

## UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES

East Campus Union, Great Plains Room

March 4, 2008

Presidents Steve Bradford, Kathy Prochaska Cue, and Ali Moeller, Presiding

### 1.0 Call to Order

President Bradford called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m.

### 2.0 Announcements

#### 2.1 Changes to Employee Self Service (ESS) (Beth Benson, Information Coordinator, Financial Services)

Ms. Benson reported that on April 14<sup>th</sup> ESS will no longer be available due to a system upgrade to SAP. The portal to obtain your employee information will be Firefly. She stated that with the new portal everyone will be required to get a new identification number. She pointed out that the new ID number will be easier to remember. She stated that she will be personally handing out the new ID's but if you do not get it from her it will be mailed to your home address. She stated that if anyone has suggestions on how she can present the information to the staff to please let her know.

Ms. Benson reported that Firefly's website is <http://firefly.nebraska.edu> and you can log in from anywhere to access it. She noted that everything that was available with ESS is available with Firefly and in addition access to SAP is available with just a single sign in.

Ms. Benson reported that from one website a person can access personal data as well as departmental and staff information (provided that the person is authorized to do so). She stated that one of the big differences with Firefly is that it is more user-friendly.

Ms. Benson announced that on April 10th the ESS system will be eliminated and Firefly will come on line beginning April 14<sup>th</sup>.

#### 2.2 Upcoming Senate Elections

President Bradford noted that last month he asked if anyone was interested in running for the Executive Committee, Secretary, or President-Elect positions. He stated that he wanted to thank those volunteers who have come forward and encouraged anyone else to contact Coordinator Griffin by the first week in April if interested. He noted that anyone with questions can contact members of the Executive Committee or himself.

#### 2.3 Diversity Committee Report

President Bradford announced that he sent a copy of the Diversity Committee report to the Senators. He stated that Professor Moshman, Chair of the Diversity Committee, will be at the April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting to present and discuss the report.

### 3.0 Chancellor Perlman

Chancellor Perlman reported that the budget situation for next year is still undetermined at this time. He noted that the Board of Regents has not approved a budget yet. He stated that there will probably be a deficit for the University system as a whole but UNL should be in pretty good shape because of our enrollment increases and we should not have any budget cuts for the campus next year. He stated that he wished there were no deficiencies so the University could move forward even more than it has.

Chancellor Perlman stated that enrollment at UNL has been an extraordinary success story for the past three years. He noted that there have been some down sides with the increased enrollment and as a result he is making funds available to the Deans to build faculty capacity to help deal with the additional students. He pointed out that part of the revenue generated from the increased enrollment will be going back to departments that can demonstrate the need for more faculty members due to the increased number of students.

Chancellor Perlman stated that a couple of initiatives will be announced soon. He stated that he wants to build the faculty. He pointed out that the number of tenure and tenure track positions has been declining in recent years and he wants to build these numbers up again.

Chancellor Perlman reported that he has contracted with a group called the Advisory Board from Washington, D.C. that does studies for universities. He stated that he has asked them to do a study on information services and how it looks here. He reported that he just received the report and it is a sensible report that needs to be taken seriously. He pointed out that the report parallels the Computational Services and Facilities Committee's report. He noted that he will be meeting with members of the Computational Services and Facilities Committee and will discuss the findings of the report with them.

Chancellor Perlman stated that there is an effort underway on campus to create a Sustainability Commission. He noted that the Commission would advise him on sustainability issues. He reported that he has seen an early draft of the details of the Commission and he is in favor of it. He stated that it could be helpful to the campus and to him. He pointed out that the scope of the Commission needs to be broad and ought not to focus on just what the Chancellor can do but what everyone on campus can do. He stated that ASUN is moving forward on approving the Commission.

Chancellor Perlman urged the Senators to look at the Diversity Committee report with care and seriousness. He stated that he was extremely disappointed with the report. He reminded the Senate that a draft diversity plan was created but faculty members objected to parts of it. As a result he asked the Senate to form a committee to create a diversity plan with the focus being on how we can increase diversity on campus.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the Diversity Committee report is not a plan and there are no recommendations in it about what we should do to try to increase diversity. Instead the report is an intellectual discussion on academic freedom. He pointed out that for a number of reasons people resigned from the committee but some of them felt that the Committee was not going anywhere. He stated that if the Senate wants to approve and use the report so be it. He stated that he will be speaking directly about the report at the April 1<sup>st</sup> Senate meeting.

Chancellor Perlman reported that he has also asked the Advisory Board about advice on creating a diverse faculty. He noted that he has not received their report yet but he expects to receive it this spring. He stated that he has asked Chairs and Deans to let him know what their best practices are for recruiting and retaining minority faculty members.

Chancellor Perlman stated that there is a committee working on creating a brochure that will outline the family friendly benefits that UNL offers. He pointed out that this can be used when recruiting faculty members. He stated that he hopes that it will be available by the end of the spring semester.

President Bradford noted that he has asked the members of the Diversity Committee who resigned if they want to comment publicly about their reason for resigning.

#### **4.0 President Milliken**

President Milliken reported that he and the Chancellors from each of the four campuses have been discussing how they could better integrate the university-wide strategic framework in campus planning and also take advantage of campus planning when working on the strategic framework with the Board of Regents.

President Milliken has presented the u-wide strategic framework to the senate previously, and he reminded the members that the framework has six goals and multiple strategies for each goal (<http://www.nebraska.edu/news/StrategicFramework2008-2011.pdf>). Together with the Board of Regents 18 priority objectives have been identified and assigned accountability measures. He noted that enrollment growth, which is measured each year, is one of the priorities. He pointed out that the Board set a target of a 1.5% increase in enrollment and this year UNL's success at increasing enrollment has resulted in a 2.7% increase. This year's freshmen class at UNL is the largest in twenty five years. He noted that that in the past, UNL has surpassed the goal for research growth. He stated that UNL has doubled its volume of research over six years.

President Milliken stated that another measurement has to do with the quality of the students. He noted that we want to keep the higher achieving students in Nebraska. He reported that we now get about 48% of Nebraska students who are in the top 25% of their high school class. He stated that the incoming students this year have the highest average ACT scores in history. He pointed out that the University is getting more talented students from Nebraska and we are attracting more students from out of state.

President Milliken stated that another area of priority for him is increasing the international dimension of the university. He noted that this year there are approximately 2500 international students enrolled system-wide at the University and about 1000 US students at NU who will go to another country for meaningful academic

experiences. He stated that he would like to see these numbers significantly increase. He pointed out it is very important for students today to have international experience.

President Milliken stated that affordable access is the first goal of the strategic framework. He noted that he has been single minded in wanting to keep tuition costs reasonable. He stated that when he first arrived the tuition increases had been in the double digits for four years. He pointed out that the University needs to take steps to keep the cost of coming here affordable for Nebraskans. He stated that what are needed are moderate, predictable tuition increases.

President Milliken stated that the second element of an affordable education is providing more need based aid to students. He reported that three years ago a program called TAP (Tuition Assistance Program) was put into place. This program guarantees that Nebraska residents who qualify for federal aid will not pay any undergraduate tuition at the University. He reported that next year the program will include for the first time those above the level of Pell grant eligibility. He stated that the University is able to do this because Pell funding went up this year and will provide additional funding. He noted that there is institutional aid as well. He stated that it is unclear what Congress will do with the Pell grants next year. More than likely they will change the family contribution but he will work with the financial aid officers to see what can be managed. He pointed out that the goal is to keep education affordable and to send a message that we guarantee that you won't be responsible for tuition if you are at a particular income level.

President Milliken stated that another program announced recently is the Thompson Scholar Program. He noted that this is the next generation of the Buffett scholarships. There are about 400 of these scholars system-wide and the scholarships often more than tuition. He stated that this is an incredible opportunity that is not well publicized yet. As part of the Thompson Scholars Program, each campus (UNL, UNO, UNK) is establishing learning communities to support the Scholars. These learning communities, which include academic advising and mentoring, are supported by the Buffett Foundation as well.

President Milliken stated that there may be significant budget challenges in the next biennium. He noted that 10 years ago 38% of the University's budget was provided by the state, now it is 28%. He reminded the senate of the difficulty of getting a 4% increase in our budget for the current biennium and he does not think it will be any easier this next time.

President Milliken noted that currently before the Legislature is a request for funding the new Student Information System (SIS). He stated that there is an initial cost involved for implementation of a program, which includes the cost of the software, necessary hardware, and consulting. He reported that he is hopeful that the Legislature will see fit to provide most of the funds required for the initial 12 to 18 months of expenditures this year.

President Milliken stated that there are a couple of policy initiatives before the Legislature. He noted that the goal of the University is to acquire 251 acres of the state fair grounds to develop a public/private research and development campus.

President Milliken reported that he has been involved recently in two major policy discussions at the Legislature. The first is the anti affirmative action measure. He noted that petitions for this policy are still being circulated. He reported that he testified on Wednesday in opposition to a bill that would have changed Nebraska law providing in state tuition undocumented immigrants in Nebraska. He stated that there is a two-year old law that would provide tuition for undocumented students. He noted that 28 students at the University have taken advantage of this law.

President Milliken stated that the demographics in Nebraska are changing remarkably. He stated that projections show that Latino students will represent 20% of the student population in about 10 years. He pointed out that we have a short time to address changes and increase educational participation in Nebraska. He stated that the drop out rate for African American high school students in Omaha is staggering and the Latino drop out rate in many of our communities is also high.

Professor Zorn, Finance, noted that three years ago a change was made to put retirees into a separate health insurance pool. As a result, their costs have skyrocketed making retirement unaffordable for many University employees. He pointed out that this is a University-wide issue. He stated that if we put the retirees back into the pool with current employees to help lower their costs we might have a number of faculty members retiring thus opening up positions for new faculty members. He noted that this is an equity issue. He pointed out that the retirees contributed to the health plan when they were working and now the University has reneged on its

commitment to these people. He stated that the only primary benefit left for retirees are the football tickets.

President Milliken agreed that a change to the insurance pool was made several years ago. He reported that actuaries met with the Board of Regents to inform them that a change in federal laws meant that the University was going to have to carry almost \$200 million in liabilities. The plan was to bring some equity into the system. He stated that he realizes it is more costly for health insurance but this is a situation not limited to Nebraska. He pointed out that some companies have eliminated health insurance entirely for retirees. He noted that each campus can negotiate for early retirement plans.

President Milliken stated that if the Senate would like to discuss this he would be happy arrange a meeting and provide information on what the rationale was several years ago when the change was made.

Professor Zorn stated that as a finance professor he thinks the actuaries' analysis was myopic. He noted that the real cost of health insurance would rise for employees but it would drop considerably for retirees if they became part of the pool again. He stated that this might cause more people to retire who could be replaced at a lower salary.

President Milliken pointed out that the cost of our health insurance was threatening to consume a significant amount of our budget. He stated that funds would have to be reallocated from other sources in the University to support the insurance program if the change had not been made.

Professor McShane, Emeriti Association, stated that his experience with retirees is that no one looks at the University's health insurance plan seriously because of the cost. Many of them get health insurance elsewhere. He wondered how many retirees are being set loose to look for their own health insurance because of the cost.

President Milliken stated that he will be happy to provide the Senate with more information regarding the change in the University health insurance coverage for retirees.

President Milliken distributed a brochure that has highlights of a public opinion poll about the University. He noted that the results of the poll are pretty remarkable and many things were said that the faculty and staff would find gratifying. He reported that the poll shows that many people in Nebraska feel that the university plays an important role in the state and that research is important to the State of Nebraska.

## **5.0 Approval of 2/12/07 Minutes**

Professor Stock, English, moved that the minutes be approved. Motion seconded by Professor King, Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication. Motion approved.

## **6.0 Committee Reports**

### **6.1 Parking Advisory Committee Report (Professor Hanna)**

Professor Hanna was not available for the meeting. President Bradford stated that anyone with questions should feel free to contact Professor Hanna.

### **6.2 Computational Services & Facilities Committee (Professor Brooks)**

Professor Brooks noted that when he first came to UNL in 1973 computing on campus was highly delocalized. He stated that as a result we have had a very thin computing support system. He pointed out that for every one Information Services person there are two people out there doing their own computer support work. He stated that there is no systematic sharing of information.

Professor Brooks stated that the Committee's report indicates that we need to build up the research side of the computer infrastructure as well as building on everyday computing needs. He stated that the Committee is recommending an appointment of a Chief Information Officer at the Vice Chancellor level who would report directly to the Chancellor. He noted that the Committee was unanimous in agreeing that there needs to be a person in this capacity in order to coordinate computing and move it forward.

President Bradford asked if the Committee is involved in an ongoing discussion with the administration about this recommendation. Professor Brooks stated that discussions are now taking place with the Chancellor. He noted that Professor Flowers discussed the issue with the Senate Executive Committee and the Chancellor became aware of the Computational Services and Facilities Committee's efforts through the Executive Committee minutes. He noted that four members of the CSFC gave a presentation to the Chancellor and the report from the Advisory Board hired by the Chancellor basically states the same thing.

## **7.0 Unfinished Business**

### **7.1 Ballot for Academic Planning Committee, Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee, and Academic Rights and Responsibilities Panel**

President Bradford noted that the motion to approve the ballot comes from the Committee on Committees. There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved.

### **7.2 Motion Calling for the Creation of a Task Force to Look Into Campus-Wide Travel Grants for Graduate Students**

President Bradford noted that the Senate heard from the Graduate Student Association about creating a task force to look into campus-wide travel grants for graduate students. At the end of the meeting Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics, made a motion to express support for the request. President Bradford asked for discussion on the motion. There was no discussion. The motion was approved.

Graduate Student Association President Epp thanked the Senate for its support and reminded them that National Graduate Student week is March 31<sup>st</sup> through April 4<sup>th</sup>.

## **8.0 New Business**

### **8.1 Proposed Revisions to Committee on Committee Syllabus**

President Bradford stated that the Committee on Committees is proposing to change the number of Senators elected from the Senate each year to the Committee.

Professor Chouinard, Mathematics, pointed out that there are 11 members on the committee but the way it is listed on the syllabus does not make sense and needs to be clarified. He stated that another thing that needs to be considered is not including the Chancellor's appointee or the Senate President's designee in the number of faculty members that are allowed from a college.

President Bradford stated that the Executive Committee will look over Professor Chouinard's suggestions and report back to the Senate at the April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

### **8.2 Sustainability Commission**

President Bradford reported that ASUN plans on looking at this proposal at the end of March. He stated that he would like to get on the record a motion calling for the creation of a Sustainability Commission. Professor Peterson made the motion calling for the Chancellor to investigate creating a Sustainability Commission. The motion was seconded by Professor Flowers.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, April 1st, 2:30 p.m. in the East Campus Union. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Richard Alloway, Secretary.