

UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
East Campus Union, Arbor Suite
April 7, 2015
Presidents Nickerson, Bender, and Guevara Presiding

1.0 Call to Order

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

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Executive Committee Member Needed

President Nickerson reported that one more candidate is needed for election to the Executive Committee. He encouraged Senators to run for election as the Executive Committee will have some involvement with the search for a new Chancellor and the SVCAA. He asked that anyone interested should contact either himself or a current member of the Executive Committee or the Senate Office.

2.2 Upcoming Items for the Senate

President Nickerson reported that the Chancellor recently requested that the Senate consider and approve a change to the UNL Bylaws pertaining to the elevation of the Chief Information Officer position to that of Vice Chancellor of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer. He stated that the Executive Committee will review the request and hopes to present it to the Senate at the April 28 meeting.

President Nickerson reported that a motion from the Academic Planning Committee to include a non-tenure track faculty member on the Committee will be considered by the Executive Committee and should also be presented to the Senate at the April 28 meeting.

2.3 April 28 Senate Meeting

President Nickerson reported that the April 28 Senate meeting has been moved from City Campus to the East Campus, Great Plains Room. The reason for the move is due to room availability.

2.4 Recognition of Outgoing Senators

President Nickerson stated that for some Senators this was their last meeting. He wanted to express his appreciation for the service of these individuals and to acknowledge them. They are: Professor Krug, Architecture; Professor Curry, History; Professor Subramanian, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering; Professors Foley and Reimer, Glenn Korff School of Music; Professor Purdum, Animal Science; Professor Kiambi, College of Journalism & Mass Communications; Professors Bradford and Schutz, College of Law; Professor Hay, Southeast Research & Extension Center; and Professor Anaya, University Libraries.

Faculty members re-elected to another term on the Senate are: Professor Dahab, Civil Engineering; Professor Foss, Mathematics; Professor Weissling, Special Education & Communication Disorders; Professor Grosskopf, Durham School of Architectural Engineering and Construction; and Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics.

3.0 Presentation of the Louise Pound-George Howard Distinguished Career Award to Emeritus Professor James Specht

President Nickerson reported that the Pound-Howard Distinguished Career Award is a Faculty Senate award to honor outstanding individual(s) whose entire career has been a real credit to the university, whether it is through teaching, research, service, or a combination of these three. He noted that it is one of the most distinguished awards and each year nominations are received from across the campus. This year in particular there was a large number of nominations, but three individuals rose to the top and were selected by the Honorary Degrees Committee and then approved by the Faculty Senate. He reported that two of the award recipients will be presented with the award at the April 28 meeting.

President Nickerson stated that the third individual, Emeritus Professor James Specht, will be presented with the award today. He pointed out that Professor Specht is considered one of the best in his field in soybean genetics and genomics, physiology, and crop production. He noted that throughout Professor Specht's career he has been a good university citizen participating on many committees. The award was then presented to Emeritus Professor Specht.

Professor Specht wanted to thank the Senate for the award and stated that he enjoyed working in the trenches of the university doing committee work and in serving the faculty. He also wanted to thank those that wrote letters of recommendations to support his nomination and stated that it has been a great ride, and while he retired last year, he hopes to continue to serve the university in any way that he can.

4.0 Vice Chancellor Paul

VC Paul stated that the faculty do all of the work in moving UNL forward in terms of research even though the environment for funding, particularly federal funding, is challenging and the competition for these funds is intense. As a result, we have to have our best ideas and proposals and even a small typo can ruin our chances of obtaining funding. VC Paul stated that in spite of the intense competition and limited funding opportunities, he thinks faculty are still doing a great job and the young faculty members being hired are very good.

VC Paul reported that Chancellor Perlman has set three goals: to increase our total research expenditures to \$300 million total; to increase our federal research expenditures to \$150 million; and to double our memberships and recognitions in national honorary societies. He stated that an additional goal is to increase the number of faculty members working with private sector partners to translate research into innovation and jobs.

VC Paul reported that our total research funding since 2000 has been steadily increasing and includes funds from not only the state, but from outside as well. He noted that there was a dip in funding in 2013 but since then the awards have stabilized and started to improve. He pointed out that this did not just happen to us, but to other universities as well and was a national trend. The important thing is that we are at least now moving in the right direction.

VC Paul wanted to share a few successes that our faculty have enjoyed. He noted that UNL has been trying to get AAALAC accreditation and after 15 years we have attained it. He pointed out that the accreditation pertains to animal care and is important for federal funding. He reported that Professor Zemleni, Nutrition and Health Sciences, is a principal investigator on an \$11.3 million NIH grant involving the Nebraska Center for Research on Obesity-Related Diseases. He stated that faculty leadership is absolutely critical in obtaining these kinds of grants.

VC Paul reported that UNL won a \$300,000 National Science Foundation grant to establish a new Central Plains Research Data Center (RDC) through the efforts of Professor Belli, Psychology, who is the principal investigator on the grant. The RDC will be in a partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau's Center for Economic Studies and is the region's only such center and only one of 19 nationwide. Previously, UNL faculty members would have to travel to Atlanta or California to get access to the data which is needed by social scientists. He pointed out that the Center requires a secured space which will be located in the Whittier Building and Professor Anderson, Economics, will be the Executive Director of the RDC. He reported that UNMC, the University of Iowa, and the University of South Dakota will be part of the regional consortium supporting the Center. He noted that there will be a sub-site of the Center at Iowa State University but UNL will be in charge of it.

VC Paul reported that another area that UNL is trying to get more involved in is minority health. He stated that Professor Dombrowski, Sociology, is the principal investigator on a grant to look at minority health disparities. He noted that the proposal was awarded \$3.3 million from NIH, but the entire grant totals \$5 million and is a USDA grant. He stated that there is another research consortium with the University of Illinois that received a \$100 million grant from the Department of Defense. He noted that we are one of the few universities partnering with the University of Illinois on this grant.

VC Paul reported that Professor Heitman, Anthropology, recently received a \$300,000 grant to digitize the Salmon Pueblo Archeological Research Collection. He pointed out that the digital humanities is doing well in terms of receiving grant funding.

VC Paul stated that with the environment being so tough for funding, there have been brainstorming sessions to see how we could do things differently to acquire more funding. He stated that he has been working with the Research Advisory Board to develop a Revision Award. If a proposal is borderline because it needs additional data to get a review his office will work with the faculty member to get some seed money. He noted that this is an experiment that began last year and applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

VC Paul reported that NIH funding is very important for our portfolio, but unfortunately, our funding has been decreasing. He stated that one of the challenges is to make sure that faculty members submit their proposals

well ahead of the deadline dates to make sure everything is in order. He noted that some researchers are working on their proposals a year in advance. He stated that this allows for the researchers to have their proposals critiqued by other faculty members and support can be provided for preliminary research or to get data to develop strong NIH R01 proposals. He reported that there were 14 submissions of this type to his office and 9 awards of \$50,000 each have been given.

VC Paul stated that the basic idea in his office is to help faculty members with their research efforts. He stated that the Big Ideas Grants grew out of discussions from a 2014 interdisciplinary retreat. The idea is to position interdisciplinary faculty teams to compete for major grants of \$3 million and more. He reported that planning grants of \$10,000 were given to nine different teams and one accelerator grant of \$100,000 was awarded.

VC Paul reported that SVCAA Weissinger, VC Green, and he have invested in a Coordinator position who will work with department chairs to help get faculty honors and awards recognizing their accomplishments. He stated that Jerry Doyle, was hired in July as the National Recognition and Awards Coordinator. He noted that this is a great initiative that will hopefully result in more of our faculty receiving national recognition and honors.

VC Paul stated that instrumentation has to be cutting edge for faculty members to be able to compete for grants and a task force was formed to get faculty feedback about what equipment and facilities are needed. As a result of the task force's effort his office has been able to make a case to department chairs and deans to contribute some funds to help get needed equipment and facilities and he was then able to get Varner Hall to contribute additional funds. He noted that \$4 million has been used to purchase new equipment and facilities to help the College of Engineering attract new faculty members. He reported that the Behlen Laboratories has had one floor converted into a core facility for laser research under Professor Umstadter which is now available for faculty members to use.

VC Paul reported that UNL is trying to get a closer relationship with STRATCOMM. He stated that we are in the final stages of hiring a person who will serve in a dual position as Director of NU's National Strategic Research Institute (NSRI) and UNL's Director of NSRI. He noted that STRATCOMM is an area that we have invested in and we are now seeking funding from. He noted that there are a lot of faculty members who can help the Department of Defense, but he admitted that working with the DOD requires numerous contracts.

VC Paul pointed out that anyone who has driven by Nebraska Innovation Campus (NIC) has seen a lot of activity and progress. He stated that there should be announcements coming out soon about further developments. He noted that NIC is exciting for UNL and the surrounding areas and we have been intentionally trying to increase relationships with private sectors. He stated that any faculty member who has a need for working with the private sector should call Ryan Anderson, Director of Industry Relations, to get assistance.

VC Paul reported that we recently hosted a visit by UNMC Chancellor Gold which was very successful and there is now a desire to increase the work between UNMC and UNL. He stated that on April 20th there will be an announcement about the Social Behavioral Sciences Research Initiative and what we plan to do in this area. He noted that we are looking at enhancing funding which is critical for many of our societal challenges. President Nickerson stated that he is delighted to see more collaborative efforts with UNMC and he noted also that the Whittier Building has been renovated and is now being used effectively.

Professor Neal, Art & Art History, asked what VC Paul sees in the future for funding the humanities and visual arts. VC Paul reported that several years ago his office stated working with the colleges about this issue, and recently there has been a renewed conversation with Dean Francisco about whether there are opportunities for funding in this sector. He stated that in the next 12 months there will be some very visible things happening in the arts and humanities. He pointed out that we have been very successful in the digital humanities area. He believes the humanities are absolutely critical and important and noted that these disciplines make up a large component of the College of Arts and Sciences. He stated that he has plans to have further discussions with Dean Francisco to discuss the issue further.

Professor Vakilzadian, Electrical Engineering, asked if Chancellor Perlman's announcement that he will be stepping down at the end of the next academic year will impact on our research. VC Paul noted that each Chancellor has their own goals, but he thinks that UNL has come a long way and he is proud to say that the culture of collaboration that has developed will assist the campus in moving forward.

President Nickerson noted that while he is in favor of getting more funding from the private sector, there is faculty concern about the funding arrangements. He asked if policies were yet in place regarding who would get patent rights and receive revenue, the faculty member or the private company. He asked whether a graduate student working on a project would be able to publish his/her data and, assuming so, how long a delay might they expect while the industrial partner was seeking IP protection. VC Paul noted that this is an area of increasing complexity and issues continue to rise with it. He reported that we have a very good faculty conflict of interest committee and policy in place which was created in partnership with the Faculty Senate. He pointed out that our research agreement with private industries is that we do not give up our rights to publish unless it is classified research. He stated that generally industry wants to get protection, but we need to make sure the principal investigator is protected as well. President Nickerson asked if the university has a point person that works with industry. VC Paul reported that either Ryan Anderson or Brad Roth, Associate Vice Chancellor of Tech Development with NUTech can be of assistance.

VC Paul thanked the Senate for the opportunity to present and discuss research efforts.

5.0 Approval of March 3, 2015 Minutes

Professor Purcell, Southeast Research and Extension Center, made a motion to revise the minutes which was seconded by Professor Anaya, University Libraries. The motion was approved with three abstentions.

6.0 Committee Reports

6.1 Information Technologies and Services Committee (Professor Woodman)

Professor Woodman reported that the responsibility of the ITSC is to review all policies and proposals and develop and assess campus-wide information technology strategies. He noted that the Committee works closely with CIO Askren who serves as an ex-officio, non-voting member. He stated that the members of the ITSC are quite well divided and represent a broad diversity of the campus, including faculty members from the Libraries and those that teach large classes.

Professor Woodman stated that one of the goals of the ITSC is to make sure faculty members are protected. He cited the KACE program as an example of the Committee working to ensure faculty protection. He noted the program, which was automatically installed on some computers, surrendered faculty administrative approval on the computers which created numerous problems for faculty members. As a result the ITSC worked to have the program removed and made sure that KACE or its successor was an opt-in program only.

Professor Woodman reported that this year the campus has been confronted with some new issues. One of these pertains to whether Blackboard should be renewed or replaced. He stated that last spring a presentation was organized demonstrating three providers of learning management systems. The providers were Blackboard, Desire to Learn, and Canvas. Faculty and staff were invited to the presentations. He noted that compared to Canvas and Desire to Learn, Blackboard seemed to be outdated. The ITSC took this into consideration and conducted a more significant investigation into the three programs. A RIF was issued and the companies were invited to give more formal presentations which were evaluated by the members of the ITSC and representatives from UNO, UNMC, and UNK looked at the programs. He pointed out that Canvas and Desire to Learn were far ahead of Blackboard.

Professor Woodman reported that in the meantime a startup company called UNIZEN began with four universities developing a replacement system for big publishers. It began as a consortium and members were invited, most of them from the Big Ten. He stated that UNL is seriously considering this opportunity. UNIZEN would allow us as members to control the content, data, and essential infrastructure that enables digital learning on the campus and beyond. A requirement is that the Canvas learning management system would need to be used. He stated that the cost of membership is \$1 million over three years and there is a six year membership. He pointed out that a benefit of belonging to UNIZEN is that the university can share instructional content. He stated that the ITSC will be meeting to develop a strategy.

Professor Woodman stated that a pilot study will be conducted during the summer to test Canvas. He noted that other universities have successfully transitioned from Blackboard to Canvas with few difficulties. He noted that ultimately there would be a 2-3 year transition process with some faculty members still being on Blackboard for a brief time. He pointed out that Canvas is much more user friendly.

Professor Woodman reported that ITSC was informed about the decommissioning of the UNL Drop Box and faculty and staff have been advised. He stated that if anyone is not having their needs met with the current storage program they should contact Information Technologies Services.

Professor Woodman stated that the ITSC was also informed of a preliminary analysis of the Echo360 Lecture capture system. He noted that the program has the ability to do live webcast lectures. He stated that students like the system.

President Nickerson reported that the Chancellor is seeking to elevate the CIO position to Vice Chancellor status and asked if the ITSC discussed this issue. Professor Woodman stated that the Committee discussed this extensively at its last meeting and felt overwhelmingly that the change is desirable. He pointed out that information is more than just connecting to the internet. Strategies need to be developed and the head of Information Technology should be more than just a member of the Chancellor's staff. He stated that the ITSC is recommending to the Senate Executive Committee that there are no objections to the change in position.

Professor Woodman stated that one of the primary goals of the ITSC next year is to participate in conducting a potential pilot of Canvas. Professor Subbiah, Food, Science & Technology, noted that the mobile aspect of Blackboard is bad and asked if the mobile aspect of Canvas is better. Professor Woodman reported that Canvas' mobile capability is much better.

Professor Vakalzadian stated that he has asked students to do their homework through Blackboard but it is very difficult to use, to the point that he went back to providing hard copies of the homework assignments. Professor Woodman agreed and said that Blackboard is cumbersome in its ability to do these kinds of things. Professor Vakalzadian stated that he was unable to write comments on the students work. Professor Woodman stated that it can be done online but is difficult.

Professor Adams, Plant Pathology, reported that there have been problems with Adobe Connect although it was fine last year. He stated that he has heard that it is a funding issue with the university not wanting to pay for its use but he would like to know whether this is really the problem. Professor Woodman stated that this was the first time he has heard of this problem but he will contact CIO Askren about it. He pointed out that CIO Askren has been excellent in providing quick responses.

6.2 Executive Committee Report

President Nickerson noted that the report in the Senate packet summarizes the list of topics discussed by the Executive Committee over the past year. Professor Vakalzadian asked if there was an easier way to search for specific items in the Executive Committee minutes. President Nickerson pointed out that the topics of discussion are titled in the minutes. Professor Anaya suggested that the Executive Committee minutes can be put into the digital commons which are searchable. Secretary Wsocki noted that the minutes are put into a PDF file which can easily be searched through Google.

7.0 Academic Freedom Award Ballot

President Nickerson stated that the Academic Freedom Award Committee has put forward a nomination for the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award. He asked the Senate to vote on the ballots provided. If approved, the award will be given to the recipient at the April 28 Senate meeting.

8.0 Unfinished Business

8.1 Open Mic Session – Academic Freedom and How to Defend It

President Nickerson noted that last month's meeting ended before the issue of academic freedom was finished. He asked if there was any further comments on the topic.

Professor Grange, Theater Arts, noted that the theater and film industry has had a long history of running afoul of people's sensitivities but in education there has always been a green light for free speech. However, he believes that this freedom is under threat because of concerns for other people's feelings. He stated that the first amendment guarantees us all the right to be offended. He stated that the freedom of speech must be inviolate, regardless of whether someone is offended. He believes that no one has the right to tell another person to shut up, yet it happens all of the time. He stated that people have been told that some words shouldn't be used because they are just too offensive because there is this belief that everyone should feel good. He pointed out that if students are allowed to graduate feeling good, something is wrong. He stated that if we are teaching adults we should not be so bound up that we ignore the first amendment and should be able to present controversial issues even if they are offensive. He stated that no one has the authority to say what is right or wrong when a person speaks. He stated that it is perfectly normal that people would examine bodies of thoughts in a classroom and yet come to different conclusions. He stated that he was stunned, almost speechless, by the Academic Freedom Award ballot that was presented because it affirms the idea of saying that people cannot say something that could be racially insensitive.

Professor Lee, Communication Studies, stated that concepts can be used to teach, but words cannot be used as a threat to anyone. He pointed out that offensive words should not be trivialized because some of these terms have hundreds of years of oppression behind them and it is not just about feelings, there is a real power in how these words are used. He asked if classrooms and workplaces are supposed to be safe places for people. Professor Ladunga, Statistics, pointed out that people say words without caring about the consequences which can then create a downward spiral in communication. Professor Grange noted that those in authority want to shut people up.

President Nickerson stated that one of the Executive Committee's interest in revising the Professional Ethics Statement is because of the call for the removal of a tenured faculty member from the University of Kansas because the faculty member criticized the NRA. He stated that there needs to be some judgement on how far we want to go on protecting faculty members.

Professor Steffen, Veterinary & Biomedical Sciences, stated that he is currently reading a book which says that freedom of speech is being threatened by political correctness. He stated that he believes in not using terms as a weapon, but if someone wants to use a term that is inflammatory then people have the freedom to do that, although using certain terms may not be the best choice of words.

Past President Guevara stated that a faculty member is not an effective teacher if the students in class are too afraid to speak. He noted that there can be difficulty for those teaching history or culture because of some of the issues that need to be addressed. He stated that he has concerns for our freedoms to teach, but questioned the use of unnecessary terminology that could be avoided. President Elect Bender noted that the history of lynching and how it has affected race relations can be very offensive to some people.

Past President Guevara pointed out that young students are easily intimidated and he believes that in class instructors should not use offensive terminology. Professor Stevenson, English, agreed and stated that it is a matter of pedagogy. She stated that it is not just about students' feeling sensitive, it is about creating an environment that is not conducive to learning. Professor Stoltenberg, Psychology, pointed out that using certain terminology does not always have to be hostile, but discussing controversial issues can engage people into discussions. Professor Grange stated that he thinks the idea of students being so intimidated is a kind of red herring to get people to shut up. Professor Neal pointed out that certain words can trigger strong emotions in people, yet in some classes controversial topics may be appropriate. Professor Grange stated that freedom of speech is freedom of speech.

Professor Woldt asked if freedom of speech were to continue on into the future, what might be the implications. Professor Grange suggested looking at the Greeks and the results of the Golden Age of Greece. He stated that where there is no limit on freedom of speech the choice is crystal clear.

Professor Stevenson stated that freedom of speech is more or a luxury of people who are tenured. She pointed out that teaching evaluations are crucial for non-tenure track teaching faculty members being reappointed. President Elect Bender stated that this is a very good point and pointed out that there needs to be another mechanism for evaluating teaching other than student evaluations.

Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics, pointed out that if Professor Moshman, who has written numerous articles on academic freedom, were at the meeting he would point out that academic freedom and freedom of speech are not identical. He stated that we all have freedom of speech, but the reason for tenure is that it protects academic freedom. He noted that the non-tenure track faculty members are more vulnerable and this was highlighted recently with two Extension Educators being asked to resign from Boards that they served on outside of the university because a political figure had objections to someone these boards wanted to bring to Nebraska to speak. He noted that in a previous Senate meeting a document was being drafted to address Extension Educators serving on boards of outside organizations. President Nickerson reported that the document is being redrafted. Professor Peterson stated that the draft document that was presented to the Senate was really a collection of university policies, but the problem was that it interpreted these policies. He noted that a faculty member's primary responsibility is to provide unbiased, researched information, but there should not be a conflict of an employee's time when serving on an outside board. President Nickerson noted that faculty members are limited to two days per month when they can provide consulting services.

Professor Peterson stated that he teaches a course on agricultural policies and some might be able to make an argument for animal rights, but who decides whether this opinion is a conflict of interest with the university. He believes that a lot of things we hear from IANR are biased towards the agricultural businesses of the state. He stated that the conflict of language and the conflict of ideas are important issues that needs to be

considered.

President Nickerson stated that academic freedom and freedom of speech probably need to be defined more clearly. Professor Peterson noted that academic freedom should be about faculty members being able to freely conduct work in their discipline. Professor Woodman suggested that language should be inserted into the Bylaws that academic freedom pertains to both non-tenure and tenure track faculty members.

Professor Steffen noted that the two Extension Educators did not want to raise the issue that they were asked to resign from these boards, but there is not a good mechanism in place for protecting Extension Educators. He stated that these people were denied the academic freedom to even participate in the discussions about the issue. President Nickerson stated that the idea of having a guideline for Extension Educators is to protect these faculty members and the dean if they are being threatened by political outsiders. Professor Steffen stated that the reason why he revised the proposed document was to protect the faculty members. If they had prior approval, they would be given protection. Professor Peterson noted that this was a peculiar sort of situation and IANR has very vocal constituents which makes Extension Educators more vulnerable.

Professor Peterson pointed out that if a faculty member feels that their academic freedom has been violated they can file a complaint with the Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee. While this Committee does not have the power to enforce the decision that it makes, a hearing is held, a recommendation is made to the Chancellor, and after that it goes to the Board of Regents, and he has witnessed the Board overturning the decision of the Chancellor and siding with the ARRC's decision.

Professor Adams noted that this specific case involved sustainability boards. He stated that we need to get the message to the President and the Deans that we educate students from other states and around the world and some of the brightest and most successful students from other countries where sustainability is important come here to learn from us. As a result, Legislators need to understand that faculty members need to teach beyond what is just done here in the State of Nebraska and should not be pressured by Chancellors, Deans or Legislators to address our views differently.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, April 28, 2015, at 2:30 p.m. in the East Campus Union, Great Plains Rom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Tad Wysocki, Secretary.