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

Absent: **Bolin, Prochaska-Cue, Schubert**

Date: **Wednesday, September 23, 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   Chief Information Officer Mark Askren
          Fech stated that the Committee has some questions regarding Information Services (IS). McCollough stated that one of the questions has to do with passwords and why we need to have so many different passwords to access different university systems. CIO Askren agreed that it is challenging to remember so many different passwords. He noted that Information Services is putting renewed effort into implementing a single sign-on infrastructure, but we are not at the point yet of being able to implement it. He pointed out that there are some key systems on the UNL campus and some from Central Administration and we need access to both.   He stated that Central Administration and the UN CIOs are moving in a good direction with discussions on this issue.

          CIO Askren stated that he is meeting with Information Technology (IT) and key stakeholders to discuss information technology issues on campus. He noted that a best practice is to move to single sign-on but this might not be possible with all systems, but he believes that at least 80% of our systems could be accessed through a single sign-on password. He stated that some of our systems have been set up with using NU ID numbers as the password but that this is not a good security practice. He noted that the campus is going to move away from using the NU ID as a password but Central Administration seems to be moving towards this use.

          CIO Askren stated that in a recent meeting of Chief Information Officers it was suggested getting a federated identity management system. He stated that such a system will help bring some order to passwords.

          Fech stated that another concern is with storage on servers. Flowers noted that this issue was raised in the consultants' and Computational Services and Facilities' reports. The question is how to space servers around the campus to handle the need of computing and where to locate these servers in facilities that can handle the environmental needs of the

equipment. He pointed out that there are also security issues, especially if servers are placed off campus.

CIO Askren stated that there are a lot of concerns in regards to servers: security, disaster recovery, the cloud, and shared storage and how it all fits are some issues that need to be addressed. He stated that part of the challenge is how to help IT operations focus on what is a commodity issue and what is strategically important for the campus. He pointed out that having a completely centralized IT model doesn't work effectively, but neither does having a bunch of individual islands of servers. He stated that the challenge is to figure out the middle ground.

CIO Askren stated that shared storage is a commodity. He noted that most of us need very generic shared storage and there is a need to make this cost effective. He reported that he has heard from some areas of the campus that they will need to buy their own storage or IS will have to provide it. He stated that the shared storage commodity service needs to be well supported by the CIO and the IS department.

CIO Askren reported that disaster recovery is usually less adequately funded by tier 1 institutions. He stated that he is in the process of reviewing our current recovery plans. He noted that he is a stickler on security and disaster recovery. He stated that from what he has seen so far, we need to further improve our disaster recovery efforts. He reported that IS is going to be working on shared storage solution for implementation around the holidays and thinks it will be very cost effective, probably about $10 a gigabyte.

CIO Askren stated that there are excellent solutions for implementing virtual servers and both IS and others on campus have had good luck with this. He stated that virtual servers are better for security and efficiency, and that this technology is here to stay. He reported that this service will be provided but storage is needed for it. He stated that the network here is good but it needs to be revisited. He noted that the storage charge is irritating some people on campus, particularly the wireless access charge. The whole issue of how best to fund the network and associated user charges are under review. McCollough stated that she has heard that the concern with virtual servers is that they require a lot of maintenance. CIO Askren stated that it depends on what the virtual server is used for. He pointed out that it is not the solution for everything, but that it is very effective for many server needs.

CIO Askren stated that one of his concerns is that the IT leaders distributed throughout the campus do not meet regularly. He stated that he wants to propose more dialogue for the IS leaders on campus to talk about significant strategic and operational computing issues.

Fech asked at what level will computing purchases be integrated. CIO Askren reported that he has had initial discussions about the issues involving technology procurement. He stated that he has not seen as much focus yet at UNL on improving IT vendor contracts, and strategic sourcing is where some real money can be saved and needs to be a very high priority. He noted that a two-fold approach addressed this problem with the

University of California system. He reported that the UC system hired a professional strategic sourcing expert and wound up saving $5 to $10 million throughout the University of California system. He stated that we need to go back and see where better deals can be found with vendors. He noted that we may be paying educational retail in some cases but we can get even better rates. He stated that he is in favor of computing purchases being distributed where appropriate. He pointed out that our real concern is making sure we are getting our money's worth and he believes we can get better deals from the vendors.

Fech noted that the consultants' report on computing at UNL pointed out a number of areas of improvement for the campus. He asked CIO Askren what his goals and priorities are in respect to this report. CIO Askren stated that we are going to drill deeper on some of the things mentioned in the report, which he said has a lot of value. He stated that one thing that needs to be done is to really listen to what the campus needs and to work on this. He stated that there is value in the organizational structure but some restructuring of IS is needed. He noted that client services are mentioned in the report. He stated that enterprise architecture is very important and we are missing a security officer which he is going to address. He pointed out that we are fortunate that we haven't had any major breaches in security, but that implementing and maintaining best practices in this area is essential.

CIO Askren stated that an enterprise architecture is like a technology road map. He stated that we need to look forward and determine what is important to us and then we need to develop a strategic plan. He reported that he will work together with both IS department and IT leaders throughout UNL to develop this approach. He noted that it can take time to develop an enterprise architecture but that it is worth the effort. He pointed out that the world of information technology is changing at an ever increasing rate, and having an enterprise architecture will allow us to be more cost effective.

Griffin asked if having an enterprise architecture would alleviate such problems as having two different offices telling you to use two different levels of internet explorer. CIO Askren stated that the architecture would help alleviate these problems. He stated that the missing piece right now on campus is that there needs to be a dialogue going on so different parties on campus are in sync. He stated that an enterprise architecture group can inform people and tell them what the basic points are and would provide needed updates. He noted that security needs to be updated continuously.

Franti asked what the cloud is that CIO Askren mentioned. CIO Askren stated that the cloud is the concept of the internet having a service out there that is being delivered, but that you aren't involved or even aware of how that service is being provided. With cloud storage you often don't know specifically where that information is located, and that can cause concerns if the data is sensitive. The cloud offers an alternative that can be quite cost effective. It is being used quite often for email and other services and is a major growth area within the IT industry.

CIO Askren stated that a question being asked is why the university even has an email system. Why not just use gmail? He stated that the speed of the internet is so fast now and widely available, operations are continually popping up with offers like gmail, and they can be seductive because they are free or at least very low cost. He stated that the question is for email systems in particular, what are the institutional risks for universities with data that they don't control locally? He stated that within higher education campus attorneys are involved in the discussion to determine if contractual safeguards are in place, and to specifically address issues such as who is responsible for costs associated with security incidents. The fact that solutions are out there as alternatives is very positive, and that this type of cloud service can be quite effective.

He noted that IT resources for universities are generally flat, but the demand continues to rise with a continual high rate of change within the IT industry. The problem is how do we fill the gap? He stated that perhaps this could be done through the cloud but how far you go with it is a real question that needs to be answered.

Konecky pointed out that the cloud is reliant on having access to the internet. She asked how CIO Askren views campus internet access and how reliant it is. She pointed out that you need a good, fast system in place or the cloud won't work. CIO Askren stated that we have very good and efficient connectivity, but the model for funding is inadequate and is causing some friction. He stated that he can understand these concerns, and that it is important that we have a funding mechanism that is equitable and that doesn't create technology disincentives.

CIO Askren stated that the student technology fees are handled very well. He stated that the incorporation of Blackboard is very effective and that UNL is a leader within higher education IT in areas like these.

CIO Askren stated that those who work in IT worry about security and systems reliability on an ongoing basis. He stated that IS needs to support the research and academic mission of UNL by making sure that our computing system is secure and robust.

Shea stated that the new student email system was put into place and he heard concerns that after a period of time any information becomes the ownership of Microsoft property. CIO Askren stated that he would look further into the details of the contract and will get back to the group on this, but that users own their email and attachments while the vendor owns the systems code. He stated that he has heard these concerns before and again, it relates back to the cloud issue. He stated that this would be a significant issue requiring thorough analysis if the faculty and staff were to use a similar email system. He noted that universities have been very careful about their contracts with vendors in regards to security. The most important issues with vendor involvement with university data is to ensure that we will be well protected, that the data dissemination will be under control of the university, and that we will be informed immediately if there are ever any breaches.

Fech thanked CIO Askren for meeting with the committee. He suggested that CIO Askren come to a full Senate meeting to quell rumors and provide explanations to the

faculty. CIO Askren stated that he would be happy to meet again with the Committee and also with the Senate. He stated that he needs to be engaged with the faculty in order to learn about the issues that impact them. He stated that he would really appreciate any feedback (maskren2@unl.edu or 2-4242) on an ongoing basis.

3.0   Announcements
No announcements were made.

4.0   Minutes of 9/16/09
Changes to the minutes were submitted by Rapkin and Lindquist.

5.0   Unfinished Business
5.1   Life Sciences White Paper
Fech stated that he found a few things in the paper that might come out fine, but there are some other things that are open to interpretation that would not give faculty control over the curriculum.

Lindquist pointed out that the Executive Committee of the Faculty of Life Sciences ought to be elected. He suggested having a list of friendly amendments ready to give to the Chancellor when the Committee meets with him on October 21st.

Griffin asked if there is a list of departments that constitutes the life sciences. Lindquist stated that he is not aware of any list. He pointed out that initially the life sciences review team was intended to review the molecular life sciences, but it seems the faculty of life sciences would involve much more than this.

Rapkin asked what the size of the school of life sciences is compared to other schools. Lindquist stated that there is no school. This would be a faculty of life sciences and it is not clear how big it might be. He stated that it needs to be defined who will be involved in the life sciences.

Rapkin stated that most departments have elections to decide who will be on an Executive Committee. Franti noted that there is a group of voluntary faculty members involved in environmental engineering and from this group, several faculty members are designated to the Executive Committee. He questioned whether the Chancellor was looking to use something like this as a model.

Fech asked if membership in the life sciences is at will.

Shea noted that a mechanism for deciding the faculty core group is not described in the paper.

Shea stated that it looks like a task force has been formed to develop the curriculum and there is the appointment of an Executive Committee but these look like administrative appointments.

Flowers stated that if the Executive Committee is a group that will determine issues, it would be better if it is an elected group of faculty members.

Rapkin stated that there should be a focus on improvement and merit but wondered where these functions are located in the paper. Shea noted that faculty members would still have positions in academic units. He questioned how faculty members would be evaluated on their participation in the life sciences.

Lindquist noted that the core curriculum initiative is not to create a new degree program. He stated that it is an effort to standardize the core courses that students would be required to take in the life sciences. Shea stated that it would be like colleges where students would be required to take certain courses. Franti noted that there is an interdepartmental degree in engineering that faculty members have volunteered to be part of and some core courses must be taken by students, but then they can choose other courses. He pointed out that the faculty members have agreed to the core courses.

Lindquist stated that this is exactly what they are trying to do with the life sciences but some faculty members are uneasy about having a single core for all of the life sciences. Some faculty are concerned that these courses will be so oriented and specific to a particular subject that students who are not majoring in that subject won't do well in the course, or may get less from it than from another course.

Franti noted that this brings up the point of standards for education. Lindquist stated that this is the intent of this effort. Shea stated that he is in favor of this to a degree but he is concerned with where this will lead and how faculty governance can be maintained in terms of setting the curriculum, particularly if the faculty members selected for the Executive Committee are handpicked. He stated that the committee needs to find out more details about the process. He stated that the faculty should develop the curriculum. He noted that he does not have a problem with the administration organizing the effort, but the process that is used and where it leads is a concern.

Lindquist stated that we need to know if a committee has been formed and if so, who is on it so that we can follow its progress. Fech stated that he will contact Deans Manderscheid and Waller to talk with them about it since they have been appointed to begin the efforts on the curriculum.

Shea stated that another committee being put together is the core facilities advisory committee. He wondered how this was being put together. Flowers pointed out that the roles of the committees are a concern as well. Shea noted that the plan is have the core facilities advisory committee in place by October 2009 and protocols developed for implementation no later than January 2010. He noted that the white paper goes on to discuss hiring and developing hiring plans.

Fech stated that he will report back to the Committee about the information he gets from Deans Manderscheid and Waller.

5.2   Five Year Review of SVC Couture

Shea stated that he is very disappointed that he and Fech were not provided any kind of report on SVC Couture's activities as had been requested. He noted that he requested it last week and was informed by the Executive Assistant to the Chancellor that his request would be forwarded to the Chancellor. He stated that he received a note that the Chancellor plans to share something with the Senate Executive Committee at the appropriate time. He asked how a fair evaluation can be given if we don't see the documents needed to do an assessment. Rapkin pointed out that there does not seem to be a requirement that administrators have to put forward portfolios like faculty members have to do.

Franti stated that this evaluation process is flawed and faculty members and others should refuse to be interviewed if the needed information is not provided. Shea stated that this is a concern that needs to be discussed with the Senate. He stated that the faculty needs to decide whether a policy should be put in place requiring that faculty members have access to these reports so they can be informed and give a fair evaluation of an administrator.

The Committee agreed to discuss the issue with the Chancellor on the 21st.

5.3   Public Awareness of UNL Faculty – Form

Fech noted that he made the changes requested by the Committee. He stated that the form will be available for use at the October 6th meeting.

5.4   Results of Committee on Committees Voting

Griffin reported that she received the necessary votes of the Senate to approve the appointment of Professors Erbe and Williams to the Committee on Committees.

5.5   Ayers Dis-Invitation Committee Progress

Rapkin noted that the Committee interviewed a variety of people across the campus and gathered the information from these interviews to write the report. A draft of the report was then sent to all members of the Committee and to key people that were interviewed: President Milliken, Chancellor Perlman, Chief of Police Yardley, and Professor Scalora. He stated that several of them had concerns with the original report so the report was written deleting some of the objectionable parts. He stated that a new draft will be out on Friday and he anticipates the final report should be ready on Monday. He stated that Professor Peterson will present the report at the Senate meeting. He stated that a list of recommendations will be included in the report. Stock suggested that a summary statement along with the recommendations be provided along with the report since it is a lengthy document.

6.0   New Business

6.1   Possible Senate Resolution

Item postponed until next week due to lack of time.

6.2   Status of RIF'd Employees
Fech stated that he spoke with Director of Institutional Research & Planning Bill Nunez and Professor Bender about the status of the 18 people that have lost their job due to the budget cuts. He stated that Director Nunez provided information that shows that three people are retiring and one is considering retirement but the other 14 have been unable to find a job.

6.3   Comments on the APC Budget Reduction Hearing
Fech stated that comments were made regarding the elimination of administrative stipends for the coordinators in Ethnic Studies in the College of Arts & Sciences. He reported that this involves three coordinators and a director. He reported that there was considerable discussion on this. Rapkin noted that there has been a lot of talk about building up courses on China yet no resources are being provided.

Shea noted that good arguments were made to keep the stipends. He pointed out that the College of Arts & Sciences has a $250,000 budget reduction which will mostly be handled by not filling open positions. He noted that the stipends for the coordinators are minimal.

Fech stated that there was also a hearing on the combining of three departments in the College of Engineering. He noted that some of these departments have low enrollment. Shea pointed out that the faculty does not seem against combining the units and indications are that it would have happened even if there was not a budget crunch.

Fech noted that there was not much discussion on the cuts to the IANR technical support staff. Lindquist stated that this is not surprising given that no one has been identified yet for losing a job. Shea noted that apparently there are a lot of open positions that could be left unfilled to cover the budget reduction. His understanding is that the decision to cut people will be made at the department level depending on how the department wants to implement the cut.   He pointed out that to his knowledge these decisions are usually made by unit administrators rather than by faculty.

Fech stated that Professor Keown pointed out during the hearing that some of these technicians will be difficult to put on grant money because the job that they do typically doesn't qualify for any grants.

The Committee agreed to ask the Chancellor about the search committee to replace VC Owens who will be retiring at the end of June.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, September 30th 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.