Present: **Bender, Guevara, Joeckel, Reisbig, Rinkevich, Woodman, Wysocki, Zoubek**

Absent: **Anaya, Nickerson, Ruchala, Schubert, Sollars**

Date: **Wednesday, May 1, 2013**

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.

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1.0   Call to Order
Guevara called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

2.0   Professor Ledder, University Curriculum Committee (UCC)
Ledder reported that he was previously on the Executive Committee when ACE was first created and had some of the same concerns back then about procedural issues as the Executive Committee does now. He noted that he hopes it will be helpful to the Executive Committee that he has been on both sides of the issue. He believes that it is a good idea to redo the ACE Governance and Assessment Document to make it clearer about the expectations of the ACE program. He stated that he does not think the UCC ACE Subcommittee's (UCC ACE) expectations for ACE recertification and assessment is unreasonably high.

Ledder reported that the UCC ACE is working on creating a draft document suggesting changes to Governance document four and provided a summary of these changes to the Executive Committee. He noted that the plan is to send out the completed draft document to the Executive Committee and the eight colleges for comments which would be collected through the end of September. Changes would then be made in response to the comments received. He stated that the goal would be to get the finalized form to the colleges by late October for a vote.

Ledder noted that there is some controversy over who makes the decision on the changes. He stated that when ACE was first created the University's official position was that the colleges had to make the decision to approve ACE because state laws say that colleges have to approve their curriculum. He pointed out that a lot of people, including him, felt there should be a formal role for the Faculty Senate in the process. The decision was to have the Senate vote to endorse the ACE program without addressing the issue of whether such endorsement was required. As a result the Senate played a role in the process and he hopes that the same thing can happen with the proposed changes rather than having an extensive argument on who gets to have the final approval on the changes.

Ledder stated that he wanted to come and speak to the Executive Committee because he is aware that there might be two separate groups working on making modifications to the

Governing document and it would be easier to have one group working on it. He believes it would be better to have the UCC ACE, which has experience working with the ACE courses, to do the revisions based on the concerns raised by the Executive Committee. He stated that the UCC ACE knows what the problems are, what it has had to struggle with in regards to the ACE courses, and what departments have complained about. He pointed out that the UCC ACE is the right group to rewrite the Governing document but noted that the Senate needs to review the changes and provide feedback.

Ledder stated that the UCC ACE wants to have better communication with the faculty about the ACE process and believes that a lot of faculty members are making more work than is necessary, particularly in regards to recertification. He reported that the UCC ACE is proposing to cut all references to reinforcements in the document. Reisbig asked for clarification on reinforcements. Ledder stated that on the ACE recertification form it asks which list of skills the course reinforces, such as writing skills, but these are unnecessary because no one looks at them.

Ledder reported that the current documentation does not clearly distinguish ongoing administration of ACE courses from long-term program assessment. A major goal of the revision is to clearly distinguish ongoing administration, recertification, and program assessment. He believes that the document will be much easier to understand if it builds up from administration of individual sections, through department assessment of courses, and recertification through UCC ACE, and eventually program assessment. He noted that most departments are handling ACE in this way.

Woodman stated that he is confused because ACE is a course centered issue, but he asked where program assessment comes into the process. Ledder stated that he completely agrees with this concern. He reported that there were two charges given to the committee that created the ACE program: to create a general education program and to create some campus-wide assessment that can be used for reaccreditation or when evidence is needed to show that the university is teaching students correctly.
Reisbig asked if the changes make it explicit that the program assessment is separate from the course assessment. Ledder noted that the document does not make it clear how you go from assessing student work to assessing a program. He stated that the only way he can see this process occurring is if you go from assessing student work to assessing a course to assessing a program. He pointed out that another part of the problem is that different groups oversee the course assessments and the program assessments: the University-wide Assessment Committee (UWAC) assesses programs while UCC is responsible for the courses. He reported that in the assessment procedure the department is to assess the courses and then report to the college that the assessment has been conducted. He noted that someone in the college is charged to collect each of the departments' assessment of courses.

Reisbig stated that it is not clear why all of the assessment is needed. Ledder answered by noting that the former ES/IS program fell apart over time and drifted away from what it was supposed to do. He stated that some kind of on-going maintenance of the ACE program was needed to avoid the same thing happening to it. Reisbig pointed out that

this should be stated clearly in the document so faculty members understand the reasoning for the process. She said that the document should also explain that program assessments are needed for accreditation. Ledder agreed.

Guevara noted that the ACE procedures were not presented to the colleges this way when the program was first unveiled. Reisbig pointed out that the current process is not transparent. Guevara said that he did not think the ACE documents state that assessment of the ACE courses goes beyond the department. Ledder pointed out that the documents do state this. He noted that how colleges manage their charge of approving ACE assessments differs from one college to the next. Reisbig proposed that there be two separate governing documents with one of them being more administrative versus one being at the faculty and course level. Ledder stated that he thinks the changes in the structure of the process will clarify this to a certain extent. He noted that it would be an improvement of what is currently in place, but it might need to be revised at some time. Woodman asked if the departments collect the information and give it to the deans. Ledder said yes.

Ledder reported that the proposed revisions include a new article that deals with on-going administration of the ACE program and states that student work need not be collected from all sections of all ACE courses, but departments need to collect work for a sampling of the sections and indicate how they will ensure that all sections meet the ACE requirements. Also, assessment can be done periodically, at least once every five years. Course assessment can be aggregated over a group of courses as long as each course contributes to the aggregate assessment, the courses are related by a common theme, and the courses are at the same level or are part of a common sequence.

Ledder stated that when the ACE program was created there was not enough representation from departments with large sections such as English. He noted that the current Governance document strongly implies that evidence needs to be collected from all sections but this is not realistic. He pointed out that the UCC ACE was aware of the problem but tried to avoid making changes that would need to go to all of the colleges for a vote. Woodman asked if a change clarifying that evidence need not be collected from all sections would be considered trivial and therefore would not need the vote of the colleges. Ledder stated that the UCC ACE has made procedural changes on its own but feels that any changes in the governing documents would need to go to the colleges. Guevara pointed out that the UCC ACE did make a change. Ledder stated that a change in policy was made, but not the actual document.

Ledder reported that the current document strongly implies that courses need to be assessed whenever evidence is provided but this is not realistic. He noted that assessment of our curriculum needs to be done if the department thinks there is something wrong with a course or when a number of years have passed since the last assessment. He pointed out that work has to be collected regularly, but the work does not have to be reviewed until the periodic assessment is conducted. He pointed out that it is better for the departments to decide what their assessment questions are and to decide what the assessment goals are and how the assessment will be done.

Ledder reported that the aggregated course assessment revision came as a result of discussions with the English department. He noted that English has gone a long way towards meeting their assessment. Reisbig asked what the English department's argument was for having aggregated course assessment. Ledder noted that English has a lot of courses that are similar but slightly different, such as Native American literature, African American literature, etc. He stated that English wants to assess these courses in a group rather than individually. He pointed out that it makes sense to group courses that are in a sequence or are similar and at the same level. He noted that for recertification a separate form would need to be filled out for the courses but they could include common paragraphs based on the group assessment. He stressed that the UCC ACE is not interested in assessing the course; it just wants to make sure the course fits the outcome, which can be determined by the syllabus and student work archive. He pointed out that the UCC ACE does not want to look at the course assignments to see if they are easy or hard.

Ledder stated that departments do need to conduct assessment that is aimed at making courses succeed and the UCC Sub just wants to know that departments are doing this work. He pointed out that it should be clear from the recertification form that the assessment has been done in a thoughtful way. He noted that many assessments say that the course is working well and there is no need to change it, but there are some courses that aren't working well and departments should provide information on what changes are being considered to improve the course.

Ledder reported that the UCC ACE wants to see a satisfactory plan for the next five-year period before recertification occurs again, but a recertification form can be revised as courses change over time to hopefully improve. He pointed out that an instructor might decide the assignments for a course are no longer accurate or relevant. He noted that the UCC ACE will look to make sure that the course doesn't lose the outcome in making modifications. He stated that course work must be collected in other semesters, not just when assessment occurs. Reisbig asked if the assessment satisfies both the UCC ACE and UWAC. Ledder stated that the course assessment is not the same thing as the department's assessment report that goes to the college administration.

Reisbig stated that it should be clear in the document what UWAC governs and what UCC ACE governs. Ledder stated that he thinks the proposed revisions will make this a little clearer. He noted that the UCC ACE does not deal with program assessment. This is governed by UWAC.

Reisbig stated that she thinks the proposed changes will help clear up a lot of concerns that were raised. Guevara stated that the proposed changes are a little shy in some areas. He pointed out that there is still ambiguity in the section about collecting student work regularly and suggested that this sections needs to be clearer. He stated that for some people this could be a bigger issue. Joeckel agreed. Guevara stated that the document needs to state clearly what is needed because faculty members can't follow a few UCC ACE members' interpretation of how much student work needs to be collected. Ledder

pointed out that if you make the document too specific you lock in inertia and lose flexibility by taking away any nuances. He noted that for some courses to demonstrate they meet the outcome an exam is sufficient, but for other courses assignments a combination of exam and assignments might be better.

Guevara stated that recertification is the biggest issue. He stated that indicating the specific way the outcome is met should be all that the UCC needs to approve. He pointed out that if someone agrees to do something for a course that is what they should do. He stated that the Governing document tries to make everything uniform. Ledder pointed out that some department's assessment plans went far overboard. He noted that the UCC does not want to make the process too rigid. Guevara stated that there were many faculty members who felt that it was too much work to produce the evidence. Ledder stated that the faculty members who are falling short on this are the ones who said they would collect a lot of evidence but wound up not showing the student work they promised to deliver.

Guevara asked how many recertification forms are rejected. Ledder stated that the UCC ACE sends the form back to the instructor rather than rejecting them. He noted that in a typical month some forms are returned merely because the syllabus does not have an ACE Statement; roughly ¼ are returned because of proposal issues.

Joeckel stated that he is curious about two things: it bothers him that we have the option of collecting evidence for just some sections. He questions how someone from the outside world would view the way we are making assessments. He noted that departments are being trusted to enforce the assessments. Ledder stated that it depends on whether someone is looking at this from an administrative perspective or a faculty perspective. While an administrative perspective would insist that every section needs to be assessed, this is unrealistic expectation for faculty. Joeckel stated that the ultimate question is whether the process works and whether we have an assessment of the ACE program. Ledder stated that the fifth year of the cycle is for a review of the ACE program and will address the overall success of the process. He pointed out that a certain amount of trust needs to be placed in the departments in that they are doing the work that they said they would do. Guevara stated that all departments should be trusted. Ledder stated that he trusts the departments that courses will be taught the way they are listed in the bulletin, but there is the issue of academic freedom and faculty members may want to teach an ACE course differently and in such a way that it may not meet the outcome. Recertification provides a check to make sure the courses are taught as ACE courses.

Guevara pointed out that the Executive Committee wants to take away the unnecessary paperwork for the faculty. Reisbig agreed and stated that this is a major issue with the recertification of the courses with multiple sections plus the UCC ACE having oversight of the student work. She pointed out that leaving this at the department level is stated clearly in the proposed revisions and this is why she finds the changes delightful.

Woodman asked Ledder, from his perspective, when students should complete the ACE requirements in their college career. Ledder noted that this is a good question and stated that he thinks they should have them completed by the end of their sophomore or early junior year, except for Outcome 10.

Woodman pointed out that UNL is seeing a great increase in transfer students, many of them whom are transferring credits in that supposedly meet ACE requirements, but we have no control over these transfer courses and questioned whether some of them truly meet the ACE outcomes. Ledder agreed and stated that is why he is skeptical of trying to transfer in courses in which the ACE outcome is not central to the standard course content. We can check that an economics course at UNL teaches ethics, for example, but we have no guarantee that economics courses transferred in from other schools do so. He stated that the hope is that a lot of the community colleges and high schools are looking at what we require for the ACE program and are changing their courses to comply with ACE. There is some evidence that this is happening with community colleges such as SECC that send a lot of transfer students to UNL. Woodman pointed out that these institutions do not have any motivation to change their courses. Ledder agreed and pointed out that there is nothing we can do about this. Restricting the university from accepting transfer courses would make UNL unattractive to transfer students. He noted that one of the problems with the ES/IS is that UNL was not transferring courses that could be accepted as an IS course. As a result we were losing transfer students. Reducing the number of courses that can be transferred in for ACE credit could have the same drawback. Reisbig wondered if there was a potential way to evaluate the transfer courses to see if they comply with ACE courses. Ledder pointed out that we would have to revisit the issue of how we are doing transfers.

Ledder reported that he will send the Executive Committee a draft of the proposed changes to the ACE Governance document once it is completed.

3.0 Announcements
3.1 Discussion with SVCAA Weissinger Regarding April 17 Minutes
Guevera reported that he had a conversation with SVCAA Weissinger regarding the concerns of the Executive Committee with the revisions she wanted made to the April 17 minutes. He stated that she assured him that her desire was not to detract from the discussion but to accurately reflect the context in which her comments were made. He stated that he wants to work towards maintaining open communication with the administrators that is not restricted by the mechanics of the minutes.

4.0 Approval of 4/17/13 and 4/24/13 Minutes
Wysocki moved to remove from the table the minutes of 4/17/13. Zoubek seconded the motion. The motion was approved. Joeckel moved to approve the minutes as revised. The motion was seconded by Rinkevich. The motion was approved: six in favor, one against, one abstention.

Reisbig moved for approval of the 4/24/13 minutes as revised. Bender seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

5.0   Unfinished Business
      5.1   Recommendations on Draft KACE Policy
      Woodman suggested that the draft document be revised to remove references to KACE and replace it with language that states KACE or programs with similar capabilities. Reisbig suggested that the acronyms be spelled out before using them in the document. She stated that people listed in the report should be properly identified, including their title and why they have access to the information gathered by a program like KACE.

      5.2   Ad Hoc ACE Committee – Members and Charge
      Guevara noted that the UCC is a Faculty Senate Committee and therefore, the UCC ACE Subcommittee falls under the Senate's authority. He pointed out that the Faculty Senate indicates the charge and composition of the UCC, but the ACE document charges the subcommittee, which in turn is charging the Senate. He stated that he wants a different committee to look into this matter to see if it is in the domain of the ACE Governance document to charge a Senate committee. He pointed out that members of the UCC are not on the committee for an indefinite amount of time and he wants a different committee to review this situation. Wysocki noted that the main idea behind the ad hoc committee is to really look into how the ACE subcommittee and UCC operate. Reisbig pointed out that the ad hoc committee should also see how the UWAC operates. She pointed out that having Professor Giesecke on the ad hoc committee will create an umbrella structure that can interface between the UWAC and the UCC ACE Subcommittee. Woodman wondered who the UCC ACE Subcommittee representative was on UWAC since the UWAC website has not been updated since 2010. Reisbig stated that the ad hoc committee should look into the overall organizational structure and governance of ACE.

6.0   New Business
      6.1   Recommendation for a UNL Faculty Representative on the University-wide Benefits Committee
      Griffin reported that Professor Hope is resigning from the University-wide Benefits Committee due to an increased workload. The Executive Committee suggested possible replacements.

      6.2   Agenda Items for Meeting with SVCAA Weissinger on May 15
      The Executive Committee recommended the following agenda items:
-    Update on Academic Success Center and Explore Center
-    Enrollment figures for summer and fall 2014
-    Update on Revisions to the Student Union
-    Status of the MOOC Task Force Report
-    Future of X and S Courses

The meeting was adjourned at 4:44 pm. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, May 15 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Toni Anaya, Secretary.