

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Anaya, Berg, Fech, Flowers, Lindquist, Nickerson, Shea

Absent: Franti, Konecky, LaCost, McCollough, Schubert, Stock

Date: Wednesday, December 1, 2010

Location: 201 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

Lindquist called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Perlman

2.1 Update on College of Engineering Dean's Search

Chancellor Perlman reported that a list of candidates is being developed by the consultant and this list should go to the search committee by the end of the year. He noted that it is intentional that this search trails the search for the SVCAA because it will be helpful to all concerned to know who will be the new SVCAA.

Lindquist asked when the new SVCAA will begin working at UNL. Chancellor Perlman stated that this will depend on the individual who gets hired. He pointed out that some of the candidates may have commitments that they must keep before starting a position here.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he hopes to make a decision on the SVCAA before the holiday closedown. He pointed out that the last candidate will be on campus next week and then he will be leaving for China for 10 days. He hopes that people will express their views on each of the candidates. He stated that the evaluations will be collected and organized and will be ready for him to review upon his return. He stated that he hopes to bring the selected person and his/her spouse in after the first of the year.

2.2 Issues on the Horizon

Chancellor Perlman noted that there have been some conversations regarding the growth of administration versus faculty so he asked Associate to the Chancellor Nunez to gather this information. He distributed two charts and stated that the figures are data for tax supported positions (faculty, administrators, managerial/professional and office/service) only, and does not include positions on grant funding or other non tax supported positions such as those in athletics. He noted that a five year and ten year analysis was done starting from the 2000-01 fiscal year. He reported that the charts show that there was a significant decline in the 2004-05 fiscal year due to the budget cuts in 2003 but shows a gradual increase in faculty and administrators with faculty having the greatest increase.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he was encouraged to see that the faculty numbers show an increase, but he thought that the administration had been built up more than it actually has. He pointed out that over the ten year period 52 faculty positions were replaced plus an additional 24 positions were added.

Chancellor Perlman suggested that the Executive Committee look at the charts and determine whether more information needs to be provided. He noted that the administration is starting to look for ways to deal with budget cuts. He pointed out that there may be vacant faculty positions that are being held by colleges that really do not reflect faculty growth but are used for other purposes. He noted that the practice of using funds from a vacant position is usually not done with administrative positions.

Fech stated that this was good information to have and asked if there is a breakdown of how the faculty positions have been distributed. Chancellor Perlman stated that most of the positions have been tenure and tenure track positions but there are some professors of practice positions as well.

Nickerson wondered how the figures would be altered if people supported by grants and other funding were included. Chancellor Perlman pointed out that these figures would be somewhat irrelevant because we do not have as much control over these positions. He stated that a question that should be asked is whether there are faculty members on restricted budgets that contribute to the teaching enterprise.

Nickerson wondered what the percentages would be with positions funded by grants versus the rest of the budgeted faculty members. Chancellor Perlman stated that his intuition and some data would suggest that administration has grown considerably if you include the grant funded positions. He pointed out that some grants require people be hired to manage the grants. He noted that much of the staff involved in research is paid out of money that is not tax supported dollars.

Lindquist asked if the data was based on full time administrators. Chancellor Perlman stated that he believes that the information is based mostly on full time equivalency but there could be some collapsing of positions involved. He noted that when you look at the figures for the office/service staff the numbers are consistent and most of the budget reductions have been done by reducing staff members.

Shea wondered whether it would be possible to get a break down of the figures for each year during the 10 year time period. Chancellor Perlman stated that this information can be acquired. Shea asked if a new baseline is being created each year during the specified ten year period. Chancellor Perlman pointed out that the baseline is 2001.

Chancellor Perlman reported that there will be more information to discuss after the first of the year. He stated that the campus will start working to try to get prepared for whatever will happen to the budget. He stated that he would like to start generating some ideas.

Nickerson noted that two of the SVCAA candidates interviewed said they would try to grow the number of students here, both out-of-state students and international students as a means to deal with the budget cuts. He reported that this was mentioned at a departmental meeting and faculty members wondered how departments were going to be able to handle increased enrollment. Chancellor Perlman stated that the faculty will need to get creative in how this can be done. He asked if there are other options that can be done in teaching. For instance, can on-line dissection of animals be done instead of having a hands-on experience. He pointed out that some medical training is done on line. Nickerson stated that on line labs were discussed and most of the biology professors feel that it will not work as well. Chancellor Perlman noted that for some students, such as non-biology majors who are just taking a course to satisfy a requirement, the on line training might be sufficient. He stated that he appreciates professors wanting students to experience conducting experiments and he is not suggesting that we put an entire life science lab on line, but perhaps a portion of it could be done through technology. He stated that if we do not find extra revenue by some means, people will have to be cut. He pointed out that some other universities are already doing some more innovating teaching. He indicated he is not pushing these ideas other than as ideas to get other to start being creative.

Shea stated that there needs to be discussions about how the faculty can deliver instruction to the students and people need to be open minded to new ideas. He pointed out that the enrollment will need to grow in order to increase the revenue for the university. He noted that he has heard that some students that do not feel there are currently enough opportunities now for hands-on experiences.

Flowers stated that there is software available that could help deliver courses through information technology. He noted that if we had the technology we could have a course taught in one location and broadcasted to other locations or retained for accessing later. He stated that some courses could be transmitted to other locations without much more work being put on a faculty member or TA and this could be an area where disciplines could gain some efficiency. He pointed out that testing for some courses are already being done online and more of this could occur. He stated that one problem is that we are short on having the necessary technology and resources to implement some of these practices and he is skeptical of MyRed's abilities to handle some of these ideas.

Flowers reported that he was recently at a meeting regarding MyRed and it was interesting to hear the various problems people are having with it. He noted that registration problems still exist and getting access to necessary information to allow students to enroll in restricted courses is difficult. He stated that he is not convinced with how quickly the problems will be resolved and whether there are enough people who can help fix the problem.

Fech suggested that it might be possible to have cyber field trips for some courses which could help enhance some courses.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Email to Benefits on Ease of Accessing NUFLEX Changes

Lindquist reported that he received an email message from Franti suggesting that an email message be sent to Benefits to compliment them on the ease of using the NUFLEX system on line. Flowers agreed and stated that it took less than five minutes to make changes. Fech stated that he has heard some contrary opinions. Lindquist noted that there are some issues with accessing the Firefly program through Mozilla. The Executive Committee agreed that Lindquist should send an email message.

3.2 Email Message Regarding Faculty Salary Increases

Lindquist reported that he received an email message from a faculty member suggesting that it might be beneficial to have the faculty make a statement saying it does not support salary increases at this time due to the state budget problems. He stated that he responded to the email by pointing out that it is too early for the faculty to make such a statement since we do not yet know what will happen with the budget.

Nickerson reported that faculty at one of our peer institutions is getting a 5% increase but the funds are being taken away from money set aside for retirement benefits. He pointed out that the result is an artificial increase for this peer institution.

Shea stated that the Executive Committee will need to have discussions with the Chancellor about this issue at some point. He noted that people are probably already talking about the budget and how to handle it. He stated that if the budget cuts are large it would seem logical to be thinking about not having an effective salary increase. Fech reminded the Executive Committee that President Milliken stated in his October 20 meeting with them that we could not sustain zero salary increases and be competitive.

Lindquist noted that it is appropriate for the Executive Committee to be thinking about the issue because it could be raised at a Senate meeting.

Fech reported that Dean Dickey, Cooperative Extension Division, is pushing research and extension centers to develop advocacy plans to be used among stakeholders, peers, and people that extension educators work with. Lindquist noted that one of the candidates for SVCAA stated in his presentation that extension interacts with people in the state continually and they are an important component in advocating for the university to people in rural areas. Shea pointed out that the candidate also stated that extension personnel need the proper technology to do the best work that they can. He stated that the research and extension centers can sometimes be left behind in regards to technology and we need to provide them with the necessary support and tools.

4.0 Minutes of 11/17/10

The minutes of 11/17/10 were approved with revisions.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Motion to Expand APC

Lindquist noted that no amendments have been made from the floor of the Senate but he amended the motion based on the Executive Committee's discussion on November 17. He stated that the amendments are to make the Vice Chancellor for Research a voting member and for the Senate Executive Committee to appoint the two additional people to the Academic Planning Committee with the Committee on Committees determining the term length of the two new members. He stated that the amended motion will be sent to the Senate before the December 7 meeting.

5.2 Update on Procedures to Be Invoked for Significant Budget Reductions and Reallocations

Lindquist reported that the Academic Planning Committee's long range planning committee was making revisions to the document that was already voted on and approved by the Faculty Senate and ASUN last spring. He noted that any changes to the document will require another vote of both the Senate and ASUN.

5.3 Motion on Employee +1 Benefits

Lindquist reported that he received an email message from Professor Harbison regarding the language of "blood relative" in the motion and whether this would exclude adopted children or children of a person's partner or spouse. He stated that he has amended the motion to follow Internal Revenue Service language. Berg moved to approve the amended motion. The motion was seconded by Flowers. The motion was approved with one abstention.

Lindquist pointed out that this is a motion asking the Board of Regents to have a discussion on the issue. Nickerson asked if the other campuses will be sending their motion to the Board at the same time. Lindquist stated that this is the idea and he should know soon if the other Faculty Senates have passed their motions. He stated that if the Senate approves the motion, he will send it along with a letter to each of the Regents.

5.4 Update on UNL Handbook

Lindquist noted that LaCost was unable to attend the meeting so the item will be postponed until next week.

5.5 Update on SVCAA Interviews and Public Presentations

Lindquist reported that the third SVCAA candidate will be giving his presentation tomorrow and the Executive Committee will interview him on Friday. He asked the members of the Executive Committee to encourage other faculty members to attend the public presentation. He pointed out that not many faculty members have been attending the presentations and it is the only opportunity for many faculty members to interact with the candidates and to ask questions. He noted that some faculty members might feel that they have no say in who gets hired so feel there is no need to attend the presentation.

Shea stated that he believes that most or all search committees are strictly advisory groups and are involved only in the pre interview stage. However, people shouldn't hesitate to send their evaluation directly to the Chancellor, particularly if they have a strong view about a candidate.

5.6 Update on Efforts for Campus-wide Discussions on a Faculty Driven Future for the University

Lindquist noted that Franti was not present but the committee working on this effort is going to try and meet before the end of the semester to do some further work.

5.7 Update on Faculty Administrative Task Concerns

Nickerson stated that the committee looked at general patterns of problems of administrative tasks that faculty members are dealing with and the Executive Committee agreed with the list. He pointed out that the biggest problems are related to travel. Shea noted that at a pre-Senate luncheon meeting the idea of having per diem expenses was suggested. He suggested that some alternatives be presented to VC Jackson when the Executive Committee meets with her rather than just complaints.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Spring Schedule

The Executive Committee agreed to meet on January 5.

6.2 Efforts to Recognize VSIP Professors

Lindquist suggested that the Executive Committee begin brainstorming about how to recognize the faculty members who have agreed to retire as part of the voluntary separation incentive program. Nickerson stated that this will be a way of congratulating these faculty members for all of their work. He noted that we want to avoid faculty members feeling bitter about leaving the university as some in the past have felt. The Executive Committee discussed suggestions on an event and agreed that Interim SVCAA Weissinger should come to an Executive Committee meeting to talk specifically about ideas for the event.

6.3 Board of Regents Meeting

Lindquist noted that the Board of Regents will be meeting on Thursday. He reported that the agenda and other materials for the meeting can be found on the Board of Regents website at <http://www.nebraska.edu/board/agendas-and-minutes.html>.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, December 8, at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Pat Shea, Secretary.