

UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
East Campus Union, Great Plains Room
April 28, 2015
Presidents Nickerson, Bender, and Guevara Presiding

1.0 Call to Order

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

2.0 Executive Committee Elections

The Faculty Senate elected the following officers and Executive Committee members:

2.1 President-Elect

Professor Woodman, School of Biological Sciences, was elected as President-Elect.

2.2 Secretary

Professor Reisbig, Child, Youth & Family Studies, was elected as Secretary.

2.3 Executive Committee Members

Professor Lee, Communication Studies and Professor Dawes, University Libraries were each elected to a three-year term to the Executive Committee. Professor Vakilzadian, Electrical Engineering, was elected to a one-year term on the Executive Committee

3.0 President Bounds

President Bounds thanked the Faculty Senate for the opportunity to speak. As a way of introduction he wanted to talk about his background. He noted that he grew up on a family farm in a poor environment in Mississippi and college did not seem like an option, but a teacher encouraged him to pursue higher education. His story shows the transformative power higher education can have in a person's life. He reported that he spent his career in Mississippi working at many levels. He stated that one of his important tasks as President is to see how the University can help move the entire state forward starting from pre-school through college. He pointed out that to do this the University needs to be as accessible and affordable as we can be.

President Bounds noted that one of his initial responsibilities is to create a search committee to work on finding a new Chancellor for UNL. He pointed out that Chancellor Perlman has served in his position for a decade and a half which is rare in higher education. He noted that Chancellor Perlman has done a spectacular job and has helped to grow the campus. He thanked Chancellor Perlman for what he has done to create one of America's greatest flagship campuses.

President Bounds reported that when he was first recruited for President of the University he was not interested, in part because he did not know much about NU. However, he became more impressed the more he looked into the University and he now cannot wait to spend time with the faculty to find out what is important to the University. He stated that he hopes to interface with the Senate often and engage the faculty in conversations because it is the best way for him to understand the faculty and the issues that need to be addressed. He noted that he is trying to figure out how to put his feet on all of the campuses in order to become acquainted with each of them.

President Bounds stated that he is delighted to be a part of the University and believes the work being done here is phenomenal. He noted that he is a strong believer in shared governance and this will be evident in the search process for a new Chancellor. He pointed out that Board of Regents' policy defines the process for the search, and he has asked President Bender and Past President Nickerson to think about a representative group of faculty members who could serve on the search committee. He noted that he will select the members of the search committee and there will be representation from all the stakeholder groups, including faculty, staff, and students. He stated that the search will engage members of the public and that stakeholder feedback will be an important part of the process. He pointed out that being new he needs to find out who would be good for the search committee because he wants to make sure that we get the right people. He noted that the search will absolutely be a national search. He stated that it will take some time for him to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the campus and the risks that UNL faces.

Professor Vakilzadian asked what President Bounds believes is the most important thing he can do that will

contribute to the campus. President Bounds stated that he will listen to the faculty to learn the challenges that face UNL, and he wants to understand the holistic approach to extension and research. He pointed out that he is aware that UNL faculty salaries are 5 ½% behind their peers and this needs to be considered. He noted that in June tuition will need to be set for the next biennium. He stated that you cannot do the University justice until you spend time with the faculty, talk to students, and talk to the leadership of the campuses.

President Bounds noted that he wants to be a part of something really special and he came here because he wants to be in a place that can help change the world. He reported that there are 7.2 billion people on earth and this will increase to 9.6 billion which will stress the environment for more food and water. He noted that the University of Nebraska has the opportunity to figure out how we can make things better for the world and his job is to go out there to try and secure research funding and support so the University can conduct research that will help make the needed improvements.

Professor LaCost, Educational Administration, asked how the faculty can take the transformative power of education concept and use that to attract and retain students. President Bounds stated that we have to get students when they are younger. He noted that he had really good teachers growing up who did not allow him to think of options other than not going to college. He pointed out that when kids don't have the means to go to college it is important that we help them to find resources that will allow them to attend the University.

Professor Joeckel, School of Natural Resources, asked what the salient differences are between Nebraska and Mississippi. President Bounds reported that as Commissioner of Higher Education at the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning he was Chief Executive of eight separate and distinct universities. Two of these universities, which were highly competitive, competed in the Southeastern Conference and reported to him. He noted that while he was visiting the Panhandle Research and Extension Center he was excited to hear that faculty ask how they could have a collaborative effort with the Medical Center. He reported that someone mentioned to him that the University has not been through the best of times during the recession, but it did not experience the draconian cuts that many universities across the country experienced. He pointed out that the University improved its research and development portfolio at a time when many other universities were losing theirs. He noted that another difference is that the Board here is composed of eight elected members. He pointed out that only four states have elected Board members.

Professor Weissling, Special Education and Communication Disorders, asked how the four campuses can be more collaborative which could result in cost savings. President Bounds stated that he thinks we should take the expertise from each of the campuses and combine them, but the question is how to do this. He noted that he does not have the answer to this yet, but there are many intelligent people who have experience in dealing with this kind of challenge. He noted that there is a public commitment here that Mississippi struggled with and if solutions to this question can be found here it can help other universities as well. He stated that the iEXCEL project at UNMC is a high tech way of providing virtual learning opportunities. He noted that in some rural areas virtual opportunities in medicine are now available and it is just a matter of time before the technology is available to everyone. He pointed out that if the campuses work together we can bring opportunities like these about much quicker.

4.0 Chancellor Perlman

Chancellor Perlman wanted to extend his appreciation to President Nickerson and the Executive Committee for their support during the past year and for the engaged conversations. He welcomed the new officers and Executive Committee members and thanked the members for their willingness to serve in faculty governance which he believes is important. He pointed out that a strong faculty voice is important, whether it agrees with him or not.

Chancellor Perlman reported that the Legislature begins addressing the budget and the Appropriations Committee has made a recommendation of providing a slightly larger than 3% increase over the next two years of the biennium. He stated that salary increases might be about 3%, and there will be a tuition increase. If the budget holds this should be a reasonably good year for UNL, although everyone is paying attention to the revenue forecasting for the state which may be lower than anticipated. He noted that providing a good budget should not be viewed as an expenditure but as an investment for the state.

Chancellor Perlman reported that he does not intend to back off pushing the university forward although he is sensitive to the fact that the next year will be his last as Chancellor and he does not want to start initiatives that would bind his successor. He pointed out that the campus needs to continue to work on enrollment growth and it appears that we may have some positive growth going into the new academic year. He wanted to thank all of the faculty for their efforts in recruiting more students.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the research enterprise of the campus has to continue to grow and it is known that the more collaborations there are between departments, the more we can accomplish. He reported that there is focus right now on engaging disciplines relating to social behavior, the social sciences, and the humanities. He believes that within the next five years people will realize scientific findings need to be implemented within society and this is where the social sciences can help with research.

Chancellor Perlman reported that the grand opening of Nebraska Innovation Campus will occur in October. He noted that this is a long term project and while some people may expect it to be completed, we are not and we have much work that still needs to be done with can lead us to major opportunities. He pointed out that VC Green is already engaged and energized in becoming Interim SVCAA and hopes to make progress. He stated that he hopes the academic year beginning in August will be an instructive year.

5.0 Announcements

5.1 Welcome New Senators

President Bender welcomed the following new Senators: Professor Sarah Murray, Classics & Religious Studies; Professor Bob Shirer, Modern Languages & Literature; Professor Kevin Hanrahan, School of Music; Professor Humberto Blanco, Agronomy & Horticulture; Professor Teshome Regassa, Agronomy & Horticulture; Professor Lisa Kaslon, Northeast Research & Extension Center; Professor Nicole Stoner, Southeast Research & Extension Center; Professor Adam Wagler, College of Journalism & Mass Communications; Professor Rich Leiter, College of Law; Professor Lorna Dawes, University Libraries.

6.0 Approval of April 7, 2015 Minutes

Professor Joeckel, School of Natural Resources moved for approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Professor Vakilzadian, Electrical Engineering. The motion was approved.

7.0 Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was discussed.

8.0 New Business

8.1 Motion to Create Vice Chancellor for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer Position

President Bender stated that the motion to approve the creation of the Vice Chancellor for Information and Technology and Chief Information Officer was being put forward as an emergency motion. Professor Joeckel moved to approve the emergency motion which was seconded by Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics. The motion was approved with three abstentions.

Professor Sollars, Veterinary & Biomedical Sciences, noted that the information provided in the handout regarding the creation of the position was helpful, but people need to realize that another administrative position was being created and we already have many administrators. She stated that she is concerned that the special authority of the position may result in the possibility of less engagement by the faculty in matters relating to information technology on campus. She noted that similar concerns have been raised by the Executive Committee and she would like to see some assurances that this will not happen.

Professor Woodman, School of Biological Sciences and chair of the Information Technologies and Services Committee, stated that the ITSC has had a very close relationship with CIO Askren and he does not see this changing if CIO Askren becomes a Vice Chancellor. He noted that this issue was raised at the last ITSC meeting and the Committee was assured that CIO Askren will continue to operate as he has in the past. He pointed out that the change would be an upgrade for the position.

The motion was approved with 27 in favor, 11 against, and 3 abstentions.

8.2 Motion to Increase the Membership of the Academic Planning Committee

President Bender stated that the APC has requested that a position for a non-tenure track faculty member be added to the APC membership. He noted that the APC is defined in the UNL Bylaws which means that several other bodies besides the Faculty Senate, such as ASUN and ultimately the Board of Regents, need to approve the change. He pointed out that the membership would increase to 19 members. Professor Weissling, Special Education and Communication Disorders, asked for clarification on whether the number of members would be 19 or 18. President Bender stated that there has been some debate regarding the language in the proposed revisions regarding the membership reverting to 18 if no qualified non-tenure track nominee is available to serve.

Professor Lee, Communications Studies, pointed out that the Faculty Senate President can appoint a Senate designee to the APC and this person could be a non-tenure track faculty member. He noted that there are several upper level administrators on the APC and his experience is that during difficult times, such as the budget cuts, arguments can be significant. A non-tenure track faculty member on a contract might work under one of the administrators which could put the faculty member in a difficult position.

Professor Stevenson, English, asked if only Professors of Practice would qualify for serving on the APC. President Bender stated that the position would be open to any of the non-tenure track positions (Professors of Practice, Lecturers, Extension Educators, or Research Professors) but they have to be elected by the faculty.

Professor Weissling asked if there is any concern about the upper administration approving the proposed change to the APC. President Bender stated that he did not know of any concerns at the present time, although previous proposed changes have met with resistance. Professor Stevenson thinks that the more we have non-tenure track faculty voices on committees the more these faculty members will become accepted as faculty members. Professor Lee pointed out that there could be real issues of conflict on the committee and the potential would be there for non-tenure track faculty members to feel very insecure. Professor Ladunga, Statistics, pointed out that we want to have a role for the Faculty Senate in the management of the university and in order to do this there needs to be participation from all faculty ranks, including the non-tenure track faculty members. Otherwise there is not a true representation of the faculty. Professor Guevara, Modern Languages & Literature, noted that the argument is not against non-tenure track faculty members but having a strong committee. He pointed out that the APC is a very aggressive committee that deals with very important issues on campus and members of the Committee should not feel vulnerable. Past President Nickerson stated that the same consideration can be made when there are tenure track faculty members on the APC.

Professor Shea, School of Natural Resources, noted that he currently serves on the APC. He reported that the composition of the Committee has certainly come up before and it is still a concern for some. He noted that some administrators have expressed concern over the appropriate balance between the faculty and the administrators on the Committee. He stated that it is essential for the APC to have a strong voice and members need to speak up and challenge the administration, but not everyone is in a position to do that. He stated that he has larger concerns regarding the APC. He pointed out that the APC is the only other committee that the faculty have a significant voice on other than the Senate, yet it is still just an advisory committee and doesn't have any actual authority, although the administration typically wants the support of the APC and the Senate. He stated that the APC does very little planning and instead typically has to respond to proposals put forward by administrators in a short time frame. He stated that his point is that even in the APC faculty members have a very limited role and he thinks the Senate should talk about how the faculty can be more engaged and how this can be achieved.

President-Elect Woodman pointed out that over one-third of the faculty are non-tenured faculty members and the issues has always been about having the opportunity to provide the non-tenure track faculty members with a voice and including them on the APC would give them this opportunity.

9.0 Presentation of the Louise Pound-George Howard Distinguished Career Award to Professor Lloyd Ambrosius, History; Professor, and Professor Patricia Crews, Textiles, Merchandising, and Fashion Design

President Bender presented the award to Professor Ambrosius and Professor Crews.

10.0 Presentation of the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award to Professor Patrick Jones, History
President Bender presented the James A. Lake Award to Professor Jones.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:17 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, September 1, 2015, at 2:30 p.m. in the City Campus Union, Auditorium. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Allison Reisbig, Secretary.