

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Berg, Fech, Franti, Konecky, LaCost, McCollough, Nickerson, Schubert, Shea, Stock

Absent: Anaya, Flowers, Lindquist

Date: Wednesday, November 3, 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

LaCost called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

2.0 ASUN – Drew Schulz, Internal Vice President

Schulz reported that ASUN is working on increasing communications with students and recently conducted a student organization representative council. A forum style discussion was conducted and student leaders representing student organizations collaborated with ASUN senators to start dialogues on university issues. He reported that the forum was extremely successful with 154 students attending. He noted that students were personally invited to attend the event. He stated that ASUN received a lot of feedback from the students and the information is being reviewed to determine what the main issues are for students on campus. He noted that ASUN is going to make this an annual event.

Schulz reported that a lot of qualitative and quantitative issues were discussed at the council but the ASUN organizers of this event have not had the opportunity to review all of the information that was provided. He reported that ASUN senators broke into groups with various student organization leaders. He stated that some issues of concern that he heard were rising tuition rates, fee allocation (where is their money going), and finding the best ways to communicate with the students. He pointed out that there are many different ways to communicate with students because ASUN is trying to determine the most effective mechanism for communicating. LaCost asked if feedback typically comes from the same students. Schulz stated that students who are more active on campus tend to be more involved in the issues facing students.

LaCost asked how many student organizations exist on campus. Schulz stated that there are 398 registered student organizations. He pointed out that one of the major responsibilities of ASUN is to make sure that these student organizations have all of their necessary paperwork completed and are in compliance with being a registered organization.

Schulz stated that on April 9, 2011 the Big Event will take place. He noted that this is a day when students provide service to the Lincoln community. He reported that last year 2100 students participated in the Big Event and this year ASUN hopes to get 2500 students. He noted that this year volunteers will provide community service in Lincoln and in Nebraska City. He stated that the idea is to assist non-profit agencies and private home owners who need assistance. He reported that the Big Event has been very successful in past years and is one of the most impactful things that ASUN has done.

LaCost asked if there were academic issues that the students wanted to bring to the attention of the Executive Committee. Schulz stated that unfortunately David Freese, the ASUN Academic Chair, was unable to attend the meeting to provide this information. He stated that one of issue of concern for students is the recurring issue of textbook adoption. Fech suggested that Freese forward a short list of concerns to the Executive Committee or reschedule to meet to discuss these issues.

LaCost asked if there are major issues with off campus students. Schulz stated that one of the issues ASUN is working on is the 475-RIDE program. He reported that ASUN has encountered problems with it and it is becoming an insolvent system and close to bankruptcy. He stated that in October 2009 the cost of the program was \$25,000. He stated that the original intent of the program is to provide a secure ride home for students when they are in a non-safe situation. He noted that the program was used properly for the first eight or nine years but last year abuses of the system became out of control. He stated that ASUN is hoping that the new changes in the transit system's bus schedule will eliminate many of the abuses. He reported that ASUN has received a lot of positive feedback on the new transit system. He stated that buses now come about every five minutes.

McCullough noted that there are universities where students are pressing to have the legal drinking age lowered for students. She asked if ASUN has been working on this issue. Schulz pointed out that this is an on-going debate but ASUN is reluctant to get involved in it. He noted that ASUN was hesitant to get involved in the debate about the bars being open until 2:00 AM. He pointed out that these are touchy subjects for student run groups to be involved in. He stated that he doubts that ASUN will address the issue. He pointed out that one way to decrease the amount of student drinking during the week is to have more required courses taught on Friday mornings. He noted that many universities are now doing this as a way to discourage mid-week drinking.

LaCost asked what the next big event will be for ASUN. Schulz stated that ASUN is working on many smaller issues but no large event will take place for the rest of this semester. He noted that the Big Event in April is a major event that will take place and will require a lot of work.

LaCost noted that there used to be a lot more events taking place outside of the City Campus Union. Schulz reported that the University Program Council has been working on trying to get more outside entertainment, but their budget is quite small for this.

Griffin stated that she was slightly surprised to see that the students voted to approve the recreation center referendum given that many students are concerned with increased tuition rates. She noted that approval of the referendum will increase student fees. Schulz pointed out that the student fees will not increase that much, only \$22 total for next year and compared to the price of textbooks or taking a class the referendum did not seem like much. He noted that a lot of effort was put into the referendum and the condition of the East Campus Recreation Center is deplorable. He pointed out that there have been no renovations to this building on campus since 1930.

Schulz reported that changes to the City Campus Recreation Center will include an increase in space for cardio machines and strength training areas. He noted that the outdoor adventure and bike shop will be moved to the parking area on 14th & R streets.

It was asked if the Mable Lee pool is being renovated. Schulz stated that he just spoke with David Coffin, Assistant Director for Facility Operations, about the pool and was informed that work is beginning on removing the tile. He pointed out that this is a long term project that will probably not be completed until next fall.

Griffin asked if students had concerns about parking on campus. Schulz stated that students are using the transit student more frequently since the changes were made this summer and he thinks fewer students are buying parking permits. He pointed out that the new garage on Vine Street is helping with parking. He noted that Parking & Transit Services is one of the few offices on campus that are self-sustaining. Shea pointed out that the reason why parking permits are so costly is because the funds from the permits are being used to offset the transit system and pay for the building of the garages. He asked if students are concerned with the cost of parking permits. Schulz noted that just purchasing a transit pass and not buying a parking permit is advantageous for people. He pointed out that student fees help to pay for transit services too.

Schulz stated that he does not see why so many students need a car and he does not think students need to park right next to their dorms. Konecky pointed out that many universities do not allow freshmen to bring a car to campus. She asked what he thought about this. Schulz stated that he did not see a problem with this, but noted that as long as Nebraska remains a school that primarily has in-state students it may not be viable to have a ban on cars. He suggested the university could offer some off campus storage to help alleviate pressures on parking.

3.0 Announcements

No announcements were made.

4.0 Minutes of 10/27/10

The minutes of 10/27/10 were approved with revisions.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Article on Eliminating Humanities from Universities

Shea noted that the issue of eliminating humanities is an issue of concern and is being dealt with in different ways by universities. He stated that he wonders what our administration's thinking is on the issue and whether it is leaning in any particular way. He noted that everyone has their own view on the subject. He thinks education should be much more than just technical training, but there are a lot of people who feel we should just be providing technical education.

LaCost noted that people are looking for skill acquisition and accountability of what students are learning. Shea stated that this seems to be the primary way of thinking lately, but he does not agree with it. He pointed out that program elimination is a real possibility with budget cuts. He asked if the Executive Committee wants to share its concerns with the administration. Stock stated that people want to know if there is going to be an effort to get rid of some departments. He pointed out that universities need to educate students on a whole range of different perspectives, not just technical training. Nickerson stated that he would fight very strongly against program elimination but there might be program combinations. Stock stated that it took the merging of the classics department with religious studies in order to save the classics department back in the early 1990's.

LaCost stated that the idea is that as requirements of a university change, the enrollment in classes might change and required classes might not be realized as being as effective by the student while they are going to school, but later on in life they will hopefully realize the importance of some of these required classes. She wondered if some required classes get eliminated when a university changes its requirements. Stock noted that the ACE program made changes but there are still requirements in humanities courses and it is his understanding that these classes have good enrollment.

Konecky stated that it would be interesting to share the article with the administrators to see what they think of the issue. Shea stated that he would like to hear the Chancellor's perspectives on this issue. LaCost noted that the article is a conveyance for having a discussion.

Nickerson pointed out that the Chancellor previously had set up a formulated view on how to approach the budget cuts. He wondered whether he will be using the same formula. He noted that the Chancellor identified core principles that he used in previous cuts.

Shea reported that the senators were told at the IANR luncheon that in a worst case scenario the university could be hit with a 10% budget reduction.

Shea asked what the faculty wants the students to achieve in their university education. He asked if faculty members are merely satisfied to give students

technical job skills or if there is more to it? He questioned whether students could reach their career goals if they did not develop the interpersonal and writing skills that many humanities courses provide. He stated that we need to make people understand what will be lost if we make too many cuts in the liberal arts.

Franti pointed out that President Milliken has strongly supported a liberal arts education in the past. Stock noted that he has not had any sense of a threat to these courses. Shea noted that having these kinds of discussions is central to the discussion about the future of the university and what we want the university to look like.

Schubert asked if cutting the humanities would really solve any problems. He stated that he would like to hear what the Chancellor views as the core of the university.

5.2 Efforts to Hold Campus-Wide Discussions on a Faculty Driven Vision for the University

Franti reported that he and Nickerson met with the APC to discuss efforts to have faculty discussions on a faculty driven vision for the university. He stated that the APC was very positive and were happy that the Senate was taking the initiative to do something like this. He reported that two faculty members from APC have volunteered to work with members on the Executive Committee on holding these discussions.

Nickerson noted that the APC long range planning committee has not addressed this issue because they have not been asked to do any long range planning. He noted that Dean Manderscheid suggested having a retreat, similar to the recent retreat held for the life sciences initiative, to have discussions on a faculty driven vision for the university.

Franti stated that APC suggested other groups on campus, such as the Teaching Council and the IANR Liaison Committee, be incorporated into the effort. He stated that we might need a subcommittee to work on setting up the forum. Nickerson stated that the APC is willing to come and meet with the Executive Committee but are aware that it would be difficult to get such a large group to meet.

Franti stated that the Executive Committee needs to get people to serve on the subcommittee. LaCost stated that this is a planning group that will work on how to get feedback from faculty members. She noted that she had envisioned having a series of meetings with faculty members.

Shea stated that we will likely have larger classes than in the past. He reported that when he brings this to the attention of colleagues they tend to recoil, but he has told them that if they have concerns, now is the time to engage in discussions and to come up with alternatives. Stock stated that he has had discussions with

senior colleagues and they are totally incredulous about it. He pointed out that rooms in his building cannot be made larger so some of the faculty members feel that having larger classes is not going to be an option. Griffin noted that faculty members could be made to teach in buildings outside of where their department is housed. Shea stated that it is possible that teaching centers will be built. Nickerson stated that there is already a shortage of large auditoriums that could hold 250-300 students for teaching.

Fech suggested having senators bring the talking points back to their departments to begin discussions on the subject. McCollough stated that this is already being discussed by the curriculum committee in her department. She stated that people have been coming up with some interesting ideas about teaching. LaCost stated that the issue has come up in her department and the faculty has been told that the department will be organizing a way to bring faculty members together for discussions. McCollough noted that the last three issues of the Chronicle for Higher Education have had interesting articles about electronic teaching.

Franti noted that the Chancellor indicated that there will be one time funding awarded and it might be possible to get funding to help look at innovative ideas for teaching on campus.

Franti and Nickerson volunteered to work with the APC members on efforts to have faculty discussions on visions of the university. They suggested that Lindquist be a member as well.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Senate Meeting Follow Up

Shea stated that he would have liked to have received more information from the Chancellor's Commission on Sustainability regarding what policies the Commission is suggesting, but he understands that the Commission is to report to the Chancellor and they have not given the Chancellor a full report yet. Nickerson suggested that the Executive Committee ask the Chancellor what the Commission has recommended to him so far.

Shea stated that no argument can be made for not including the Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development as a voting member on the APC. He pointed out that the mission of the APC covers research as well as academic planning. He stated that he hopes at the same time that the number of faculty members on the APC is increased and noted that the Chancellor was not opposed to this.

Schubert pointed out that the Chancellor stated that workload was not the major issue for increasing the number of faculty members on the APC. He wondered what the efficiency of impact the APC has and why a lot of faculty members do not want to be a member of the APC.

Nickerson noted that when he was on the APC, 95% of the work was not with planning. It was in making sure there were representatives on academic reviews of departments and reviewing proposed programs. Schubert asked if the APC is more of an evaluation committee rather than a planning committee. Nickerson stated that it was more of an evaluation committee. He noted that during the 2003 budget cuts the Chancellor brought the cuts forward, but the APC held hearings on the budget cuts. He noted that the APC occasionally disagreed with what the Chancellor recommended but only about 2 or 3% of the cuts were changed because of APC's recommendations. He pointed out that the APC did not have any time to do any planning because they were busy dealing with the budget cuts and hearings.

Shea recalled that previously there was discussion on what defines a program. He stated that at the time he was told that a single person could be defined as a program. He stated that we need to know what constitutes the core of the university, what defines a program, and where tenure lies.

Nickerson reported that he spoke with Emeritus Professor McShane after the Senate meeting who stated that the Senate used to have its own lobbyist back in the 1980's. He noted that McShane recommended that the Senate should have its own lobbyist again. Shea stated that he hopes we are moving away from the "us versus them mentality." He stated that he did not want to see anything done that would further divide faculty and administration.

Berg suggested that we work more closely with the university's lobbyist. Griffin suggested meeting with Associate VP Withem and Assistant to the Chancellor Waite during the spring semester.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, November 10, at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the 201 Canfield Administration. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Pat Shea, Secretary.