

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Guevara, Irmak, LaCost, Lindquist, Purdum, Rinkevich, Schubert, Shea, Varner, Wysocki

Absent: Anaya, Nickerson, Purdum, Struthers

Date: Wednesday, October 12, 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

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

2.0 Professors Miles Bryant and Stephen Lahey, Academic Planning Committee (APC)

2.1 Faculty Governance

Bryant stated that he asked to speak to the Executive Committee about faculty governance. He noted that the APC is an unusual committee in that the members consist of eight faculty, three Vice Chancellors, two students, as well as several other administrators and the Committee's responsibilities touch all parts of the campus and works on how to best position the university academically. He pointed out that the charge of the APC is defined in the UNL Bylaws and by the Faculty Senate.

Bryant stated that the APC wants to publicly strengthen faculty governance but the APC has no budget and has limited help from support staff from the Institutional Research & Planning Office and the Faculty Senate. He stated that the APC is hoping to find out how faculty governance operates at some of the other Big Ten institutions to see if changes can be made here that would help strengthen faculty governance.

Bryant reported that the APC's responsibilities, as outlined in the UNL Bylaws, state that the Committee formulates policy, but in fact it is more of a reactionary committee. He stated that an example of this is the proposed budget cuts. He noted that all of the proposed budget cuts were made by the Chancellor and the APC could only react and make recommendations to the Chancellor afterwards. He pointed out that the Chancellor receives suggestions from the deans about what could be cut from their budgets and it is the Chancellor who then makes the decision about what to cut.

Bryant stated that he wants the Executive Committee to look at the statement of responsibilities for the APC to see if they should be redrafted because currently, the APC cannot meet the listed responsibilities, or whether the APC should continue to function as it has been doing and the responsibilities be rewritten to be more realistic. He pointed out that the APC is having conversations about what is the proper role of the APC.

Bryant noted that the Chancellor, in his State of the University address, stated specific goals for the campus. Bryant pointed out that these goals have direct implications for the campus and particularly the faculty yet none of the goals were discussed with the APC. He stated that the responsibilities of the APC clearly state that it “shall formulate and recommend to the Faculty Senate, to the Colleges, and to the Chancellor goals for UNL in the areas of education (resident and extension), research, and service.” He stated that the question is how we can improve academic planning and academic participation.

Bryant reported that Lahey is chairing the APC’s long range planning committee. This committee is looking at possible Bylaws modifications. He noted that making changes to the Bylaws is an elaborate process requiring the approval of the Faculty Senate, APC, ASUN, the Chancellor, and the Board of Regents but it may be worth making the changes, especially as we engage more with the Big Ten universities.

Bryant stated that the APC wants to ask the Executive Committee to consider a more specific initiative relating to the goal of attaining 160 more faculty members. He stated that he thinks the Senate needs to be involved in where these faculty members are going to be located. He pointed out that the campus needs to figure out where the needs are in academic units. He stated that the more the APC and Senate can work together to identify where these needs are, the more probability there will be staffing positions in these areas.

Lahey reported that the APC long range planning committee is trying to find a rubric so the APC is not just reacting to what the Chancellor is doing. He stated that the APC would like to be proactive rather than just reactive. He noted that the APC is talking about meeting with the Chancellor to discuss the goals and is working on putting together a systematized response about the goals. He stated that the long range planning committee would like to hear the Senate’s thoughts about how the APC can monitor the administration. He noted that a recent example of the need for this is with the change in the 120 credit hour requirement for graduation. He pointed out that there are many scientists in Arts & Sciences that are still upset about this change.

Shea stated that what the APC is saying seems very positive and he shares the same concerns. He asked if the Chancellor has expressed what he feels is the role of the APC. Bryant stated that there has been no discussion with the Chancellor about this issue but the APC has discussed it with the Vice Chancellors. Shea suggested that a starting point in the discussions would be to ask the upper administration to state what they believe is the role of the APC. He noted that the upper administration may or may not tell the APC what they are truly thinking.

Shea stated that he would caution the APC about revising the APC’s responsibilities to just reflect how it currently operates. He stated that he is not sure when the charge of the APC was first created but someone or some group had the intent that the APC should address the kinds of issues outlined in the responsibilities. He pointed out that if changes are made, they should not lessen faculty governance. He said changes shouldn’t be made just to make them match what has been happening with the APC. Changes should be

made to reflect what we feel is the right way for the APC to be operating and steps should be taken to see that we operate according to the Bylaws. Bryant agreed and noted that what he meant by the responsibilities being more realistic is that they reflect what the APC is capable of doing given the limited staffing that it has.

Bryant stated that many of the recent decisions that have happened in the last six months, such as the change in the 120 credit hour requirement, the change in the administration of summer sessions, and the goal to increase enrollment by 5,000 students could have involved the APC. Shea pointed out that the APC should have been involved. Lahey asked where the faculty should get involved in these discussions. He noted that he is aware that the Board of Regents did not have to ask us about the 120 credit hours but the decision impacts the work of the faculty. Shea pointed out that if the faculty objects to the way administrators or the Board are operating they should tell them so.

Lindquist asked what the limiting factors are that keep the APC from being able to do the work identified in the APC's charge. Bryant stated that there are two major obstacles. The first is not having the time for members of the APC to look at the complex structure of the university and to be able to come up with initiatives. A way to address this is to involve the APC in the discourse that takes place between the administrators on topics that relate to the charge of the APC. A suggestion from the APC is to have one of the faculty members on the APC get release time so he/she can be actively engaged in planning. The other factor is limited staffing. He noted that there needs to be an increase in the staff that can assist the APC.

Lindquist stated that he does not think there is a problem with the Chancellor putting out the goals for the university, but he does think the APC can contribute by stating whether it agrees with the goals and the APC can have input into how these goals are met. He pointed out that timing is an issue that would need to be addressed. Shea stated that the APC or the Faculty Senate should not hesitate to offer different goals if the body feels that it is appropriate, and the APC or governing faculty body should state whether they are satisfied with the goals. He pointed out that there needs to be reasonable and legitimate reasons for disagreements with the goals. He stated that it would be good to have the upper administration get used to a process in which the faculty is fully engaged in setting goals for the university.

Schubert asked what the specific cause is for the APC and Faculty Senate standing up and saying we want a change. Bryant pointed out that there have been many administrative decisions that have been made without any previous consultation with the APC. For example the budget cuts. Schubert asked if the faculty body, the APC and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee wants to be asked about proposed budget cuts before they are made. Bryant stated that the APC would like some involvement prior to the decision on what to cut and the APC would like enough information so that it can help with decisions. He noted that he previously mentioned that the Chancellor receives information from each of the colleges of possible budget cuts but the APC does not ever see this list. Lahey asked if only one person should be making the decision on what is more valuable to the university when determining budget cuts. Bryant pointed out that

this kind of discussion is what the APC is supposed to do, according to the UNL Bylaws. He stated that the APC wants to know how it can be more proactive. Wysocki asked how many of the proposed budget cuts were made by the APC. Bryant stated that none were because the APC did not get any information upon which to make recommendations prior to the announcements. Schubert noted that the APC did have some input after the cuts were announced. Guevara pointed out that the APC is being bypassed and should be involved before decisions are made. Schubert stated that committees must be productive and should not spend the majority of its time just complaining.

Guevara stated that after reading the APC's charge it is clear that the APC is not being consulted, it is just being informed. He pointed out that the faculty voice on the APC is what we should be defending. He noted that it is up to the administrators to defend their point.

Wysocki recalled that a statement was made by the Chancellor, prior to the announcements of the proposed budget cuts, that people could submit suggestions for possible budget cuts. He stated that this would be a good time when the APC could be proactive. Bryant stated that the APC could have sent out an email to the faculty asking for their suggestions. Wysocki suggested that a survey could have been sent out and the information gathered from the survey could have been presented to the Chancellor. He noted that this would allow for a sort of merging of ideas.

Lahey asked when the announcement is typically made about whether we will have budget cuts. Bryant stated that generally the shortfall is not known until the fall semester. He reported that the administration then starts to assemble all of the budgetary needs. He noted that hopefully we won't be going through another budget reduction this year.

Bryant pointed out that the APC, which is in part a Faculty Senate Committee, is expected to engage in academic planning and it needs to figure out ways to do this better. Wysocki suggested that there should be a load reduction for the faculty members of the APC so they can conduct the work of the APC.

Lindquist stated that he thinks there are opportunities for the APC to take proactive action given the goals outlined in the Chancellor's State of the University address. He pointed out that the reality is that faculty members serving on the APC and the Senate Executive Committee do not have the time to be able to do all of the work that is outlined in the responsibilities of these committees.

Shea pointed out that it is important to make sure that the faculty retains the right and opportunity to engage whenever they feel it is appropriate. He stated that we do not want to reword Bylaws and procedures that would further restrict what the faculty can do. In fact, he would like to see a broader-role of the faculty in bylaws and procedures. He noted that the bigger picture concerns how the faculty and administrators should engage in discussions and decision-making. Schubert stated that we need to focus on efforts that can result in an accomplishment. He stated that just engaging in discussions just eats faculty time and he is opposed to meetings where faculty members talk about nothing.

Lahey pointed out that having the goals sprung on the faculty and APC is a problem. He stated that the APC was not involved in formulating the goals, yet the brunt of the work that is needed to meet these goals will be on the faculty.

Bryant asked the Executive Committee to review the existing responsibilities of the APC and to suggest possible revisions. Shea suggested that the responsibilities should be realistic and contemporary but he prefers to have broader statements that will not restrict faculty governance. He noted that there have been times, including more recently, when there was insufficient engagement with the faculty on issues that are clearly in their purview. He pointed out that even though the administrators stated that the Board has the right to set the framework for the number of credit hours required for graduation, the framework can be limiting. He believed that absolute control of the framework should be given to the Regents.

Bryant stated that the other request that the APC has is that the Faculty Senate be actively engaged in planning what areas the additional faculty members mentioned by the Chancellor in the State of the University address, will be added. LaCost stated that she has been to two meetings recently where the Chancellor has stated that he does not know specifically how the addition of 160 faculty members will take place. She stated that she believes the Chancellor will welcome a plan from the Senate on where these people shall be placed.

Lindquist stated that this would be a great project for the APC to work on. He pointed out that there will be an obvious growth in science and engineering, but the campus needs to decide where and how to grow in areas that don't traditionally bring in large amounts of external funds, but could bring the University great prestige as national and international leaders. Wysocki pointed out that developing a plan for increasing the number of faculty members is directly reflected in the Senate's goals this year.

Schubert pointed out that one of the APC's responsibilities is academic planning and he stated that the APC should come with suggestions about where these people should be located. Bryant stated that it would be helpful if the Executive Committee asked senators where faculty needs are the greatest. Schubert stated that someone will need to collect this information. Bryant stated that APC will collect the information but he believes the Executive Committee has to take the lead in this effort.

Shea pointed out that we will need the support of the faculty body and the Executive Committee needs to come up with specific goals. He stated that we do not want to get into a situation where we are pushing for things that in fact are not supported by the faculty at large. He suggested putting an idea forward to see how much support there is going to be for it. He noted that the Chancellor will want to hear a plan that the faculty would support. Bryant stated that he would like to create some buzz about this effort through faculty groups on campus.

Lahey noted that each department has had to develop strategic plans and the plans state what the faculty needs are for departments. He stated that it should not be difficult to get a copy of department strategic plans. Wysocki pointed out that some strategic plans reflect the plans of administrators, not necessarily the faculty.

Bryant asked if the APC will hear back from the Executive Committee on the two items requested. Lindquist stated that the Executive Committee can review the charge of the APC and it should absolutely get involved in supporting plans for the expansion of faculty with new hires. He pointed out that this is an area where the APC can take a stand in developing such plans and informing the Senate so that we can all be on page in supporting those plans. Bryant stated that this can be done. Wysocki suggested that the Chancellor should be informed of the APC's request to the Senate to develop a plan on where faculty members should be hired.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Meeting with Matt Hilgenkamp, External Vice President, ASUN

Griffin reported that the Executive Committee will be meeting with ASUN representatives on November 2. LaCost stated that she will be working with Hilgenkamp to develop an agenda for that meeting.

3.2 Discussion with Daily Nebraskan

Lindquist reported that he met with Riley Johnson, a reporter from the Daily Nebraskan, to discuss salary differences among faculty members at UNL. He stated that more stories will be coming out in the DN on faculty salaries and, as chair of the Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee (FCAC), he wants to be proactive in planning for its spring meeting, where recommendations on faculty compensation are formulated. He stated that he wants to know what the faculty wants the FCAC to be looking at this year in terms of salaries and benefits. LaCost noted that Institutional Research & Planning seems to be working with an old model for analyzing the data. Lindquist stated that a subcommittee of the FCAC will be discussing this, among other things, at the end of the month.

4.0 Approval of 10/5/11 Minutes

Rinkevich moved for approval of the minutes as revised. Schubert seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Proposed Revisions to the Emeritus Policy

LaCost stated that Provost Pratt is asking the Executive Committee to provide feedback on proposed changes to the Regents' policy on Emeritus Faculty. The Committee discussed the proposed revisions. Lindquist asked if the Emeriti Association has been able to comment on the proposed changes. LaCost stated that she did not know if the Provost contacted the Emeriti Association for feedback. Lindquist stated that the document should be sent to the head of the Emeriti Association.

Lindquist noted that this is a Regents policy and, therefore, applies system wide.

5.2 Update on TeamMates

Schubert reported that he wrote an email to Walter Powell of LPS asking if he, along with Dr. Osborne, would make a presentation to the Faculty Senate about the TeamMates program. He stated that he suggested that the presentation be made at the December Senate meeting. This would allow more time to develop the presentation. LaCost asked if the idea is to link up UNL faculty members with LPS students. She noted that TeamMates is a program throughout the state. Schubert stated that the policy of the program is for the mentors to be within ten miles of the student. Varner suggested that it be noted during the presentation that there are chapters of TeamMates throughout the state because extension educators could become involved in their regions.

LaCost asked if there are already faculty members serving as mentors in TeamMates. Schubert stated that Powell could help identify TeamMates members who could talk about their experience with the Senate. He noted that it would be helpful to know if UNL supports having an association with TeamMates. He stated that it would be helpful to have a contact person at UNL that TeamMates could work with. He noted that TeamMates mentoring typically takes place at the student's school but it is possible that the student could meet with a faculty member on campus. This would make it more accessible to the faculty member and could introduce the student to the campus.

Griffin asked if Emeriti professors have been asked to become members of TeamMates. Schubert stated that he is not sure but information can be provided to the Emeriti Professors Association.

5.3 Conflict of Interest Policy Update

Lindquist reported that the committee working on the draft policy will be meeting tomorrow, October 13th, to further revise the policy.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Revisions to Senate Definition of Disciplines

Griffin reminded the Executive Committee that during the spring the Senate wanted a review of the Definition of Disciplines as defined in the Faculty Senate Syllabus. Griffin reported that the Committee on Committees sent email message to each Senator asking them to review with their department its classification in the disciplines to see if it needs to be changed or moved into a different definition. She noted that there were some housecleaning changes that needed to be made to reflect changes in department names. It was suggested to include Education in the title of the classification Business and Social Sciences. The other change was to move Agricultural Economics from the Biological Sciences classification to Business, Education, and Social Sciences definition. Lindquist noted that a correction needed to be made in the proposed revisions regarding the exception of Agricultural Economics from all divisions in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources under the Biological Sciences classification.

6.2 Professorship Committee

LaCost reported that she received an email message from Associate VC Perez regarding reappointing people to the Professorship Committee. Lindquist suggested that LaCost contact Associate VC Perez to see who the members are on the Committee so the Executive Committee can decide how to proceed. LaCost stated that she will contact Associate VC Perez and report back to the Executive Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, October 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.