

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Fech, Flowers, Franti, LaCost, Lindquist, McCollough, Nickerson, Shea, Stock

Absent: Anaya, Berg, Konecky, Schubert

Date: Wednesday, December 8, 2010

Location: Faculty Senate Office

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 3:06 p.m.

2.0 Professor Lee, Chair of the Parking Advisory Committee, and Professor Bender, Faculty Senate Representative to the Academic Planning Committee

Lindquist reported that Lee sent a letter in November about upcoming concerns with parking on campus. He noted that Bender was invited since the Academic Planning Committee reviews building plans on campus.

Lee reported that Texas A&M conducted a benchmark survey on parking fees at various universities in the country. He stated that comparing what would be equivalent to a surface A lot at UNL, the survey shows that we have one of the highest parking permit fees of the universities surveyed. He noted that you expect to see higher prices for universities in major cities but it is shocking to see how much UNL permit holders pay when you compare land prices with the other schools in the survey.

Lee stated that the reason why we pay so much in parking is because parking and transit services are self financed. He noted that every time a new building is constructed on campus it takes out another surface lot. He stated that typically the appropriate amount of money needed to replace the lost parking spaces is not obtained. Lindquist noted that the university has a policy that any new building that replaces existing parking has to provide replacement costs. Lee pointed out that this policy has not been in place very long and even when replacement costs are provided they are not enough to cover the cost of building the garages.

Lee reported that parking garages can cost \$10 – \$12 million each to build and the campus has to fund these buildings. He noted that the firms that provide the bonds require an additional 40% of the estimated cost of the building has to be kept in a reserve fund. The money in the reserve fund will come back to the university if it is not used, but it is not refunded to the permit holders.

Lee pointed out that people who now park in garages because of lost surface parking are now paying an extra \$10 a month in parking fees. He noted that the campus is financing a huge amount of debt through permit fees and faculty, staff, and students are financing the building of the parking garages through their permit fees. He reported that the parking office is not happy with the high cost of the parking fees to support the building of the garages. He stated that Parking & Transit Services runs an efficient operation and tries to find ways to decrease the cost of permits. He pointed out that the decision to remove surface parking and increase the costs of permits is being made by the administration.

Lee reported that our permits also include a high transit fee. He noted that 70% of the cost of the transit services is built into permit fees. He pointed out that this is an issue that the Parking Advisory Committee (PAC) can revisit. He stated that most of the people who use the transit buses claim that they are using parking too. He reported that the PAC might be looking into the use of the transit system more closely. Lindquist suggested that people using remote parking might be using the transit buses. Lee pointed out that consultants hired to look at parking on campus did not think many permit holders use the transit buses.

Shea noted that the Executive Committee has met with Dan Carpenter, Director of Parking & Transit Services, and discussed some of the same issues. He stated that there was some discussion about improving peripheral parking.

Lee reported that the situation we are now facing has to deal with future parking. He pointed out the plans are to build additional dorms just east of the Robert Knoll residence center, thereby removing more surface parking. He noted that approximately 60-65% of students bring a car to campus and if student enrollment increases, more students will bring vehicles to campus requiring even more parking spaces.

Lee reported that a suggestion was made at a PAC meeting to have Housing pay for the cost of displacing parking spaces and providing parking for the increased demand that will be created with the new dorm. He noted that there is a representative from the residence halls on the PAC and this person claims that there would be a substantial increase in student room and board fees if Housing has to pay for building a garage and this would still not be enough to compensate for the lost parking.

Lee stated that phase two of the campus recreation center renovation could substantially displace a great deal of parking. He noted that the building is primarily paid through student fees and the proposal is to add enough to the student fees to pay for lost parking, although it is unclear whether this will actually happen. He pointed out that this phase has not been approved yet, but if it is approved it will substantially impact parking.

Lee reported that the worst case scenario is that two new garages will need to be built on city campus at \$10 - \$12 million each. He stated that if one garage is built to cover the lost parking from the new dorm on R street, the increase in parking fees would probably be \$4 - \$6 a month. If two garages need to get built because of phase two of the

recreation center renovation, than the increase in parking fees would be substantial. He pointed out that moving from parking on a surface lot to parking in a garage in the future could result in a \$300 a year increase in parking rates. He stated that these large increases in parking rates are crushing the support staff members who make significantly less money. He suggested that remote parking needs to be revisited again.

McCollough noted that at many institutions students are required to park in remote parking areas. Lee pointed out that a lot of money is spent creating an infrastructure for close parking which results in the transit system being underutilized. Lindquist noted that the situation is further exacerbated because the city's transportation system is not very good. He pointed out that improvements in remote parking would not be as costly as providing a more adequate transportation system.

Shea asked what the PAC is proposing. Lee reported that the Committee has voted not to build more garages. Lee stated that it is his sense that if the administration decides it wants to build a parking garage it doesn't pay attention to the advice of the PAC.

Nickerson pointed out that new construction on campus needs to get approval from the Academic Planning Committee. Bender stated that he recalls the APC dealing with proposals for the new dorm and there was some discussion about parking, but he does not think any votes were taken on the parking garages. Griffin noted that in the past APC has taken action against raising parking fees.

Shea asked if parking services is self financed at the other institutions listed in the previously mentioned survey. Lee stated that he believes the universities listed in the study have self supporting parking services although he is not 100% sure. He reported that UNO parking rates are very low. He noted that the faculty, staff and students at UNL have been funding the building up of the campus through parking fees.

Lee stated that something has to change in the way the campus finances the parking garages. He pointed out that the campus could have difficulty paying its bonds if enough people stopped buying parking permits. He pointed out that people, particularly staff members, will be more apt to stop buying permits if the cost becomes too high.

Lee stated that another concern is the future increase in out of state students who typically bring cars to campus. He noted that this will create even more demand for parking.

Lindquist suggested having a two tier system for students parking on campus. He stated that students who need closer access to their cars can pay a higher price and park near the dorms as they do now, while others could park in remote lots for less money. He noted that the university now has the Innovation Campus land where remote lots could be located. Fech stated that employees could use these remote lots as well. Lindquist suggested that under the two-tiered system, students wanting to park closer on campus should pay the same amount as faculty and staff.

Shea stated that it bothers him that the lowest paid staff members have to pay the same rate as higher paid employees. He stated that it has been suggested that this be changed to a graduated fee scale but the Executive Committee was told that the response was that many faculty members are against this idea. He suggested that the parking permit fee could be assessed as some percentage of an employee's salary.

Lee stated that a graduated fee scale has been discussed. He noted that if you look at the permit as a tax, it is highly regressive. He pointed out that there are a lot more staff members than faculty members and if you made significant decreases in staff parking fees the faculty fees would have to go up dramatically to make up for the lost revenue. He stated that there is concern that this would create a significant decrease in reserved parking spaces which would further lower revenue.

Shea stated that the only solution seems to be remote parking, although there are disincentives for doing this. He stated that UNL should pay for parking costs out of its general fund. Lee stated that there are restrictions on using state funds for parking. He pointed out that what needs to change is the policy of constructing buildings on existing parking lots. He stated that if the new building cannot adequately pay to replace parking then the building plans need to be reconsidered. He pointed out that he is talking about building plans paying for the capital construction of parking, not just maintenance money.

Lindquist asked who is responsible for checking on where the money for displaced parking goes to and how we can make sure the money is where we are told it is going. He noted that he has asked this question several times and never received an answer. Nickerson stated that we should ask the Chancellor this question the next time we meet with him.

Franti asked if the parking payments taken out of people's salary are pre tax dollars. He wondered whether these payments could be differentiated differently so people can claim them as a tax deductible donation since the permit holders are contributing to the building of campus. Lee stated that he could check on this. He suggested people could have the option of paying for parking permits a year or two ahead of time to receive a reduction.

Franti pointed out that it is a waste of time and money to require faculty members to sign up every year for a parking permit when the permit could simply be continued. He noted that it is also frustrating that we pay as much as we do for parking but we can't use the garages even though the cost of the permits paid for the building of these garages. Shea stated that it irks him the most that staff members have to pay as much as the faculty and administrators. Lee pointed out that if we do not keep a close watch on what is happening with parking on campus we will be paying a lot more in the future.

Franti asked if the campus permit holders will be subsidizing parking on Innovation Campus when parking is developed there. Lee stated that nobody seems to know exactly what will be happening with Innovation Campus, although he has heard that this parking

will be self financed and the companies will have to pay for it. He noted that there has been some talk to see if we could share some parking with Assurity Life.

Bender stated that Doug Zatechka, Director of Housing Administration, did make a proposal to the APC regarding the new dorm and the topic of displaced parking was discussed. He stated that the question of coordinating parking with a new dorm was discussed and the APC was informed that it would be some time before a new garage is built. He reported that the rationale for building the dorm now is that the costs are low. Lindquist stated that the PAC should make every effort to see that there is coordination between the building of the new dorm and replacement parking.

Lindquist noted that if the difference in cost between parking on campus versus using remote lots is significant, people will start using remote lots. Lee pointed out that paying the existing debts for the garages relies on people buying the more expensive permits. He stated that the campus would experience great pressure to pay those debts if revenue drops from loss of permit purchases.

Lindquist suggested that Lee come back and speak to the Executive Committee again towards the end of the spring semester to get an update on what is going on with parking. He stated that he wants to know what is being proposed and when it will occur.

Lee pointed out that parking is one issue where the Faculty Senate, UAAD, UNOPA, and ASUN all have concerns. He stated that a united front is needed by these groups in order to tell the administration that it is unacceptable to put the building of any more garages on the back of the permit holders.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Executive Committee Schedule

Griffin noted that the Executive Committee will not be meeting on December 15 and the next meeting will be on January 5.

4.0 Approval of 12/1/10 Minutes

Griffin noted that she has not received the changes on the minutes from the Chancellor yet since he is in China. The Executive Committee approved the changes but agreed to postpone distributing the minutes until the Chancellor has had the opportunity to submit his revisions.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Update on UNL Handbook

LaCost reported that she is creating a matrix to check to see where things are on the web that should go into a faculty handbook and what AAUP recommends should be in the handbook. She noted that all of the html's are being stored when information is located on the web.

LaCost suggested that there needs to be a discussion on how the Executive Committee wants to handle links to information on the web. She pointed out that the mission of the

university is not listed anywhere. She stated that many people may not know the name of particular policies or where to look for them.

Lindquist suggested that in the on line handbook that is to be developed a short paragraph explaining what the link is could be created. He suggested that the matrix LaCost is working on could be put on Google documents so that each of the Executive Committee members could help work on the project.

5.2 Update on Committee on Committees Reviewing the Disciplines as Defined in the Syllabus of Campus-wide Committees

Griffin reported that the Committee on Committees discussed sending a letter to each senator asking them to check with their departments to see if they feel that their department is categorized correctly in the syllabus. She stated that the Committee on Committees will send the letter out in the beginning of the spring semester.

5.3 Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA)

Lindquist reported that he continues receiving information from COIA. He noted that the Faculty Senate voted to discontinue membership in the COIA last year. He stated that he sent a note to the chair of the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (IAC) asking if there is any reason that we should consider sending a representative to the COIA meeting being held in January since it is being held at the Big Ten headquarters. He reported that Professor Pearson, chair of the IAC, responded that someone would be willing to attend the meeting but the IAC was not sure that there was any real reason for attending. He noted that all of the Big Ten universities are members of the COIA.

Shea pointed out that the Senate already voted not to participate in COIA and asked if we would need to vote on it again. Lindquist stated that he is not suggesting rejoining the COIA but just to send someone to the meeting. Griffin pointed out that the Faculty Senate Office budget was reduced considerably in the last budget cut and President Elect LaCost has already taken a trip to attend that AAUP Summer Conference so funds are limited.

Nickerson suggested inquiring what the Athletics department thinks we should do. Griffin suggested Lindquist contact Professor Potuto, UNL's NCAA representative, to get her opinion on this matter.

Franti made the motion to have the President decide whether we should send someone to the COIA meeting if he feels it is necessary. LaCost seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

5.4 Discussion on SVCAA Candidates

The Executive Committee discussed the interviews of the candidates for SVCAA.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Review of the Senate Meeting

The Executive Committee discussed the motions that were approved by the Senate at the December 7 meeting. Lindquist stated that he will convey to the other campuses that we passed the Employee Plus One Benefits motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, January 5, 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.