

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Anaya, Fech, Flowers, Franti, Konecky, LaCost, Lindquist, McCollough, Nickerson, Schubert, Shea

**Absent:** Berg, Stock

**Date:** Wednesday, January 12, 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.

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### 1.0 Call to Order

Lindquist called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

### 2.0 CIO Askren, Professor Minter, and Dean Kebbel

#### 2.1 Identifying IT Cost Reductions

Lindquist asked for a brief summary of the cost reducing efforts of this task force. CIO Askren reported that he has had discussions with the Chancellor on how to provide better IT services while reducing costs during a time of budget cuts. He stated that in order to do this we need to focus on using our resources effectively and to look for collaborative ways to make IT reductions. He noted that the alternative is to ignore collaboration efforts and just let cuts filter through the various units. He reported that there are approximately 23 IT units on campus in addition to smaller groups of distributed IT staff, and approximately \$40 million a year is spent at UNL on IT.

CIO Askren stated that he believes we can do some important things here that can help reduce costs. He stated that he supports continuing with a decentralized IT model, but that it needs to be organized more effectively. He pointed out that the main focus is serving the core mission of the institution.

CIO Askren stated that he is co-leading the IT Cost Reduction Task Force along with Dean Kebbel, College of Journalism and Mass Communications, and Dean Dickey, Cooperative Extension Education. The group is primarily comprised of faculty members including Professor Minter of the Academic Planning Committee. He noted that Professor Minter's perspective on the cost reducing efforts is particularly important because the APC will eventually need to review any IT plans.

CIO Askren reported that surveys were sent out to the 23 IT units. The surveys asked about the key services the units provide, who the audience is for the unit, and the unit's funding sources. The IT Directors of these organizations were also asked for their ideas about improving services and reducing costs, both within their own units and also from a university-wide perspective. He stated that the data have been received and are being

reviewed and he is now meeting with various groups on campus to get input on IT concepts that are being considered.

CIO Askren noted that the Chancellor is looking for recommendations that would total a 5% reduction for the IT budget for this year and next year. He stated that they are working on identifying areas of strategic investments as well. Depending on the severity of the budget pressures, the full extent of the IT cost reductions may not be needed. In that case, recommendations for additional IT investments based on reallocations could further improve services and increase efficiencies both centrally and in distributed IT units. He stated that the group is looking at core services and what colleges and departments need in order to support faculty. He pointed out that the campus has had a tendency not to develop a substantive collaborative strategy focusing on common enterprise architecture and standards. While there has been entrepreneurial success with some IT units, there have also been redundancies.

Professor Minter reported that the survey data have been interesting to see. She pointed out that it will be important for the group to identify and hold on to the principles of IT when it reviews the different areas on campus.

CIO Askren pointed out that most universities around the country are going through the same process and the general consensus is that it is time to make some changes. He noted that IT tools and equipment change continually, but efforts to coordinate and manage IT on campuses have not changed as rapidly. He stated that higher education needs to explore how to manage IT efforts in a model that can leverage local, collaborative, and new models of external services such as cloud computing.

Shea stated that it seems like the goal is to better coordinate IT services and use resources more efficiently. He noted that this includes some centralization, but in CIO Askren's email there seems to be contradiction in thinking we can have both centralization and decentralization. He asked for a brief explanation of how this can be accomplished.

CIO Askren admitted that this will be challenging for the campus. He stated that an example of centralization is procurement efforts. He stated that instead of buying laptops whenever some are needed, the campus could work together to determine the needs and then negotiate with a vendor to buy a substantial number of laptops, but at reduced costs. He stated that there would still be some choices but people would not be able to buy any brand they want at any time they want. He pointed out that UNL spent \$11 million on purchasing equipment, services, and software last year and he has observed peer institutions negotiating better prices if the negotiation takes place prior to the purchase. He stated that he believes 10% can be saved each year on purchasing equipment and software. He stated that an example is networking. He noted that the numbers are showing that we could go to the cloud for an email solution and save 25% of what we have been paying for email. Another idea is content management systems that can be standardized and that people can be trained on. As an example, UNL is currently moving forward with the community source Drupal content system that will increase efficiency.

CIO Askren stated that currently we are all over the map with IT. He noted that some colleges have large IT units while others have only one person. He stated that the campus should have IT units that provide commodity services and basic support and these could be more centralized rather than each college feeling like they must provide these basic services. This could free up some IT resources that would allow the deans to focus on their college and faculty's strategic needs.

McCullough asked why there isn't more wireless service on campus. She noted that wireless service could be used rather than having desktop computers plugged into a portal in the wall. CIO Askren stated that the campus has invested quite heavily in wireless access and is continuing to do more, and also considering working with providers such as AT&T and Verizon to possibly further build out the cellular infrastructure as this will further our mobility capabilities. He noted that some faculty and staff members still need to pay for wireless personally which he objects to since it creates a barrier to using technology. CIO Askren is working with the IS Directors to propose new models in this area.

CIO Askren stated that a question to consider in terms of cost savings is whether we should continue to have as many general purpose computer labs on campus since students typically already have laptops and since much of the use in the labs is for social networking purposes. He stated that another question in higher education is the future of land line phones for faculty and staff members since cell phones are so common. He noted that from a telecommunications perspective we are partially subsidizing the network and other services such as the 911 operators from the land line phone charges. He stated that we need to get to the place where our network is self-supporting rather than relying on charges from other areas.

McCullough asked if there is any way to consolidate the costs of site licensing. CIO Askren stated that this overall area of strategic sourcing will probably be the most definitive recommendation that will come out of the survey. He pointed out that professional negotiators can help drive down these procurement costs. He noted that we have some site licenses, but there are still people who are unaware that we have them so they pay more for a software program than is needed. He stated that one example is to identify the top 20 software programs purchased by the campus and try to improve current pricing through site licenses or other methods. He pointed out that the IT Cost Reducing Task Force is looking at up to \$2 million in reductions for the fiscal year ahead. Savings with procurements could amount to \$1 million.

Schubert noted that issues of centralizing and decentralizing components of IT are being discussed and \$11 million of the \$43 million IT budget goes into hardware and software. He asked if the rest is all for personnel. CIO Askren stated that \$25 million goes towards the 450 technical positions that are on campus. He pointed out that does not include managers, student employees or administrative support staff. Schubert noted that the majority of IT's budget is for personnel.

Schubert suggested that it would be a good idea to provide a list of what we currently have in regards to IT and what we want to do with it to those groups that the CIO is speaking with. He noted that this would probably elicit more feedback and response. CIO Askren stated that this was a good idea and that he will provide additional updates and opportunities for feedback. He stated that data security is always a major concern and people should be able to get quality services across the campus.

Nickerson asked if small teams of IT units, including those in the Beadle Center, are considered part of the 23 IT units on campus. CIO Askren reported that there is really no standard or self identification of what constitutes an IT unit. He noted that there are now monthly meetings for all IT managers. He stated that while 23 IT units were identified and sent the survey, he estimated that there are probably anywhere from 25 – 50 small additional IT units on campus including the Beadle Center IT staff.

CIO Askren reported that the survey was only sent out to the larger IT units and college technical leaders because he wanted to get a sense about the key services and larger expenditures and to get a footprint of what IT on campus looks like today.

Flowers noted that trying to determine all of the IT units on campus has been a chronic problem for years because there is such huge divergence in what is considered an IT unit. He stated that the Computational Services and Facilities Committee made attempts to quantify the number of IT units in the past. He pointed out that there might be more specialized units on campus that IT may not be aware of, and he cautioned that you do not want to cut these specialized groups off.

CIO Askren noted that it is important for the voices of the smaller units to be heard, but the spirit of the study is to identify what is a university commodity and IT service versus a decentralized strategic need, and to not over invest in those general service areas by creating unique solutions for UNL where other universities have already adopted best practices solutions that we would benefit from. He stated that another problem is that people in these smaller units distributed around campus have probably not been provided with the proper technology tools that they need. For instance, IT people could be provided with better security systems at significant cost savings but many people have been on their own and are unaware of this. He stated that there might be some tradeoffs with some of these cost saving measures, such as having to go through a bit more of a process to purchase equipment, but he hopes the financial and technical advantages will make up for less flexibility in those cases.

Schubert asked how the savings with vendors will be implemented. He noted that we already have a contract with Dell yet he had to work hard to obtain a specific Dell computer. He asked if the procurement process would become more additional work for faculty.

CIO Askren stated that he does not want to provide forms that people must fill out in order to get a computer. He pointed out that basically, the current agreement with Dell and other vendors is that we usually are paying the common education discounts but that

we aren't negotiating to the extent possible to further reduce prices. However, if we go to Dell and tell them we want to buy 800 computers at one time then we might be able to drive the costs down. Schubert asked if UNL has purchased this many computers in the past. CIO Askren stated that he does not believe that this has occurred. He pointed out that if you buy a computer one at a time you cannot get a good enough deal on it. Schubert agreed that there could be some potential savings this way but the process would need to be looked at carefully.

CIO Askren stated that he thinks there can be definite savings with software programs. He pointed out that some vendors are not forthcoming with published education pricing and that we are working to do a better job of collaborating with peers to make sure that we are not overpaying. Joining the CIC will help a great deal in terms of their longstanding history of effective collaboration. CIO Askren mentioned that one product that is currently being seriously considered is Blackboard Mobile. McCollough asked what the advantage is to this. CIO Askren stated that from a student perspective the expectation is that programs will all be accessible by mobile communications, and that mobile connectivity in general is a major focus for providing student, faculty, and staff IT services going forward.

CIO Askren stated that in terms of the campus-wide course management system it would be hard to change the campus from Blackboard, but the system wide contract is up for renewal in a few years and it is possible that a replacement program could be considered.

McCollough asked if a drop box for storage would be cost saving. CIO Askren stated that it would absolutely save funds. He pointed out that he does not want each college to feel that they have to buy their own storage unit and if a faculty member feels that they need their own data center, there needs to be a conversation about it. McCollough pointed out that a faculty member could obtain a password that is specific to their data files and a drop box could offer huge opportunities for savings. CIO Askren stated that the idea behind it is that if the storage is secure and reliable, it doesn't matter where the storage unit is located. He stated that the key issues are cost, performance, and security. He noted that these types of storage deals would probably be negotiated at the central administration level to increase savings and that cloud solutions are becoming quite competitive in this area.

Lindquist stated that he appreciated the efforts of this group and that everything they were talking about sounds good, but there are obvious questions about how these costs savings plans/ideas will be implemented over time. He also stated that while he understands the need for improved security, he thinks it may be easy to go overboard and that the faculty does not want IT telling people what they can and cannot do in terms of computing. CIO Askren agreed and pointed out that the idea for centralization is for commodity services but there needs to be good discussions on it. He stated that he does not want IT staff in decentralized units to be burdened with providing commodity services unless there is some compelling reason as it is a distraction from their main responsibilities within their colleges or departments.

Dean Kebbel stated that he is not sure that all of the deans would agree with the idea of centralization. He stated that conceptually the idea is good, but with a college that has 17 computer labs in the building, IT people are needed. He noted that he found out that the College of Fine and Performing Arts has a lot more server capacity than is needed so Dean Oliva offered some of the capacity to the College of Journalism and Mass Communications. He pointed out that Dean Oliva suggested cross-training IT personnel in the two colleges so they could back each other up if needed. He pointed out that the devil is in the details and we need to be careful how we roll out the idea of centralization because some people could be bothered or threatened by it.

McCullough asked if the Libraries is getting what it needs in terms of IT. Konecky stated that Professor Allison has a department for IT and it is well managed. She noted that students pay a fee for use of specific computers and this fee goes to the Libraries. She stated that she thinks the Libraries is doing well and likes the idea of some decentralization and some centralization. CIO Askren noted that Professor Allison is doing an excellent job of managing the Libraries IT organization, and that she has raised some appropriate concerns as a member of the Task Force.

McCullough asked if the Libraries have e-subscriptions. Konecky stated that the Libraries is not involved with buying and circulating ebook devices or buying the ebooks for those devices. She noted that the Libraries purchases ebooks that people can access from any computer via the Internet, similar to streaming video.

Lindquist noted that the Computational Services and Facilities Committee requested changes to its structure and responsibilities. He asked CIO Askren if he thinks the Executive Committee should go forward with the request. CIO Askren stated that he agrees with the recommended changes and supports them. He pointed out that whatever changes that could help provide faculty input to him is crucial. He noted that dealing with some of the student IT services can be challenging, but that he is most in need of feedback to ensure that the IS department and other UNL IT resources are meeting the needs of the faculty.

Lindquist noted that the Computational Services and Facilities Committee would be expanded by two faculty members. He asked if there should be staff representation as well. CIO Askren stated that he does not want to dilute the faculty voice on the Committee and he thinks that staff concerns would be addressed by the ex-officio members serving on the committee.

Shea noted that CIO Askren indicated last semester that there may be changes with the email system. He asked if this was going to occur. CIO Askren reported that Microsoft, Lotus-IBM, and Google have expressed interest. He noted that UNMC has some concerns over changing the email system, as they believe it is important to stay with an on-premise solution due to HIPAA and other privacy issues. One question is how critical it is for UNMC and the other campuses to be on the same system for faculty and staff members. He stated that he hopes that there will be an announcement at the end of

February about the email system plans. If a new system is adopted the migration to it will likely not occur until the summer.

Konecky asked if the student migration to hotmail has affected the decision on the email. CIO Askren stated that UNK and UNO have Google and UNL has Microsoft Live (similar to hotmail). CIO Askren believes that the issue of which email solution campuses provide for their students is not likely to influence the common solution for faculty and staff members.

Schubert asked how the Executive Committee was going to proceed with the IT issue. He pointed out that IT is an administrative unit and he has questions regarding the budget. He noted that less than \$11 million goes into hardware and software and \$25 million is for operational costs. He stated that there was discussion reducing costs of procuring hardware and software, but not of reducing the operation of the administrative unit and he finds this worrisome because it could have a negative impact on the faculty. He pointed out that the faculty is being asked to be more efficient but there was no discussion on how to make the administrative unit more efficient. He stated that the Executive Committee should make a suggestion that not only should the IT service be made more efficient, but the operational costs should be made more efficient. Lindquist stated that it might be implicit in the ideas that were presented that fewer people would be needed to do the work. Schubert suggested that a clearer breakout would be helpful.

Nickerson stated that he does not want everyone who is an IT technician to be put into one area. Shea pointed out that CIO Askren is looking for cooperation in the commodity buying and all units will need to comply with this in order for there to be real savings. Konecky stated that it was her impression that CIO Askren was looking to create large group ordering and if the Libraries could get more computers for less money they will buy into it.

Schubert stated that as faculty representatives we should serve the interest of the faculty and he observes that this service unit is about to reduce their service which would come out of the faculty pockets and unit funds. He stated that if the changes are about making service cheaper, then faculty life could become harder. Lindquist pointed out that CIO Askren probably doesn't directly control the total \$44 million that is spent on IT. Konecky pointed out that Information Services isn't paying for computers and hardware. These costs are coming out of department and college funds.

Anaya asked if CIO Askren was asking the Executive Committee to gather information from faculty members or was just providing information on proposed ideas for reducing costs. Lindquist suggested that CIO Askren was providing information but thinks he would be happy to get feedback from the faculty.

### **3.0 Announcements**

#### **3.1 Invitation to 2011 UNL Empowerment Forum**

Lindquist reported that he received an invitation to attend the 2011 UNL Empowerment Forum on January 28<sup>th</sup> from 11 – 5 at the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center. He noted that the event is open to all UNL faculty, staff, and students.

### **3.2 IANR Meeting**

Franti reported that there will be a meeting for the Institute personnel and VC Green will speak although no agenda has been provided to the faculty.

## **4.0 Approval of Minutes from 1/5/11**

The minutes of 1/5/11 were approved with revisions.

## **5.0 Unfinished Business**

### **5.1 Changes to Computational Services and Facilities Committee**

Lindquist reported that he sent Professor Brooks, Chair of the Computational Services and Facilities Committee, an email asking for the specific changes to the syllabus. Flowers stated that it should be made clear to Professor Brooks that the changes are presented to the Senate sometime this spring.

### **5.2 Update on Action on Revising the Procedures to Be Invoked for Significant Budget Reductions and Reallocation**

Lindquist reported that he sent an email message to Professor Brand, Chair of the APC, to ask whether the APC has voted on and approved the changes it is recommending. Griffin stated that the APC did not meet on 12/15 and will not meet again until 1/26. She noted that the Procedures are on the agenda for the 1/26 meeting.

Lindquist asked if the Executive Committee wants to wait to see what the APC will do. He pointed out that the Senate and ASUN approved changes to the Procedures last April but the APC has not acted on them yet.

McCollough moved that the Executive Committee move forward with the document that was approved by the Senate and ASUN last spring. Konecky seconded the motion.

Franti pointed out that the changes to the Procedures were born out of different viewpoints between the Executive Committee and the APC and the issue is not going to be resolved if we do not allow the APC to act on the document. He noted that we are trying to create an environment of working with the APC and moving forward could imperil the rest of our work with the APC.

Shea stated that it might be too late to have the new procedures in place for the upcoming budget reductions. He pointed out that any changes made to the document will need to go back to the Senate and the APC for approval.

McCollough pointed out that the APC has promised for some time that the changes will be made and it has not occurred. She stated that she believes the Executive Committee should move forward with it.

Lindquist noted that there will be very little time between the APC voting on the document and it going to the Senate for the February 1 meeting, although the new document would not be voted on until March 1. The consensus of the Committee was to see what is approved by the APC at their January 26 meeting and then decide how it will be handled.

The motion to move forward with the Procedures that were approved last spring failed.

### **5.3 APC Appointments**

Lindquist noted that the Executive Committee discussed appointing new members to the APC. He stated that he will be sending a message out to the Senators seeking nominations. Griffin reported that the Committee on Committees met earlier and decided that the term of one of the appointed positions will be for 1 ½ years and the other 2 ½ years.

## **6.0 New Business**

### **6.1 Meeting with VP Dietze**

Lindquist reported that he and the other Faculty Senate Presidents will be meeting with VP Dietze on 1/28 to discuss benefits. He asked if there were any specific issues that he should raise. The Executive Committee suggested the following: status of conducting the health insurance audit; will the increased life insurance continue; will holding down health care costs to employees continue since pay increases were not given; anticipated changes in benefits due to the number of faculty members who are taking the VSIP.

### **6.2 New Key Policy?**

Shea reported that apparently there is a new policy regarding keys for students who have access to laboratories. He stated that faculty members who have labs are now being expected to pay for and manage those keys. He stated that it is unclear whether the deposits for keys are going to be refunded to the faculty member's account when keys are returned. The Committee agreed to discuss the issue with VC Jackson when they meet with her on January 26.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, January 19, 2011 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.