

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Irmak, LaCost, Lindquist, Nickerson, Purdum, Rinkevich, Shea, Varner

**Absent:** Anaya, Anderson, Schubert, Struthers, Wysocki

**Date:** Wednesday, June 1, 2011

**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

LaCost called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

### 2.0 SVCAA Weissinger/VC Green

#### 2.1 Mentoring Deans

LaCost reported that the Executive Committee has been discussing the concept of mentoring new deans, particularly since we had several new deans this past year and two new deans beginning this year. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she has had the wonderful opportunity of observing the three new deans and reported that Dean Dussault, Dean of Graduate Studies, and Dean Wei, Dean of the College of Engineering, started their positions today. She asked what kind of mentoring the Executive Committee is suggesting.

Purdum noted that everyone has a different set of skills they bring to the position of dean. She stated that with a new dean there can be a big difference in intercommunication skills. Some might call while others communicate through email and it can take awhile before faculty members figure out what style of communication a new dean uses. She stated that it would be helpful if new deans would notify their faculty of how they want them to communicate with them.

LaCost asked how the new deans get up to speed on the Bylaws. She asked if they have to take this task on themselves or if they are guided through them. SVCAA Weissinger stated that deans have a tendency to encounter the Bylaws through decision making situations. She stated that she knows that there are some sections of the Bylaws that are more relevant to deans.

Varner asked if most deans are former faculty members who move into administrative positions. SVCAA Weissinger stated that most deans come from a department chair role but things can be different here. She pointed out that being a department head is very different than being a dean.

Varner asked if there is any kind of orientation for new deans to help them get acquainted to the campus. SVCAA Weissinger stated that each college is very different, but there

are some core issues such as the Bylaws that are uniform across the campus. She reported that there is no orientation but new deans are highly connected to the Vice Chancellor they report to and they become quickly involved with the university. She pointed out that the dean's role is incredibly complicated and the Vice Chancellor helps the deans to anticipate what is being expected of them.

Shea stated that we should be as coordinated across the campus as we can be with procedures and policies and the greatest opportunity to do this is with new administrators. He noted that there is the opportunity to create a culture of strong, positive connections among the colleges, and new deans can look at how the colleges can work more effectively together rather than thinking of their college as a separate empire. He stated that this would lead to more productivity and satisfaction across the campus. He pointed out that the colleges are unique and the administration is reluctant to dictate what deans should do, but we should not hesitate to create a more collaborative culture among the deans. He stated that he does not think this has happened in the past. SVCAA Weissinger agreed. She stated that it is interesting in that we have a set of extremely high expectations of deans to be managers within their units and the dean also has to accept a role as a college leader. She noted that those deans who report directly to her and VC Green have embraced the concept that they are a collaborative campus leadership group, but it is a hard dichotomy because we want the deans to be different with their colleges and to establish goals specifically for their college. VC Green pointed out that the dean's behavior is learned by example. He noted that he and SVCAA Weissinger have a well established relationship which he hopes is an example for the deans. He pointed out that he is seeing a lot of congeniality and cooperation across the campus.

Lindquist noted that the deans interact with the people in their colleges and it is their responsibility to mentor department chairs and heads to work in the same collaborative way within a college as the deans are expected to function with the university.

Nickerson stated that the culture of the dean would be to include the general theme of protecting faculty time. He pointed out that if UNL is going to move up into the Big Ten, protecting faculty time so the faculty members can do the necessary work to move the campus forward will be very necessary.

## **2.2 Dean Searches**

LaCost asked for an update on the deans' searches. SVCAA Weissinger noted that although we gained two new deans today, we are simultaneously losing two deans. She noted that Dean Oliva is going to become Provost of the Fashion Institute of Technology in NYC. She reported that Professor Mamiya will serve as interim dean. She stated that this search will begin immediately and she wants to get the search committee formed and charged within the next two or three weeks. She noted that Dean Poser has agreed to serve as chair of the search committee.

SVCAA Weissinger stated that this search is very important for us because we have an unusually collaborative fine and performing arts college that has become increasingly very effective in defining what a fine and performing arts college contributes to a

research university. She pointed out that we need to find a dean with this same kind of collaborative instinct. She noted that the college has a sizable foundation endowment and the relationship between the college and the Foundation is important.

SVCAA Weissinger stated that she intends to work on an aggressive timeline for the search committee similar to the search for the SVCAA last fall. She reported that she hopes to have on campus interviews before the holiday break in December.

SVCAA Weissinger stated that she received feedback from several people with suggestions on who should be on the search committee. She stated that given the size and scope of the college she wants a couple of faculty members from each department and faculty members outside of the college. She noted that a couple of students, a staff member, and a key constituent of the college will also be on the committee but she wants to keep the search committee small.

SVCAA Weissinger reported that the search for the College of Architecture dean will not be started right away. She pointed out that this delay is not because of concerns about the college, but she wants the faculty to spend a period of time in a planning process to envision the future of the college. She reported that Professor O'Hanlon will serve as interim dean. She stated that he will help the college to decide its priorities and vision for the future. She stated that she will confer with Professor O'Hanlon in mid fall to see where the process is at.

VC Green reported that the top candidate for the Dean of the Agricultural Research Division has come back to campus for a second interview and he is gathering feedback on the interviews.

VC Green noted that Dean Dickey and Associate Dean Birnstihl, Cooperative Extension, will be retiring next year. He reported that a search for Dean Dickey's position will be initiated the first of the academic year with the intent to have a new dean named by next July 1. He stated that the Associate Dean position will be held open so the new dean can review the position and provide input on the search.

Nickerson asked if any conclusions have been made about combining extension and research. VC Green stated that no decisions have been made. He pointed out that that he plans on taking a hard look to see to what degree these two areas can be more tightly connected. He pointed out that this is a discussion he wants to have when the new leadership for the Agricultural Research Division comes into place.

### **2.3 Update on Budget Cuts**

SVCAA Weissinger complimented the members of the APC for the enormous amount of work they did and for moving swiftly to hold the hearings. She noted that the APC persisted through long meetings so that everyone with concerns about the cuts could have their say. She pointed out that the APC created a very civil and sensitive environment. She reported that the day after the hearings the APC met and had a very long deliberation period about the cuts. As a result, the APC was able to reach conclusions about the

proposals and communicated the committee's response to the Chancellor quickly. She noted that the Chancellor accepted all of the decisions recommended by the APC.

SVCAA Weissinger stated that she is proud that UNL determined our first round of budget cuts quickly. She stated that she does not know of anything new coming up with the budget for the rest of this year.

LaCost reported that some people think that the budget decisions made by the administration were done too quickly. She noted that she told these people that there has to be a plan and it's the administrators' jobs to gather the necessary information to develop a plan. SVCAA Weissinger reported that she and VC Green engaged the deans this past fall and asked them to explore ways to make budget cuts. She noted that she asked for deeper cuts than anticipated. She stated that asking them for larger cuts provides the Vice Chancellors with the chance to make the necessary decisions. She noted that differential cuts will be made depending on priorities.

SVCAA Weissinger stated that all of the deans were engaged very early in the process and she trusted the deans to contact department heads and chairs who should have spoken to faculty members about the cuts. She stated that discussions at the department levels should have occurred in the fall semester with the deans presenting their reduction plans to the Chancellor in January. It was then up to the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors to decide where to make the cuts.

Lindquist noted that the \$5 million cut for this year is the first round of cuts and that we could have a total of \$10 - \$15 million in budget cuts for the biennium. He asked if the SVCAA had any idea of how large that figure will be and when we might know of additional cuts. SVCAA Weissinger stated that it is unclear at this time. She noted that the campus will have a better sense in the fall if there will be additional budget cuts.

Lindquist asked if the process for determining budget cuts will be the same as the one used for this year. SVCAA Weissinger stated that this will be determined by the Chancellor. She pointed out that everyone wants to know what our budget reality is and when it is determined we want to get the information to the APC quickly. She noted that getting the budget cuts done quickly helps with the cash flow and enables the campus to help any individual that has a negative implication because of the cuts.

VC Green pointed out that several things will impact the budget. The first is that the tuition increase has to be approved, next salary increase recommendations made, and the big unknown factor is the cost of health care benefits. He stated that the health care impact will depend on how many additional dependents will be included in our plan because of the federal health care program. He stated that it is very smart for UNL to go through the budget process the way we did and before the other campuses because he believes it will come back to serve us in the long run.

## **2.4 Plans to Empower Chairs and Heads**

Shea stated that the Executive Committee very much appreciated the previous discussion it had with VC Green and wanted to know more about the idea of empowering chairs and heads. VC Green stated that the upper administration feels that this is an area that needs to be worked on, but nothing is definite at this time. He pointed out that in IANR the structure is different and he is considering making the Associate Vice Chancellor in the Institute the central point for department heads to go to. He stated that the idea is for the chairs to have the empowerment to envision the future of the department.

Shea pointed out that there are legitimate concerns about some unit administrators presenting visions that are primarily their own rather than a collective vision of the faculty in the departments. VC Green stated that he does not think a department can be successful in long term without the faculty and the unit head having the ability to make visions for the department together.

Shea noted that one of the problems for accomplishing this goal lays in part with infrastructure communication problems. Purdum pointed out that previously goal setting for departments has come from the top down. SVCAA Weissinger stated that realistically the goal setting will be coming from both directions. Shea pointed out that oftentimes communication from upper administration is a trickle down process and there is the assumption that faculty members are aware of things in a timely way and that the faculty has had an opportunity to be engaged. However, sometimes the faculty does not know because of problems with communication. He noted that he has received forwarded email messages from administrators that show a huge delay in the time between when they were originally received and when they were sent out to the faculty. He stated that timely communication is needed and a mechanism can be set up to ensure that information is sent out promptly. He stated that this should not be a problem.

SVCAA Weissinger stated that she is making notes of these concerns and can talk with the deans about it. She pointed out that some communications can go directly to the chairs and heads with notification also sent to the deans. She stated that the administration has become so careful in how many emails are sent that they may have erred on being too cautious. She noted that previously in the Deans' Council the Vice Chancellors used to provide information in printed handouts, but a deans' memo series was then created. The memo series can go to whoever the deans designate should receive the information. This would make it easier for the dean to forward information to the appropriate people. She suggested that this process could be used more.

## **2.5 Summer Sessions Enrollment**

SVCAA Weissinger stated that she did not know the exact figures but early registration numbers were down from last year. She stated that her instincts are that the summer session needs to be reformed. She noted that there needs to be discussion about what summer sessions is for, what academic roll it plays, and how it is an extension for the curriculum. She suggested that schedules and policies for summer sessions need to be built. She stated that the question of what role summer session plays in the revenue

stream also needs to be considered. She stated that these questions have not been asked in a long time and need to be thought out.

Nickerson asked why summer sessions have to be separate. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she does not know the answer to this question but it is one to consider. She noted that some deans have advocated for a three semester approach. She stated that we need to explore what we want from summer sessions and look at models that might help us attain the goals we set for summer sessions. She pointed out that if you just look at enrollment figures the trends show a creeping downward in the number of students taking summer session courses. Purdum stated that there is a student need component that needs to be considered. She noted that there are times where there are not good matches in the courses that are offered during the summer and what courses students really need. SVCAA Weissinger pointed out that students indicate their need through enrollment.

LaCost asked if the VSIP retirements have had an effect this summer on enrollment or whether there has been a gradual decline in enrollments. SVCAA Weissinger stated that our policies seem to be guaranteeing that we have declining enrollments each year. She stated that we need to ask what the academic and fiscal impacts are from summer sessions. She pointed out that it will be a two year process to make any changes to summer sessions but the administration wants to look at this issue this fall.

Varner noted that student interests and priorities should be considered in discussions about summer sessions and both traditional and non-traditional student needs should be considered. He reported that he has recently spoken with students who are taking courses at three different institutions this summer and they indicated that they would like to take classes year round. VC Green stated that there are models at some universities that have year round rolling terms and students can select which terms they want to take during the year.

SVCAA Weissinger stated that she knows it is time to ask questions about summer sessions and she believes we can make some progress here. She noted that discussions about this issue can help advance our vision of the curriculum and advocate student needs.

LaCost asked if SVCAA Weissinger is envisioning what the purpose of summer session is. SVCAA Weissinger stated that a lot has changed since the summer program was created, particularly the interest of the students and the nature of what the students want to accomplish. She suspects that we need a system that is quite different from when summer sessions were first created.

Nickerson asked if the university was to offer year round rolling terms, would faculty members have to provide introductory courses during the summer as well as during the other semesters. SVCAA Weissinger stated that working out the complexities will be difficult to decide. She pointed out that there are curricular issues, policies, and administrative issues that would need to be addressed.

Nickerson suggested that there be a review as to whether the summer session needs a separate administration.

## **2.6 VSIP Money**

SVCAA Weissinger reported that she provided the Academic Affairs' deans a plan last week on the VSIP money. She stated that \$1.2 million of the VSIP salary and benefits money available due to VSIP retirements was used for budget cuts. She stated that \$976,000 of this was salary and this budget cut has been allocated across the colleges. This was done strategically but not proportionately. She stated that the deans found the plan acceptable, although no one really liked it. She reported that the second stage of dealing with the VSIP money is deciding how much of the remaining dollars should go immediately back to the colleges from which it came. She noted that there are a variety of opinions on how this should be done. She stated that many of the deans felt that the remaining money should be competed for and others felt it should go back to the colleges from which it came.

SVCAA Weissinger reported that about \$5 million will be remaining of the VSIP money in academic affairs. Some of these funds have been allocated back to the colleges they came from and, most colleges ended up with a little less than half of the VSIP dollars that came from their college. She noted that college priorities will guide decisions about how to reallocate these funds and the money will have some strings attached to it. She pointed out that the VSIP money is our chance to transform the faculty in ways we have been wanting to do but the deans will have to demonstrate that these dollars will get spent for the highest priorities. She reported that she put a rule out that the only way the VSIP money could be reallocated permanently back to a department is that the funds must be used for tenure track lines. She noted that the deans can use the funds temporarily but the fund cannot be allocated on a PAF except for a tenure track line. She pointed out that there are two reasons for this: our tenure track faculty number has to get larger if we want to move the university forward, and we do not want the VSIP retirements to change the proportion of tenured faculty members. She noted that we will also need some additional non-tenure track positions.

VC Green reported that there is \$2 million in VSIP money for IANR. He noted that in IANR funds from open positions go back to the administration. He reported that an analysis of the open lines has been done and advertisements are now being made for some positions. He stated that funding from VSIP money is being used for two positions in the Water for Food Institute. He stated that he is encouraging the unit heads to collectively think about how the funds can be used to address interdisciplinary lines rather than just going for individual lines. He noted that he is looking outside the Institute as well for partnering efforts.

## **2.7 Results of Health Care Audit**

SVCAA Weissinger stated that she has not seen a final report yet on the health care audit. She noted that there were still a number of people who did not respond by the deadline in May. She noted that the default for not responding to the audit is that dependents will be removed from the university's health insurance. She pointed out that this initiative

started with Central Administration. She reported that VC Jackson and her staff have tried to make the initiative better by making personal phone calls to those who did not respond to ensure that no one is dropped from coverage accidentally. She stated that there have not been as many complaints about the audit as had been anticipated. She noted that biggest complaint is that people did not like the lack of trust that the audit implied.

Nickerson stated that he is waiting to hear what the impacts to our health care benefits will be from the audit. SVCAA Weissinger stated that the audit will be a tiny part of the overall health care costs. VC Green stated that if the federal plan holds, a factor will be how many new dependents will come on to our plan. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she will check to see if there is any more information about the audit. VC Green noted that there was no mention of it at the recent President's Council.

## **2.8 Faculty Development Leave Policies**

Nickerson stated that he asked for this agenda item because development leaves are not offered as often as many people believe. He pointed out that at some other universities development leaves are also offered to pre-tenured faculty members. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she is surprised to hear this because everything she has been reading on the issue shows that things are heading in the opposite direction.

Nickerson noted that the issue of faculty development leaves arose in conjunction with comments made about faculty productivity and membership in the AAU. He stated that faculty development leaves could help faculty members be more productive. He stated that some institutions are making development leaves more available. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she would be happy to do more research about this.

## **2.9 Upcoming Issues**

VC Green stated that the planning process for IANR is continuing this summer. He noted that there have been 11 teams working on different charges and reports from each of the teams are due on June 30. He reported that there will be a retreat in July in North Platte to review each of the reports. He noted that the Chancellor will be at the retreat and occasionally SVCAA Weissinger will be in attendance. He stated that the next step will be to move forward based on the reports. He stated that he is very excited to see the reports and participate in the retreat.

Nickerson asked if the recommendations will be made public. VC Green stated that he will call an all faculty meeting to discuss the recommendations, probably in early fall. He stated that he would be happy to meet with the Executive Committee in August to discuss the retreat.

Purdum asked if the recommendations will supersede the IANR strategic plan. VC Green stated that IANR has a strategic plan for 2016. He stated that the current planning process was laid out on how we can accomplish the goals established in the strategic plan. He noted that this may entail looking at bureaucratic processes in the Institute and evaluation of faculty and staff members.

Purdum asked if the report will be more of an internal report for IANR. VC Green stated that it would. He noted that we have a very good strategic plan and he has high expectations for it.

Purdum noted that trying to combine parts of the Agricultural Research Division and Extension would be a very complicated process. She stated that faculty members with joint appointments deal with the complexity of these two units and trying to change the bureaucracy associated with both divisions would be much more complicated. Lindquist pointed out that VC Green has indicated a desire to eliminate unneeded bureaucracy, but it will take time to make changes. Shea stated that VC Green is taking a different approach to things and he thinks it is a better approach. VC Green is asking how the faculty might view alternative structures and processes.

Purdum noted that there is the possibility of the government discontinuing its funding for extension programs. Varner stated that he thinks extension specialists will be expected to get more outside funding and do more applied research. He stated that he appreciates VC Green's willingness to open up to the Executive Committee. Nickerson noted that the faculty has been asking the administration to become more efficient and VC Green appears to be heading in this direction.

Shea pointed out that we want to work with the administration in a productive way and that we should encourage this by not putting too much pressure on the Vice Chancellors. He stated that the Executive Committee should make positive suggestions about bureaucratic changes.

### **3.0 Announcements**

#### **3.1 Meeting with VC Franco**

LaCost reported that she recently met with VC Franco and other administrators to discuss issues relating to student affairs. She stated that she was asked to share the plans of the Faculty Senate for the upcoming year and she concentrated on activities relating to student safety, persistence, and curriculum. She reported that she informed the group that the Senate has plans to be actively involved with the Faculty Senates of the Big Ten. She noted that there was discussion about having bike paths on campus. Other discussions were about the civic engagement policy and its link to ACE classes; the appeals process for dismissed students; graduate student recognition at graduation; emphasis on retaining students and the importance of faculty-student engagement for retaining students.

LaCost stated that over 300 courses will qualify under the civic engagement policy. She noted that Professor Mitchell, Director of General Studies, will be speaking with the Executive Committee this summer about the policy.

LaCost reported that she received an inquiry from Jennifer Nelson, Assistant Director of General Studies, about creating a more uniform process for dealing with dismissal appeals. She noted that currently each college has its own process and the administration is questioning whether it would be better to have a standard process across the campus.

LaCost stated that there was strong emphasis about retaining students and there was discussion about policies that need to be put into place to help students persist in their education. She pointed out that there is a body of research that links early faculty engagement with students and retention rates.

Varner stated that new faculty members in Extension have talked about mentorship a great deal and how it makes a huge difference in retaining them. He reported that he has heard students say that they are told that they have to find their own mentor. He pointed out that the key is to get students involved in projects with faculty members very quickly. He noted that this is an issue that the Senate should continue to have discussions on.

Nickerson asked if there was discussion about low grades and retention rates. He assumes that there is a high correlation between students' grades and retention. LaCost stated that this was not discussed. She pointed out that from her department's perspective retention rates are based more on the idea of a student's persistence and motivation. She noted that grades are an important piece but the student must have the motivation in order to succeed. Varner pointed out that the university is competing with schools like Doane College and other schools that put a lot of effort into retaining students.

Shea noted that there is a relationship to admission standards too. He pointed out that the university has fairly lenient admission standards because it wants to give students the opportunity to pursue their education, but a number of the students might find out that college is not for them. He stated that the university should create a supportive atmosphere for students through mentorship and provide them with opportunities to become involved in campus programs and activities.

Purdum pointed out that the colleges have different approaches to mentoring students. She stated that she knows that some colleges have people who specifically work with students. She noted that there are many reasons why some students flounder and sometimes a faculty member, counselor, or a student peer can help students who are experiencing difficulties.

LaCost reported that she was asked at the meeting if faculty members would be interested in mentoring students. Nickerson pointed out that mentoring a student can be a big time commitment and not all faculty members have the time available for mentoring. Shea noted that most colleges and departments often have professional advisors who are very good, and sometimes superior to faculty, at working with students. He stated that colleges need to ensure that there are professional people who are advisors. He noted that these advisors could then connect students with specific faculty members which could evolve into a mentoring relationship.

Lindquist asked if there was any discussion about MyRed at the meeting. LaCost reported that nothing was discussed at this meeting and that she would email Dr. Franco that MyRed continues to be a concern.

### **3.2 Meeting with Associate to the Chancellor Nunez**

LaCost reported that she will be meeting with the Associate to the Chancellor to discuss the criteria that was provided to the AAU.

## **4.0 Minutes of 5/18/11**

The Executive Committee discussed the minutes of 5/18/11 and whether a paragraph should be removed. Lindquist noted that Schubert has previously stated that everything the Executive Committee discusses should be in the minutes. Purdum noted that Roberts Rules states that there can be a motion to amend the minutes and the minutes can be approved by the majority of the committee. Shea pointed out that the Executive Committee has not had a formal approval process for some time. Griffin stated that Past President Bradford removed the approval process when he was President. Purdum stated that she objects to having one person saying whether a paragraph should be removed or retained. Shea stated that the Executive Committee needs to look at the revised minutes. Griffin pointed out that the problem is that Executive Committee members do not get their changes back in time for her to send the suggested changes out to the Executive Committee before the next meeting. Shea suggested that there be a deadline for when changes have to be made. He suggested that revisions to the minutes should be sent to the Coordinator by 5:00 on Monday.

Purdum moved that the Executive Committee instill a procedure with the goal to have the minutes distributed by Friday afternoon with changes made by Monday at 5 p.m. and the revised minutes be sent out with the agenda. The minutes will then be approved by a motion and a vote. Lindquist seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

## **5.0 Unfinished Business**

### **5.1 Suspension of Pay Policy**

Lindquist reported that Attorney Hansen's comments seem to be consistent with the Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee. He asked what everyone else thinks about the response. Nickerson stated that Attorney Hansen's letter indicates that the faculty should not get involved in creating a suspension of pay policy. Shea and Lindquist agreed that this was the sentiment of her comments. LaCost pointed out that the ARRC gave the Executive Committee a statement indicating that the Executive Committee should not address the policy. She stated that we need to notify the Chancellor if the Executive Committee decides not to do this.

Shea pointed out that Attorney Hansen is almost advocating that the faculty not create a policy. He suggested that it might be best for the Executive Committee to discuss the key points outlined by Attorney Hansen to make sure that we are carefully considering them.

Irmak stated that the item should be a discussion point for the next Executive Committee meeting. Lindquist stated that each of the Executive Committee members should read both the email messages from Professor Peterson and Attorney Hansen. He pointed out that the Chancellor asked the Executive Committee to address this issue a long time ago and the Committee needs to make a decision on what to recommend to the Chancellor.

**6.0 New Business**

**6.1 Search Committee for Dean of the Hixson-Lied College of Fine Arts**

The Executive Committee discussed the suggested list of search committee members provided by SVCAA Weissinger.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, June 15, 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.