

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Anaya, Guevara, LaCost, Lindquist, Rinkevich, Ruchala, Schubert, Shea, Woodman

Absent: Purdum, Wysocki, Zoubek

Date: Wednesday, February 22, 2012

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 Associate Vice President Niemiec, Director of Online Worldwide

President LaCost reported that President Milliken has made very positive statements about Associate VP Niemiec and encouraged the Senate to invite her to a meeting. Associate VP Niemiec reported that she has been trying to meet as many people as possible in the six months since she has come to NU. She noted that she came from the University of Illinois at Chicago where she served as Executive Director of External Education. She noted that during her time at UIC the President there envisioned creating a fourth campus with online education complete with its own accreditation. The President's goal was to tap into the faculty on the campuses to run the courses but the work would be done on a propriety basis which was strongly resisted by the faculty. The faculty would not support having a fifth campus and fought the President on accrediting the campus resulting in the failure of the global campus.

Associate VP Niemiec noted that she was initially contacted by NU during the first search for a director of Online Worldwide, but it wasn't until she was contacted again after the first search failed that she decided to do some research to see what the University's intent was with online courses. She reported that she liked what she saw and was glad to see the level of engagement from all of the stakeholders and decided to pursue the job.

Associate VP Niemiec reported that upon coming here she realized the depth of quality online programs are offered throughout the system. She noted that there are 129 programs online from the combined NU campuses which nearly create access and choice to a full university online. She stated that the one primary purpose of Online Worldwide is to market the programs to attract distance students and to create national and international awareness. She stated that the goal is to market the programs to attract distance students and to make sure the programs here have a national and international presence. She stated that part of the efforts of her office now are to identify the necessary infrastructure that is required to ensure that we can handle growth in distance education.

She noted that UNL is having a number of conversations about the enrollment goals made by the Chancellor and the infrastructure that will be needed to accommodate the increased enrollment. LaCost pointed out that the delivery system isn't part of the problem. Associate VP Niemec noted that online courses are a mode of delivery, a part of the way we teach, and is not a separate entity. She stated that the external message is that Online Worldwide is a central point of access for online programs offered by the four campuses and their academic colleges. She pointed out that the programs are owned by the campuses and the curriculum is owned by the faculty.

Woodman asked if baccalaureate degrees are offered through Online Worldwide. Associate VP Niemec stated that an online baccalaureate completion degree can be obtained through UNL, UNK and UNO and that UNMC actually has some advanced degrees for people who already have a credential in particular fields. She noted that listed on the Online Worldwide website are degree completion programs, masters programs, certificate and endorsement programs and two doctoral programs. Woodman asked if a student gets a degree from UNL, UNO, or UNK or from the University of Nebraska. Associate VP Niemec stated that undergraduate degrees are awarded from the campus that is offering the program, but graduate degrees are from the University. She noted that there are some collaborative programs between all three campuses. She stated that students would register with the campus of their choice but the coursework is shared between the campuses with these collaborative degrees. LaCost asked if UNL only offers one baccalaureate degree. Associate VP Niemec stated that UNL's online baccalaureate degree completion program is a B.S. in Applied Science. She noted that there are a number of blended programs offered by UNL.

Guevara asked if Extended Education is coordinated with Online Worldwide. Associate VP Niemec stated that it is and they work closely together to coordinate efforts. She noted that if a student is admitted into an online degree program, they are not considered any differently than an on-campus student. She pointed out that non-degree seeking students might not have access to some courses unless additional capacity in the course is allowed. This is a decision made by the departments and faculty.

Woodman asked who owns the course content. Associate VP Niemec stated that, in her opinion, the faculty member owns the content of their course. Woodman noted that he is teaching two online courses but if he were to stop he wondered if someone else could use the online course that he developed. Guevara pointed out that in his department it is specifically stated that the online course is owned by the department, not the faculty and a chair could assign someone else to teach a course that was created by another faculty member. Woodman asked if even the Powerpoint presentations are owned by the department. Guevara said yes and noted that the faculty found this troubling. Associate VP Niemec stated that much depends on the agreed upon arrangement for course development. She stated that she feels mutual ownership between the faculty member and the institution is the most pragmatic and enforceable. She stated that the model where a content expert develops the curriculum and another person teaches it is not the way online courses are taught now at the University of Nebraska. She noted that intellectual property is something that needs to be addressed and discussed upfront. She

reported that MIT and Stanford have non-credit courses online and are offering them for free and other schools are offering credit courses for a minimal fee. She pointed out that the landscape for online education is shifting rapidly.

LaCost noted that her department does a lot of online courses and the landscape for online education is changing considerably. She reported that she was informed that she needed to change the content of her course so that it coincides with other courses offered by her department. The reasoning is so that someone can easily take over an online course should it be needed. Guevara pointed out that ACE courses are already doing something similar to this.

Shea stated that he is glad to hear Associate VP Niemiec's viewpoints. He stated that it was his impression a few years ago that the administration believed that the course content was university property and the faculty members had no claims to it. Associate VP Niemiec stated that it would be near to impossible to tell a faculty member that they cannot continue to utilize the content they have created for a course. She pointed out that putting course material online as part of an online program makes it an educational resource for the institution. This does not mean the course remains static for years. She noted that as information changes, the content of the course is modified by the individual teaching. She pointed out due to the 120 credit hour requirement many courses will be undergoing re-design.

Associate VP Niemiec re-stated that, in her opinion the course content is owned by the faculty with an understanding of the reality that the faculty member is a paid employee of the University and the University has rights to use the work. Woodman stated that he has concerns that someone else can come in and take over a course and use all of the work that another faculty member has developed. He pointed out that this is the creative work of the faculty. Associate VP Niemiec stated that there have been significant discussions about this topic and that institutions deal with the ownership issue differently. She pointed out that when institutions like MIT, Stanford, and Yale are making non credit courses available online for free, the question other institutions are asked is why we are not sharing our knowledge. She feels that soon more universities will need to make policy decisions whether to evaluate these courses for credit if a student seeks to enter a degree program.

LaCost asked if Associate VP Niemiec sees more collaboration between the campuses in the coming year. She pointed out that a major issue is the different prices for courses on the campuses. Associate VP Niemiec stated that she sees a strong possibility for more collaboration. She reported that, in some subject areas, faculty members have come together from each of the campuses to see how they would collaborate with course offerings. She stated that the goal is to get the distance education tuition as equal as possible. She pointed out that having different costs for courses can make some of the courses appear to be less valued. She reported that recommendations from the campuses will be made soon on tuition increases and her staff is working on looking at comparable tuition rates. She reported that she recently met with UNK faculty members and there

was significant discussion on collaboration. She pointed out that the faculty members of UNK had many of the same concerns as faculty members at UNL.

Woodman noted that the model for online courses is based upon enrollment. He stated that it seems like the administration collects the fees from online courses and the funds are supposed to go back to the college, however, the funds trickle down to the department and the faculty member and he wondered if the percentage the college keeps is standard for the entire university or whether it varies. He asked if this is standard procedure or will the deans and chairs develop a model by themselves. Associate VP Niemiec stated that the tuition comes in through the tuition model. She pointed out that Online Worldwide receives 5% of the tuition from online courses and the rest goes back to the campus. Lindquist asked if the total tuition costs are given to the colleges and departments or whether differential rates are returned. Associate VP Niemiec stated that the total tuition distributed back to the campuses is less than 5%.

Associate VP Niemiec stated that the biggest concern in regards to collaboration between the campuses is the student's ability to easily take courses at one of the other campuses. She stated that currently the students may have to enter into two different Blackboard systems if they are taking a course on one of the other campuses. She pointed out that consistent 24 hour, 7 days a week technical support is needed for both the faculty and the students.

LaCost noted that there is not enough assistance to create videos or to make changes in your course. Associate VP Niemiec pointed out that at the other campuses faculty are taught how to use the technology and assisted with instructional design, but the courses are not built. She reported that one of her goals is to look at shared services to see where we can collaborate with regards to faculty development. She stated that discussions have begun regarding a retreat for instructional designers so they can address concerns and share effective practices. She stated that she is hoping next year to have a system-wide workshop for those engaged or interested in distance education. Effective practices and national speakers will be part of the experience. She noted that Instructional Design and Development is a real resource offered through EE&O and they have very good instructional designers. LaCost agreed but pointed out that they are understaffed.

Associate VP Niemiec stated that online resources need to be looked at too, not only from an institutional perspective but from a faculty and student perspective. She pointed out that once again approaching this through shared resources could be very helpful. She noted that at some institutions there are repositories of online courses that can be shared. She reported that she met with the Librarians and they indicated that they are struggling with resources to keep the licenses for critical pieces because of the costs. She stated that they are working together to find solutions.

Woodman stated that it would be helpful to have some of the technical support people write up a series about what tools are useful in developing online courses. He noted that he had to do a lot of his own research to develop an online course and there was no list or resource that could guide him to a list of tools or software that would be helpful.

Associate VP Niemiec reported that something similar was created at UIC. She stated that if there was a new technique a video vignette explaining the technique was created and to guide an instructor through the process of using the technique. She stated that it was very helpful and she is having some conversations about it here, but will discuss this further with administrators.

Associate VP Niemiec pointed out that most of the information pertaining to faculty interested or teaching online courses can be found on the Online Worldwide website (<http://www.nebraska.edu/administration/online-worldwide.html>). She noted that information on the current grant competition for faculty can be found on the website. She reported that there is approximately \$200,000 available for faculty and staff to write proposals for program development, planning, and capacity building. The deadline date for submitting grant proposals is March 17. LaCost asked if individuals can apply for the grants or whether they have to be submitted by a department. Associate VP Niemiec stated that proposals can be submitted by individuals with the consent of the department and coordinated through the campus. She reported the representation on the review committee for the grants includes faculty from all four campuses and the Libraries.

LaCost noted that Online Worldwide has great potential. Associate VP Niemiec agreed and pointed out that it is meant to be complimentary to on campus programs, not compete against them. She pointed out that she would rather see a student who wants to take online classes going through one of our campuses rather than outside the system. She noted that if a program finds out that a potential distance education student is not a good fit for their program, these students should be referred back to her office because, in all likelihood, one of the other campuses has a program that may serve that student.

Lindquist asked if all classes that are offered by distance at UNL are offered through Online Worldwide. Associate VP Niemiec reported that all of the programs are listed online but not all of the courses but this is one of her goals. She pointed out that there is a demand from students wanting specific courses and we have the potential to meet this non-degree need.

Schubert asked if online courses are more expensive than campus courses. Associate VP Niemiec stated that the tuition may be higher but online students do not have all of the student fees to pay. Schubert pointed out that the online engineering courses are significantly higher than on campus courses, even when you factor in the cost of living. Associate VP Niemiec pointed out that the market for online courses is beyond Nebraska borders and she thought that the credit hour tuition was less although she needs to verify it. She stated that the tuition recommendations come forward from the campuses and the departments. She stated that while campus comparisons are a consideration, the rate is also driven by what the market can bear. The University of Nebraska has very competitive tuition rates.

Guevera asked if people getting a degree online have any additional fees. Associate VP Niemiec stated that they have to pay a technology fee, library fee, and distance education fee. She noted that they are not eligible for student health insurance. ‘

Schubert pointed out that a student taking twelve credit hours online pays \$150 more per credit hour than on campus students. He asked what the benefits are for taking courses online. Associate VP Niemiec noted that many of the online students are place bound and cannot come to campus, often because they are working. She stated that degree completers are primarily adult learners taking courses part-time. She stated that the key to taking online courses is the flexibility and convenience of it. She reported that the profile for degree completers is that they are over 21 and have had some college courses. She stated that efforts are to focus on developing online general education courses which will eventually allow the student to enter into a program where they can obtain a degree. She stated that in looking at the State's demographics, 80% of the brick and mortar institutions are in three counties in the state. The question is how to enable people in other parts of the state to take classes in higher education through the University.

Associate VP Niemiec stated that she will be addressing the UNO Faculty Senate in March and has a Board presentation in April, but she would be happy to come and speak to the Executive Committee or the Faculty Senate at anytime. She said that anyone with thoughts or suggestions should please feel free to contact her (mnieniec@nebraska.edu).

3.0 Announcements

No announcements were made.

4.0 Approval of 2/15/12 Minutes

Schubert moved for approval of the minutes as revised. The motion was seconded by Anaya. The Executive Committee discussed removing a couple of sentences that stated incorrect information. The Committee agreed to deletion of the two sentences. The minutes were approved.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Professors of Practice Survey

LaCost reported that she made changes and corrections as suggested by the Executive Committee. She noted that full IRB approval has not been received yet. Lindquist asked how the data from the survey is going to be used. LaCost stated that for now the data is just for the Executive Committee's use to see if campus-wide problems exist for professors of practice. She stated that the Executive Committee can decide later if it wants to share the data. Lindquist asked if the IRB request states that information obtained from the survey may be presented to the Faculty Senate. LaCost stated that there should not be a problem with presenting the data in aggregate form.

5.2 Update on International Visitors Issue

LaCost reported that she sent an email message to SVCAA Weissinger regarding the Executive Committee's request for addressing concerns relating to temporary housing of international visitors, but she has not received a response from SVCAA Weissinger. She suggested that the campus might need to have a policy on providing housing for international visitors, particularly since one of the Chancellor's goals is to have more international collaboration.

Schubert stated that the question is why someone coming for a few days needs to have a university ID. He noted that the Chancellor stated that he cannot imagine that this should be a problem because we have many summer visitors staying on campus who do not have a university ID. He noted that SVCAA Weissinger stated that she would look into the concerns of the Executive Committee when they previously met with her, but the answers that were provided by a staff member in SVCAA Weissinger's office did not address the concerns of the Committee.

Lindquist asked if Housing actually provides short-term accommodations for an international visitor. Schubert stated that Housing insists that it cannot provide accommodations without a university ID. He noted that departments can pay for the accommodation of the visitor and on-campus housing would be less expensive than using Embassy Suites. He stated that he thought Housing would have been interested in doing this but apparently they are not.

The Executive Committee agreed to discuss the issue again with SVCAA Weissinger.

5.3 Student Bereavement Policy

Griffin reported that Professor Woodward, chair of the Grading & Examinations Committee, sent a draft of the proposed Student Bereavement Policy. Shea noted that this appears to be a separate policy and not something that is going to be incorporated into the existing student absence policy as previously suggested. Lindquist noted that the Executive Committee needs to decide whether to bring this to the full Senate for a full vote. Griffin stated that Professor Woodward suggested presenting it to the Senate at the April 3 meeting.

Woodman stated that he has concerns about the policy and asked if it would completely override the attendance requirements that an instructor states in his/her syllabus. He asked what would happen if there are a limited number of absences in a class and the student already reached that limited number before there was a death in the family. He questioned whether the policy would allow for further absences. LaCost stated that she does not think the bereavement policy totally overrides the instructor's ability to limit absences. She noted that the proposed policy has provisions requiring the student to contact the instructor to make arrangements to complete missed work.

Guevara noticed that the policy states that three out of five consecutive days of class can be missed, not three weeks of class if the class only meets once a week. He stated that this should be clarified in the policy and that the scheduled activities beyond those days are not affected and remain as indicated by the instructor.

Lindquist stated that he liked the policy, particularly because the students have to go through the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs' Office for verification. Woodman pointed out that the process already exists to a certain extent because he has received a note to accommodate a student in cases of bereavement. Lindquist reported that he had

three absences in his class this week due to bereavement and he would prefer verification from the Vice Chancellor's Office regarding the death of a family member.

Woodman stated that he is looking for some kind of ownership on the part of the student and the student should be responsible for making up work missed during the bereavement absence. He stated that he would suggest revisions to the proposed policies to address the Executive Committee's concerns.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Pamphlets Distributed in Class

Shea stated that he received an inquiry from a faculty member regarding pamphlets from an outside company being left on the seats of his classroom. He guessed that no one gave these people permission to distribute these brochures and was asked to bring it to the Executive Committee's attention. Guevara pointed out that this is frequently done around campus by different organizations. LaCost stated that she will contact VC Jackson to see if this is permissible.

6.2 Upcoming Senate Meeting

Schubert asked if Kris Baack, Assistant Director of Student Involvement, should be invited to the Senate meeting to talk about TeamMates. He noted that there were questions that were not addressed after the presentation last month. He pointed out that Baack has been a long term mentor with TeamMates and could answer questions and talk about her experiences with the program. The Executive Committee agreed to invite Baack to the March 6 meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:54 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, February 29 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.