

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Fech, Flowers, LaCost, Lindquist, McCollough, Prochaska-Cue, Rapkin, Schubert, Shea, Stock

Absent: Bolin, Franti, Konecky

Date: October 7, 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 3:03 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Article in Lincoln Journal Star

Fech noted that today's Lincoln Journal Star had an article on the research and teaching work being done on apples by an extension agent. He pointed out that this is the kind of success story and public value to Nebraskans that the Senate wants to convey to the Office of University Communications as mentioned at the October 6th Senate meeting.

3.0 Minutes of 9/30/09

Changes were made to the minutes.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 VC of IANR Search Committee

The Committee discussed possible candidates for the search committee. The list of candidates will be provided to the Chancellor.

4.2 Professor Hope – Report on University-Wide Benefits Committee Meeting

Professor Hope reported that recently the University-Wide Benefits Committee met. She noted that the U-Wide Committee is made up of representatives from each of the four campuses and includes administrators from Central Administration. She pointed out that it is considered an advisory board only.

Professor Hope noted that the Senate Executive Committee had asked her to raise a number of issues with the U-Wide Committee. She stated that the first regards what occurs when someone goes on disability. She noted that the white paper written by professors from the Business College of UNO reported that it is devastating for employees to go on disability pay because they are put into the health insurance pool for retirees. She reported that Ketih Dietze responded to the white paper with an analysis that shows a better outcome, in part because most people sign up for Cobra coverage

because it is less expensive and if someone is severely disabled they can go into the social security system. Professor Hope stated that another issue is with health insurance. She reported that if an employee goes on disability, he/she would only get health insurance for themselves, not for their family. Fech asked what would happen if a person's family is dependent on the employee. Professor Hope stated that it is her understanding that the employee could still get coverage but the dependents would not. She stated that the UNO faculty members who wrote the white paper are going to investigate this response from Keith Dietze.

One detail that came out of the white paper was that there is a provision with the disability insurance. She reported that if you also get income from some another source such as social security, it is subtracted out of the amount you receive as long term disability pay so you would still receive just 66% of your income. Professor Hope reported that many members of the U-Wide Benefits Committee were unaware of that provision and felt most faculty and staff members were likely unaware as well.

Flowers noted that people who have invested into the disability program may not be clear what they are actually getting into. Professor Hope pointed out that if an employee is getting closer to retirement age it may not be cost effective to purchase the long term disability insurance. She stated that the benefits are very complicated and not easy to make sense out of on our own. She suggested that everyone should meet with one of the benefits personnel to figure out what kind of coverage they should get.

Professor Hope reported that she asked the U-Wide Committee about extending the time for claims from the health care reimbursement account. She reported that Central Administration will not extend the time period because it is required by federal regulations that money be in the account in January for those who might need to use it early in the year, even if they then leave employment and no longer contribute, leaving a deficit in the account. She noted that more people on the U-Wide Committee were interested with this issue this time and the administrators stated that they would present figures on the health care reimbursement account later. She stated that the argument from administrators is that if the time is extended for filing claims, it does not really help. She noted that it is hard to get Central Administration to provide the data on the health care reimbursement account but this information should be available. Prochaska-Cue noted that the account must be balanced at the end of the year so data should be available. She stated that information needs to be provided on whether people are leaving a small amount in the account or whether they are leaving large amounts in it. Professor Hope stated that the U-Wide Committee wants to see the numbers on this as well.

Professor Hope noted that the Executive Committee asked her to inquire about a health savings account rather than the health reimbursement account. She reported that if a person has the low option health care they can have a health savings account set up through their bank. She pointed out that this option is better for healthy people rather than those with existing health conditions. She stated that people would spend less on health care insurance but should keep their own savings for needed health care costs. Keith Dietze stated that it would not be cost effective for the university to have such

accounts because it creates an adverse selection situation that makes it difficult to fund the current system.

Professor Hope reported that a ROTH IRA account would be considered an option for the supplemental retirement and Varner Hall has been looking into this but noted that the ROTHs are probably going to be eliminated because the government is losing money on them when they are paid out. She noted that with supplemental retirement you pay an income tax on it when the money is put in but not when you take it out. Fech stated that he thinks a ROTH IRA exists through TIAA-CREF.

Professor Hope noted that LB 551 extends health care coverage for children up to the age of 29, but the bill states that employers could make those who have this insurance pay more for it. She stated that in some cases the cost could be \$400 or more a month and this would be in addition to what an employee already pays. She pointed out that a number of criteria must be met in order to have this coverage and if it is ever dropped for the child, you could not reinstate them. Fech asked if the child can be covered if they are a student out of state. Professor Hope pointed out that this is true only if they maintain their Nebraska residency. She noted that people had hoped that the legislature would have written the bill to just extend the coverage that is provided until age 24, but the state did not write it this way.

Professor Hope stated that there is a law called Michelle's law which states that a student can continue health care coverage for 12 months if they drop out of school. The university has made the changes to meet the requirements of that law.

Professor Hope noted that President Milliken recently sent a letter out about health risk assessment and what can be gained by participating in it. She stated that it took some time to get this created. She stated that Blue Cross/Blue Shield already has a lot of the information about our health so it is helpful that they are conducting the HRA rather than having to share health information with a third company. It is promised that only group information will be reported and it will be used for wellness programming. Prochaska-Cue pointed out that there is a potential privacy concern with the health risk assessment program that people need to consider.

Professor Hope reported that the people involved in the Wellness Program are very excited about the health risk assessment program because it will allow them to build campus programs to help improve the health of people.

Professor Hope reported that life insurance is changing. She stated that employees are going to get an increase in life insurance without any cost. She noted that for most people it is a big benefit.

Professor Hope stated that the university is dropping the accidental death and dismemberment program because not many people are enrolled in it. She noted that having life insurance is more advantageous. She reported that the categories for life

insurance will be simplified. She noted that as people get older it is more difficult to get life insurance.

Fech stated that the Executive Committee appreciates the service of Professor Hope to the U-Wide Benefits Committee very much.

Prochaska-Cue pointed out that accidental death and reimbursement insurance is generally not a good buy. She stated that this kind of insurance is very profitable to insurance companies but they don't pay out much to those that are enrolled in it. She stated that it is much better to have the best general medical coverage that one can get.

4.3 Parking

Fech reported that he has received a response from everyone but ASUN regarding parking concerns. He stated that we largely received support from UNOPA and UAAD about our concerns, but UNOPA President Peg Johnson pointed out that we cannot do anything about the eventual loss of parking at 17th & R Street, but the Senate should continue to remind the Chancellor of the impacts the loss of parking is having on faculty and staff.

Shea pointed out that there are bigger issues than just the loss of parking. He stated that the Committee should ask why parking garages are not considered part of the infrastructure of the university and why the university does not help pay for part of this infrastructure rather than putting the burden on the permit holders. He noted that he still believes that lower paid employees should not have to pay so much for a parking permit. He pointed out that we should not give up on the parking issue because it is an issue that concerns many faculty members and staff.

Shea noted that he has been told that faculty members from east campus can park in the garages on city campus. He stated that he does not understand why all area A permit holders cannot park in the garages. A handout from a meeting in 2007 with VC Jackson and Associate VC Phelps showed that 50% of the cost of a parking permit goes to debt repayment.

McCollough stated that it would be interesting to see if there are any other alternatives to paying off the debt for the building of the garages besides the cost for parking permits. Schubert stated that we should raise the issue of area A permit holders being allowed to use the parking garages.

Prochaska-Cue questioned whether Parking & Transit Services receives all of the money that is brought in during athletic events. Fech stated that he thinks some of it goes towards cleaning up after the games. Schubert stated that he talked with a high school student several years ago who stated that groups did volunteer work to clean the stadium. LaCost noted that some years ago she would see a lot of young people cleaning the stadium but now announcements are being made in the stadium asking for people to pick up their trash and she does not see any groups cleaning up. She stated that paying for the cleaning of the stadium should be separate from parking.

Fech stated that the Committee will raise the issues of parking with the Chancellor at the next meeting with him.

4.4 Discussion with Dean Waller on the Life Sciences

Fech reported that he had a good discussion with Dean Waller on the life sciences. Fech noted that Dean Waller had stated that no committees were in place yet (at the time of the interview), although he believed that committees were to be formed quickly. He noted that Dean Waller feels very strongly that the curriculum is the purview of the faculty. Fech reported that Dean Waller feels that balance is needed across the different life sciences, including the social sciences.

Fech stated that Dean Waller noted that programmatic initiatives that join faculty members are much better than any forced moves. He noted that there is good communication occurring amongst all parties. He reported that Dean Waller is not sure whether uniform evaluation procedures will work well for all units, but he knows that having external letters will be helpful. Shea stated that as long as the number of external letters required is under control the evaluation process should be fine. He stated that he is concerned with the proliferation of external letters and noted that if the required amount of external letters continues to increase, there is a greater chance of getting letters critical of a faculty member's performance which could impact a person getting promoted or receiving tenure. Lindquist pointed out that on SVCAA Couture's website it now states that at least three external letters are needed.

Lindquist stated that the Committee needs to send a letter to the Chancellor explaining the concerns faculty members have on the life sciences initiative. He stated that he would draft a letter and send it to the Committee for comments.

McCollough stated that she has heard concerns about the top committee for the life sciences having appointed members. She pointed out that the core facilities need to be clarified. Lindquist explained that the core facilities would have some of the high tech equipment located in one place and faculty members can go there to have tests run but at a cost. Shea noted that a concern is how the pricing for this testing will be determined. He pointed out that at some places this is expensive. An example is the cost of analysis for a water sample can cost \$160 each and some research projects require hundreds of samples. He questioned whether the core facilities would be self supporting and whether the university should be providing some basic support for these facilities. He noted that, in principle it makes sense to have a core facility, but the cost could make it prohibitive to many faculty members. He stated that this issue needs to be discussed.

Schubert stated that he has heard that core facilities in physics gets some funding from the Office of Research and if people use the core facility for experiments it will be charged against grants. He pointed out that a percentage of overhead from the grants gets turned back to the Office of Research. He noted that principal investigators on research projects that require specialized, high tech equipment often worry about how to maintain some of these machines and hope that the university will help take on this task.

McCollough pointed out that there should be faculty involvement in the core facilities advisory board. Schubert agreed and stated that administrators should not be on this board.

Lindquist asked if the faculty should have a role in identifying who should be on the executive committee. Schubert stated that the faculty should have the power to put people on this committee.

Lindquist asked if the Committee had concerns regarding the hiring plan as mentioned in the life sciences white paper. Shea stated that he disagreed with Dean Manderscheid's comments that the deans should control the hiring plan. He stated that the faculty should control this. Stock asked what is considered a hiring plan and asked if deans have the right to determine hiring priority. Shea asked if it is wrong to assume that departments should decide their hiring plan. Stock reported that his department weighs its hiring plan all of the time. Rapkin pointed out that the hiring plan is part of the strategic plan and faculty members should be involved in it, but control over finances cannot be wrested away from administrators.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Review of Senate Meeting

Fech reported that he received an email message from Professor Bryant, chair of the committee that reported on the cancellation of Dr. Ayers' visit to campus, expressing disappointment that no motion was made at the Senate meeting to either accept the report or to accept the recommendations. Fech stated that he spoke with Past President Prochaska-Cue and agreed that the focus of the report needs to be on the recommendations. He pointed out that because a motion wasn't made at that particular meeting does not mean that we do not want to bring anything forward on the recommendations of the report.

Shea stated that he thought there was open discussion about the report at the Senate meeting that allowed people to express their views. He pointed out that it was a lengthy document that was received just a few days before the meeting and people need time to read it and to think it through.

Rapkin noted that there were complaints with the ideological balance, but not the thrust of the report. He stated that there was no discussion on what to do now that the report has been presented. He stated that we need to focus on the proposals. Shea stated that he thinks we should definitely take the recommendations to the next stage. Stock agreed and stated that we need to move beyond the report.

Shea asked if a report has to be accepted before any actions can be taken with it. The Committee agreed that it is not necessary to accept the report, but it does want to make motions on the recommendations.

Prochaska-Cue suggested prioritizing the recommendations perhaps by what the Senate can do itself and what recommendations need to be done in collaboration with the administration. She pointed out that they are all very good recommendations.

The Committee agreed to work on this next week.

The Committee noted that a resolution calling for the Board of Regents to continue its current policy about following federal guidelines on stem cell research was approved by the Senate. The Committee agreed that a copy of the resolution needs to go to the Board of Regents, the Chancellor, President Milliken, and to UNMC.

5.2 Govern Announces Special Session

Flowers reported that the Governor is considering calling a special session of the legislature to discuss the budget. He stated that President Milliken has sent a message to the campuses stating that he will be meeting with the Chancellors to discuss steps that should be taken to reduce the budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, October 14 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.