

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Anaya, Bender, Guevara, LaCost, Reisbig, Rinkevich, Ruchala, Schubert, Woodman, Wysocki, Zoubek

Absent: Nickerson, Purdum

Date: Wednesday, November 7, 2012

Location: Faculty Senate Office

Note: These are not verbatim minutes. They are a summary of the discussions at the Executive Committee meeting as corrected by those participating.

1.0 Call to Order

Schubert called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2.0 Special Assistant to the Chancellor Giesecke

Dr. Giesecke reported that the North Central Higher Learning Commission, which is the accrediting agency for UNL, is changing their procedures in January 2013. She pointed out that the previous self-study accreditation was a multi-year process with numerous committees finalized by a 200 page self-study report but the new process has two components: quality assurance and quality improvement initiative and five criteria now have to be addressed. The criteria are: mission; integrity; academic program – quality, resources, and support; academic program evaluations and improvements; and resources and planning.

She noted that a major shift with the Commission has to do with public accountability and information pertaining to this must be easily accessible. She stated that the Commission is looking at program quality, available resources, support, and learning outcomes. She noted that student retention and graduation rates are also reviewed and we are checked to see if we have strategic plans in place.

Reisbig asked if Dr. Giesecke can elaborate on the programmatic assessments. Dr. Giesecke stated that the Commission looks at whether there are established learning goals in programs and if we have a way to assess the goals and provide feedback on the teaching in the programs in order to improve them. She stated that our current program assessments do not engage in a full-cycle of assessment of learning outcomes. She noted that programs that have plans for their professional agency accreditation can use the same plans for the North Central Higher Learning Commission but we need to find a system that will work for us.

Dr. Giesecke reported that the quality initiative will probably need to be approved by the Commission by the fall of 2013. She stated that the campus will have to pick a quality initiative, probably something that fits with what the campus is already doing, and write it as a proposal. She suggested that the Chancellor's Goal of improving retention rates and

improving student success could be written as a proposal. She pointed out that the quality initiative has the potential for having significant impact on the institution and the academic core. Woodman asked if the Commission is looking for something that can be precisely measured. Dr. Giesecke stated that the Commission is looking for something that we are actively doing to make improvements. Woodman asked if there is a standard we have to aspire to or whether we just need to show improvements. Dr. Giesecke stated that the efforts must show improvements. She noted that one thing the Commission is looking at is degree qualification profiles. This outlines what undergraduates and masters' students should be able to do when they graduate. She pointed out that many of our ACE courses already addresses learning outcomes.

Anaya asked if the process is for each college to produce evidence of improvements which will then be compiled into a report. Dr. Giesecke noted that the self- study process is done by criteria and there should be a summary for the campus, but she does not know how much the college's will play a role. She stated that the hope is to keep the summary work down to a few people. She reported that she is talking to the deans to see what their colleges have to do for their accrediting bodies and if a best practice can be determined and shared with the colleges that would help facilitate the process.

Schubert stated that in view of the recent discussions about the ACE process, is this new required accrediting process meaning that the self-reporting by faculty members about their classes is going to be uniform across campus. Dr. Giesecke stated that she does not know the answer to this question, but she has been talking with Dr. Mitchell and clarifying what kind of sampling needs to be done. She noted that she was at the Senate meeting and heard the complaints of the faculty that providing samples of the work, particularly from courses with numerous sections, is very time consuming. She pointed out that for the first time through doing the ACE assessment and recertification things are working fairly well, but stated that the system needs to be tweaked.

Schubert stated that the bottom line is there will be requirements for more accreditation, and we will see more accreditation processes in place. Dr. Giesecke pointed out that all of the accreditation agencies are putting a lot more emphasis on assessment, as well as the Department of Education. She stated that the hope of the administration is that we can find ways to do assessment that are helpful and not so burdensome. She noted that she will need to come back to speak to the Executive Committee as things progress with accreditation.

Dr. Giesecke reported that she is also working on academic integrity issues. She reminded the Committee that members of ASUN rewrote the Student Code of Conduct last year and she is now working with them to help get their changes incorporated into the existing document. She stated that the academic integrity component of the Student Code of Conduct will be put back into the document. She stated that the hope is to bring the proposed revisions back to the Executive Committee early in the spring semester.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Meeting with Associate Vice Chancellor Goodburn

Griffin reported that the Executive Committee will be meeting with Associate Vice Chancellor Goodburn on December 12 to continue discussion on retention initiatives.

3.2 CIC Faculty Leadership Conference

Guevara reported that he will be attending the CIC Leadership Conference at the end of November and will report back to the Executive Committee on the conference.

3.3 Meeting with Professor Potuto – Faculty Athletic Representative to NCAA

Schubert announced that the Executive Committee will be meeting with Professor Potuto to receive an update on NCAA changes that impact student athletes.

4.0 Approval of 10/31/2012 Minutes

LaCost moved for approval of the minutes as revised. Zoubek seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 AAUP Messages to All Academic Faculty Members

Schubert asked if the Faculty Senate Office should broadcast AAUP messages to all academic faculty members. Woodman asked if AAUP is strictly a tenure protecting organization. He pointed out that more non-tenure track faculty members are being hired and he wondered if the AAUP excludes these people. Bender stated that the AAUP can speak up for untenured faculty members. LaCost stated that one of AAUP's main focuses is to protect academic freedom. Ruchala noted that protecting academic freedom of non-tenure track faculty members is more critical for these faculty members.

Guevara suggested that the Executive Committee should find out if any of the Big Ten universities are unionized. Zoubek suggested that the Committee also find out how far behind the Big Ten schools are in faculty salaries.

Guevara stated that a question that would need to be asked is whether the faculty wants to be unionized. Woodman asked whether the AAUP parallel interests of the Senate. Schubert pointed out that membership into the AAUP is a personal choice, but faculty members are elected by their colleagues to represent them on the Senate. He asked if the AAUP chapter would be kept distinct from the Senate. LaCost stated that at some universities the AAUP acts as the Faculty Senate, but in many other institutions they are two distinct groups. She stated that the AAUP can help provide legal support.

Zoubek asked if there is a UNL policy that an organization cannot send an email out to all faculty members. Griffin stated that an outside organization would more than likely not have access to the all faculty email list. She reported that she was informed last year that she could not send an email message out via the faculty list serve because the administration wanted all news to go through UNL Today. After explaining to Kelly Bartling, News Director that the Faculty Senate has the right to correspond with its constituents, Griffin was given access to an email list of all academic faculty members.

Anaya asked why the AAUP chapter of UNL is no longer active. Bender reported that he and Professors Lewis and Pratt recently discussed this issue. He noted that they believe that participation diminished at UNL due to the inability to automatically deduct membership fees from a member's bank account. Reisbig pointed out that the decline probably happened around the same time that participation in the Faculty Senate started to decline. Bender noted that participation in faculty organizations is happening around the country.

Guevara asked if members of the AAUP have to pay dues. Anaya stated that members do pay dues which are based on the member's salary. She noted that membership can range from \$46 - \$230 a year. Guevara stated that he can understand how some people may perceive the AAUP as being considered a union if members have to pay fees. Ruchala pointed out that AAUP is similar to other professional organizations that provide benefits and requires a fee.

Schubert stated that we need an official clarification of connection between the AAUP in general and the Faculty Senate. Bender moved that a member of the Faculty Senate, if available, be a contact person with the AAUP. Ruchala seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Reisbig suggested that AAUP make a request to have notices of meetings put in UNL Today.

.6.0 New Business

6.1 Review of Senate Meeting

Schubert noted that President Milliken spoke about the budget and it seemed to him that the President was promoting UNL having a bargaining unit. Wysocki agreed and noted that the President made the comment that UNL and UNMC salaries are not determined until UNO and UNK, the two campuses with bargaining units, have agreed on a salary increase package.

Schubert stated that he was glad to hear the President pointed out that each of the four campuses has very different missions and focus. He noted that UNO is a city closed campus and many of its students primarily work and take a few classes. Woodman pointed out that this is beginning to change because UNO is starting to get Ph.D. programs and is building dorms. He stated that UNL and UNO will start having much more overlap. He stated that he worries about the diluting effect with a state that has a small population of high school students. Anaya pointed out that UNO can recruit students from the Council Bluffs area since it is right across the river from Omaha. Zoubek noted that UNO has competition from the South Dakota universities which are recruiting heavily in the Omaha area.

Schubert asked for opinions on the presentation from Todd Jensen and Rick Haugerud from Information Services. Woodman pointed out that there has been no mention about requesting faculty input on computing issues. He reported that Associate Vice

Chancellor Perez will be giving a presentation to the Information Technologies and Services Committee on what computing on campus should look like.

Schubert asked Woodman to write a few lines summarizing what he thought of the IT presentation. He stated that he would like to have the Executive Committee voice concerns that the faculty may have about information that was, or wasn't, presented during the Senate meeting. Anaya suggested getting a copy of the PowerPoint presentation that was made.

Schubert pointed out that there was no mention of a time scale for exploring the use of new equipment or software. He stated that if it takes three years for IS to explore the equipment or software it will be outdated before it is even installed.

6.2 Review of Discussion on ACE Assessment and Recertification

Schubert reported that he asked Director Mitchell to attend the meeting to discuss the comments made at the Senate meeting and to see if solutions can be found to move the assessment and recertification process forward. He noted that he ran into Associate Dean Snow, Arts & Sciences, and discussed what was happening with the Senate and the ACE process. He reported that should the Senate decide to have a summit about the process, Associate Dean Snow offered to attend since he was one of the faculty members who worked on formulating the ACE program. He stated that the goal today is to identify the issues raised in the discussion to see if current procedures could be changed to address the concerns raised during the Senate meeting.

Director Mitchell reported that she used the discussion as a building point to draft some recommendations to the ACE process. She stated that discussions have shown that the value of assessment and recertification is not being communicated well. Guevara agreed and stated that faculty members are being required to do a lot of work but they do not know what the purpose is of the assessment and recertification. Director Mitchell stated that it is important that faculty members realize that there are people looking at the materials that are being collected as evidence. She pointed out that the real value of this process is in the discussions that occur in the department/program about the ACE courses. She stated that department/program and college need to determine what the outcomes of the ACE courses mean to them. This shouldn't be an empty exercise of collecting information to write reports for administrators without thinking about how student learning can be improved by the courses and outcomes.

Director Mitchell stated that she empathizes with the frustrations people are having with the electronic part of the process. She noted that the system that is being used has problems and she has recently had a meeting to see if there is some kind of interface that can be created that would connect the various software components. Schubert pointed out that this is a very complex process that is not going to be fixed quickly.

Schubert noted that the recommendations call for educating the faculty better about the process. Director Mitchell stated that people are confused about assessment and recertification and everyone seems to view it differently. She noted that some

departments want to do just the program assessment, not a course assessment. She stated that recertification requires course-based assessment, and evidence that the course is still meeting the outcomes it was initially identified as providing. She pointed out that the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) is the body that recertifies the courses. She asked if the faculty want to give the power of recertification of courses to the college administrators, which is one suggestion she's heard about streamlining the ACE assessment process. She stated she's heard complaints about recertification reports. Schubert giving the power of recertification to the administrators is counter to what ACE is about. He stated that the UCC needs to review the recertification, not the college.

Guevara stated that what has caught people by surprise is that it is an on-going process. He noted that Professor Peterson pointed out in the Senate meeting that the departments decide how to provide the evidence, but this process needs to be streamlined, particularly for large classes with numerous sections. He asked if you really need a sample from each section of the course that was taught in the past three years. He stated that if the ACE documents are followed correctly, a course that is taught five times a year would require 60 papers as examples. The samples of work would then need to be discussed and a report written. He stated that if people have to read all of these papers it becomes a lot of work for the faculty. He pointed out that it needs to be made clear that all of the examples of work aren't going to be analyzed.

Director Mitchell noted that the faculty of each college voted on the ACE documents and the requirements. ACE Governing Document 4 requires that samples be collected from every course: "Providing the hosting department/unit each semester with a reasonable sample (at least three) of students' products (related to achievement of the appropriate ACE Learning Outcome) and assessments of those products." "A reasonable sample" in current practice does not require that every section of every course must provide the samples. It is expected that the samples will be collected over time and will be sufficient to answer the assessment being investigated by the instructor/department/program. She suggested that instead of needing to provide samples of work from each section that the UCC members have requested that faculty members answer a question in the recertification process assuring them that every section of an ACE course is being taught as such. (These statements can be as simple as this: "A course coordinator works with faculty members teaching the various sections to make sure the courses all include the ACE outcome and appropriating language in the syllabus and that the sections are all aligned with the outcome.) She pointed out that because we are such a varied institution she does not think it is right that every instructor has to or should necessarily collect three samples of work per course. She stated that if the process is going to be meaningful to faculty members, the faculty needs to identify what they want to know related to the outcome and the evidence they collect depends on the questions that are being asked. She reported that Statistics looked at certain questions on tests and did an analysis of the questions across courses.

Guevara stated that people want the process streamlined. He noted that everyone understands what the ACE courses are about and people have no problem with the intent of the courses. He stated that the problem is that too much faculty time is being taken to

upload samples of the work when they don't even know how it is going to be evaluated. He pointed out that reducing the process to a small checklist would be much more helpful. Director Mitchell stated that the UCC ACE subcommittee created the template as simply as they could. Guevara reported that there is discrepancy between what the ACE Governance Document 4 requires and what the template requires.

Schubert asked Guevara to formulate what he means about streamlining the process and to identify what needs to be done. Guevara pointed out that we need to know how to change the governing bylaws. He stated that a simple form would be helpful. He stated that process should be simplified so that multiple-section courses can be treated like they are one section. He pointed out that if the people who designed the courses and submit the evidence are trusted then there shouldn't be a problem. Director Mitchell stated that the idea of clarifying the multiple-section course requirements is a good one.

Ruchala stated that educating the faculty is critical. She noted that in the School of Accountancy they have to go through a separate accreditation and they have to show student achievements from low to high grades. She stated that it is a very helpful exercise, which allows you to reflect and evaluate your teaching in a meaningful way and she thinks this is the intent of the ACE program. She stated that the process is to see that instructors have gone through a reflective process of their teaching. Director Mitchell stated that the ACE process seeks to have instructors consider what improvements to student learning can be made through teaching. She noted that what some departments have learned is the value is in the discussions held about course program improvement, not the collection of data. She reported that in discussions she has had with various people, they have asked that assessment be done over a period of time. She reported that students want to know how courses can be made more like an ACE course. Guevara stated that the complaints that he has received are not about reflecting on your teaching it's the amount of time that is required to gather all of the samples, especially for multi-section courses.

Ruchala noted that what is happening is a cultural change. She stated that in her department there was a lot of complaining for the first two or three years about the process that was required for accreditation, but once the faculty understood it the complaints stopped. She noted that now when the assessment committee reports on the writing samples, faculty members want to see more information collected so they can determine why there is such great variance in the writing skills of students. She pointed out that the assessment process is an evolutionary process and once people get passed the process of filling out the forms, they usually see the benefits of the process. Guevara noted that some departments already do an assessment of their teaching. Reisbig stated that the key issue is that one instructor has to do the majority of the work if he/she teaches an ACE course.

Schubert stated that a major issue nationwide is the value and cost of education. He noted that the price of education, not the value of education, is of major concern to many people and therefore assessment of universities will become more frequent. He stated that reporting on our courses and lectures might be in the future.

Woodman pointed out that the passion that was voiced at the Senate meeting should not be discounted. He noted that for some disciplines providing samples of work is much easier than for other disciplines. He stated that the faculty is frustrated thinking that their courses are being assessed by someone who is not a member of the discipline. He pointed out that some people who have participated in the assessment and recertification process have never heard anything back about it so the point of the process is not obvious.

Schubert stated that ACE courses are open to students across the campus and a reporting process or protocol is needed to ensure that these courses are meeting the outcomes of the course. He noted that the evidence showing that the outcomes are being met needs to be available should it be required for accreditation purposes. Wysocki pointed out that all sorts of communication protocols are by direction, but how can this happen if there is no feedback.

Director Mitchell stated that the value of the ACE program is in having programmatic discussions about the courses. She stated that she hears the frustration of the faculty on what things need to be fixed with the program and we need to move towards a solution about ACE processes collectively. She asked if any of her suggestions sound good. Schubert asked if reporting would go away or not. Woodman stated that the department has the best ability to evaluate whether an ACE course is meeting the outcomes of the course.

Schubert pointed out that one of the reasons the ACE program was developed was because students were dissatisfied with the ES/IS program. He stated that if we return to the previous process where there was no oversight of the program we will be right back in the same boat of having a general education program that is not working.

Ruchala stated that when an accreditation agency comes to campus they are looking to see if the unit has been through the process of assessment. She pointed out that the agency does not judge the process. She stated that the accreditation agency will ask for copies of the reports of assessment.

Reisbig asked if it is clear to people that the assessment is housed in the units and the UCC is just verifying to make sure that the assessment has occurred. Woodman pointed out that UCC's role in the process has felt like units are being scrutinized. Director Mitchell stated that she tried to explain the difference between the assessment process and recertification in the workshops but it is very confusing to people and constant re-education is needed.

Schubert suggested that the Executive Committee create a working document compiling a list of actions that are broken in the process and then include a list of actions to address the problems. He asked Guevara and Reisbig to draft a recommendation for an improved educational process by reviewing ACE Governance Document #4. He suggested coming

up with a list of bullet points that can initiate discussion with the Faculty Senate and administrators in order to better educate the faculty on the process.

Ruchala suggested removing any negative language from the document so that the purpose of the ACE program is clearly stated. Woodman stated that he believes the intention behind the ACE program is good but the committee working on the documents did not realize the problems that would arise with it.

The meeting was adjourned at 4: 59 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, November 14 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and David Woodman, Secretary.