

UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
City Campus Union, Auditorium
February 7, 2017
Presidents Woodman, Purcell, and Bender Presiding

1.0 Call to Order

President Woodman called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Resolution on Travel Ban

President Woodman reported that many of the Big Ten schools are passing resolutions against the immigration ban and the Executive Committee will be discussing a resolution being proposed by Northwestern University. He noted that the issue is becoming increasingly more relevant to academic issues and if the Executive Committee should write a resolution he will email it to the Senate for consideration.

3.0 Chancellor Green

Chancellor Green wanted to first report on the budget deliberations. He noted that President Bounds recently spoke to the faculty and the staff in separate Town Hall meetings laying out in granular detail the challenge of the budget situation. He pointed out that President Bounds spoke in greater detail about the implications of the budget cuts beyond what it looks like in the state budget. He stated that a major problem with the budget cut is that over 80% of our state appropriations are salaries of faculty and staff and we cannot move funds from most other parts of our budget to cover any shortfall in the state appropriation. He stated that if the Governor's proposal was to be enacted the University system would have a budget deficit of \$58 million for the next biennium, assuming that UNL and UNMC would get the same raises that UNO and UNK will be getting from their collective bargaining. He pointed out that another factor in the budget deficit is the 10% predicted increase in health care costs in each of the next two years. He noted that the \$58 million deficit is before any change in tuition. He reported that President Bounds did speak about how a tuition increase would impact the budget cuts, but even if the tuition was raised by 7% the University would still have a large deficit and raising tuition could have a negative impact on student enrollment. He noted that the University has been articulating this to the Legislature and the Governor to show the clarity of the problem and the true impacts the cuts would have on the University.

Chancellor Green reported that he, EVC Plowman, and VC of IANR Boehm have traveled to 11 different communities in the state to talk about what we are doing at the University, what our trajectory is, and what economic impacts the University has on the state. He noted there are plans to visit western Nebraska and the Sandhills and the goal is to hit all the legislative districts in the state. He pointed out that a recurring question that the people in the communities are asking is what the budget cuts will do to the University.

Chancellor Green stated that the next step in the formal budget process is the University's Appropriations Committee hearing on February 27, but first the Legislature will finalize the budget cuts for this current fiscal year and will send it to the Governor for his signature. He pointed out that the cut to the University's budget for this year is approximately \$13 million, with the allocation of this cut to be determined by President Bounds. In past budgeting cycles, UNL would be responsible for approximately half of the cut as we received approximately half of the state appropriations. He noted that the University has been dealing with these cuts over the past few months with the hiring freeze, travel restrictions, and purchasing restrictions and these will allow us to get through this year without any permanent cuts to the budget.

Chancellor Green wanted to provide an update on the hiring freeze. He stated that 83 positions were sent to President Bounds in January for consideration and 76 of the positions have been exempted from the freeze. He pointed out that most of these positions were faculty lines. He noted that in December, a total of 57 positions were exempted from the freeze. At this point, this leaves about 250 positions that are still open. He stated that he will keep the Senate apprised of the budget situation as the process moves forward.

Chancellor Green stated that the University has been dealing with and following the recent Executive Order from the President on immigration. He noted that the University has issued a statement about it and we have a strong desire for the Order to be reversed. He reported that the University's position is that we have a large number of affected students who were here on vetted visas and we do not want the progression of their education program to be interrupted, or for other students to be able to come here. He pointed out that we are

supporting our students that are caught in the flux of the Executive Order. He noted that 146 students are at the University from the seven banned countries, and 104 of these students are here at UNL.

Professor Adenwalla, Physics & Astronomy, asked what the mood is around that state towards the University. Chancellor Green reported that the mood is very positive about where the University is headed and the people have a great deal of pride in the University. He stated that people are concerned with how the University will deal with the budget cuts because they remember how the budget cuts in 2003-2005 set the University back in significant ways, both programmatically and in enrollment. He pointed out that it took years for the enrollment to recover from the almost 40% increased tuition rates during this period.

Professor Nickerson, School of Biological Sciences, noted that in the 2003 budget cuts programs were discontinued in out-state Nebraska and the people of the areas affected spoke extensively to the Academic Planning Committee voicing their strong concerns. Chancellor Green stated that he is aware that the Southeast Research & Extension Center in Clay Center and the veterinary diagnostic labs in North Platte and Scottsbluff were closed during that time and there are still very vivid memories for the people of the state, particularly when the budget cuts hit close to home. However, he noted that tuition increases and accumulated student debt seems to be of concern as well.

Professor Ladunga, Statistics, pointed out that the University needs to have a more flexible budgeting system which could help when there are budget cuts. Chancellor Green pointed out that some of the funds must remain where they are specified. For instance President Bounds mentioned housing in his town hall meetings. Every dollar that goes to housing must stay there because the bonds that are used to fund the building of the dorms are based on the future income of the facility as collateral. He pointed out that most of the funds are very legally defined. For example, federal dollars cannot be taken out of federal contracts. He reported that there is some flexibility in a few areas, but these funds are already being used to help us deal with our budget.

Chancellor Green noted that Athletics is a big source of revenue for Nebraska and brings in well over \$100 million a year in revenue. He pointed out that Athletics is self-supporting and the campus does receive significant revenue from athletics already as all scholarship athletes are supported with full cost of attendance and revenues are assessed a 5% overhead. In total, this results in over \$20 million of athletics revenue going directly to support University academic programs. He noted that we are relatively unique in being able to do that because very few universities in the NCAA are in such a position. He stated that the administration is looking at all available dollars to help with the budget.

Professor Billesbach, Biological Systems Engineering, noted that there was a recent announcement about construction of new buildings at Nebraska Innovation Campus (NIC). He asked if maintaining these buildings will be the University's responsibility and will this have an impact on our budget. Chancellor Green reported that there is separate funding for NIC. The building is being constructed by a private firm and they will own and operate it and pay for the cost of the infrastructure, although there is a ground lease that they will pay to the University. The building will be leased out to tenants, but there is no planned University presence in the building at this time.

Professor Weissling, Special Education and Communication Disorders, stated that there did not seem to be much notice about the Town Hall meetings with President Bounds and asked if there was a mechanism that could be used to better notify the campus. Chancellor Green noted that the Town Hall meetings he is having are regularly scheduled. He reported that President Bounds felt that he needed to go to each of the campuses quickly to speak about the budget and it was publicized two weeks prior to the Town Hall meeting in Nebraska Today.

Professor Lee, Communication Studies, noted that Athletics will be getting a large amount of money this year for being a full member of the Big Ten. He pointed out that some universities are thinking about taking some of the money from Athletics to help with the budget and he asked if this is being considered here. Chancellor Green stated that our revenue from being a full member in the Big Ten will increase significantly. In addition, the Big Ten is negotiating new television contracts which will further increase the revenue distribution to the members of the conference. He reported that the Council of Presidents and Chancellors in the Big Ten has been having considerable discussion about the increased revenue for Athletics, and some members of the Council are considering using some of the money for academic programs. He pointed out that it really varies by the university and whether their Athletics department has a balanced budget or a deficit. Most of the members of the conference are not currently "in the black" as Nebraska is fortunate to be.

President Woodman stated that the current climate in the country affects all international students, not just those from the countries that have been banned by the President. Chancellor Green stated that this issue is being discussed across the board at the University. He reported that international students have been sent messages to try and calm and reassure them regarding their concerns.

4.0 Approval of January 10, 2017 Minutes

Professor Joeckel, School of Natural Resources, moved for approval of the minutes. Motion seconded by Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics.

5.0 Committee Reports

5.1 Honorary Degrees Committee

President Woodman noted that Professor Wolfe, Chair of the Honorary Degrees Committee was unable to attend the meeting and suggested that anyone with questions should contact Professor Wolfe (jwolfe4@unl.edu).

6.0 Louise Pound-George Howard Award

President Woodman stated that the Honorary Degrees Committee was putting forth two candidates for the Pound-Howard Award and asked that the Senate vote on the candidates. He asked the Senate to keep the names of the candidates confidential until they are notified of the results of the election.

7.0 Unfinished Business

7.1 Motion to Approve Proposed Changes to UNL Bylaws

President Woodman reported that some amendments were being proposed to the revisions to the UNL Bylaws. He noted that some of the amendments are basic housecleaning to reflect current positions, but there has been a slight change in the cumulative performance review section, the UNL Assembly Composition, the districting report to the Faculty Senate, and changes to the Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee.

Professor Shea, School of Natural Resources, moved to postpone the action to vote on the proposed revisions to the UNL Bylaws until the next meeting to allow Senators the time to share the amendments with their colleagues. Professor Adenwalla seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

8.0 New Business

8.1 Proposed Changes to UNL Syllabus Policy

President Woodman reported that a motion was being put forward by the Executive Committee to revise the UNL Syllabus Policy. He stated that it was pointed out by the Higher Learning Commission during our recent reaccreditation that our syllabus policy did not include information about an academic honesty policy. He stated that the Executive Committee suggested also including language to provide information for students with disabilities.

Professor Billesbach noted that the Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Honesty discussed whether the syllabus policy should include the academic honesty policy. However, it was felt that a course syllabus could become so lengthy that students would not read it. The Committee instead wondered if there would be a better mechanism to get the message out. President Woodman suggested that there could be a webpage with links to the various campus policies that pertain to students.

Professor Adenwalla asked if instructors were required to include all of the information listed in the syllabus policy. Professor Dussault, Chemistry, pointed out that according to the Regents Bylaws (section 4.1 (f)) instructors only have to inform students concerning the requirements, standards, objectives, and evaluation procedures at the beginning of a course. Professor Stewart, Art, Art History, and Design, noted that some departments and colleges have their own course syllabus policy. She suggested that instructors could reference the unit policy in their course syllabus and also reference the Senate policy. Professor Shea pointed out that it would be helpful if we had a uniform policy which could allow people to customize their syllabus.

Professor Shea stated that he thought all instructors were required to include certain wording in a course syllabus. President Woodman stated that the Senate policy has certain elements that are required. He suggested that the Student code of Conduct should be referred to generically, but he does not think there is any real enforcement of what has to be on a syllabus. He pointed out that violations of the policy should not be the basis for any grade appeal. He noted that the policy is not really enforceable, but the Higher Learning Committee thought that it was important that reference to the academic honesty policy be included.

President Woodman stated that the motion will be voted on at the March meeting.

8.2 Ballot for Elections to the Academic Planning committee, Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee, and the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Panel

President Woodman stated that the Executive Committee was making a motion to approve the ballot for election to the Academic Planning Committee, Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee, and the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Panel. He stated that the motion will be voted on at the March meeting.

8.3 Faculty Senate Redistricting Report

President Woodman stated that the redistricting report reviews the number of faculty members in departments to ensure that they have the correct number of representatives on the Senate. He stated that departments can have anywhere from one to three representatives, depending on the size of the unit. He recommended that Senators review the report to make sure the numbers are correct and to contact Coordinator Griffin if there are any concerns.

Professor Hoyt, Sociology, noted that there are a number of research professors that are not affiliated with academic departments and there does not appear to be a mechanism for them to have representation on the Senate. President Woodman stated that the Executive Committee has discussed this issue in the past and it did not think the issues the research professors may have fall under the Senate's purview. Coordinator Griffin noted that the Regents Bylaws states that the governing agency for the faculty deals with matters of interest to more than one college and act on academic matters that affect more than one college. She stated that there needs to be consideration about whether centers fall under this criteria. She pointed out that this is a complex issue and more information about centers and the faculty employed by them should be obtained before the Senate makes a decision.

Professor Shea pointed out that all faculty members should have representation on the Senate. He noted that some of the faculty members have affiliations with an academic unit and suggested that there be some formalized association for research professors not associated with a department, or these faculty members could be associated through one unit.

Professor Wysocki, Electrical & Computer Engineering, asked how many faculty members would be involved. Professor Hoyt stated that it is hard to say because some of them show up in department rosters while some do not. He wondered if there was a way to get them an appropriate department affiliation or an at-large designation.

President Woodman stated that the Executive Committee will visit the issue again.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:31 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, March 7, 2017, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. in the East Campus Union, Arbor Suite. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Sheila Purdum, Secretary.