that previously the Committee met with Professors Bender and Eckhardt from the APC and discussed the possibility of forming an ad hoc committee to review and suggest possible modifications to the RIF procedures. He pointed out that there was not a quorum at the meeting and it was felt that the issue needed to be discussed more indepth.

Rapkin pointed out that a charge needs to be developed and asked what the timeline would be for the ad hoc committee. Fech suggested that changes be in place for the second part of the biennium. Prochaska-Cue stated that efforts should be made to complete the changes this fall.

Rapkin asked if the Chancellor's consent would be needed. Fech stated that he thinks it would be wise to have an administrative representative on the ad hoc committee along with two faculty members from the Senate, two from the APC, and 1 each from ASUN, UAAD, and UNOPA. Rapkin asked what level of administrator should be on the committee. Lindquist suggested that this should be decided by the Chancellor.

Franti asked if the APC has to initiate the change. Prochaska-Cue pointed out that the APC has initiated the change by asking the Senate to form the ad hoc committee.

Shea noted that he was on the previous committee that worked on trying to revise the RIF procedures. He pointed out that the suggested revisions at that time were more radical. He stated that it would be reasonable for the ad hoc committee to work with the existing document. He pointed out that if there is the opportunity for us to work on these procedures than we should do so. He stated that not working on the procedures would be a serious mistake. Fech agreed and stated that he feels compelled to try to do something with the procedures.

Fech noted that logistically the APC needs to have involvement with the committee because they are the group that is most actively involved with budget cuts.

Fech stated that he will meet with Professor Bender, incoming chair of the APC to develop a charge for the ad hoc committee.

## **5.2 Vice President Lechner's Response About Health Benefits**

Fech reported that there are 43 faculty members from IANR who will not benefit from the university's plan to absorb the increase in the health insurance. He stated that this creates an inequity for these people but VP Lechner disagrees.

Franti asked if these people ever had the option of transferring to the university's health plan. Prochaska-Cue replied, as someone who is on the federal health insurance plan, replied it is most beneficial for the employee if they are on the federal plan at least for the last five years of employment. She noted that there continues to be a difference as to what is contributed to the federal civil service retirement plan as well.

Fech noted that several attempts have been made to address this issue but we have not been successful. Shea suggested that the issue should be brought to the University-wide Benefits Committee as many times as needed.

Fech stated that he will contact Professor Hope, UNL's faculty representative on the University-wide Benefits Committee, and ask her to raise the issue with the committee.

## **6.0 New Business**

### **6.1 Search Committee for the Dean of the College of Journalism & Mass Communications**

Fech reported that he received a letter from SVC Couture proposing a list of members for the search committee for the Dean of the College of Journalism & Mass Communications. The Committee noted that the Regents Bylaws call for “the appointing officer shall choose from lists of faculty and students submitted respectively by the elected heads of faculty and student governments, provided that each such list shall be prepared in consultation with the appointing officer and shall contain a number of names which is at least twice the number of representatives to be chosen there from.” The Committee then worked on providing additional names for the SVC.

### **6.2 Possible Co-sponsorship of AFCON Conference**

Rapkin noted that AFCON is inviting Dr. Bill Ayers to speak at its conference this fall. He wondered whether AFCON has committed Ayers to speak on the same issues that the College of Education and Human Services were asking him to address. Fech stated that it is his understanding that Ayers is to speak about academic freedom.

Prochaska-Cue pointed out that the conference will be AFCON’s state meeting. She reported that AFCON is trying to determine what entails being a co-sponsorship of the event. She noted that the Senate is a member of AFCON. Griffin pointed out that the Senate Office has not received a statement for 2009 membership in AFCON so no membership fees have been paid.

Prochaska-Cue stated that she is concerned with academic freedom for the faculty and students in the College of Education and Human Services because they were not able to hear Ayers speak on issues that are relevant to their discipline. She suggested that the Executive Committee wait until AFCON defines what it means by co-sponsorship before making any decisions about whether to support AFCON’s fall conference.

Shea pointed out that the Senate was not asked to participate in the process of deciding who the guest speakers will be at the conference. He noted that this and other decisions were done before the Senate was informed of the conference. He stated that he objects in principle to organizations putting together an event and then asking someone to endorse it afterwards.

Lindquist asked if the Senate has ever co-sponsored the conference in the past. Griffin stated that she was not aware of any former co-sponsorship of a conference with AFCON. Lindquist questioned whether the only reason why the Senate was now being asked was due to the invitation of Dr. Ayers to speak.

Fech noted that the subcommittee that was created to look into the procedures of dis-inviting a guest speaker is expected to propose that an academic freedom conference be held at UNL. Rapkin stated that the committee is likely to recommend that a symposium be held.

Lindquist pointed out that the Senate has not been formally asked by AFCON to sponsor the event. Shea suggested that the Committee wait to see what AFCON determines as co-sponsorship before making any decisions.

### **6.3 Change in Membership of University Curriculum Committee (UCC)**

Fech reported that he has been contacted by Professor Walklin, chair of the UCC, about adding the Director of General Studies as a member. The Committee asked what the explanation is for adding this person. Fech stated that this was not provided in the request but he will inquire why the change is being requested.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, July 22nd at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in 201 Canfield Administration. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and David Rapkin, Secretary.