

UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
City Campus Union, Auditorium
December 7, 2010
Presidents John Lindquist, Barbara LaCost, John Fech, Presiding

1.0 Call to Order

President Lindquist called the meeting to order at 2:34 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Change in Agenda

President Lindquist stated that he was going to move agenda item 6.0 Honorary Degrees Ballot up in the meeting to make sure that the election is conducted with a quorum.

3.0 Approval of 11/2/10 Minutes

Professor Harbison, Chemistry, moved for approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Professor Lawson, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences. The minutes were approved.

4.0 Committee Reports

4.1 Academic Planning Committee (Professor Brand)

Professor Brand reported that the APC report contained copies of the letters sent to the Chancellor last year about the budget cuts. She noted that the APC meets frequently during the budget cutting years but also does other intensive work such as conducting academic program reviews. She stated that there are sixteen members on the APC: eight are faculty, six of whom are elected by the faculty. She stated that many of the faculty members on the APC work on the academic program reviews and several serve on the APC's long range planning committee. She noted that these tasks can only be done by the faculty members of the committee. She pointed out that some of the highlights of being on the APC are to interact with the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors and to provide input on many issues.

Secretary Shea pointed out that there is a conflict within the report regarding the recommendation to approve the Procedures to be Invoked for Significant Budget Reallocations and Reductions. He noted that in the section "Recommendations for the Faculty Senate" the APC is recommending the Senate to take action to approve the Procedures, yet later under "Other Actions" it calls for the APC to make further revisions to these Procedures. He asked for an explanation.

Professor Brand stated that the APC wants the Senate to approve the Procedures for the upcoming budget reductions but she stated that the APC has found some things that were revised in the 1993 document that were contradictory and there are some references to the Regents Bylaws that do not exist anymore. Secretary Shea asked when the Senate can expect to receive the revised Procedures. Professor Brand stated that she hopes that the APC will approve the newly revised Procedures next week.

President Lindquist pointed out that the Procedures were approved by the Senate this past April, but with the APC's recent revisions the document will need to come back to the Senate again for a full vote.

4.2 University Judicial and Appeals Board (Dean Hecker)

Dean Hecker reported that he continues to be careful with the use of time needed for the Judicial and Appeals Board. He noted that due to the thoroughness of the Judicial Board, the Appeals Board has only been utilized twice in the past eight years. He commended the Judicial Board for its very admirable work in resolving problems that arise.

Dean Hecker reported that his office plans on working in earnest to revise the Student Code of Conduct, particularly with issues of academic honesty, which will require input from the Executive Committee and the Senate. He noted that academic honesty continues to be a challenge on campus. He stated that there continues to be troubling issues of academic honesty with graduate and international students because there is a striking difference of opinion in what constitutes plagiarism, particularly for international students. He pointed out that technology is allowing students to cheat more easily.

Dean Hecker stated that he hopes that the number of misconduct cases will remain low.

Coordinator Griffin asked if there has been an increase in alcohol abuses since the 2:00 a.m. closing time went into effect. Dean Hecker stated that the number of cases involving alcohol remains low and he hopes that this will continue. He pointed out that with the 1:00 a.m. closing there was a mass exodus of people leaving the bars but the police have now witnessed a change with this. He reported that there is now a less massive crowd at closing time because many people have already left the downtown area.

Dean Hecker recommended that the Senate appoint faculty members to serve in the effort to revise the Student Code of Conduct.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Honorary Degrees Ballot

President Lindquist asked the Senate to vote on the honorary degree ballots. He asked people to keep the names of the nominees confidential because they need to be approved by the Board of Regents. If approved, the names are then placed into a pool which means that it could be several years before a person is selected to receive an honorary degree.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Employee Plus One Motion

President Lindquist stated that there was some discussion at the last Senate meeting on the motion and President Elect LaCost asked that amendments to the motion be sent to the Executive Committee. As a result several communications from Senators were received. He noted that when suggestions are received that provide clarity to a motion, the Senate needs to consider the suggestions. He reported that the suggested changes to the Employee Plus One motion improve the flow of the language in the motion. He stated that the revisions do not substantially change the motion and as a result he accepted all of the changes.

President Lindquist noted that he was providing a more recently revised motion than the one that was distributed by email on Friday.

President Lindquist noted that the motion is a request to the Board of Regents to create and incorporate a plus one category of beneficiary and the revised motion proposes two means for defining the plus one category. He stated that a Senator pointed out that using the language "blood relative" in the motion would exclude any adopted child so the motion was changed to qualify a child based on the criteria defined by the Internal Revenue Code.

President Lindquist pointed out that other changes include using the term plus one since it is considered an accepted term and removing the language health care so the motion relates to benefits, not just health care benefits. He stated that he deemed the changes all to be friendly amendments.

President Lindquist stated that this is an important resolution to us as an institution because it is important for us to accept all employees as being equal. He reported that UNK has already passed a similar resolution, UNO will vote in January on a similar resolution, and UNMC is finalizing the wording of their resolution. He stated that the goal is for the campuses to be a unified front in asking the Board of Regents to take up this issue.

Professor Zorn, Finance, wanted to congratulate whoever revised the most recent version because he feels it is better. He reported that he spoke with the head of the actuarial science program here and did some research on the issue and found that the actual cost of providing this benefit would be low. However, he is concerned that the inclusion of the language "financially interdependent" makes the provision much weaker. He stated that this language could allow roommates to qualify for the benefit and suggests that the wording include "must show financial interdependence." He stated that the person applying for the benefit would then have to prove that financial interdependence exists. He noted that currently the language is too vague. He stated that he is making these comments in an effort to try and keep the costs of this benefit at a reasonable and predictable level.

Professor Prochaska-Cue, Child, Youth & Family Studies, stated that with all due respect to Professor Zorn, she thinks people trying to get their roommates covered would be stretching things a bit. She asked if the motion has been vetted with the Benefits Office to see if the wording is legal under the new health care reform. President Lindquist reported that he sent the motion to Director Clayton, Benefits, but he did not get a response on it. Professor Falci, Sociology, noted that as a caveat the language could state that evidence must be provided to show that a person is financially interdependent.

Professor Zorn stated that he is concerned that someone can come in and abuse the benefit by stating that they share financial costs with another person. He questioned what constitutes evidence. He noted that when people are legally married a contract is put into place. He pointed out that there is a body of law that specifically states what a marriage is, but this motion states that just a relationship with someone is needed to qualify for the benefit. He stated that he does not believe the intent of the motion is to support casual relationships regardless of sexual preference. He pointed out that making the motion too flexible will greatly increase the cost of providing this benefit.

Professor Anaya, University Libraries, noted that the motion is to encourage the Board of Regents to discuss the issue. She pointed out that the Board will have to stipulate what and who will be covered. She stated that people seem to be getting caught up on the “what if’s” of the motion rather than whether the Senate wants to support it. She asked if not having this benefit is the type of welcome message we want to give new people coming to UNL.

Professor Zorn stated that he wants to show that we have considered the motion carefully and does not want to put forward a motion that ignores costs. He reiterated that he has spent some time researching this issue. He stated that the motion would cover domestic partners and the Senate will not have the opportunity again to specify what should be in the motion once it goes to the Board of Regents.

Professor Varner, Southeast Research & Extension Center, stated that a group of Senators feels that this motion is controversial and want to obtain feedback from their constituents and perhaps provide amendments to the motion. He noted that after gathering input from constituents since the original resolution was distributed, the Senate had just received a revised resolution the Friday prior to this Senate meeting and another revision at the beginning of the meeting. Although the resolution is a suggestion for the Board of Regents to discuss the benefit, one or two words or changes in the resolution can make a real difference. He stated that he is uncomfortable passing the resolution that was just received without further review of his constituents and moved that the motion be tabled until January. Past President Fech seconded the motion. The vote to table the motion was: 21 in favor, 21 against, and 1 abstention. Due to a tie in the vote to table the motion, President Lindquist voted against tabling the motion. The motion failed.

Professor Scheideler, Animal Science, suggested that if there is a sector of the Senate that disagrees with the motion they should work with the Senate to help rewrite it. She stated that it is bothersome that there is a segment of the Senate that is working to rewrite the motion but is not sharing their ideas with the Executive Committee. She pointed out that there needs to be collaboration of the entire Senate when working on issues.

Professor Sarroub, Teaching, Learning, & Teacher Education, stated that she is glad to see the newest revision of the motion and is definitely in support of it, but she feels that the language should reflect reality better. She pointed out that there are couples who have a long distance relationship and do not share a primary residence yet have been involved or married for a long time. She stated that the motion should be more flexible and consideration needs to be given to financial independence. She suggested that the paragraph defining who is eligible should include all the ways people are coupled. She noted that marriages can include couples that have all kinds of living arrangements across the country, although she is willing to pass the current resolution because she wants to get the discussion going on this benefit.

Secretary Shea stated that the issue that Professor Sarroub raised is a reasonable question. He asked how residence is defined and whether maintaining two residences in different locations make a difference in the benefit.

Professor Zorn stated that if it is required that people must show evidence of financial interdependence, this can be done in many ways. He pointed out that if the requirements for getting the benefit are too loose, abuses will occur and the cost of the benefit could be raised significantly.

Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics, pointed out that the language of the motion just provides examples of financial interdependence and does not exhaust all possibilities or rules of how financial interdependence can be verified. Professor Harbison suggested that the language that we are recognizing married people and domestic partners could be removed.

Professor Erbe, Mathematics, pointed out that many of these problems have been dealt with by other Big Ten universities and top companies. He suggested that research be conducted to see how the issues have been dealt with at other institutions. President Lindquist stated that the language in part two of the motion came directly from policies at other institutions.

Professor Rapkin, Political Science, noted that the term interdependent has many definitions. He asked how a situation gets dealt with when there are two partners, one of whom is a house husband and no money is exchanged between the partners.

Professor Peterson called the question. Professor Harbison seconded the motion to call the question. The motion to call the question as approved with 35 in favor, 7 against, and 2 abstentions.

President Lindquist asked for a vote on the motion. The motion passed with 35 in favor, 8 against, and 1 abstention.

6.2 Motion to Expand the Academic Planning Committee

President Lindquist stated that the November Senate packet included a letter from the APC justifying the reason for the expansion. He noted that some comments were made at the November meeting resulting in some minor changes to the motion. He stated that a revised motion to expand the faculty members on the APC was now before the Senate. He stated that the new changes include: 1) no more than two faculty members serving on the APC from the four discipline areas defined in the Senate's Syllabus of Campus-wide Committees; 2) allowing the Vice Chancellor of Research & Economic Development to vote; 3) having the Executive Committee appoint people to immediately begin serving on the APC; and 4) the Committee on Committees will determine the length of the term for the newly appointed faculty members. He stated that the most important changes are the ones to the UNL Bylaws regarding the APC. He pointed out that stating that no more than two faculty members from the discipline areas rather than no more than two from the colleges, allows for future flexibility.

The motion was approved with a vote of 43 in favor of it.

7.0 Chancellor Perlman

Chancellor Perlman stated that he supports domestic partner benefits and thinks it is important to the university to offer these benefits. He pointed out that not only is it the right thing to do, but we will ultimately be required to offer these benefits in order for us to be competitive with other universities. He stated that he is in agreement that it will not be easy in getting these benefits approved and the timing and nature of the proposal will have an impact. He recommended that the Senate be strategic in how to press this issue.

Chancellor Perlman wanted to report on the SVCAA search which is critical to our campus' future. He noted that the last candidate is on campus today and he asked that people provide their views on the candidates to either the search committee or him. He reported that he is leaving for China for ten days which will allow faculty members to make comments on the candidates, but it will delay the decision process. He pointed out that there will probably be a period of negotiation so the announcement about who has been selected will not be made until after January 1.

Chancellor Perlman reported that the search for the Dean of the College of Engineering has intentionally followed the SVCAA search so the new SVCAA can have input into the final decision on who will be Dean. He stated that he believes we have a good pool of candidates and he hopes that this search will have a good outcome.

Chancellor Perlman reported that he attended the first official meeting with the Presidents of the Big Ten universities. He stated that the Presidents were engaging and welcoming and enthusiastic about our entry into the Big Ten. He reported that the decision of the Big Ten is to not expand the conference beyond Nebraska at this point.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the campus continues to be engaged with the CIC (Committee on Institutional Cooperation) and various groups on campus are meeting with similar groups at other Big Ten universities. He noted that the University Police is meeting with the Police Department at Purdue University and he knows that the deans of the colleges have met with deans from the Big Ten. He pointed out that joining the Big Ten creates enormous opportunities for us as well as challenges.

Chancellor Perlman reported that the faculty advisory committee for Innovation Campus has been selected and will begin meeting in the spring. He stated that the faculty advisory committee will provide efforts to get faculty input into the structure of Innovation Campus so it fits the values and provides the best benefits for the university. He stated that the entire university would be part of Innovation Campus and the distinctions

between east and city campus will eventually be blurred. He noted that not every unit is represented on the faculty advisory committee but the administration will be engaged with the deans from each of the colleges and he is hoping that the deans will engage the faculty of their college. He reported that the land is being cleared and the hope is that a developer will be hired in the near future. He pointed out that building Innovation Campus will take time but he is feeling more certain that it will be successful.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the faculty of life sciences initiative is a classic example of a successful initiative that occurred with faculty participation. He noted that recently a life sciences retreat was held with national guest speakers who discussed where the life sciences are heading. He stated that there is a report on the web about the retreat (<http://www.unl.edu/ucomm/chancllr/lifesciences/docs/FLS-Report.pdf>) and he encouraged the Senate to read it. He stated that the report not only focuses on important issues but what can be done with the life sciences. He reported that preliminary priorities were formulated by the faculty members that attended the workshops, but these priorities have not been finalized yet. He stated that six initiatives were identified with respect to research and the intent is to have individualized workshops on the six priorities. He noted that there will be break-out sessions so that others can participate.

Chancellor Perlman stated that there are two things that are important to recognize with respect to the life sciences. He pointed out that we ought to be a great university in the life sciences given our location and natural resources. He noted that the most critical issue the world is facing is providing food for everyone and we have a comparative advantage being in Nebraska, but this does not exclude other disciplines from the life sciences, rather it opens up the possibility for other disciplines to get involved with the initiative. He stated that he hopes Senators will encourage their colleagues to attend the various sessions that will be held in association with the life sciences. He stated that lawyers, people involved in the social sciences, and others can all contribute to the life sciences. He stated that the life sciences executive committee has also presented its report and it can be found on the web at: <http://www.unl.edu/ucomm/chncllr/pdfs/ReviewofMolecularLifeSciences.pdf>.

Chancellor Perlman reported that the Water for Food Institute gives us global reach and while it is a system-wide focus, it will mostly involve the UNL campus. He stated that the Board of Directors has been formed to manage the Institute. Currently members of the Board are President Milliken, the CEO of Valmont Industries, and the CEO of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, although the Board will probably be expanded. He stated that the administration of the Water for Food Institute will be developed first. He noted that participants in the Institute will be from here and other universities as well as from other countries. He stated that hubs of the Institute are being established in India and he recently went to Africa where he believes there are opportunities to collaborate with private companies. He stated that efforts to create hubs in Brazil, China, and Pakistan are being pursued. He reported that the university is now formally part of a collaborative effort with Harvard and MIT on the water initiative. He stated that he hopes that a curriculum, at least at the undergraduate level, will be formed and hopefully a graduate level curriculum will also be developed.

Chancellor Perlman reported that the capital campaign is moving forward and that we have now exceeded \$800 million. He stated that there have been six or seven initiatives that have received significant funding and some campus priorities are being worked on. He stated that efforts are being focused on college campaigns. He stated that he is confident that we will reach our goal in terms of dollars and objectives. He noted that we are building a very significant base for the next capital campaign.

Chancellor Perlman stated that we will have the opportunity to sign an agreement with the Chinese Scholarship Council establishing UNL as one of the priority institutions for placement of Chinese graduate students. These students are largely paid by the Chinese government and should result in an increase in good graduate students at UNL from China.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he cannot report the number of faculty members who are taking the voluntary separation incentive program because there are still some existing deadlines with the program. He reported that there are a significant number of senior faculty members who are taking advantage of the program and he hopes to report on the numbers after the first of the year. He noted that this will turn out to be a successful program but we will lose valued colleagues with much experience and talent, although this will provide us with opportunities to make advancements in some areas. He pointed out that there will be some burdens on us, particularly next year when the payouts will occur, and there will be a reduction in the number of faculty members in some departments. He stated that if we can cover the work without additional expenditures the campus will be in a better position should we get more budget cuts.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the campus will probably be looking at how to increase the teaching capacity

with the people that we have. He pointed out that the savior of the campus will be increased enrollment and we are working as hard and fast as we can to build additional housing. He noted that on the academic side it is more difficult to build quickly. He stated that we will have to be creative in the ways we teach since we will not have a lot of available resources. He suggested that departments might want to review the curriculum to see if there are courses that do not have to be taught every year or could be taught in different ways that would allow expansion of enrollment. He pointed out that how this will be done will determine the focus of the university for the next ten years. He stated that this could mean that faculty members are working smarter, not harder, and it could be a very exciting time in teaching.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he does not know more about the budget. The Governor will set the stage in January when the legislature meets but the Appropriations Committee won't present a draft budget until March. He noted that there will be another revenue forecasting report in February which could impact budget decisions but the legislature will not adopt a budget until early May. He stated that he hopes the faculty and staff will understand while we try to work through these matters.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he reviewed the proposal to expand the APC and he essentially agrees with it. He stated that he appreciates the willingness of the Senate to make the Vice Chancellor for Research & Economic Development a voting member of the APC.

Chancellor Perlman wished everyone Happy Holidays and an enjoyable break.

8.0 New Business

No new business was discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, January 11, 2:30 p.m. in the East Campus Union, Great Plains Room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Patrick Shea, Secretary.