

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Flowers, Konecky, LaCost, Lindquist, McCollough, Nickerson, Shea, Stock

Absent: Anaya, Berg, Fech, Franti, Schubert

Date: Wednesday, March 2, 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.

1.0 Call to Order

Lindquist called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Biotechnology Seminar Series

Nickerson reported that Professor Van Ettern, Plant Pathology, is hosting a series on Biotechnology next fall and he will be inviting a National Academy of Science faculty member from each of the twelve Big Ten schools (including the University of Chicago) to give one of the seminars. He noted that Professor Van Etten is a member of the National Academy of Sciences.

3.0 Minutes of 2/23/11

The minutes of the 2/23/11 Executive Committee meeting were approved pending other additional comments.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 Review of Proposed Parking Plans

McCollough stated that she did not have anything to add to the review given the report that was made by Professor Lee, Chair of the Parking Advisory Committee, at the Faculty Senate meeting. LaCost stated that it sounds as if the Parking Advisory Committee has already made its recommendation to VC Jackson. She noted that parking rates for faculty and staff will basically remain the same but student reserved parking will increase.

McCollough stated that she was surprised that ASUN voted to raise the rates on student reserved parking. She wondered whether the full ASUN body voted on the issue.

Lindquist stated that he thinks it might have been the ASUN representatives on the Parking Advisory Committee but Konecky thought it was the ASUN Board.

4.2 Planning for Campus Wide Forums – Advertising

Lindquist asked the Executive Committee for suggestions on how to best advertise the upcoming forums. Members suggested that a broad email message be sent. Konecky suggested that another email be sent to the Senators asking them to encourage their colleagues to attend and participate in the forums.

Members also suggested having an announcement in UNL Today and a short article on the campus forums in the Daily Nebraskan. Lindquist stated that he will draft an announcement so it can be sent out quickly since the first forum is on Thursday, March 17 from 2:00 – 3:30 in the City Campus Union Auditorium. He noted that a reception will be held immediately following the forum.

Nickerson asked if the format is to identify the forums as being jointly sponsored by the Faculty Senate and the Academic Planning Committee. Lindquist stated that this is correct and that the idea is to keep the forum as a faculty conversation.

Konecky stated that the forums should be labeled as a series. Nickerson stated that the plan is to have more forums in the future on different topics relating to the faculty. Lindquist noted that some possible topics will be Innovation Campus, the Rural Initiative, the Water for Food Institute, and possibly having a conversation with President Milliken.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Candidates for Faculty Senate Executive Committee Elections

The Executive Committee worked on trying to identify Senators who would be willing to serve on the Executive Committee. Lindquist noted that elections will be held at the last April meeting but biographical information on each of the candidates needs to be sent out two weeks before the meeting.

5.2 Letter to Chairs/Heads of Units with No Representation to the Faculty Senate

Griffin suggested that the letter sent to chairs and unit heads seeking assistance with encouraging faculty members to serve as a Senator, be revised. She noted that the letter might want to point out that the campus, and the teaching enterprise, will be changing with our moving into the Big Ten. The Executive Committee agreed and stated that they will send suggestions for revising the letter. Shea pointed out that we need to make it clear that the intent is that the faculty of the department/unit will select the Senator. He stated that the Senator should not be appointed by the chair/unit head.

5.3 Reception for Pound Howard Award Recipient

Lindquist noted that the Honorary Degrees Committee is recommending that the Senate have a reception to honor the recipient of the Pound Howard Award. Nickerson stated that he thinks we should have a reception for the award winner and that this should be done on an annual basis. Griffin suggested that the Senate could have a reception for the Pound Howard Award winner in the spring and the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award could be moved to the fall. She pointed out that there may still need to be a reception for the Freedom Award winner this spring because the call for nominations has already be sent to the campus and it indicates that the award will be presented in April.

McCollough moved that the Faculty Senate have a reception for the Pound Howard Award recipient in the spring and that we move the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award to the fall. Nickerson second the motion. The motion was approved.

5.4 Professor of Practice and Voting Rights

Lindquist reported that he received an inquiry about the voting rights of Professors of Practice. He noted that the Senate recognizes these people and that they have voting rights. He reported that Varner Hall left the language vague so colleges and units could decide whether to give these people voting rights.

Konecky asked if this was a departmental issue. She noted that the University Libraries has voted on this issue and provides these people with voting privileges except on matters of tenure.

McCollough asked if the policy should be standardized across the campus. Shea stated that it should be uniform across the campus. He pointed out that he was on the committee that worked on developing the Professor of Practice positions and while he doesn't remember the specifics, he knows he would have argued for voting rights for people holding this title. He stated that he will check to see what the original documents stated. Nickerson pointed out that the Senate voted on these positions.

Konecky suggested conducting a survey to see how many departments give Professors of Practice voting rights. Stock reported that the English department allows people in these positions to vote on issues except for tenure decisions.

Lindquist asked the Executive Committee members to bring in their own department policy on the issue. He asked Griffin to locate the document that the Senate voted on. The issue will be discussed again at the next meeting.

5.5 Increasing the Minimum TOEFL Scores for Incoming Graduate Students

Lindquist noted that Asst. Dean Bellows raised two issues at the Faculty Senate meeting: the Dean of Graduate Studies position (it is currently being filled on an interim basis) and raising the TOEFL scores.

Shea stated that there should have been discussion about raising the TOEFL scores in the units, but he does not think this has happened. He noted that he had to ask Asst. Dean Bellows what other issues were coming up with the Graduate Council. He pointed out that if the minimum requirements are being changed there should be discussion with the faculty. Flowers noted that the Graduate Committee Chair of his department just learned about this and did not receive any prior information.

Konecky asked what the reason is for the change. Lindquist stated that it is his guess that the changes are being made because of us moving into the Big Ten. He stated that we should encourage our units' representatives to the Graduate Council to be actively involved with this issue.

McCollough asked if there has been any evidence that having higher TOEFL scores brings in better graduate students. LaCost pointed out that they are talking about a significant increase in the TOEFL score requirement. Shea stated that he is not sure doesn't believe the TOEFL score is a strictly enforced rule.

Lindquist pointed out that we have not heard anything about the Dean of Graduate Studies position now that Dr. Weissinger will become SVCAA. He noted that this should not be a position that is appointed. He stated that he will contact SVCAA Weissinger about what is going to happen with the position.

5.6 Engineering Deans Interviews

The Executive Committee discussed the interviews with the three candidates that have come to campus so far.

5.7 Annual Evaluations

Shea asked if departments equally judge refereed journal articles or whether some journals are rated more highly and whether criteria such as journal impact factors are being used. He stated that he is hearing that credit for a refereed publication may vary on annual evaluations of faculty. He stated that many faculty members had these concerns when the quality indicators were created. Nickerson stated that the same three tiers of publications are being used in his department as has been used in the past.

Konecky stated that she does not believe it's an official policy but the deans and others might be pushing to do this. Shea stated that he was informed that there is more pressure coming from the upper administration to do this, supposedly because we are moving into the Big Ten.

Lindquist asked if the evaluations are being based on the impact factors of the articles or the number of citations of it. Shea stated that it is his understanding that the impact factors are being looked at. Lindquist pointed out that total number of citations of an article is a better indication of the impact factor rather than the impact factor of the journal it's published in.

Shea suggested that we discuss the issue with the upper administration. He stated that we should ask them if this is the approach that units should take and what we should expect in joining the Big Ten. Flowers pointed out that in some colleges the evaluation of refereed journal articles has become more rigid.

Shea noted that evaluating articles this way not only impacts faculty members here, but it also impacts journals. He pointed out that journals raise their ratings by getting people to submit high quality, frequently cited articles, but if institutions only rate certain journals highly people will be less inclined to submit articles to other journals that aren't rated as highly. He noted that there is a proliferation of on-line journals and these are becoming more attractive in terms of making research more accessible. Konecky pointed out that this is a good reason to get articles into the digital commons repository on campus. It makes the articles more accessible and faculty members are provided with statistics about how many people access the article. Lindquist stated that the digital commons also tells you how many times an article has been downloaded.

Shea stated that the Executive Committee should discuss the issue with VC Green and SVCAA Weissinger.

5.8 UNMC Reporting Time Away from Campus Requirement

Shea reported that he received an email message from UNMC which states that the faculty is being told that they must now report whenever they are away from campus through the leave reporting system. He stated the email states that any time being used for personal use must be recorded otherwise the campus could suffer damage from the State Auditor's office. He stated that he is concerned that the same thing will be required here.

Konecky stated that this has occurred because people were not recording through Firefly when they took time off from work to take care of personal matters such as going to the doctor for an appointment. Flowers pointed out that it might be a different matter for people who are on a nine month contract. Lindquist noted that most of the UNMC faculty members are probably on 12 month appointments.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, March 9, 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.