

## UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES

City Campus Union, Auditorium

November 3, 2009

Presidents John Fech, John Lindquist, and Kathy Prochaska-Cue, Presiding

### 1.0 Call to Order

President Fech called the meeting to order at 2:34 pm.

### 2.0 Announcements

#### 2.1 Link Student Code of Conduct

President Fech noted that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee recently met with Dean Rita Kean and Meg Lauerman, Director, Office of University Communications, to discuss efforts to put the undergraduate bulletin on-line and the importance of helping students understand the process of attending the university. It was pointed out during the meeting that linking the Student Code of Conduct (<http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code>) on a syllabus would be helpful. He stated that the announcement was just a friendly thought from the Executive Committee instructors to include the link on any course syllabus.

#### 2.2 Faculty Success Stories

President Fech stated that he has not heard of any faculty success stories yet, but he encouraged the faculty to participate in this effort. He noted that in IANR the e-ARFA report allows a person to reflect on the work they have done in the past year and this would be a good opportunity to identify a faculty success story. He pointed out that the Office of University Communications is seeking these kinds of stories.

#### 2.3 Moving December Faculty Senate Meeting

President Fech stated that he would like to move the December 1<sup>st</sup> Senate meeting to December 8<sup>th</sup>. He stated that moving the date of the meeting would allow him to speak at the Deans Council and would allow the Executive Committee to review the proposed changes to the Procedures to Be Used for Significant Budget Reduction and Reallocation that are being proposed by the Budget Reduction and Reallocation Review Committee. He stated that anyone who has concerns with the date change should contact him at [jfech1@unl.edu](mailto:jfech1@unl.edu).

### 3.0 Chancellor Perlman

Chancellor Perlman noted that a special session of the legislature to address the declining revenue in Nebraska begins tomorrow. He reported that the special session has to last seven days but will more than likely take longer. He stated that the university should know by Thanksgiving what will happen to the budget and the formal process of making budget cuts will start as soon as the university knows what the figures will be.

Chancellor Perlman reported that the Governor's budget recommendations appear to be fair to the university in many respects. He noted that the Governor's recommendations for the university is less in percentage than many state agencies but still represents a very significant reduction in our resources. He stated that preliminary rough estimates are that UNL would have a \$4 million reduction for this year's budget and a \$10 million reduction for the next year of the biennium. He pointed out that the cuts are very serious and significant given the fact that we have already made reductions for this year. He reported that we have had to reduce our budget for five of the last nine years, but we had to recognize the reality of the situation.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he is aware of the efforts to make some changes to the procedures for budget reductions and stated that they seem reasonable. He noted that there is some language in the procedures that are ambiguous and some of the proposed changes address the problem. He stated that if the Senate moves forward on the changes we could probably follow the revised procedures.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the issue with the budget cutting process has always been the proper allocation of responsibilities and initiatives between the administration and the faculty. He pointed out that if it were possible to have more faculty involvement in each stage of the reduction process he would welcome it, but there are some downsides to this. He invites the Senate specifically, and faculty in general, to provide ideas on how to reduce the budget. He stated that he is more than open to consider suggestions on how to make reductions. He pointed out that we may need to look at restructuring the university which could include elimination of some programs. He noted that faculty members who have been here a long time might have some good ideas on how we can meet this challenge. He stated that anyone with ideas should send either

himself a message ([hperlman1@unl.edu](mailto:hperlman1@unl.edu)) or Associate to the Chancellor Poser ([sposer1@unl.edu](mailto:sposer1@unl.edu)) a message. He noted that he receives a lot of suggestions but most of them could only save \$10 or \$15 thousand dollars, which is fine but doesn't solve the budget reduction problem. He stated that we will need to look at some major things and we will have to think outside of the box. He pointed out that he does not have any large targets on the top of his head, but noted that salary increases are in the budget for next year. He questioned whether the increases should be given up and if so, how we should do this. He suggested that the Senate might want to have a conversation about this suggestion.

Professor Starace, Physics & Astronomy, asked if the special session is not only considering the budget for the remainder of this year but for the next two years as well. Chancellor Perlman reported that we are halfway through the first year of this biennium and then we have one more year of the biennium. He stated that the Forecasting Board is looking over the budget for the biennium.

Professor Starace asked how much 1% of UNL's salary budget translates into in dollars. Chancellor Perlman stated that 1.5% of salary increase is about \$4 million. He stated that looking at the websites of other universities shows that even with the new cuts, we are still better off than some other universities where the budget cuts have been much larger. He noted that the University of Iowa has a \$25 million reduction for this year.

Professor Harbison, Chemistry, noted that his department is getting into the heavy stage of hiring faculty members. He asked if the Chancellor has any idea what will be happening with hiring. Chancellor Perlman stated that he is not in favor of hiring freezes but he thinks departments need to be cautious. He reported that he will be telling deans and directors tomorrow that there may need to be some renewed checking on searches through the Vice Chancellors before offers can be made. He pointed out that we will not be able to hire as much as we would like.

Chancellor Perlman wanted to discuss the audit on the purchasing card program. He noted that this program has been a process that the university has had for some time and it saves the university a considerable amount of money by saving paperwork, providing large discounts, and getting better rates on purchases. He pointed out that the university gets a half a million dollars in rebates alone with this program. He noted that there are some risks with it because some people won't follow procedures or policies correctly. He pointed out that the state auditors found no fraud or intentional wrongdoing by anyone. He stated that some of the purchases raised a two-fold question: whether the purchases were legitimate and the public perception of those purchases. He noted that purchases need to be considered more carefully. He stated that one of the problems is that people are not following the instructions for proper documentation of purchases, but plans are being made to address this problem.

Chancellor Perlman reported that searches are still continuing. He noted that an announcement recently came out about the search committee for the Vice Chancellor of IANR and the deans searches will go forward. He stated that at this point he sees no reason not to go forward with the searches, but he will see how things develop with the budget.

Chancellor Perlman reported that he is about to conclude the selection of the executive committee for the Faculty of Life Sciences and will announce the members shortly. He stated that he wished that the task force on efficiency had been formed sooner because it would be helpful right now, but he plans to get it in place within the next few weeks. He noted that the task force will hopefully be able to help with the budget situation.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he has not had an opportunity to carefully review the academic freedom recommendations but wanted to commend the committee for all of the work that it did. He noted that the committee was open to suggestions on the draft of the report and he appreciates the courtesy the committee extended to those involved in the interviews. He stated that in circumstances like this, committees tend to craft a set of rules for a circumstance that will probably never repeat again, but the thrust of the recommendations by the committee are appropriate. He noted that one of the recommendations suggests that his office partner with the Faculty Senate to host a conference on academic freedom and he is happy to be a partner and participate in such an event.

Chancellor Perlman noted that on the agenda is the motion for the UNL Faculty Senate to withdraw its membership from the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA). He stated that he understands the faculty's decision to do this. He noted that the faculty has a strong role to play in making sure that intercollegiate athletics is done in a rightful way, but the thrust of the COIA is that all universities should

implement assurance of consistent value of intercollegiate athletics in the same way, and he does not think this is possible.

#### **4.0 Approval of 10/6/09 Minutes**

Professor Flowers, Psychology, moved that the minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics. The motion was approved.

#### **5.0 Ballots for Honorary Degrees**

Associate to the Chancellor Poser asked that the Senate vote on the ballots distributed at the meeting. She asked that the nominees for the honorary degrees be kept confidential because they must first be approved by the Board of Regents. If approved, their names are placed in a pool. The nominees might be selected from this pool, but may not therefore it is essential to keep the names of the nominees confidential. The Senate then voted on the ballots provided.

#### **6.0 Committee Reports**

##### **6.1 Chancellor's Commission on the Status of Women (Professor Doll and Jan Deeds)**

Professor Doll pointed out that the Commission is comprised of three councils: one for faculty, one for staff, and one for students. The Commission works on different activities to enhance the state of women on campus. She reported that nominations are being sought for the Chancellor's award for contribution to the status of women.

Professor Doll announced that members of the Faculty and Student Councils will be spending time at the Nebraska Union where people can stop by and discuss any particular concerns they may have.

Professor Chouinard, Mathematics, asked if the faculty members represent the different colleges or if there is any difficulty getting faculty members from a particular college to serve. Professor Doll stated that the Commission is having difficulty recruiting faculty members from IANR and the Academy of Distinguished Teachers. Jan Deeds stated that it would be helpful if the Senate could assist in encouraging people to apply for membership to the Commission.

##### **6.2 Research Council (Professor Awada)**

President Fech noted that Professor Awada was not in attendance to present the report.

Professor McCollough wondered if a break down could be provided on who received grant money; junior or senior faculty members. She noted that the amount of money awarded seems to have stayed the same over the past ten years. She questioned whether the Research Council could possibly get more funding.

President Fech stated that these questions will be raised with Professor Awada.

#### **7.0 Unfinished Business**

##### **7.1 Recommendations of Report by the Ad Hoc Committee on Cancellation of Dr. Ayers' Visit as Revised by the Executive Committee**

President Fech wanted to recognize the members of the ad hoc committee and commend them for all of their work. The members were: Professor Bryant, Educational Administration; Professor Moshman, Educational Psychology; Professor Wes Peterson, Agricultural Economics; Professor Rapkin, Political Science; and Emeritus Professor McShane. President Fech noted that their work is greatly appreciated.

President Fech reported that the Executive Committee reviewed and worked on the recommendations and assigned actions or possible actions to each of the recommendations. The Executive Committee made the decision to call them the academic freedom recommendations. He noted that the Senate has been given an abbreviated form of the recommendations and those wishing to read the full text should refer to the report of the ad hoc Committee.

President Fech noted that the Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee (ARRC) is reviewing the recommendation to include language into the ARRC procedures as suggested by the ad hoc Committee. He noted that the Senate will need to vote on the procedures if the ARRC agrees to the proposed changes.

President Fech stated that he will be meeting with the Deans of each college to see if they have protocols in place to deal with the cancellation of a guest speaker because of security issues.

President Fech reported that Professor Scalora and Chief Yardley of the Threat Assessment Team have been

contacted and they will be meeting with the Senate at an upcoming meeting to talk about what the best course of action is for professors when dealing with threatening situations.

President Fech stated that recommendation number five calls for creating a central system to deal with numerous angry phone calls. He noted that the staff had to deal with many of the difficult phone calls relating to Dr. Ayers' visit. He reported that the Chancellor has indicated that he is interested in working with the Senate on this.

President Fech stated that some events might require additional security and some academic units lack sufficient funds to pay for this security. He noted that the Chancellor recognizes the importance of security and has stated that the campus will provide the usual amount of security, but anything additional needs to be covered by the department or from other funds. President Fech stated that the Executive Committee will continue to work on this recommendation.

President Fech noted that the idea behind recommendation number seven is to educate people about academic freedom. He noted that this could be done in a number of ways: a conference on academic freedom, a series of lectures, or providing printed materials. He stated that he hopes there can be discussion over the next month or in December on how we can make this a positive event that will bring about some positive changes.

Professor Franti, Biological Systems Engineering, asked if the recommendations were coming to the Senate as a motion or just being discussed. He stated that he liked the idea of recommendation seven and wondered if it would be possible to collaborate with the EN Thompson Forum by expanding the issue to include freedom of speech and academic freedom. Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics, reported that he serves on the EN Thompson planning committee and will convey this idea to them. He noted that the schedule has already been set for this year but this could be a topic for discussion in the future.

Professor Shea, School of Natural Resources, noted that discussions on east campus have caused him to wonder how colleagues in the university community view academic freedom. He wondered if there is a consensus of whether academic freedom is a concern. He stated that he is not convinced that the majority of the faculty feels this is the case. He stated that he would be really interested in knowing what the faculty thinks about the issue of academic freedom.

Professor Peterson noted that this is an interesting question. He pointed out that there are some institutional things that would support Professor Shea's concern. Professor Peterson reported that there has not been a winner of the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award for the last two or three years because there have been hardly any nominations. He stated that this could be a reason for the Senate to work on this issue and to try and inform our community about the significance of it. He noted that Professor Moshman has just recently published a book on academic freedom and there are resources on campus that we could use to help educate people about academic freedom.

President Fech encouraged the Senate to think more about the recommendations over the next month. He stated that the Executive Committee wants to make as much of a positive change as we can on the issue. He pointed out that a motion can be made at the next meeting on the recommendations.

## **8.0 New Business**

### **8.1 Research Misconduct Policy**

President Fech reported that the motion to accept the document and to have it replace existing policies dealing with research misconduct comes from the Executive Committee. He noted that a lot of time and effort has been put into the creation of the document by the ad hoc committee working on it. He noted that the motion to accept the document will not be voted on until the December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. He encouraged the Senators to discuss the policy with their colleagues. He pointed out that the policy is complex and though it is seldom needed, there is a lot at stake when it is used. He reported that the document is available on the Faculty Senate website (<http://www.unl.edu/asenate/researchmisconductpolicy.pdf>).

Professor Peterson stated that this document should be passed by the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee (ARRC) for their reaction before the Senate votes on it. Professor Shea stated that the document has been sent to the ARRC and the Executive Committee is waiting for its response.

Professor Starace wanted to compliment the ad hoc committee on a greatly improved document. He reported that the first draft raised a lot of concerns in Physics & Astronomy but this draft cleared up a lot of the ambiguity. He stated that after a quick reading it seems vastly improved and probably worth approving.

Professor Carlson, Veterinary & Biomedical Sciences, strongly recommends that either in the document or in the motion that it is specifically stated what policies the document will replace. He pointed out that otherwise some procedures could live a life beyond their intended purpose.

Emeritus Professor McShane noted that he raised a lot of concerns last spring when the document was first introduced. He stated that the new version is a vast improvement and shows that a lot of work and effort went into revising the document to address these concerns. He noted that the revised document retains the possibility of a faculty review and maintains administrative review of the situation. He pointed out that a great deal of the ambiguity has disappeared and the definitions are crisper. He wanted to thank the ad hoc committee for the improvements.

President Fech encouraged the senators to read the document again and discuss it with their constituents.

Professor Franti, Biological Systems Engineering, stated that he would like to have a record of the ad hoc committee members involved in doing all of the work for the document. President Fech reported that the ad hoc committee members are: President-Elect John Lindquist; Professor Barbara LaCost, Educational Administration; Professor Pat Shea, School of Natural Resources; Professor Dana Boden, Libraries; Associate Vice Chancellor Kim Espy, Office of Research; Associate to the Chancellor Susan Poser; and Research Compliance Services Manager Sara Conrad, Office of Research. President Fech wanted to thank all of these members for their hard work and careful considerations.

### **8.2 Changes to Blackboard (Heath Tuttle, Information Services)**

Tuttle reported that the current version of Blackboard is tentatively scheduled to go off-line around December 27<sup>th</sup> and will not be up again until noon on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. He reported that during the downtime Blackboard will be upgraded to version 9. He pointed out that this is an application update only and will not affect the database and anything already on Blackboard.

Tuttle suggested that instructors develop their spring course as soon as possible. He noted that spring courses usually start to appear on Blackboard around mid-November.

Tuttle stated that one of the changes is that drag and drop options to change items will be available and this can be done without having to go into the control panel. Links can also be renamed quickly. Tuttle reported that assignments can now allow more attempts and groups can more easily be set up and students can opt into a group if this is allowed by the instructor.

Tuttle stated that overall the process of using Blackboard will be much easier. He reported that there will be a discussion board where help for specific tasks can be found immediately.

Tuttle stated that Information Services is working to get the word out that there will be changes to Blackboard. He announced that the current version has tabs that show training information for the new version. He noted that training is done at Architectural Hall or the Barkley Center. He reported that graduate students can take the training sessions as well.

Professor Starace asked if any significant changes will be made to the grade book. Tuttle stated that the grade book will remain the same for now.

Tuttle encouraged everyone to come to the training sessions. He noted that he would be happy to come to departmental meetings to talk about the changes and pointed out that he has met with about 40 departments to date.

### **8.3 Motion to Revise the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) Syllabus**

President Fech stated that the request to add the Director of General Studies as a non-voting member to the UCC comes from the Committee itself. He noted that the chair of the Committee sent him a message stating that the addition of the Director of General Studies is mainly a housekeeping item. President Fech pointed out that the motion will not be voted on until the December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **8.4 Motion to Discontinue Membership in the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics**

President Fech stated that there appears to be some question regarding the clarification of the motion. Consequently, he is withdrawing the motion from the agenda. He stated that the wording will be worked on and the motion presented at the December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. He pointed out that the Senators involved with the

motion were not able to make today's meeting to answer any questions.

### **8.5 External Letters Policy**

Professor Starace stated that he had questions regarding the discussion that occurred at the October 21<sup>st</sup> Executive Committee meeting about the required number of external letters needed for promotion and tenure. He reported that several of his colleagues wondered what the problem is with the current policy. He noted that the University states that there should be a minimum of three letters. He stated that we should not want to mandate a limit on the maximum amount of letters that are required. He pointed out that many faculty members at the level of associate professor have activities that span many different fields and they come into contact with many people both nationally and internationally. He stated that the policy in the College of Arts & Sciences is that all letters must be put forward and the feeling of many in his department is that the more letters the better. President Fech pointed out that for some fields, requiring a large number of letters is difficult and escalation is occurring in many departments.

Professor McCollough stated that an issue is limiting departments in the number of external letters that are required. She asked how departments handle it if two people are going up for promotion and tenure and one has more external letters than the other. Professor Starace stated that his department does not have a particular number that it seeks, but when people who have worked in different subfields are put up for promotion and tenure, the department wants to get commentary on the work done in these subfields. He noted that the Dean will ask where the letters are if they are listed in the promotion and tenure file. He pointed out that not all requests for external letters are responded to.

Professor Eccarius, Special Education & Communication Disorders, stated that she discussed this issue with her chair who said that experience has shown that not all of the solicited letters include the information that is being requested. She stated that the department wants to make sure that enough letters that meet the required specifications are available for the promotion and tenure file.

Professor Carlson asked why the ambiguity of three or four external letters. President Fech stated that the minimum required, as stated on the Academic Affairs website, is for three external letters.

Professor Shea noted that in discussing this topic and visiting with faculty there are a lot of differences across the campus on this topic. He pointed out that there is some concern that there is getting to be a proliferation of letters, but a large number of letters is clearly what some faculty members are wanting. He stated that if the amount of letters is truly what the faculty is asking for then he doesn't have a concern with it, but in some units he is not convinced that the proliferation of letters is because the faculty wants them. Rather it seems to be administrators want more letters. He stated that he wants to make sure that we are being fair to those people going up for promotion and tenure. He pointed out that as the number of letters increase, so does the probability of negative letters that could provide a basis for denying promotion and/or tenure.

President Fech noted that the Executive Committee has discussed the issue twice with SVCAA Couture and will continue working on it if it is an issue that faculty want addressed.

Professor Carlson moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Professor Flowers and approved by the Senate.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:53 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, December 8, 2009, 2:30 p.m. in the City Campus Union, Auditorium. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and David Rapkin, Secretary.