EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Fech, Flowers, Franti, Konecky, Lindquist, McCollough, Rapkin, Schubert, Shea, Stock

Absent: Bolin, LaCost, Prochaska-Cue

Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2009

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
Fech called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

2.0 John Parish, Manager, University Bookstore
Fech noted that he was contacted by Parish several weeks ago about meeting with the Committee to discuss several new marketing ventures that are taking place with the bookstore. He pointed out that cyberspace keeps changing things and the bookstore is working to incorporate these changes.

Parish reported that the textbook landscape is constantly changing and publishers are trying to regain their market share by creating a bundle of materials for courses. He stated that the bookstore needs to build a relationship with the faculty to determine what instructors need, and one way to do this is by the bookstore doing a better job of communicating with the instructors.

Parish stated that when the bookstore gets a bundle of materials for courses they break it down into separate items. He noted that the bookstore does this because students requests that this be done. Students are typically provided with a text book, access code, and DVD. He stated that students are often confused about what is required for a course and it would be helpful if instructors could clearly state what is needed on the course syllabus. He pointed out that sometimes what is listed on the syllabus does not correspond with what the bookstore has on the shelf and sometimes students wind up purchasing duplicate books. If this happens the bookstore tries to notify the students of their mistake.

Parish reported that the textbook market is moving towards digital versions. He stated that the Follett Higher Education Group, owner of the bookstore, has purchased CafeScribe. He stated that through this program textbooks are provided in a format that can be downloaded to a computer. He stated that once downloaded, the students can retain texts purchased through CafeScribe. He reported that CafeScribe allows students to instantly search for key terms, make notes in the margins, and allows for bookmarking.
and highlighting key passages. He stated that CafeScribe is on line and on the desktop. This allows for easy creation of study groups by students. He noted that digital textbooks are less expensive than printed texts.

Parish reported that there are now 51 titles in digital format at UNL. He noted that a new management textbook can cost $191 new, but a digital version if $114. He pointed out that the publisher receives money for the purchase of a digital text, but not when a used text book is purchased. He pointed out that digital textbooks are a great way to address the price of books for students. He noted that a recent survey of students shows that the number one priority for students is the price of a textbook.

Parish stated that rental of textbooks is another option but this is challenging for bookstores to handle because the bookstore must actually purchase the texts. Consequently to justify the cost, the bookstore would need to know that the text is going to be used for a considerable length of time. He stated that Follett is piloting a rental program in seven stores and the company is choosing texts that it feels have life and will be used for awhile. He pointed out that it is the company that is taking the risk with the rental program, not the individual campus bookstores. He stated that campus bookstores can still adopt specific titles if they feel that the book will be used for a lengthy time. He noted that rental programs do save students a lot of money.

Parish stated that he thinks value is very important for the students. If a textbook is ordered by an instructor and then not used, the students get upset. He pointed out that the bookstore really supports faculty members individually choosing the texts they want to use for a course. Shea asked if this isn’t what instructors always do. Parish stated that in some areas, the department chair or other faculty members decide what texts should be used for a course. Shea noted that it is irresponsible for faculty members not to consider the cost of a textbook for students.

McCollough asked what the rental price is for most books. Parish stated that the rental cost is about 45% of the cost of the book. McCollough noted that some students are going on-line to purchase or rent books. She asked if this is beneficial for students to do. Parish pointed out that students using this method of textbook purchasing need to make sure they have good communications with the on-line provider.

Konecky asked if the bookstore uses a similar method as Amazon in that the buyer can delete those items from a bundle they do not want. Parish reported that the bookstore cannot do this at this time.

Konecky asked if there is a list of all the currently available digital textbooks and whether the idea is to have a digital copy for all books. Parish stated that at some point this is the company’s idea but currently they are still competing with the publishers.

Parish reported that the bookstore pays about 11% of every sale to the university as rent.
McCollough noted that book buyers go directly to the faculty and they offer alternatives. She asked if there is any way for the bookstore to work directly with the faculty. Parish stated that other books could be available from UNL in digital format. He reported that money is earned from the on-line books. He pointed out that publishers need to be more forthcoming about what will happen with textbooks. He noted that the bookstore cannot take a used book and sell it along with an access code. He stated that it is sometimes in the student’s advantage to buy the bundle. He noted that the publishers have the access codes which they sell to the bookstore. McCollough asked if the bookstore can then sell the access code once they have purchased it from the publishers. Parish stated that this can be done. He pointed out that if the bookstore can make it cheaper for the students then it will try to do this.

Konecky asked how the purchase of rental or digital books works with the drop/add option for students. Parish stated that digital and rental purchases have the same policy as regular textbooks. Konecky asked if this would have applied last year. Parish stated that it would not. He pointed out that CafeScribe can turn off access to a digital text. He stated that there is a try now and buy later component to CafeScribe where a digital text can be downloaded for a week before a student purchases it.

Schubert asked how often a student can download a text that is purchased. He pointed out that people frequently change computer equipment and may need to reload the digital textbook to a new computer. Parish stated that it can be downloaded three times. He stated that he believes it can be put on a jump drive. Schubert pointed out that people will need someone to talk to in order to prove that you have access to a digital book. Konecky noted that upgrades are a factor that also needs to be considered.

McCollough stated that publishers don’t let instructors know when a new edition is coming out. This creates a problem for students in not being able to sell books back. Parish stated that the financial impact of this would be interesting to look at. He stated that book adoption and how the current and future student sees it can make a difference. He noted that he is very pleased with the level of book order compliance at UNL. He stated that there is a course materials program review which looks at how many book orders were submitted and provides other information. He pointed out that UNL is out-performing the grade, although he thinks we can do better.

Konecky noted that it is frustrating for students to buy a book for $100 and then only get $15 back on it. Parish reported that the average price for books is $60; to date 107,000 books have been sold for an average price of $57 which amounts to 0% increase in inflation from last year although inflation did hit the used book market. The inflation for used books is 7%. Konecky asked if the increase is dependent on the discipline. Parish stated that some disciplines have higher costs.

Rapkin pointed out that it is difficult to keep both the bookstore and the publishers happy. He stated that there are times when there is no reason to use a newer edition because some updates are so small and trivial to books. Parish stated that with digital textbooks
custom updates can be done which is less expensive for students but yet relevant material is provided.

Parish stated that as soon as an instructor indicates that they will be using the same book it is put into the computer system so students can sell them back. He stated that typically most campuses get half of the used books from students and the other half from other sources, but UNL is different because of Nebraska Bookstore. He pointed out that this creates a very competitive buy back situation. He stated that UNL students have the advantage of a 60% buyback. The industry is typically 50%.

Fech asked if there was a primer that could be shared with the faculty updating what the bookstore has been doing in regards to textbooks. Konecky stated that it would be helpful to faculty if they could be kept informed of upcoming changes the bookstore is doing with textbooks and programs to purchase them.

Parish stated that he would like to exchange information with the faculty but asked how this could be best accomplished. McCollough noted that when publishing company representatives met with the faculty in Arts & Sciences the meeting was packed with instructors. Schubert suggested specifying days when publishers representing specific disciplines will be on campus. Konecky stated that the faculty needs to know about the digital platform that is available. Parish reported that the company is working with Blackboard and in the future it might be possible to reference portions of books on Blackboard.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Outstanding Service to Students Leadership Award
Fech asked if everyone has received notification about nominations for the award. The Committee stated that the notice has been sent out to all faculty members.

3.2 Honorary Degree Awards
Fech reported that the Chancellor is endorsing all of the nominations approved by the Senate for honorary degrees.

Shea pointed out that the Senate has very little time to read over the biographies of the nominees at the Senate meeting. He stated that more time is needed in order for Senators to make an informed decision. Griffin noted that the process has been to give the Senate the biographies at the meeting in order to keep the nominees confidential. Konecky stated that nominees do not know that they are being nominated and it would be difficult to get a vitae on someone without notifying them of the nomination.

The Committee agreed to have a meeting with the chair of the Honorary Degrees Committee to discuss the process.

3.3 Embryonic Stem Cell Research Resolution
Fech noted that members of the Board of Regents have drafted a resolution calling for the university to adhere to the guidelines on stem cell research under the Bush
administration. He noted that this is in direct opposition to the resolution passed by all four of the UN campuses and with President Milliken’s and Chancellor Perlman’s stance on the issue.

Flowers stated that if the proposed resolution passes there will more than likely be resignations from UNMC, a significant loss of grant money to the university, and the impacts will be far beyond the UNMC campus. Fech pointed out that it will be seen by many as intrusion into the area of academic research.

4.0 Minutes of 11/11/09
Changes were noted for the November 11th minutes.

5.0 New Business
5.1 Research Misconduct Policy Motion
Lindquist asked if there has been a response back from the Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee on the policy. Fech stated that he will check again with the chair of ARRC.

Lindquist stated that he will send the administrators on the ad hoc committee Emeritus Professor McShane’s suggested revisions.

The Committee agreed to send a copy of the revised procedures to the Senate the week of December 1st.

5.2 Faculty Senate Participation
Griffin reported that she checked with Academic Affairs on the status of instructors in ROTC. She was informed that these instructors are not paid by the university and would therefore be considered adjunct faculty members. Konecky pointed out that adjunct faculty members are not considered part of the Academic Assembly as stated in the UNL Bylaws. The Committee agreed that ROTC does not qualify to have a seat on the Senate but should be given a representative to the Senate similar to UNOPA, UAAD, and ASUN.

5.3 Pay for Distance Education Courses
LaCost was unable to attend the meeting due to a change in the scheduling of a Ph.D. defense committee.

6.0 New Business
6.1 Executive Committee Spring Schedule
The Committee agreed to check with the Chancellor to see if arranged meetings could be held with him since he will be unavailable to meet with the Committee except for three times during the spring semester. Fech stated that he will contact the Chancellor to see if this could be done.

6.2 Replacements for Academic Planning Committee and Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee
The Committee discussed possible replacements for the spring semester for the Academic Planning Committee and the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, December 2nd 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.