

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bender, Guevara, Joeckel, Nickerson, Purcell, Rinkevich, Rudy, Sollars, Woodman

Absent: Konecky, Steffen, Ruchala, Wysocki

Date: Wednesday, October 8, 2014

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

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

2.0 Dean Alan Cerveny

Dean Cerveny wanted to provide an update on the enrollment. He noted that this year is the second time in the history of the university that we have gone over 25,000 students for the total enrollment, the last time was in 1982. He pointed out that the difference between 1982 and now is that we are graduating approximately 1,000 more students per year.

Dean Cerveny reported that we have the largest nonresident undergraduate enrollment that we have ever had with 29% of the student body being nonresident. We also have the most diverse campus with 12.6% of the student population being students of color, and we also have the largest international student enrollment with 10% of the student body coming from different countries. He noted that we have had the largest freshmen class in 35 years and he is hoping that next year will be even larger.

Dean Cerveny stated that one of the changes over the past 10 years has been where our nonresident students are coming from. He reported that students coming from Illinois and Minnesota now lead in the number of nonresident students. He noted that previously Iowa and South Dakota were the leaders, but the enrollment figures for these states has remained relatively the same. He stated that there has been an increase in students from Kansas, California, Colorado, Missouri, Texas, and Wisconsin. He pointed out that in enrollment terms you haven't established a true market in an area until you get 100 or more students each year, but we are seeing over 150 students a year from suburban Chicago and an increase in students from the Denver area. He stated that once a university is established in an area it is easier to recruit students from the vicinity. He noted that there is greater interest from students in the Milwaukee area which he believes is due to our being part of the Big Ten.

Woodman asked if there are any differences in retention rates between resident students and nonresident students. Dean Cerveny reported that in the freshman year the Nebraska

students have a slightly higher retention rate, but the tuition rate at UNL has helped keep nonresident students here.

Woodman asked if the ACT scores of nonresident students are higher than Nebraska students. Dean Cerveny stated that we have students with high ACT scores from both out-of-state and in-state. He noted that one of the concerns of faculty members when you bring in a larger number of students is with the quality of students. He reported that since 2002 we have not only seen a growth in enrollment, but also in student profile. The grades, test scores, and ACT or SAT scores of students have been the best profile we have had.

Nickerson stated that he and other faculty members in his department have seen a dramatic decrease in the performance of students, particularly for those teaching large courses. He stated that he has been trying to figure out why this has occurred but cannot come up with any answers.

Woodman pointed out that a faculty member he spoke with stated that the language skills of some international students are poor. He stated that he likes the fact that the profile scores of students is increasing, but the class performances are not showing it. Dean Cerveny reported that Associate Dean Pat McBride has commented that there are students who score well on TOEFL but haven't had good interaction with the language. He stated that the campus is considering a course on how an international student survives in American classrooms. He noted that he thinks many of the international students are capable of doing well, but they may not be ready for the classroom yet. Woodman asked if there was any special counseling for international students. Guevara pointed out that while some people can study for tests it does not provide a true evaluation of how they can perform. He stated that he does not think the metrics are as reliable as they should be in measuring how well they will do in class. He noted that he has heard the same concerns from many faculty members. Dean Cerveny stated that there have been some examples of students that have come to campus and took a placement exam which was completely at odds with their TOEFL score. They are asked to take the exam again, but if they are still not compatible they are removed from the university. Nickerson suggested that these international students should take a conversational English course for a semester. He stated that another idea is to have them be roommates with an American student so they can improve their language ability. Dean Cerveny noted that Associate Dean McBride believes that those international students who take more conversational English courses feel more confident and have greater success in the classroom.

Dean Cerveny reported that there are approximately 20,000-21,000 high school students graduating in Nebraska each year, but half of the students lack proficiency in areas the ACT covers in terms of the courses that the university wants students to have. He noted that this puts us in an awkward position because it means that only 50% of the students have the kind of credentials that make them eligible for admission, and there is some concerns that we aren't providing the level of support for these students that is needed.

Purcell asked what the acceptable minimum ACT score is for admittance. Dean Cerveny said a score of 20 on the ACE is needed. He noted that as a land grant university this is the reality of our standards because a mission of the land grant university is to provide education for many students. He pointed out that the average ACT score of students applying to UNL is 25.4 and we are getting the top 10-20% of high school students.

Nickerson noted that at the recent CIC Faculty Governance Leadership Conference he and Bender learned that many of the other Big Ten schools had special admits, in some cases with 50 or more athletes that are brought in that wouldn't be accepted otherwise. He pointed out that Nebraska was not listed as one of these schools and asked if we have any special admits. Dean Cerveny noted that we are structured differently than the other Big Ten schools in terms of our Athletics department. He reported that we have had an admissions program in place since 1977 so we have good statistics to review. He stated that students that have one deficiency can be admitted through an individual review, and most of these students have done well. He stated that Admissions has sat down with coaching staff to show them what is required for a student to be admitted. He noted that some athletes are admitted with an individual review, but they must follow the same guidelines as other students. Nickerson asked how many students are admitted through the individual review process. Dean Cerveny reported that the Board of Regents allows for up to 15% of new students but we have never come close to that amount, usually it is between 7 and 8%.

Bender asked what the success rate is for students who are admitted individually. Dean Cerveny stated that they have the same success rate as other students. He pointed out that an Admissions committee reviews the applications, but the decision is made without knowing the name of the student or what school they come from. Nickerson asked how many people are on the panel that makes the decision. Dean Cerveny reported that typically 10 or 12 people are on the panel and they make decisions each week.

Nickerson stated that there does not seem to be any concerns here with Athletics getting special admits. Dean Cerveny stated that Admissions wants to be proactive and make coaches understand right away what will be required for students to be accepted to UNL.

Dean Cerveny has heard that some people think we are becoming more elitist because we are always touting the Big Ten, but this is not the thinking of the average Nebraska high school student. He pointed out that we have received more applications this year from all counties in Nebraska than last year. He stated that the idea that we are less attractive to Nebraska students is unfounded. Woodman noted that he lives in Nebraska City and it appears that more students from that area are attending UNL. He thinks in the past they thought UNL was too big a school. Dean Cerveny stated that Admissions can track all the information that is provided to every student that applies and as a result we can customize the information they are seeking and get them in contact with appropriate faculty members. He noted that recently a father told him that his child received more personal attention from UNL than a smaller college.

Nickerson asked to what extent faculty members are involved in recruiting students. Dean Cerveny stated that Admissions tries to utilize the faculty as much as possible during the recruiting process. When the student comes to campus Admissions tries to get them appointments with the college and faculty members that they are interested in seeing. He pointed out that typically when you see an increase in enrollment and profiles it means that the faculty are involved. He stated that the students are excited to meet and talk to the professors they are interested in taking courses from.

Bender asked if we are doing anything to try and develop markets in other parts of the country where there is large student growth. Dean Cerveny reported that since joining the Big Ten we have seen a growth in applications, particularly in the Big Ten footprint. He stated that there has been some jump in applications from the south and southwest, but he thinks a factor for these students is concern about the winter weather. He stated that he believes there are some great opportunities in New Jersey. He noted that all of our websites have been retooled with a new template to be more attractive to students since the web is the front door to the campus these days. He pointed out that many parents in other parts of the country like the safety aspects of Lincoln and the cost of our tuition.

Guevara stated that he has heard reports that we are giving out-of-state tuition breaks and asked if this is correct. Dean Cerveny reported that out of 1200 nonresident freshman students, 319 of them are receiving out-of-state tuition scholarships. He noted that some of these scholarships were designed to increase awareness of UNL. He pointed out that students are looking for a good place to go that is not so expensive. He reported that the George Beadle Scholarship is given to out-of-state students who have ACT scores in the high 30's and were at the top of their class. This allows them to pay resident tuition. He noted that the scholarships are more than paying for themselves. He reported that in-state tuition rates were frozen for the last two years but out-of-state rates have increased.

Dean Cerveny stated that a presentation was made to the deans about a course scheduling proposal that is based on recommendations made by a faculty ad hoc committee that looked at how our peer institutions handle scheduling of courses. He reported that we are doing things differently in seven identified areas. One of the questions that arose is whether we are using the space we currently have most efficiently. He stated that the idea is to pursue best practices in scheduling, but there needs to be discussions with the faculty about this topic. He noted that the Academic Planning and Scheduling Advisory Group will be looking further into this issue.

Nickerson noted that the Executive Committee received a copy of the report from the ad hoc committee. He pointed out that one of the issues that needs to be addressed is the conflict in scheduling Tuesday and Thursday classes between East Campus and City Campus. Dean Cerveny stated that one of the problems identified is that required classes for students are being offered at the same time. He reported that most of the classes are clustered between 9:30 to 2:30 and we need to spread these courses out during the day.

Purcell asked if there has been any comparisons with online classes. Dean Cerveny said that there might be more opportunities for blended courses. He noted that students like to have online courses available because it provides them more flexibility with their schedules.

Dean Cerveny stated that he will provide an electronic copy of the enrollment fact sheet to the Senate Office so it can be shared with the Senators and their colleagues.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Accreditation Criteria Working Groups

Nickerson reported that he sent in the names of those who have volunteered to serve on the reaccreditation working groups. He noted that Associate Dean Bellows has asked all of the deans and others to suggest people to serve on these committees so he is unsure who will be selected.

3.2 Request from University Health Center to Eliminate Providing Class Absences

Nickerson stated that since discussion last week on the University Health Center's request to not provide a class absence note to students who do not see a physician he has thought of several things regarding the situation: 1) Consider having the UHC verify only those students who go in for medical treatment; 2) approach Student Affairs to see if they would put the absence form used by Iowa University on their website for use here; 3) if the form is on the Student Affairs website can there be some mechanism that would allow the administration to know how often a student has downloaded the form and on what dates; 4) stress that the form does not override an instructor's attendance policy; and 5) present the idea of the form to the Senate.

Woodman stated that he would like to see a statement on the form that states that in no way does the form override an individual instructor's attendance requirements. Rudy asked what is trying to be achieved with the form. Nickerson stated that it would simplify the UHC's work and allow them to spend time taking care of those people who need medical attention. Woodman questioned why the UHC doesn't just refuse to provide the absence note. He pointed out that he doesn't want to get a third party note about a student that has been ill, he would rather that the student contact him.

Guevara pointed out that some faculty members will not accommodate a student's absence and require that a student get a note to make up the work. He stated that he thinks the form could allow for an abuse of the system by some students or worse, mislead students into thinking that all they need is the form. The form cannot, in any way, change the faculty member's policies indicated on the course syllabus. He stated that it should be emphasized that students need to discuss their absence with the faculty member and make arrangements to make up the work. Sollars pointed out that if the students have to log into a system in order to get access to the form it could provide oversight to see how often the student was using the form, and cases of abuse of the form could be identified. Joeckel stated that the form might expedite things and the UHC should post on their website that they will not provide a note for class absences.

Woodman pointed out that keeping track of the use of the forms is a complicated software program. Sollars noted that it could be automated and suggested that the form could be used for a trial period to see how well it works.

4.0 Approval of October 1, 2014 Minutes

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

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Non-Tenure Track Survey

Woodman reported that the subcommittee working on the non-tenure track survey would like to add seven questions to the survey, some of which deal with the length of their contract and whether they are eligible to participate on committees. Rudy noted that the original survey focused on faculty rights, but they wanted to add questions regarding whether the non-tenure track member has the opportunity to voice their concerns.

Guevara asked if the survey would be sent out to the same group of people. Woodman verified that it would be sent out to the same rank of people. Purcell asked if Extension faculty members would receive the survey as well. Woodman stated that they were surveyed the first time so they would be included. Rudy asked if research professors were included. Woodman stated that they were included. He noted that the Executive Committee could be shown the positions of faculty that were surveyed originally. He pointed out that the results of the survey were broken down by the various positions.

Nickerson asked what the target date was for conducting the survey. Woodman stated that it would be conducted sometime during the last third of the semester. Nickerson asked if the analysis would be conducted in early spring semester. Woodman said yes. Griffin asked if IRB approval would be needed. Rudy stated that it would and that they will apply for it.

Nickerson stated that the difficulty will be in developing best practices and what the Senate wants to do with them. Woodman pointed out that Past President Schubert had done a synopsis of the first survey which could help identify best practices. Rudy asked what actions the Senate wants to take with the best practices, to share it with the administration. Nickerson pointed out that SVCAA Weissinger has made it clear that the Senate should not tell departments what they can do. Rudy pointed out that some colleges might not be aware of what other colleges are doing in regards to non-tenure track faculty members and if could be helpful. Woodman noted that in some departments there are very few professors of practice and they feel isolated in their units. Guevara stated that SVCAA Weissinger and the Chancellor should be made aware that the Executive Committee is conducting another survey. Nickerson noted that it will be announced in the Senate President's newsletter. Rudy suggested that it also be included in UNL Today, if possible.

Woodman stated that he will send a draft of the survey to the Executive Committee to obtain feedback.

5.2 VSIP

Rudy noted that the reported payout for the last VSIP was short of \$11 million. He wondered if there is a pool of money to payout for another VSIP program. Bender suggested that the Executive Committee ask the Chancellor at its next meeting how the VSIP will be financed. He noted that he wanted to ask why the VSIP was not announced earlier. Joeckel stated that he would like to know what the impetus is for offering the VSIP again. Nickerson wondered if it was a means to redirect funds to other programs. Guevara stated that the past experience shows that it was used to redirect some lines. Woodman questioned whether the VSIP is a new model for getting rid of departments and programs. Sollars pointed out that people can apply for the VSIP, but the administration has stated that if the VSIP would weaken a program or department that the request could be denied.

Rudy questioned whether the VSIP is the Chancellor's decision or whether it is from the Board of Regents. He noted that the offer is being made to UNO and UNK faculty as well.

Woodman asked Nickerson if he was informed or consulted with about a national search being conducted for a new SVCAA. Nickerson stated that he did not know about it until he read it in the Chancellor's State of the University speech. Joeckel suggested that during the search process it should be pointed out that according to the Bylaws the SVCAA is to meet with the Senate Executive Committee at least bimonthly. He pointed out that the work of the faculty is more effective when we meet regularly with the SVCAA.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Review of Senate Meeting

Item postponed due to lack of time.

6.2 Report on Information Technologies and Services Committee Meeting

Woodman reported that the ITSC met recently and Associate Vice Chancellor Perez was in attendance. He stated that RFI's have been received from three providers and they have been analyzed and scored. He noted that two of the providers Desire to Learn (D2L) and Instructure (Canvas) scored far ahead of Blackboard. He stated that the ITSC discussed what the next steps should be. He described Unizin, a consortium of universities including some Big Ten schools, working with Instructure (Canvas) to manage and share content created by students and faculty, to foster interoperability among systems, and to facilitate learning analytics in order to improve student outcomes. He pointed out that the overall goal of Unizin is to have a learning management system that would eventually allow different universities to share information. He reported that the ITSC has decided to advocate support for a pilot of Canvas through the Unizin consortium buy-in by next fall. He noted that many Big Ten universities are changing away from Blackboard for a variety of reasons.

Joeckel asked how soon faculty will be informed if a change is going to be made. Woodman pointed out that the pilot program would need funding and that is the next step. He noted that the IT managers would probably have to approach the SVCAA about this funding. Nickerson asked if this is all being coordinated through Central Administration. Woodman stated that he has asked this question but does not know the answer yet.

Nickerson noted that the other campuses were adamant that they didn't want to switch from Blackboard, although he does not know the reason for their objection. Woodman pointed out that even though we have a learning management system called Blackboard on each campus, they are separate installations and they do not communicate with each other so it really doesn't make much of a difference whether we have a different program.

Joeckel asked how much warning time faculty would have if we were to switch systems. Woodman stated that it would start with the pilot. He noted that the decision would be made in spring of 2015, but there would be a transitional phase. He stated that the transfer of data/content could be staggered or done all at one time. He pointed out that Penn State, a much larger university, switched systems and it only took a matter of a few months and was relatively transparent. Bender asked if there was no loss of data. Woodman stated that these companies base their reputation on being able to make clean, easy transfers and it usually goes well.

Woodman pointed out that people need to think of Blackboard only as a provider of a learning management system. He stated that the ITSC is taking the initiative to examine better delivery systems. He stated that if we want to eventually be able to talk to other universities where we can exchange content because each one may have a better or unique content, it can be done seamlessly through some of these newer learning management systems.

Bender asked if the decision has been made yet. Woodman said no. Bender asked if faculty will be experimenting with the new system. Woodman said yes via the pilot study but not until next year. Joeckel asked if there would be long-term cost savings to switching to a new system. Woodman said yes. He pointed out that Blackboard has some capabilities but it is cumbersome. He noted that updates with either Canvas or Desire to Learn would be every two weeks, but most of them are so minor that people won't notice that they have occurred. He pointed out that with Blackboard upgrades are major and sometimes the changes require the system to shut down for a short period of time.

Nickerson asked who will approach the administration about the funding. Woodman stated that the ITSC plans on talking to Askren about it.

6.3 Faculty Senate Meeting on Innovation Campus

Rudy asked the Executive Committee about having Director Duncan of Nebraska Innovation Campus to speak to the Senate and to have the meeting on Innovation Campus. The Executive Committee agreed to pursue this idea.

6.4 Recognizing Veteran, Military, and ROTC Students at Commencement Ceremonies

Rudy stated that the Chancellor's Office has made a request to the Commencement and Honors Convocations Committee to allow veteran, military, and ROTC students to wear honor cords or an aiguillette with their academic regalia if they participate in graduation ceremonies. Bender stated that these individuals should also be asked to stand so they can be recognized for their service. Rudy asked how they would be identified, Bender stated that they would be self-selected.

Rudy made the motion to allow veteran, military, and ROTC students to wear honor cords or an aiguillette with their academic regalia if they participate in graduation ceremonies. The motion was seconded by Guevara. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, October 15 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Tad Wysocki, Secretary.