

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Anaya, LaCost, Lindquist, Nickerson, Rinkevich, Shea, Varner

**Absent:** Anderson, Irmak, Purdum, Struthers, Wysocki

**Date:** Wednesday, May 18, 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 Announcements**

#### **2.1 LB 397 – Collective Bargaining**

LaCost reported that she received a request from Inside Higher Education to comment on LB 397, the proposed state bill about collective bargaining. Nickerson stated that he did not think the Executive Committee should respond to the request because it does not pertain to UNL. Shea stated that it will be interesting to see if the bill will impact UNL's hiring should the bill be approved. LaCost suggested that the Executive Committee monitor the bill to see what the legislature's final decision is.

### **3.0 Minutes of 5/4/11**

The minutes were approved as revised.

### **4.0 Unfinished Business**

#### **4.1 Suspension of Pay Policy**

LaCost noted that the Chancellor asked the Executive Committee to develop a suspension of pay policy for cases when a faculty member does not perform his/her duties. She noted that a charge was given to the Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee to consider drafting a policy. However, the ARRC felt that a policy was not needed because the language in the Regents Bylaws is adequate to cover cases of faculty members not performing his/her duties.

Lindquist noted that he recently forwarded to President LaCost an email message he received from attorney Mary Kay Hansen. The Executive Committee had recently asked Attorney Hansen to review a draft policy on suspension of pay for its compatibility with the Regents Bylaws and state statute. He stated that she and another attorney have been working on the request and indicated that they had not been able to find a state statute that says state employees cannot be paid for work in advance for services rendered, though this language is included in the Regents Bylaws. Shea stated that he recalls the Chancellor saying that this was a state law and he wouldn't think the Regents would

include a statement like this without it being a state law. Schubert pointed out that in the business world people are often paid in advance.

Schubert noted that he is confused about the need for a suspension of pay policy. Shea stated that he thinks the Chancellor is concerned that an administrator could abuse the Regents Bylaws if there isn't a strict policy with guidelines that specifically explain the conditions when the policy can be invoked. He noted that the Chancellor stated that having a policy would protect faculty members from abuse by an administrator. He pointed out that a policy would dictate the specifics under which pay could be suspended. He stated that his reaction is that we should work with the Chancellor on creating such a policy because there are currently no guidelines outlining when the Regent's bylaw can be enforced.

LaCost noted that the ARRC felt that the faculty was not in a position to address the issue. Shea said his understanding is that the ARRC feels that the issue is adequately addressed in the Regents Bylaws.

Lindquist pointed out that it is probably best for the Committee to wait for Attorney Hansen's complete response before making a decision on what course of action to take. He stated that he will forward Hansen's response if he receives it before the next meeting.

Lindquist pointed out that the Executive Committee asked Attorney Hansen to review and respond to the proposed policy, which means that the Executive Committee members will receive a copy of the responding email. He suggested that if an individual makes a request to an Executive Committee as a matter of Senate business, it is perfectly reasonable to distribute that message to the whole committee. However, if an individual is making an initial inquiry, for example, on a delicate matter about how to proceed on some issue, then we should consider it a private matter that would not be forwarded until a more formal request is made. However, any email message sent from a University account essentially becomes part of the public record.

LaCost stated that the Committee will continue working on this issue after Attorney Hansen fully replies to the Committee's initial request.

## **5.0 New Business**

### **5.1 Faculty Volunteers for Reading Names of Masters Students at Hooding Ceremonies**

Griffin reported that Associate to the Chancellor Nunez asked her to check with the Executive Committee to get their opinion on having volunteer faculty members read the names of graduating master students at the graduation ceremony. Nickerson noted that he recently attended the hooding ceremony and spoke with the Graduate Student Association President who said how anonymously masters' students were at the ceremony. He reported that ASUN requested to at least have the names of the students flashed on the screen but this was not done.

Shea stated that it makes sense to acknowledge and identify the masters' students. LaCost stated that a representative from each of the colleges should be responsible for reading the names. Shea stated that he thinks faculty members would be happy to volunteer to read the names of the students from their college.

Shea stated that the response to Associate to the Chancellor Nunez should be that this is a good idea and that colleges should be responsible for getting a faculty member to read the names. Nickerson suggested that a copy of this message should be sent to the Graduate Student Association.

## **5.2 Agenda Items for VC Green and SVCAA Weissinger**

The committee identified the following issues to discuss with the Vice Chancellors at the June 1 meeting:

- Mentoring deans
- New deans searches – Dean Oliva and Dean Drummond
- Empowering chairs and heads
- Summer Session enrollments
- Reallocation of VSIP money
- Update on Budget Cuts
- Priority of Building Construction
- Possible Combination of Extension and Agricultural Research Division
- Results of Health Care Audit
- Faculty Development Leave Policies

## **5.3 APC Budget Cut Hearings**

Anaya reported that she attended the APC budget cut hearings. She noted that different individuals were called up to speak to testify regarding of specific budget cuts. Schubert asked if those testifying asked questions regarding the cuts. Anaya stated that the APC asked the people speaking in opposition to the proposed cuts.

LaCost reported that her college is meeting with the art education students and has assured them that they will help them get through their program.

Schubert reported that Emeritus Professor Ballard sent a letter on how troubled he was that the Engineering College Administration recommended elimination of a department. Nickerson asked if the letter went to the APC. LaCost stated that the letter was not sent to APC.

Shea asked what happens if the APC does not approve of the recommended cuts. Nickerson reported that the APC is advisory to the Chancellor, but if the APC is strongly against some of the cuts the APC will ask the Chancellor for alternatives. He noted that there have been instances when alternatives were found based on the APC's recommendations.

Anaya stated that one of the concerns raised by the people associated with the elimination of the Industrial Management & Systems Engineering department is that students

majoring in the department have already been notified that the program is being eliminated and people feel that this has already caused irreparable damage to the department. Nickerson stated that it is a general practice that students are guaranteed that they will be able to complete their program but no new students will be accepted. Shea pointed out that the exact wording of the letter is critical. He noted that a letter stating that the program is under consideration for elimination is very different from a letter that states that a program is being eliminated. He stated that he is not sure if there is a better way to handle this situation. He noted that as soon as the Chancellor announces the cuts it is public knowledge that a program is under consideration for elimination. He stated that the university is being responsible by sending a letter to students informing them of the proposed elimination. He believes people prefer to hear from an administrator about possible elimination rather than finding out about it in the news.

#### **5.4 Health Care Audit**

Anaya asked if the results of the health care audit are in yet. LaCost reported that at the recent Board of Regents meeting a wife of an employee spoke wanting to know the trustworthiness of Chapman Kelley. She stated that Regent Hawks was particularly concerned and wants to check out Chapman Kelley's security. She noted that Regent Hawks also wants to revisit the issue of the university collecting social security numbers.

Nickerson stated that he would like to know how much money is being saved because of the audit. LaCost stated that the Committee will continue to ask this question of the administrators.

#### **5.5 Graduate Curriculum**

Schubert stated that there has been some discussion in the Engineering College on the idea of advising doctoral students to take courses that would allow them to get a masters degree while they pursue their Ph.D. He stated that many of the faculty members think that this might be an advisable approach because if students should fail their qualification exam for the Ph.D. they would still be able to obtain a masters degree. Lindquist pointed out that if the faculty members of the college feel this way, they could vote on changing their graduate curriculum. He noted that in some colleges graduate students begin a graduate program with the expectations of getting a Ph.D., but after a few years some of them are not qualified to receive the doctorate degree. These students typically get a masters degree, which does not have the same level of expectations as a doctorate degree.

Nickerson stated that he has always thought it was ridiculous to require all master students to take a certain number of 900 level courses and that this requirement should be removed.

Nickerson noted that a number of years ago students typically received a bachelor's degree first, followed by a masters degree, and then a doctorate degree, but now in many programs students go directly into a Ph.D. program. Lindquist pointed out that this depends on the employment opportunities for M.S. and Ph.D. level graduates within a particular field. Nickerson stated that many faculty members in the sciences don't want

to invest time into a master's program because the students are here for only a couple of years.

Schubert reported that part of the problem is that Graduate Studies says that students can only be enrolled in one program: either a master's program or a Ph.D. program. The student cannot be in a Ph.D. program but instead get a master's degree. Nickerson stated that graduate students get changed from a doctoral program to a master's program around the campus frequently. He stated that the student's graduate committee switches the student to the master's program by filling out some paperwork. Lindquist stated that within IANR there are many students in the master's program and if they want, or are good enough, they can apply for the Ph.D. program. Schubert stated that few faculty members in the Engineering College have pushed for this route because the model is for students to get a Ph.D. He stated that it seems like a logical fit to go up through the master's program. He noted that the idea is that they want students to still register into a Ph.D. program but require them to go through the master's program while working towards their doctorate.

Schubert stated that if a student wants to conduct research in Engineering they have to have a doctorate degree. He noted that some faculty members are exploring ways to make it a regular process for a student to get a master's degree while pursuing a Ph.D. Nickerson suggested that the Engineering College admit the students into a master's program. Shea pointed out that it is not difficult to change a student to a master's degree student, it just takes some paperwork. LaCost pointed out that the big issue is that students can only be registered in one program at a time.

Shea suggested that Schubert and his colleagues discuss the issue with the new Graduate Studies Dean Pat Dussault.

## **5.6 Impacts from UNL's Removal from the AAU**

Schubert asked if any of the Executive Committee members have received any negative comments about UNL's removal from AAU membership. Lindquist stated that he senses that the public's perspective is that we were booted out of the AAU. Schubert reported that three young faculty members in his college are leaving UNL. Shea stated that it is his understanding that the AAU is moving away from including land grant universities in its membership.

Schubert stated that he would like to know why the AAU does not include all of a campus' publications when being considered for membership. He stated that the Executive Committee should look into this and get more information.

Nickerson noted that many schools in the Big Ten that are members of the AAU have far more support for research faculty members thereby allowing them to teach less and conduct more research. Schubert stated that if we have evidence to support this statement, the information can be used to make a case for us saying that we need to restructure the university to support faculty members who are conducting research.

Lindquist agreed that it would be good to see the data that was provided to the AAU. He pointed out that, for example, the AAU metrics count the total number of faculty members at the university but do not count agricultural research funds. He stated that he would like to see how we really compare to the schools in the AAU if those discrepancies were removed. Shea stated that he would like to see justification for not including USDA grants in the AAU criteria. Lindquist noted that the private schools have not traditionally had access to this money. Varner pointed out that the university is doing well getting support from the public and agricultural companies and seeing the information from the AAU is something to consider. Nickerson stated that the only quick fix to the situation is to change the arrangements between the four campuses. Shea stated that it would be interesting to explore potential solutions to the AAU situation.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, June 1, 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.