

**UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES**  
**City Campus Union, Auditorium**  
**September 9, 2014**  
**Presidents Nickerson, Bender, and Guevara, Presiding**

**1.0 Call to Order**

President Nickerson called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

**2.0 Announcements**

**2.1 Faculty Senate Representatives on Campus Committees**

President Nickerson noted that one of the goals of the Faculty Senate is to achieve shared governance and in that spirit the Executive Committee has made some arrangements with the administration to have Senate representatives on some of their regular and ad hoc committees. He pointed out that this is all designed to improve communications between the administration and the faculty. He asked that Senators please accept an appointment to a committee if asked to help facilitate communications between the administrators and faculty.

**2.2 Future Faculty Senate Meetings**

President Nickerson stated that he is contemplating modifying some of the full Faculty Senate meetings in order to have an open microphone session to discuss topics. He noted that there is not a list of topics yet, but if anyone has any ideas on what they would like to discuss to please let someone on the Executive Committee, himself, or Coordinator Griffin know. He reported that Vice President Niemiec will be speaking at the October 7 meeting as well as Associate Vice Chancellor Goodman, Assistant Vice Chancellor Batman, and Associate Dean Bellows.

**2.3 AAUP Statewide Meeting at UNL**

President Nickerson reported that this Saturday, September 13, the AAUP will have its statewide meeting in the City Campus Union. He noted that the UNL AAUP chapter meeting will also be held and he encouraged faculty members to attend.

**3.0 Interim President Linder**

Interim President Linder reported that as a former faculty member at UNMC he was able to establish good business connections and worked half time as an administrator. He noted that he worked with former President Milliken for three years in Central Administration, but since being Interim President he has learned a great deal about the university, particularly UNL. He stated that many great stories are coming out of UNL including record enrollment and a record number of grants that have been awarded to the faculty at UNL.

Interim President Linder stated that ideally he thinks he needs to accomplish five things:

- 1) Spend significant time with the Regents to keep them focused on governance matters
- 2) Spend considerable time with state senators, particularly since we are in the midterm of the budget process
- 3) Ensure the faculty that they are being supported
- 4) Try to bring the faculty together on the four campuses by using system-wide programs
- 5) Look at infrastructure issues.

Interim President Linder stated that his overriding task is to make sure that the Chancellors have the right resources, policies, and freedom to run their campus. He noted that he has enjoyed working with each of the Chancellors.

Interim President Linder reported that when he agreed to serve as Interim President he set out with the goal to try to leave the university in a little better condition than when he began his interim position. He noted that he has asked state leaders what the university can do better, but the leaders are often stumped by this question because they feel that the university is already doing a good job. He reported that he often points out what a great bargain UNL is for students.

Interim President Linder stated that the Chancellors and campus administrators should be engaging the faculty in discussions about what the campus will look like in 2025. He pointed out that it is better for the faculty to think about this proactively because the campus will be very different from what it is today. He

noted that there might be efforts on the part of the Chancellors to have these discussions on their campus. He stated that it would be worthwhile for faculty members to read the Board of Regents' framework (<http://www.nebraska.edu/docs/StrategicFramework.pdf>) for the university before beginning these discussions.

Professor Hay, Southeast Research & Extension Center, asked Interim President Linder what was some of the surprising things he has learned since becoming Interim President. Interim President Linder reported that he was surprised to find that there were no skeletons in the closet which is making his job easier. He stated that some of the pleasant surprises is learning about programs that he has never been exposed to before, such as the University of Nebraska High School program which attracts students from around the world, and the Susan Buffett Early Childhood Institute.

Professor Vakilzadian, Electrical Engineering, asked about infrastructure plans for the UNL campus. Interim President Linder reported that approximately a year ago the Regents engaged the firm of Sasaki Associates to map all of the buildings on each campus in order to provide better information for capital planning. He stated that he hopes to use the plan to engage in discussions with state senators to make them see the need for some new facilities such as a life sciences building. He pointed out that currently the campuses have to rely on private funds for constructing these facilities. Emeritus Professor Diffendal asked if Sasaki Associates is speaking with the faculty about the needs of the campuses. Interim President Linder stated that he believes they will be speaking to various members of each campus in the next phase of the process.

Professor Woodman, School of Biological Sciences, asked Interim President Linder for his take on improving faculty salaries and how he can be an advocate for it. He noted that the faculty have received very small increases over the past several years and UNL is still lagging significantly behind its peers in regards to faculty salaries. Interim President Linder reported that the Regents' proposed budget is calling for a 1% fund to be used to target faculty salaries that are vastly different from their peers. He reported that he has spoken with the Regents and State Senators about the issue. He noted that UNL lags its peers by 4 – 6% in terms of salaries, but discussing increasing salaries for university employees is tricky in Nebraska. However, he believes we need to remain competitive with other universities. He noted that the 1% money is separate from the regular salary increase. He pointed out that the Board does not get involved with how the Chancellors use the increase in their funds.

Professor Schleck, English, said that she hoped that faculty members would be part of the discussions in the long term planning for 2025. She asked if there was any input from the faculty when the Regents developed the goals for the university and wondered if there are other areas of governance where the faculty voice is missing or not being heard. Interim President Linder pointed out that he hopes that the faculty voice is not being missed. He noted that faculty members need to have increased dialogue with the people who hire our students because the citizenry of the state does not think we are doing our jobs in training the students. He stated that for-profit education organizations do pose some threat to us, but each campus needs to decide what the best learning environment is for them. He noted that there are some universities that have competency based education programs. He reported that he has spoken with the Chancellors about the need to have the faculty decide what will be needed in the future to educate our students.

President Nickerson noted that there are some Regents that are opposed to stem cell research and asked what the likelihood is that research will be restructured on campus because of this opposition. Interim President Linder pointed out that stem cell research has been an issue for a long time. He noted that no one can predict the election results in November and the sentiments of the Board of Regents, but he does not think this research currently is an issue.

President Nickerson thanked Interim President Linder for speaking to the Senate.

#### **4.0 Approval of April 29, 2014 Minutes**

Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics, moved for approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Professor Vakilzadian, Electrical Engineering. The motion was approved.

#### **5.0 Committee Reports**

##### **5.1 Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee (Past President Guevara)**

Past President Guevara noted that data on faculty salaries was included in the Senate packet and shows that faculty salaries are still behind that of our peer institutions, and in some departments severely so. He reported that the only thing that he has heard differently regarding salary increases was the information that Interim President Linder provided regarding the proposed 1% increase to adjust salaries.

Past President Guevara stated that administrative salaries shows that UNL administrators receive some of the lowest salaries compared to our peer institutions, particularly for the Chancellor's position, but the highest for a dean. He reported that the Chancellor pointed out that some new faculty members have been hired with larger salaries but percentage wise these salaries were meaningless. He stated that the Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee has asked the Chancellor to provide a plan to improve faculty salaries.

### **5.2 Commencement and Honors Convocations Committee (Professor Cheung)**

Professor Cheung reported that the Commencement and Honors Convocations Committee (CHCC) is composed of faculty members, staff from the Chancellor's Office, and the Office of Communications. He stated that the main responsibility of the CHCC is to coordinate commencement events and student recognition events. He reported that the CHCC has no recommendations for the Senate.

Professor Cheung reported that in December 2013 separate graduation ceremonies were held for graduate and undergraduate students. He noted that the graduation ceremonies have been moved to the Pinnacle Bank Arena, but doing this lost some space for setting up the students to enter the arena and a tent was installed to help provide some additional space. He stated that the CHCC has implemented a number of improvements to increase the experience for the students and their families and the Alumni Association organized an after commencement congratulatory event which allowed them to connect with the graduates. He pointed out that the August ceremony was different from the May undergraduate ceremony because it was an all university commencement and the names were read of everyone graduating. He noted that in order for us to continue our success with the graduation ceremonies more people are needed to help with the event.

Professor Cheung pointed out that improvements were also made for the faculty participants as well. He stated that parking permits are now available for the faculty. He noted that the music has been changed for the ceremonies and is being played before the ceremonies begin.

Professor Combs, Political Science, asked if there is a reason why we only report data in terms of males and females graduates and suggested that it would be helpful to have other demographics provided. Professor Cheung stated that he followed what has been provided in the past but he will make a recommendation to the CHCC to provide more information in the future.

President Elect Bender asked if there were any plans to have the names of undergraduates read during the May and December ceremonies. Professor Cheung reported that at this time there are no plans because of the large number of students that graduate during these ceremonies. He noted that there are two lines of students going on stage to receive their diplomas and even then it takes a lot of time. He pointed out that in order to pronounce the name of each student correctly the staff of Registration and Records has to contact the students and there are not enough staff members to make all of these calls.

Professor Vakilzadian suggested that the diplomas be given later on rather than at the ceremony because it is so time consuming for the staff to get all of the diplomas ready. He asked if there are any plans for going away from handing out the diplomas at the ceremony. Professor Cheung stated that currently the CHCC has no plans on doing this. He noted that it is a tradition here at UNL to provide the diploma at the graduation ceremony. President Nickerson agreed that it takes a lot of time to read those names at the ceremony and commended the CHCC for its excellent work in organizing and coordinating the ceremonies.

### **5.3 Executive Committee Summer Report**

President Nickerson reported that the Executive Committee met about every other week during the summer and a summary of the meetings was provided in the packet. He noted that a few highlights included the interaction of the Executive Committee with members of the ACE Subcommittee to try and simplify and improve the ACE recertification process. He reported that there has been some progress, but it will take about two years to see how well it works. He noted that the process has been modified to help reduce the faculty's time in recertifying a course which is one of his goals, to preserve faculty time. He reported that when this goal of preserving faculty time was shared with SVCAA Weissinger she pointed out that it is faculty members who create regulations and restrictions causing more work for faculty. He noted that faculty members should remember that the work they do influences other faculty members.

President Nickerson reported that at the end of the spring semester the Board of Regents were considering proposed changes to the Regents Bylaws that would impact how deans, vice chancellor, and chancellors are selected. He pointed out that these changes would have eliminated or greatly reduced faculty participation in the search process. He noted that the Faculty Senate Office alerted the faculty which resulted in the Regents

receiving a large number of emails and phone calls from faculty members. The result was the Board including language that stated that the changes “are not intended and will not affect the current campus bylaws and practices for the selection of chancellors, vice chancellors, and deans. He stated that the faculty should take credit for speaking up and voicing their concerns.

President Nickerson reported that the Executive Committee successfully implemented a campaign to improve dialogue with the administration to get Faculty Senate representation on committees created by the administrators. For instance, Past President Guevara was a member of the implementation committee for the TIPSPrevention system. He noted that Professor Sollars, Veterinary & Biomedical Sciences and a member of the Executive Committee, is now representing the Senate on the Enrollment Management Council and the Academic Scheduling and Planning Advisory Group.

## **7.0 New Business**

### **7.1 Executive Committee Goals for 2014-15**

President Nickerson reported that the Executive Committee held a retreat to identify goals for the Committee for 2014-15. He noted that nine goals have been established one of which includes providing the faculty with a one-page newsletter from the President and President-Elect regarding the work of the Senate. He noted that if anyone feels that there needs to be additional goals they should contact him.

President Nickerson stated that the Executive Committee is continuing its efforts to protect and inform the campus on how non-tenure track faculty members fit into the faculty and to let these people know what their rights and responsibilities are. He noted that there is a subcommittee working on a follow-up survey for the non-tenure track faculty members and the goal is to inform and educate the faculty about these positions.

President Nickerson reported that the Executive Committee intends to look into the distance education theme which the Board of Regents is very interested in and wants to increase the number of distance education courses being offered. He noted that the renewed interest in distance education will need to be looked at by the faculty.

President Nickerson stated that another goal is to provide information on academic freedom and faculty rights and to have this information located on the Senate webpage. He stated that another effort will be to work with administration to try to improve retention rates and to make sure that appropriate tutoring services are available. He noted that a subcommittee of the Executive Committee will be reviewing the UNL Bylaws and Senate Bylaws for possible updating.

### **7.2 Open Faculty Senate Seats**

President Nickerson stated that in the past the President of the Faculty Senate sent an email asking chairs to help find someone to represent their department on the Senate but this has not always worked. He noted that the open seats in the Senate were recently publicized in the President’s newsletter and it has generated a little response, although he thinks there will be more response if Senators contact people they know in units that are not represented. He pointed out that being a Senator is not time consuming or requires a lot of work. He asked Senators to encourage people to serve, and when asking that they also see what issues faculty members are concerned about. He noted that the goal is to fill all of the open seats or at least have each department represented on the Senate. He reported that the following departments have no representative on the Senate: Chemistry, Computer Science & Engineering, Physics & Astronomy, Economics, Finance, Management, Marketing, Mechanical Engineering, and Ag Leadership. The following departments have an additional open seat: English, Mathematics, Modern Languages & Literature, Psychology, Biological Systems Engineering, and the Durham School of Architectural Engineering.

### **7.3 Proposed Changes to UNL Bylaws**

Professor Shea, School of Natural Resources, noted that there has been discussion about reviewing and revising the UNL bylaws for some time and asked what kind of changes are being considered. President Nickerson stated that nothing in particular is being considered. He reported that the Chancellor had suggested that the Bylaws needed to be updated and he had a law student review them and make a few suggestions. The Executive Committee volunteered to help with the review and a subcommittee has been formed to look at the Bylaws. He stated that the hope is to include more language on academic freedom and to protect non-tenure track faculty members. Past President Guevara noted that there are some redundancies and contradictions in the UNL Bylaws with regards to the Regents Bylaws.

Professor Shea asked if this might be an opportunity to address issues relating to faculty governance. He stated that he still thinks one of the main problems in getting people to participate more in faculty governance

is because people feel that the Senate has little authority in the university and many of his colleagues feel that they do not want to invest the time to be a part of the Senate. He pointed out that if the Senate had a larger role in governing the university he thinks there would be more interest. President Nickerson stated that the Executive Committee is trying to approach this incrementally and the subcommittee has not looked at the Bylaws sufficiently yet to be able to address this issue.

#### **7.4 Changes to Distance Education Tuition Distribution**

Professor Stoltenberg, Psychology, reported that the changes in the distribution of the distance education tuition has caused great concerns for some departments in Arts & Sciences, yet President Nickerson mentioned that the Board wants to increase distance education. He pointed out that there was a unilateral move to change how the tuition is distributed which resulted in the removal of about \$3 million from the Arts & Sciences budget with only \$1 million being given back to the College. He stated that it appears that this occurred without any input from the faculty. President Nickerson noted that this is an important issue that the Senate discussed at its last meeting. He pointed out that the Chancellor and SVCAA discussed openly with the Executive Committee at several meetings about the changes going as far back as January and it was recorded in the minutes of the meetings.

President Nickerson reported that he has spoken with SVCAA Weissinger who told him that in her opinion the deans have enough money to cover the distance education classes, but he is trying to gather more information. He noted that 35% of the distance education tuition was returned into the college's base budget for the deans to distribute. He stated that what he is trying to determine is what happened from the dean's level to the departments because it appears that there are some departments that were very surprised by what happened. He stated that there seems to be some distinct problems at the department level that needs to be rectified and the Executive Committee wants to try and help these departments, although it is not clear exactly what the Senate can do.

Professor Combs noted that the Political Science department shares the sentiments of the Psychology department and believes that there has been a breach of faculty governance and the violation of best practices with the change that occurred with the distance education revenue. He pointed out that the change has placed departments into very stressful positions making it difficult to provide classes to all of the students. He asked what departments should do and to what extent we can make a difference. President Nickerson noted that the Executive Committee will be discussing this issue further with the Chancellor and SVCAA on September 17, and he is trying to ascertain where the communications have broken down in this issue.

Professor Steffen, Veterinary & Biomedical Sciences, noted that the budget deficit for the campus happened in part due to the shortfall created by the distance education tuition which went to departments rather than to the campus operating budget. He pointed out that to address the budget shortfall a percentage of the faculty/staff salary increase has been used. He stated that the amount of money spent on distance education was known within the colleges and the Executive Committee was informed that equal amounts of money was going to cover teaching the courses, but whether this occurred needs to be ascertained.

President Nickerson noted that the upper administration seeks more input from the faculty, but we need to come up with the ideas and an agenda. He pointed out that if we want to have more impact we need to do more work and if we have questions we can ask of the administration we can dig deeper into issues of concern to the faculty. He stated that revising the Bylaws will give us the opportunity to have more input.

Professor Schleck suggested that the President's newsletter can provide education on what the Senate can do. She noted that there is a general sense amongst the faculty that things cannot be changed. She suggested that the Senate so consider how it can push back to try to regain shared governance. She noted that faculty participation will increase if faculty members feel like they have a voice.

Professor Lahey, Faculty Senate President's designee to the Academic Planning Committee, reported that the APC discussed the distance education revenue and "recommended that the distance education revenue be used to mitigate, to the extent possible, the reduction in the salary pool. The APC asks Chancellor Perlman to embrace this principle as the entire Committee shares the same concern of salary competitiveness as compared to our peer institutions for faculty and market pressures for staff" (from the Academic Planning Committee minutes of April 30, 2014). He pointed out that while the entire committee shared their concerns for salary competitiveness, they voted in favor of recommending that the Chancellor use the distance education monies to decrease the deficit, although he thinks most of the APC members who were from Arts & Sciences voted against the motion. President Nickerson noted that this is a difficult issue and the Executive Committee will be discussing the issue further with the Chancellor and SVCAA on September 17.

### **7.5 ACE Recertification Process**

Professor Vakilzadian asked who is handling ACE recertification. President Nickerson reported that the University Curriculum Committee's ACE Subcommittee does the recertification and they have recently simplified the procedures. Professor Peterson noted that ACE 8 and 10 courses are the only ones being recertified at this time. All of the other ACE courses have now been recertified.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on October 7, 2014 in the East Campus Union, Arbor Suite. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Tad Wysocki, Secretary.