EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bolin, Fech, Flowers, Franti, LaCost, Lindquist, McCollough, Prochaska-Cue, Shea, Stock

Absent: Konecky, Rapkin, Schubert

Date: November 4, 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.

1.0 Call to Order
Fech called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Perlman/VC Owens
2.1 Initiative for Senior Faculty Hires
Fech noted that a recent memo from SVCAA Couture encourages departments to take advantage of opportunity hires for senior faculty members. He asked if this is a new initiative or an on-going process. Chancellor Perlman noted that in his state of the university address he stated that the university should take advantage of opportunities to hire faculty who could lift the profile of the University if possible because we have been in a better financial position than many other universities. He reported that he informed the deans that if senior faculty members are located that could elevate the university the deans should let the Vice Chancellors know about it. He pointed out that justification and funding would be needed for such a hire and the individual would need to be engaged in conversations to determine whether he/she would be willing to move here. He stated that obviously not as many of these hires as once planned will take place now because of the financial situation of the state.

Shea said this process suggests that those who are here aren’t good enough. He pointed out that senior hires do not always work out as planned. He recommended the Chancellor be cautious with these opportunity hires because they can be hard on the morale of existing faculty members.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he would not frame it this way at all. He noted that some junior hires do not work out either. He pointed out that in some disciplines there are very talented faculty members but leadership and experience are needed in order for departments to know how they can maximize their opportunities. One way to do this is to find a senior professor who mentors younger faculty members and has the experience with a portfolio that would elevate an entire department. The senior faculty member can make a unit and the people in it look better.
Flowers stated that concerns expressed to him are with the timing of these hires given the gravity of the budget situation. He stated that this may not be the right time to hire. Chancellor Perlman agreed that it might not be as successful to hire now as compared to a couple of months ago. He stated that he knows that the faculty has to work hard to hire new people yet he does not see a good reason to not let this initiative go forward when possible.

2.2 Budget
Chancellor Perlman stated that he might have over-estimated the amount of the cuts in the second year of the biennium as reported at the November 3rd Faculty Senate meeting. He stated that the cuts might be approximately $4 ½ million this year and maybe $5 - $6 million next year but it is still too early to know for sure, and these figures are based on the Governor’s recommendations. He pointed out that there are a lot of discussions that will take place in the legislature and it is possible that the proposed cuts could change.

Lindquist asked if these amounts were just for the Lincoln campus or if they were for the entire university. Chancellor Perlman reported that they were for UNL only.

Flowers asked if there were any projections of how the financial situation may not improve. Chancellor Perlman reported that the stimulus package will be ending at some point and there will be some decline because these funds will not be available. He stated that if cuts are taken now we will preserve the cash reserve of the state but there is some interest to use the cash reserve. He stated that it is hard to predict whether the cash reserves will be needed later on. He noted that other opportunities for state revenue are up for discussion. Fech reported that he attended a town hall meeting on the budget and he was surprised to hear how many people supported removing the property tax relief.

Lindquist stated that there appears to be a change in philosophy by the legislature, as indicated by the way the cuts will be distributed. He asked if the university’s philosophy will also change. Chancellor Perlman stated that he guesses the university will begin by thinking of vertical cuts, but to a certain extent the reductions include across the board cuts. He stated that his instinct is to not assign everyone a percentage to cut.

McCollough asked if higher education is going to be the main target of budget cuts for the state. Chancellor Perlman stated that traditionally it has. He noted that the stimulus package has some provisions which were conditions to obtain the money for education and this may give us some protection.

2.3 Update on Deans’ Searches
Chancellor Perlman reported that there were 37 applicants for the Dean of the College of Journalism & Mass Communications; the search committee has reduced the field down to 12. The next step is to have these 12 candidates respond to a list of questions and on December 1st the search committee will discuss the responses and narrow the field down to the short list. He reported that on campus interviews should take place in January.
Chancellor Perlman stated that 32 applications were received for the Dean of the College of Law. The search committee has narrowed the candidates down to 6 and recommendations for the short list will be made in December with interviews to follow in January.

Chancellor Perlman reported that the list of candidates for the Dean of the College of Business Administration has been reduced to 8 and off campus interviews will take place in December to reduce the number of candidates down to the short list. He noted that a search firm is being used in this search.

2.4 Digital Tenure Dossiers
Fech reported that this issue was brought up by some Senate Presidents in the Big 12. He realizes that there are security issues but asked if this is currently being done here at UNL.

VC Owens stated that he does not know of any digital tenure files but the Electronic Annual Report of Faculty Accomplishments (e-ARFA) process is getting geared for this. He reported that there is a commercial organization called Digital Measures that does something similar to e-ARFA and it is possible that digital tenure dossiers could flow from their program. He noted that currently there is discussion about adopting the Digital Measures process for evaluating all the faculty members at UNL. He noted that e-ARFA costs a lot of money to operate. He pointed out that it would be better to have a uniform process across campus.

2.5 Issues on the Horizon
Chancellor Perlman reported that the new Student Information System (SIS) is moving along. He pointed out that the new system is going to cost us and this cost will need to be dealt with. He stated that the campus will need to remember that we had to develop a new system because the old system would no longer be serviced.

Chancellor Perlman stated that initially people may feel that the new system is not as good as the old system but the new system has the potential to be very good once components of it are up and running. He noted that the system is working and is being used by Admissions. He reported that UNL has had less difficulty with the new SIS than some other campuses, in part, due to the very hard work that people here have been doing on it.

Chancellor Perlman noted that there is a lot of information flowing around the campus regarding the NU Online Worldwide distance education program. He stated that he is supportive of it and feels it’s the way to go to expand our distance education program and to increase revenue. He pointed out that it will work better if there is an organized central system rather than doing courses department by department. He stated that people should continue to raise concerns because it remains a work in progress and it will take some time to bring it together and get into place. He reported that President Milliken supports the development of a systematic plan so campuses are aware of what will be going on with the program.
Chancellor Perlman noted that there has been some concern from units about revenue coming back to them from the distance education courses. He reported that the university is switching these funds from a revolving account to a state account and all distance education courses will be linked into the regular state accounts. This means that the funds will come to the campus in a general fund. He pointed out that a budget model will need to be developed that will create incentives for departments to participate in distance education. He reported that SVCAA Couture and VC Jackson are working on a budget plan that will be available for review at some point.

Chancellor Perlman acknowledged that currently things seem to be a bit ad hoc with the program but this is due to the fact that the decision to centralize the program was just recently made. He reported that Arnold Bateman, who is directing the program, will be having a retreat with campus academic administrators to discuss the program in December.

VC Owens reported that a review team was on campus to conduct the academic program review for Agricultural Economics. He noted that the review is being led by an economist with a national institute on food and agriculture and an exit report will be provided this week.

Professor Fech stated that he had a discussion with Dean Weissinger regarding the Board of Regents and efforts to bring forth a resolution restricting embryonic stem cell research. He noted that there is concern that such a resolution would interfere with academic freedom and meddles in academic research. He stated that the question is whether such a resolution would open the door to other academic restrictions. Chancellor Perlman stated that anytime a Board withdraws a university from conducting research within the mainstream of science there are impacts across the university. Academic freedom is a concern but the stem cell research raises different issues. He pointed out that he understands the conflict when moral and ethical beliefs conflict with the good of the university.

Fech asked if it is the Board’s role to infringe on academic freedom and research. Chancellor Perlman stated that there are a variety of regulations that dictate how research can be conducted and what materials can be used. He pointed out that there are many restrictions when using human subjects. He stated that he thinks academic freedom’s strongest protection is in publishing the research that one has done.

Shea noted that recent articles discussed plans on how Innovation Campus would be governed. He stated that the articles reported that four people from the private sector and three from the university would comprise the governing board. He asked what the role of this group will be and if Innovation Campus will really be a part of the university, should the majority of people on the governing board be from the private sector? Chancellor Perlman stated that there will be a governing board with a majority of the members being from the private sector. He stated that the reasoning for this is because it allows for more flexibility in conducting research and for getting funding. He noted that
Innovation Campus will operate under a master lease with the Board of Regents and there will be regulations in place that state that companies at Innovation Campus will have to maintain some kind of relations with the university and will have to adhere to university policies. He pointed out that the President and the Chancellor of the University will still control the board and if at any time they think the body is doing something contrary to the university they can stop it. He reported that appointments to the board will be subject to the Chancellor’s approval.

2.6 Summary of Faculty Interviews on SVCAA Couture’s 5 Year Review
The Committee discussed the summary of faculty interviews with the Chancellor.

Flowers stated that he still feels positive about the process that was used to conduct the review but suggested that a broader constituency should be considered. Chancellor Perlman reported that he is relatively comfortable with the process. He noted that there was a broader constituency of people interviewed who work with the SVCAA on a daily basis. He stated that he feels reasonably good that he got an accurate picture of people’s perceptions. Shea suggested that more faculty groups should be interviewed. The Chancellor noted that increasing the number of people interviewed will increase the cost of conducting the evaluation.

3.0 Announcements
No announcements were made.

4.0 Minutes of 10/28/09
Changes to the draft of the minutes of 10/28/09 were discussed.

5.0 Unfinished Business
5.1 Class Absence policy for Student Soldiers
Fech reported that he received an email message from Major Ford, ROTC, suggesting that the words “military training” be included in the student absence policy. He noted that Major Ford is concerned with mounting a campaign to educate instructors on the change to the policy.

Lindquist stated that the Committee should go forward with the language modification and bring it to the Senate. Flowers moved that the language “military training” be inserted into the student absence policy. The motion was seconded by Prochaska-Cue. The motion was approved.

6.0 New Business
6.1 Change in December Senate Meeting
Fech reported that the December Senate meeting will be changed to December 8th, at 2:30 in the City Campus Union, Auditorium. He noted that the main reason for the change is to allow time for the Budget Reduction and Reallocation Review Committee to complete work on revising the procedures for the December Senate meeting.
Fech stated that he spoke with one of the representatives from UNOPA and UAAD who felt that it was very helpful to have Associate to the Chancellor Poser at the meetings. Prochaska-Cue agreed and stated that the Chancellor is supportive in having representatives from these two campus organizations on the APC during the budget cuts. She reported that the Chancellor has suggested that a representative from UNOPA and UAAD be included in the upcoming round of budget cuts. She noted that this will at least have these groups involved throughout the process and this will give them the opportunity to at least know what is going on with the budget cuts.

6.2 Review of Senate Meeting
Franti wondered why there was no motion on the academic freedom recommendations. Fech stated that Professor Chouinard, Parliamentarian, suggested that a motion would probably not be made from the floor. Fech stated that he was wondering whether there should be a motion supporting a conference but is reconsidering this after discussions at the IANR luncheon. He noted that there were good suggestions on other ways to address the issue of educating people about academic freedom.

Shea stated that he is not sure whether the faculty feels that this is an issue. He noted that the suggestion of having a series of lecture on the issue might have greater impact than a conference.

Lindquist suggested tying in the James A. Lake Academic Freedom award presentation with a speaker to discuss academic freedom.

Lindquist stated that he will probably reword the motion on the Research Misconduct Policy to specifically identify the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Professional Conduct B policy and the current Research Misconduct Policy as being replaced by the new policy.

6.3 Closing of Libraries on Game Days
Bolin reported that the UNL Police specifically asked the Libraries to close the School of Music libraries and the School of Architecture library because of problems with drunk fans using the facilities. She pointed out that a number of buildings are closed because of previous problems.

6.4 Report on Deans and Directors Meeting
Fech reported that VC Jackson discussed changes as a result of the state auditor’s report on the purchasing card program. He stated that allowable items that can be purchased with the P cards will be reduced significantly and if a person has even just one violation the card will be pulled.

Fech stated that Diane Mendenhall, Executive Director of The NE Alumni Association spoke and reported that a booklet called the Cornhusker Campus is available to students who become a member of the Scarlet Guard (formerly the student alumni association). He noted that booklet contains a list of things students should do while being a student at the university.
Fech stated that a person from the Culture Center spoke and reported that the new multicultural center building was moving along and space allocation is now being made. Meeting rooms will also be available in the Center.

Fech stated that Assistant to the Chancellor Crump talked about search committee training changes. He stated that departments will be encouraged to have tiers of candidates rather than creating a numerical list of candidates. He reported that a minority person could not be moved from one tier to another tier just because there is no minority in one of the top tiers. The goal is to create a well qualified and diverse group of candidates.

6.5 Meeting with Interim Dean Berens
Fech reported that he met with Interim Dean Berens, College of Journalism and Mass Communications, to discuss whether there are protocols in place to deal with a situation of cancelling a guest speaker. He noted that Interim Dean Berens realized there was nothing in place and agreed that this needs to be worked on. Fech reported that they also discussed faculty success stories.

The Committee discussed getting members of the Threat Assessment Group to speak to the Executive Committee about possible actions that can be taken in regards to the academic freedom recommendations.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:41 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, November 11 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.