

UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
Campus Union,
September 1, 2009
Presidents John Fech, John Lindquist, and Kathy Prochaska Cue, Presiding

1.0 Call to Order

President Fech called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Violence Prevention Workshops

President Fech reported that there will be a Violence Prevention Workshop on October 20th for faculty and staff members. He noted that Dr. Steve Albrecht, a special consultant in threat assessment, will be speaking on how to deal with hostile or difficult people. Nancy Myers, UAAD representative, stated that there will be a website (<http://go.unl.edu/j64>) where people can obtain more information and register for the workshop. She stated that efforts are in progress to broadcast the workshops to UNL centers throughout the state.

2.2 Postpone Report on Ayers' Disinvitation

President Fech stated that a little more time is needed to complete the report of the committee looking into the cancellation of Dr. Ayers' visit last fall. He stated that more time is needed for final revisions to the report.

2.3 Reminder on Senate Meeting Procedures

President Fech stated that new senators receive a packet of information regarding procedures and bylaws of the Faculty Senate, but he wanted to point out a few highlights. He noted that Senators should seek a consensus position from their constituents on issues but may also act on their own thoughts at times.

President Fech encouraged Senators to speak out at the meetings. He pointed out that while silence is golden, it can also suggest that Senators are in agreement with what is being discussed. He asked people to speak up if they have an opinion on any issues. He stated that it is important to hear all sides of the issues being discussed.

President Fech reminded Senators to state their name and department when they first come up to the microphone to speak. He stated that if Senators cannot attend a meeting they should send a proxy. He noted that there are no voting privileges for a proxy but they can provide information to the Senate and report back to the Senator and their unit.

President Fech stated that the minutes of the Executive Committee and Senate meetings will be sent out electronically once they have been approved. He asked that Senators distribute the minutes to the faculty in their department. He suggested that the Senators may want to personalize the minutes by highlighting those sections that might be of interest to members in their department. He stated that Senators should ask to report at department meetings about what is occurring in the Senate and to gather faculty input on issues.

2.4 Senate Packets to be Mailed Electronically

President Fech reported that in an effort to go green and reduce costs, the Senate packets will be mailed out electronically beginning with the October meeting. Anyone who does not receive a packet should contact the Faculty Senate Office.

3.0 Chancellor Perlman

Chancellor Perlman welcomed the faculty back to campus and welcomed the new Senators to the Faculty Senate.

Chancellor Perlman reported that he recently underwent a five year review that was conducted by President Milliken. He noted that one of the recurring themes from the interviews that were conducted as part of the process is that the administration is not taking advantage of the creative thoughts of the faculty. Some of these creative thoughts have to do with the budget. He stated that some initiatives relating to the budget will be addressed in his State of the University address. He noted that one of the challenges is how we can move the university ahead given the financial state of the world. He stated that he hopes there will not be any additional cuts, but there are not many indications that the economy will be improving enough to provide any extra income.

Chancellor Perlman wanted to call attention to the H1N1 alert. He pointed out that the flu is here and policies have been adopted at both the campus and system level to help deal with it. He stated that the key is to reduce the spread of the influenza and to isolate people who have it. He noted that people should use good common sense to help prevent H1N1. He stated that one concern is with attendance policies which faculty members need to address. He pointed out that normally he applauds attendance policies that insist that students attend class, but given the current situation instructors might need to rethink their policy. He noted that this is a difficult issue because there is always the prospect of abuse, but we do not want to create a situation where students or employees are required to come to work when sick. He stated that we do not want to have a policy that requires a doctor's note to prove that someone has the flu. He pointed out that Lincoln and the University Health Center do not have enough doctors to handle huge volumes of patients and he asked the faculty to be reasonable.

Chancellor Perlman reported that a presentation will be made to the Board of Regents at the September 4th meeting on Innovation Campus. He stated that the initial findings of the consultants, with drawings and plans will be shown. He stated that community forums will take place the following week. He reported that the master plan and how the campus will be laid out will be displayed. He suggested that anyone interested should attend the forums to provide input on the plans.

Chancellor Perlman stated that a number of deans' searches are underway. He noted that we are in the mode of trying to attract new administrative talent to the university and he hopes the searches will be successful. He stated that we are trying to attract some new faculty members as well and more information on this will be presented in his State of the University Address.

Chancellor Perlman reported that he has been engaged with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee in discussions about how the five year review of administrators is conducted. He noted that there is a Bylaw regarding the procedure and it includes criteria about faculty involvement in the process. He stated that with the approval of the Executive Committee, he is looking into changing the process but not the Bylaw. He stated that traditionally questionnaires were sent out to everyone but the response rate was very small, even when there has been controversy. He reported that he was attracted to the process that he recently underwent for his review. He noted that professional outside consultants were hired to interview people who interact with him, including faculty members. A report was then put together which was presented to President Milliken and to himself. He stated that the process allows for the gathering of information that a questionnaire cannot generate. He stated that the interviewers ask for examples, raise questions, and give supervisors a better opportunity to see what the concerns and what the good points are of the administrator under review. He pointed out that the administrator being reviewed will also see this information. He stated that he is going to try, as an experiment, to conduct a similar five year review this fall. He pointed out that the review will include faculty members and will adhere to the Bylaw, but questionnaires may not be sent out to everyone.

Professor McCollough, Anthropology, stated that her colleagues want to know how UNO is handling their budget when they received such big raises. Chancellor Perlman stated that the additional money needed to fund UNO's raises is coming out of their budget, not ours. He pointed out that they have their own process. He stated that, at this time, they do not know yet what their increase will be and how it will reduce their overall budget.

Professor Carlson, Veterinary & Biomedical Sciences, noted that there is an appeal to the State Supreme Court about moving the state fair. He asked what the Chancellor's views are regarding the appeal and what would happen if the Supreme Court agrees with the appeal. Chancellor Perlman reported that he has looked at the claims and lawsuit. He stated that it is hazardous to predict the outcome of the Court's decision but he does not see any strength in the allegations that have been made. He stated that he hopes a decision is made soon because significant resources are being put into the moving of the state fair. He pointed out that the state fair is to begin in Grand Island next August and he thinks some construction has been started. He stated that Grand Island will be investing resources quite quickly.

Chancellor Perlman stated that one of his concerns is the expectation levels people have with how quickly things will happen with Innovation Campus. He pointed out that the horizon for this project is 20 – 25 years. He noted that Technology Park is just starting to reach full potential and noted that it has been approximately 20 years since it was first started.

4.0 Approval of 4/28/09 Minutes

Professor King, Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication, moved to approve the minutes. The

motion was seconded by Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics. The motion was approved.

5.0 Committee Reports

5.1 Commencement and Honors Convocations Committee Report (Professor Isernhagen)

Professor Isernhagen stated that the role of the Committee is to constantly monitor the success of the commencement and honors convocations ceremony. She reported that recently the two ceremonies were divided due to the amount of work and people involved. She stated that the Committee has been working on making sure the ceremonies are aesthetically pleasing. She stated that this year flowers were purchased from the Agronomy & Horticulture department, bleachers were draped, banners were used, and signs put up during the ceremonies. She noted that the Chancellor's office paid for the banners which provide more pomp and circumstance and allows parents to see where their child is sitting.

Professor Isernhagen stated that the Committee wants to make two recommendations to the Senate. She stated that the Committee would like the Senate to endorse its development and implementation of Gonfalons for use in academic ceremonies. She stated that the Committee also needs help in promoting faculty attendance at the ceremonies. She pointed out that one of the most difficult things is to ask the faculty members to stand at the ceremony when not many are present. She asked that the Senate recommend to colleagues that a person from each department attend one of the ceremonies. She noted that there are three main graduation ceremonies during the year and having faculty members attend one of the ceremonies would be greatly appreciated.

Professor Eccarius, Special Education & Communication Disorders, noted that the graduate ceremonies are well attended by faculty members but the undergraduate ceremonies are not. She stated that she encourages new faculty members to attend one of the ceremonies because it is a good way to network with other professors and it provides a service that only takes about two hours. She pointed out that the undergraduate students appreciate it when faculty members attend the ceremony.

Professor Zorn, Finance, asked if department chairs and other administrators are required to attend graduation. Professor Isernhagen stated that some administrators are there and all of the deans are there to present their college. She stated that she does not believe there is an attendance policy.

Professor Chouinard, Mathematics, stated that he understands the reason for splitting the graduate and undergraduate ceremonies but asked why this is done during the summer when there are not as many graduates. Professor Isernhagen stated that there is some thought in having the ceremonies at the same location so people understand where it is going to take place rather than switching the locations depending on the time of year.

Professor Carlson pointed out that the venue does not allow for faculty members to mingle with students and parents after the ceremony and to find an individual student is a massive challenge. He stated that he tries to see the student before the ceremony because he knows how difficult it is to try to find them afterwards. Professor Isernhagen agreed.

Professor Fech thanked Professor Isernhagen for her report. He noted that he has been to two of the graduation ceremonies recently and found it to be much more enjoyable than he thought it would be. He stated that there is a lot of pomp and circumstance. He stated that the Senate wants to work with the Committee to try and get more faculty involvement.

5.2 Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee (Past President Prochaska-Cue)

Past President Prochaska-Cue pointed out that the FCAC is composed of faculty members and administrators. She stated that there is a small group of support people who provide information to the FCAC but they are not voting members. She wanted the Senate to understand that the FCAC is not just a faculty committee. She stated that she wanted to recommend to the Senate that the language in the FCAC syllabus be clarified regarding who the voting members are on the committee. She reported that she included the recommended changes in the report.

Past President Prochaska-Cue reported that the FCAC met only once last year because of the budget situation. She noted that the FCAC did not know what was going to happen with the budget and whether there would be any money for salary increases. She noted that the report includes a statement from the former chair on the recommendations made by the Committee.

Past President Prochaska-Cue stated that the recommendation for the FCAC for the next year is to review the salaries of administrators and inform the Senate about policies concerning salaries and total compensation for

administrators.

5.3 Executive Committee Summer Report (President Fech)

President Fech reported that the Committee met every two weeks during the summer. He stated that there was good discussion about the progress of the ACE program with Professor Nancy Mitchell, Interim Director of General Education. He stated that the Committee also met with Professor Savory and Kristin Grosskopf to discuss NU Online Worldwide which is an initiative already in progress. He reported that the Committee met with members of the APC to discuss possible revisions to the reduction in force procedures. The Committee also had a retreat where the Senate goals for the year were established.

President Fech reported that he had the opportunity this summer to attend the AAUP Summer Institute. He stated that faculty members from various universities attended and participants found that they had a lot of common issues. He stated that court issues for higher education were addressed as well as positive outcomes of the faculty and administration working together during tough economic times. He stated that it was a wonderful retreat and provides good opportunities and encouraged people to attend.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Report of Subcommittee on Dis-Invitation of Dr. Ayers

See section 2.2 under Announcements.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Committee on Committees (CoC) Election

President Fech stated that there are two positions on the CoC that need to be filled from the Senate. He asked that interested senators contact Karen Griffin, Coordinator, by email.

7.2 Executive Committee Goals

President Fech reported that there was a lot of discussion at the retreat about the goals. He noted that some new goals have been established. One of the goals is to increase public awareness of what the faculty does and the value of the university. He stated that other goals are to improve the intellectual climate of the university and to strengthen faculty governance. He asked if there were any comments on the goals.

Professor Chouinard noted that increasing faculty participation in governance is important. He suggested that restructuring and simplifying some procedures might make things more effective. He stated that the more faculty members are involved and invested the more power we have behind all of the other goals of the Senate.

President Fech asked if there was any other new business. Professor Zorn wanted to make a comment regarding the Chancellor's discussion on the five year review of administrators. He pointed out that there is an asymmetry between the way the faculty is evaluated and the way administrators are evaluated. He noted that faculty members get a 360 degree review with students and administrators all contributing to the evaluation. He stated that he has no problems with any of the administrators but feels that people would be more comfortable if they could post anonymous comments about administrators during their review. He stated that he understands there are some concerns about this, but more meaningful reviews might be made if faculty members feel less paranoid about the review process.

President Fech appreciated Professor Zorn's comments. He stated that he thinks there will be an opportunity for more anonymous comments, but it is incumbent on those being interviewed for the review of an administrator to express any concerns. He stated that someone who wants their voice to be heard by the evaluation team should speak candidly. He stated that it is his understanding that the new process for the five year review of administrators will still involve faculty members in the process.

Past President Prochaska-Cue pointed out that it is a paradox that faculty members are subjected to anonymous reviews but administrators are not. She stated that she finds this a bit troubling. She stated that she does not have an axe to grind, but she would be more comfortable and could be more honest if the feedback was anonymous.

Professor Shea, School of Natural Resources, stated that the Executive Committee strongly recommended to the Chancellor that an avenue should still exist that would allow faculty members to provide comments in the new process for reviewing administrators. He stated that if we are making this request to the administration than we need to give them the chance to respond to it. He noted that if this is a consensus amongst the Senate, then we should be strong on this point and should push for it. He stated that the Chancellor reported to the Executive Committee that very few responses are received when a questionnaire is sent out to the faculty, but

the point is that a process should still remain open to provide faculty members with the opportunity to make comments if they wish to do so.

Associate to the Chancellor Poser stated that she believes the opportunity for faculty members to make comments will still be available. She noted that this process may go through the consultant. She reported that there is only a 3 – 8% response rate when questionnaires are sent out and it is difficult to do an effective evaluation based on this low response rate. She stated that she will take this message back to the Chancellor.

Professor Carlson asked if an outside consultant will be used for administrators' review down to the deans' level and what the costs associated with doing this type of evaluation are. President Fech stated that the Chancellor is experimenting this fall with doing this type of evaluation. He noted that the Chancellor went through this kind of review and found it to be very informative and helpful. He stated that the process will be done for the five year review of SVC Couture.

Professor Carlson stated that he thinks it is unrealistic to make comments about a Chancellor given the relationship that exists between most faculty members and the Chancellor. He stated that most faculty members get more information from the press about the Chancellor rather than having first hand factual knowledge which would allow them to make good comments. He stated that he thinks it is unrealistic to look at the faculty or student body and expect them to participate in this procedure.

Professor Harbison, Chemistry, pointed out that in his department a file of information over a ten year period is gathered for evaluation of faculty members. He noted that this provides an enormous level of information. He questioned why administrators are not required to create a similar file. Professor Zorn stated that this should apply to deans and department chairs as well, not just the Chancellor.

Professor Sarroub, Teaching, Learning, and Teacher Education, stated that she has concerns about implementing a procedure that is experimental because we will have to live with the results of it. She asked, if a questionnaire is not a good design, then what is a good design that would increase faculty participation. She stated if it is decided that the consultant is the right design, the next question is how the consultant decides who represents the faculty. She pointed out that evaluation of an administrator impacts how the faculty work.

President Fech stated that the Chancellor reported that he had to provide a list of groups that he interacts with. He stated that the Executive Committee is going along with the experimental process to see if it will provide more quality information.

Professor Shea noted that the Chancellor told the Executive Committee that the process is quite costly and this may be a reason why its use may need to be limited. He said we need to know how much this costs and why it is so expensive.

Professor King noted that in the Executive Committee Summer Report there is a list of regular activities which includes meeting with the administration. He noted that meetings with the administrators was minimal and asked if this is sufficient. President Fech stated that he thinks it would be better to have more meetings. He noted that there were some scheduling conflicts this summer that resulted in some cancellations by the administrators. He stated that one of the goals of the Executive Committee is to meet with the administrators more often. Professor Shea pointed out that the UNL Bylaws stated that we are to meet with the administrators periodically. He stated that the administrators need to adhere to the Bylaws or suggested that the Bylaws might need to be changed.

Professor Winter, Classics and Religious Studies, moved for adjournment. Motion seconded by Professor Zorn. Motion approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:34 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, October 6, 2:30 p.m. in the East Campus Union, Great Plains Room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and David Rapkin, Secretary.