

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Purdum, Wysocki, Zoubek

Date: Wednesday, September 19, 2012

Location: 201 Administration

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 3:05 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Perlman/SVCAA Weissinger

2.1 Privatization Plans for Health Center

Schubert reported that concerns have been raised by faculty members and students about the impacts of privatizing the Health Center. Chancellor Perlman noted that there is only an RFP (request for proposals) out now and the campus would drive any agreement. He pointed out that he is not sure what kind of interest the RFP will generate but he thinks it is possible that we could have a better facility which is more convenient for some students than the current facility. He noted that our interest is to assure that students have equal or better access to health care with no increase in the price and this is stated in the RFP.

Woodman asked if students pay a co-pay for office visits to the Health Center. Chancellor Perlman stated that he would imagine that it depends on their health plan. He noted that with Obamacare students can stay on their parents' health insurance until they are 26. He understands that there are a lot of concerns with the idea of privatizing the Health Center, but several things are certain: we need a new facility and we have been trying to get a new facility for four or five years now. He noted that a student referendum to build a new Health Center was turned down several years ago because it would have raised the student fees significantly. He pointed out that by going to the private sector we would be in a better position to keep the costs low and a private company would be responsible for building a new facility. He reported that he has created an evaluation committee comprised of students, faculty, and administrators to review the responses to the RFP.

Nickerson stated that an opinion piece written by a student for the Lincoln Journal Star claimed that student health care would go down with a new facility. He pointed out that the article states that the specifics of a new health care facility are up in the air because people do not know the details of the contract. Chancellor Perlman stated that he would not sign any agreement that would result in the decrease of health care on campus. He

noted that there are student representatives on the evaluation committee that will be reviewing any proposals and ASUN has a committee that reviews the Health Center.

SVCAA Weissinger stated that everything that the campus is doing right now is focused around our goals, and one of our interests is in exploring the possibility of whether having a more attractive health care facility will help attract more students. She pointed out that the current facility needs to be replaced and health care facilities and student recreation centers are important to potential students and their parents.

Woodman asked if other universities have privatized their health care centers. Chancellor Perlman stated yes. He noted that many schools are in close proximity to the school's medical center and student health care is usually associated with the medical center, but we do not have that option here.

Nickerson asked whether the private company or the university would own the facility. Chancellor Perlman stated that this would be part of the contract, although he guesses that it would be privately owned.

Guevara noted that a private health care center would need to be on or near campus. Chancellor Perlman stated that the RFP suggests that the facility be on the Textron property on Vine Street.

2.2 18th & R Street Parking Garage

Schubert reported that there was discussion at the Board of Regents meeting regarding the 18th & R Street garage and he was surprised to learn that the some of the proposed housing on top of this garage was being considered for housing visiting faculty members. He noted that had he been aware of this he could have provided some data to support the idea of having housing as part of the structure. Chancellor Perlman reported that the motion has been tabled by the Board of Regents. He noted that the Board raised some issues with the proposal which he hopes to address. He noted that we are under a time frame because we need to have the garage ready for when the new dorms are completed. He stated that he thinks a private company can be found that will provide the housing and bidders seem to be responsive to our concerns. He pointed out that if the Board is not willing to have private housing on campus than we won't be able to do anything about it.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the idea of trying to get some visiting faculty apartments came about because the Senate Executive Committee raised the issue. He noted that the idea is to combine space of a few student apartments of the structure to create some apartments for visiting faculty members, although costs for doing this would have to be determined. He stated that he believes a developer would certainly be willing to work with us and the location would be good for city campus.

Schubert stated that he appreciates the support and help of the Chancellor on this issue. He stated that more of an argument could be presented to the Board once the Executive Committee asks faculty members what the need is for such a facility.

2.3 Merger of Electrical Engineering and Computer & Electronics Engineering

Schubert reported that there has been considerable turmoil in these departments because the faculty was not involved in the discussions to merge the departments, and there are considerable concerns with how this merger would work. He pointed out that this is an example of faculty governance being neglected and some faculty members feel that shared governance is fictional on this campus and this merger is a prime example.

Chancellor Perlman stated that Schubert's criticisms are a fair review, but he rejects the idea that a single issue in which the faculty does not believe they are adequately consulted represents the state of shared governance on all issues. He pointed out that there are two central elements of faculty governance that is not affected by the merger: the availability to hire talented people and control of the curriculum. He noted that the Regents Bylaws are clear that the Faculty Senate does not have jurisdiction on intra-college issues, and he does not believe the merger is within the Senate's jurisdiction. He acknowledged that he would want his Faculty Senate to be sensitive to what is happening in units but the context of the argument needs to be clearer. He stated that it is also clear in the Bylaws that the Chancellor is the one who has authority to determine departments. He noted that there is an APC process that describes how a merger is to be undertaken when no faculty jobs are at stake and no programs are to be eliminated. He pointed out that this merger will in fact expand the existing programs.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the APC process for merging departments states that a dean should discuss with the SVCAA the idea of merging departments. If the SVCAA approves the idea then discussions should take place. He reported that it is his understanding that there were conversations with the chairs and associate deans about the merger and how to increase enrollment and opportunities to increase the stature of the departments. He noted that we cannot continue to run parallel programs in UNL and UNO that have separate structures. He pointed out that the department of Computer Electronics and Engineering (CEEN) is not recognized in terms of any ranking and does not contribute to the research enterprise of the college. He stated that what is being offered by CEEN at UNO is not as responsive as the College could be to the needs of Omaha and it is clear that the two departments should be merged.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he understands that Dean Wei has engaged the faculty about curriculum and promotion and tenure issues and he is confident that the chair of the APC will ask the faculty of these departments what they think about the merger. He pointed out that if the faculty members of the departments are against the merger they should provide documentation as to why the merger would not work. He stated that the dean would then have to make a compelling case to override the faculty.

Schubert pointed out that there should have been a conversation with the faculty of the departments first. Chancellor Perlman asked how this could have been done. Schubert stated that the faculty was notified that the merger was a done deal and that faculty would not be allowed to weigh in on the decision. The Chancellor pointed out that no merger is approved until the SVCAA, and the Chancellor, after receiving advice from the APC, approves it.

Nickerson asked if there is anticipation that there will be revenue savings by eliminating the administrative overlap of the departments. Chancellor Perlman stated that there will be some savings with having only one chair. He noted that this is an opportunity that seems to make sense, but he has not heard the reasons for not doing it.

Schubert pointed out that the issue is not necessarily the merger, but the process that has been used to do it. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she takes responsibility for this. She stated that the APC procedures say that the dean should propose the idea. If the SVCAA supports the idea then it is her job to charge the dean to create a process for the merger. She reported that the process unavoidably involves the faculty members of both departments and there are issues that faculty in the departments have to examine. She noted that there are two ways that a merger can occur: the faculty can originate the idea, which is rare, or the dean can originate the idea. Whichever way occurs, a process is codified in the APC procedures that must be followed.

Guevara stated that this sounds like a very organized approach, but this is not the way that it happened. He noted that faculty members have been told that the merger was going to happen, that it is a done deal, and they have not had input into the decision. SVCAA Weissinger stated that faculty member's initial reaction might provoke anxiety, but after some deep conversations occur this might dissipate.

Ruchala noted that the discussion has focused on the merging of departments, particularly smaller departments but asked if the same APC process is in place for departments separating into two distinct units. She asked what would happen if a department operates as two distinct departments before the separation has been approved. Chancellor Perlman stated that until he approves a merger or separation it has not happened particularly in issues such as tenure decisions. He pointed out that some departments might act like they are split, but in fact a split has not occurred. He noted that the merging of the Teachers College with the College of Home Economics was announced and then faculty members got together to discuss it. LaCost pointed out that many faculty members in Teachers College had no knowledge of the merger until the night before it happened.

Schubert stated that there may be a weakness in our organizational structure in that we do not have conversations with the deans. He stated that if there were some more conversations with the deans it might help to avoid some of the anxiety that can occur when changes are made. He suggested that consideration needs to be given on ways for the faculty to have conversations with the deans.

SVCAA Weissinger stated that she is not opposed to this idea. She pointed out that no matter how many conversations take place with faculty members and deans there is still going to be some amount of anxiety with a merge. She stated that she is grateful that the Executive Committee has been a sounding board on this issue.

LaCost noted that in retrospect she knows how the faculty around her reacted to the merger of Teachers College and Home Economics. She pointed out that for many of the

faculty members it came as sudden information, but the deans had been involved in discussions for a year figuring out how the merger was going to occur. She stated that faculty members should have been included in discussions during this time. She suggested that the faculty members of CEEN and Electrical Engineering should gather data on the implications of a merger and bring this forward.

2.4 Innovation Campus Update

Chancellor Perlman reported that the Regents recently approved a series of legal documents which are necessary for the developers to start work on the project. He stated that the assumption is that the construction fence will be going up very soon. The next part of the process is to figure out what is going to happen on the Campus in the next twenty years.

2.5 Appropriate Ways Faculty Can Help in Recruiting Students

SVCAA Weissinger stated that she thinks it would be great if Dean Cerveny and Director Hunter were invited to give an expert answer to this issue to the full Senate. She noted that Dean Cerveny just conducted a recruiting workshop for deans and SVCAA staff and his answer for us this year, especially for faculty imbedded in the programs, is to make sure we can answer specifically why someone should study in their program. She noted that the answers need to be authentic and unique to our programs and we need to point out why our programs are better. She stated that she hopes that the first priority of every academic department's website is in recruiting and there needs to be academic engagement in campus visits of prospective students. She stated that she hopes faculty members are open to allocating time to meet with groups and/or individuals wanting to visit the campus. She stated that research shows that meeting with a faculty member can make the biggest difference in a student's decision to go to a university.

Anaya pointed out that what she is hearing is in direct contrast from what the Executive Committee heard last year when it met with Dean Cerveny and Director Hunter. She noted that last year the message was for the faculty to leave it to the recruiting experts. SVCAA Weissinger suggested that there might have been some miscommunication last year. She stated that Dean Cerveny is effectively connecting people with Admissions and the deans' offices, but he needs informative people who can talk directly with students and their parents. Schubert stated that his recollection from last year's conversation was that we were bypassing each other in what was being said to prospective students. He noted that the Executive Committee was looking at how the faculty can help organize prospective students rather than informing them of what we could offer the student by coming here.

SVCAA Weissinger reported that Admissions has a very intricate way of working with students and when enough information is obtained from the student, we can more easily make a good contact for them in the departments. She noted that we are getting better at clarifying what the student specifically wants from us. She reported that there may be some additional opportunities available for Nebraska students this year and she is engaging Dean Cerveny to provide information specifically that would be helpful to Nebraska students.

Woodman stated that he lives in Nebraska City and has two daughters and he does not recall UNL coming out to the high school to recruit students but other schools did. SVCAA Weissinger reported that a lot of universities have moved away from high school visits and have moved towards more of a database approach for recruiting.

Woodman stated that what would be helpful to the faculty is to have the chairs and deans recognize recruiting efforts by faculty members as service. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she certainly hopes this happens and she is pushing for it with the deans and chairs. She pointed out that as our enrollment increases we are going to have a more diverse student body and this will lead us to get more faculty members. She pointed out that there is no flexibility left in the university budget and enrollment decline means a real time budget reduction. It is crucial that we retain the vigor, scope, and depth of the campus and it is in everyone's self-interest to be involved with recruiting.

Ruchala stated that her daughter went to a university out of state because she thought her daughter would get a better education because the university had a more targeted program. She pointed out that unless we start targeting our efforts to create special programs we are going to lose some students. She cautioned that we should not diffuse programs just to get the student enrollment numbers up. She noted that her daughter has taken honors classes in her freshmen year that honors students here do not get to take until they are juniors. She suggested that we need to prime the pump to target certain programs to get targeted groups of students. SVCAA Weissinger stated that this is another good reason to have Dean Cerveney speak to the Senate.

Chancellor Perlman pointed out that the faculty is responsible for the curriculum. Ruchala stated that she teaches a senior level class that is all essay and writing and this is causing difficulty for some students in the class, particularly international students whose English skills are not strong. She pointed out that we do not have the resources to help these students and as a result the conversations in the classroom suffer and the grading is more difficult. She stated that resources need to be available to help these students succeed.

Ruchala pointed out that there can be a tradeoff between quality and quantity of students. Nickerson asked if there is anticipation that these students' English skills will be better in three or four years. Ruchala stated that she is seeing the opposite. The students' skills were better three or four years ago than they are now. SVCAA Weissinger stated that we are really focused on the combined goal of having a larger, better prepared and more diverse student body. She pointed out that we would not be meeting our overall goal if we didn't want every freshmen class to be better than the last. Chancellor Perlman stated that the faculty has a larger individual role in retention by identifying students that are having problems and getting these students to the services that match their needs. He understands that the services need to be available, but the faculty member needs to identify and lead the students in the right direction.

2.6 Current Status of NU Online Worldwide

SVCAA Weissinger reported that the current status of NU Online Worldwide has not changed. She stated that it is the central marketing porthole for online courses.

2.7 Is Funding Still Being Offered for Developing New Online Courses

SVCAA Weissinger stated that the online courses are now worked more carefully into the academic enterprise. She noted that previously faculty members were contacted by the Office of Extended Education about online courses without the knowledge of the department which was disconcerting. She stated that when this office was folded and the new Online and Distance Education Office was created she wanted departments and colleges to manage these courses and integrate them into the departments. She stated that she believes the deans and chairs are giving faculty members opportunities within the department to develop an online course.

Guevara asked if the delivery of online courses is still being monitored. SVCAA Weissinger noted that previously when a faculty member and chair signed an agreement to teach an online course the faculty member would have to teach the course regardless of whether it was relevant to the department. She pointed out that there was a disconnection between the policy and the practice that needed clarification because we don't want to have people teaching an online course with few students when the instructor could be teaching an on campus course with numerous students. She stated that departments need to set ambitious goals for retention and recruitment and distance education has an important role in accomplishing these goals.

Chancellor Perlman stated that he believes NU Online Worldwide may still offer some funds for creation of courses but they would have to involve faculty members from one, or more, of the other campuses.

2.8 Impacts of MOOC Courses

Schubert noted that the Chancellor had mentioned the MOOC courses in his state of the university address and asked what the possible impacts will be from these courses. Chancellor Perlman reported that SVCAA Weissinger has set up a task force to look at what the implications for us will be from these kinds of courses. Nickerson noted that these courses are being offered by very prestigious universities. Guevara asked if we should be concerned that these classes are being offered by top universities for free, even though students would not receive credit for taking the course. SVCAA Weissinger stated that she has begun talking about this with Professor Goddard and Director Keck. She noted that it is clear that we have to parse out what meaning, if any, this movement might have and the task force is looking into this.

Woodman asked if these kinds of courses would be accepted as transfer courses. SVCAA Weissinger stated that there are many layers of discussions that need to be held regarding these courses. Questions such as should we offer MOOC courses, should a faculty member deliver a content of a course and integrate it in some fascinating way, and should we allow transfer credit even though these courses are not given credit?

LaCost stated that conversation on these courses is critical. She pointed out that the frontier is changing rapidly and new innovations will continue to come forward.

SVCAA Weissinger noted that there are two interesting things about the MOOC courses: what motives are at play with these institutions for offering these courses and the intellectual counter movement against these courses. She pointed out that we are only starting to see real data from these courses. Guevara stated that one of the dangers of these courses is that if they are detrimental to what we do as an institution. SVCAA Weissinger stated that it is difficult to know whether this is a vanguard or a fad and what the longer term implications of the MOOC courses will be.

LaCost asked if the task force will share some of its findings over time. SVCAA Weissinger stated that they will and she has asked them to produce a summary of their initial thoughts on the issue.

2.9 Status of the Plus One Benefit with Open Enrollment this Fall

Anaya asked if the plus one benefit will be available this fall during open enrollment. Chancellor Perlman stated that it will be ready in November.

2.10 Upcoming Issues

Schubert reported that he received a phone call from a faculty member who wants to look into the legality of the mandatory reporting of private interest that a person earns on the IOARF. He states that the faculty member claims that the university cannot ask how much income a faculty member earns from outside consulting fees. He stated that the hope is that the university will resolve this issue.

Chancellor Perlman stated that the legal issue can be looked at, but if this is in regards to the Conflict of Interest Policy the reporting is dictated by federal regulations. He noted that the rationale for asking the income information is that there could be a potential conflict of interest if a faculty member has a larger share in a corporation that is associated with research being conducted by the faculty member.

Schubert stated that one of the faculty member's concerns with the form is that information reported could be made available to deans, chairs and others and a faculty member might not want to share this information with others. SVCAA Weissinger stated that signatures are required in the routing of the form. She suggested that the faculty member engage directly with the Office of Research and Economic Development about the concerns.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Lunch with President Milliken

Schubert noted that he and the other Senate Presidents will be having lunch with President Milliken on Friday. It was suggested that Schubert ask the President where he sees the University five years from now. Schubert stated that he will report on the luncheon meeting.

4.0 Approval of 9/12/12 Minutes

Anaya moved for approval of the minutes. Ruchala seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Review of Senate Meeting

Schubert stated that he has not had the opportunity to put the Powerpoint presentation on the non-tenure track faculty survey into a PDF yet so it can be distributed. Schubert stated that he still wants the Executive Committee to make recommendations regarding non-tenure track faculty members. He asked about whether Professor Sarroub's comment about the rigor of the analytic strategy employed for the survey needs to be taken into consideration. Guevara pointed out that the survey is not a scientific survey. LaCost stated that Professor Sarroub would need to be more specific about her concerns. She and Reisbig stated that the survey structure and reporting of frequency distributions was fine for the information that was being sought.

LaCost stated that she will be pulling some information from the faculty salary data to protect individuals from being identified before the document is distributed.

5.2 Ballots of Election to APC, ARRC, and ARRP

Item postponed due to lack of time.

6.0 New Business

6.1 November 6 Senate Meeting

Griffin asked if Todd Jensen and Michael Ruhrdanz from Information Services should be asked to address the Senate at the November 6 meeting. The Executive Committee stated that they should be scheduled and that a list of topics will be developed for them to address.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, September 26 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.