

UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
East Campus Union,
April 24, 2012
Presidents LaCost and Schubert Presiding

1.0 Call to Order

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

2.0 Elections to the Executive Committee

2.1 Election of President-Elect

Professor Guevara was elected as President-Elect.

2.2 Election of Secretary

Professor Ruchala, School of Accountancy, moved to approve the election of Professor Woodman as Secretary by acclamation. The motion was seconded by Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics. The motion was approved.

2.3 Election to Executive Committee

Professor Wysocki, Computer & Electronics Engineering, moved to approve the election of Professor Bender, College of Journalism & Mass Communications, and Professor Rinkevich, Classics & Religious Studies, to the Executive Committee by acclamation. The motion was seconded by Professor Peterson. The motion was approved.

3.0 Recognition of Outgoing Executive Committee Members

President LaCost expressed her appreciation to the following outgoing Executive Committee members: Past President Lindquist, Secretary Shea, and Professor Rinkevich. She thanked the Executive Committee for its dedicated work.

4.0 Announcements

4.1 Introduction of New Senators

President Schubert introduced the new Senators: Mikil Foss, Mathematics; David Pitts, Mathematics, Loukia Sarroub, Teaching, Learning, & Teacher Education; Paul Harmon, Durham School; Gretchen Foley, School of Music, Jamie Reimer, School of Music; Timothy Lemmons, Northeast Research & Extension Center; Phil Willet, College of Journalism & Mass Communications; Steve Bradford, College of Law, Anthony Schutz, College of Law, Kristy Weissling, Special Education & Communication Disorders. He welcomed back Senators re-elected to another term: Kim Wilson, Architecture, Karen Lee, Communication Studies; Jennifer McKitrick, Philosophy; and Wes Peterson, Agricultural Economics.

President Schubert stated that he wants the Senate to think about the goals for the Senate this academic year and would like to have more proactive interactions with the Administration. He stated that the overarching goal for next year is for the betterment of all on campus. He noted that one of the issues that the Executive Committee will continue to work on is the survey of the non-tenure track faculty members.

5.0 Approval of 4/3/12 Minutes

Professor Wysocki moved for approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Professor Rinkevich, Classics & Religious Studies. The motion was approved.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Motion to Approve the Student Bereavement Policy

Professor Peterson stated that he believes including a student bereavement policy in the existing class attendance policy is a better option than having a stand-alone document. He pointed out that he is not opposed to the idea of excusing students for traumatic events, but it makes more sense to include it in the current class attendance policy. He noted that absences for religious observances were added to the document several years ago and sees no reason why student bereavement couldn't be included. He pointed out that students are expected to attend classes but there are clearly going to be a range of cases when a student cannot attend a class and he thinks the class attendance policy frames the accepted excuses well. He noted that the policy states that students are expected to work with the instructor to determine how work lost during the absence can be made up. He suggested that the language of the class attendance policy might need to be revised to define

two categories of absences: one that is of unforeseen events such as illness, accident, or death of a family member and the other such as university sponsored events or religious observances. He stated that if a student cannot do the work due to circumstances beyond his/her control the student can sometimes withdraw from a class. He pointed out that oftentimes cases of extended absences need to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. He stated that the proposal that was presented is written poorly and he would like to see it defeated on its own merit. He stated that the proposed document is overly detailed and is over managed and has too many mandates. He stated that it is more beneficial to the student for the student to work directly with the instructor on these kinds of issues.

Professor Peterson noted that the motion is to approve a stand-alone policy and this needs to be defeated first if the Senate determines that a student bereavement policy should be included in the existing class absence policy. He stated that the Executive Committee could then be asked by the Senate to incorporate the language into the existing policy.

Professor Eccarius, Special Education & Communication Disorders, stated that she would be interested in knowing why ASUN is requesting that there be a separate policy. Past President of ASUN Lane Carr stated that he worked throughout the year on this policy and ASUN has seen a large number of students who have written or called ASUN when they have had issues making up assignments due to the loss of a family member. He noted that Purdue University was the first to establish a bereavement policy and the students worked collaboratively with their administration to develop the policy. He noted that the proposed policy is almost identical to Purdue's. He pointed out that other schools have adopted a similar policy.

Past President Carr stated that for the most part the faculty members understand absence due to bereavement. He noted that school work becomes the least of a student's concern when a family crisis such as the death of a family member occurs and eliminating the additional burden of having to get an assignment completed by a particular due date is what the policy hopes to achieve. He pointed out that students would still be required to do the coursework, but they would be able to complete it at a later time.

Past President Carr stated that ASUN worked with VC Franco's office on the policy. He noted that the Office of Student Affairs would initiate an email to all of a student's instructors informing them of the student's crisis and asking that the student be excused from class. He stated that the student would only need to call one person to initiate the process. He pointed out that a subcommittee of the Senate Executive Committee which included Professor Woodward, Chair of the Grading and Examinations Committee, worked on the policy. He noted that ASUN was unaware of the existing class absence policy when it first began working on the student bereavement policy. He asked that the Senate include students in the rewriting of the policy should the Senate vote it down. He stated that he thinks it is a right for a student to go home if family crisis occurs.

Secretary Woodman agreed with Professor Peterson in that the mandates of the policy are difficult to follow, particularly if someone teaches very large classes. He noted that he teaches very large sections and has worked with many students in the last six years and has always managed to work with a student if they have a personal issue. He pointed out that the proposed policy mandates that students will be given the option of making up lab assignments but noted that it is really difficult for a faculty member to reset an entire lab for one student. He stated that the student has the option of taking an incomplete and completing the assignment in the next semester. He suggested that the motion to approve the policy be tabled to allow further discussion of incorporating the policy into the class attendance policy.

Professor Bradford, Law, stated that he agreed with Professor Peterson in that a student bereavement policy should be included in the regular class attendance policy. He noted that the policy is overly legalistic and moves to table the motion. Professor Peterson seconded the motion to table the policy. Professor Rinkevich called the question. Twenty-six were in favor of tabling the motion, four were against, and two abstained. The motion to table the student bereavement policy was approved.

7.0 New Business

7.1 UNL Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures

Schubert reported that federal mandates require the university to have a policy that addresses issues of conflict and this policy needs to be in place by late August in order for the university to continue to receive federal grants. As a result the Executive Committee is making the motion to approve the policy as an emergency motion. He pointed out that the Executive Committee has had discussions about the policy with Associate Vice Chancellor Hamernik and she was present to address any concerns. He noted that the Senate could disapprove it or an electronic vote could be held over the next couple of weeks. He stated that an electronic vote would be conducted by the Coordinator of the Faculty Senate. The motion to treat this as an emergency

motion was seconded by Professor Peterson and approved.

Associate VC Hamernik reported that several listening sessions were held earlier this year to hear faculty members' concerns with the proposed policy and the draft policy was posted on line. She stated that the policy in front of the Senators has been approved by the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors.

Past Secretary Shea stated that after Associate VC Hamernik recently met with the Executive Committee faculty members were invited to provide some additional comments and suggestions. He sent in suggestions but noted that these are not included in the document that is before the Senate. Associate VC Hamernik stated that the responses were not received in time to incorporate them into the draft that is before the Senate. Secretary Shea pointed out that the Senate would vote on the current draft but if the Senate was to wait it could vote on a revised policy. Associate VC Hamernik noted that however the Senate wishes to handle the voting on the document, it needs to be done in a timely fashion because the policy must be in place by August 24.

Professor Carlson, Veterinary & Biomedical Sciences, asked what the Executive Committee proposes to do with the voting on this policy since the full Senate will not meet again until September. President Schubert stated that the Senate can conduct an electronic vote and this could be done within a certain time frame over the next few weeks. He stated that another option is the Executive Committee, which acts on behalf of the Senate during times when the full Senate does not meet, could vote on it.

Professor Bradford noted that the draft policy provides examples of conflicts of interest in the appendices. He stated that he has concerns with 3H regarding the "use of textbooks that generate royalties for the instructor may adversely affect students" yet there is nothing in the policy that would prevent an instructor from using his/her own book and he recommended that the example be removed from the document. Associate VC Hamernik stated that the use of an instructor's textbook in his/her class is a controversial issue.

Professor Peterson noted that we have an emergency motion on the floor to vote on the policy that is in front of the Senate. He pointed out that the Senate needs to vote on it and then a motion can be made to have a vote over the summer on a revised policy. The Senate voted the existing policy down.

Professor Bradford pointed out that since the policy is going to be amended, he moved that once the final policy is approved by the Executive Committee that an electronic vote be conducted as set by the Executive Committee. Professor Zoubek, Southeast Research & Extension Center, seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

8.0 Presentation of the Louise Pound-George Howard Distinguished Career Award to Emeritus Professors David Forsythe and Professor David Sellmyer

President Schubert presented that Pound-Howard Award for Distinguished Career to Emeritus Professor David Forsythe, Political Science and Professor David Sellmyer, Physics and Astronomy.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, September 11, 2012, 2:30 p.m. in the City Campus Union, Auditorium. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and David Woodman, Secretary.