

UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
City Campus Union,
April 27, 2010
Presidents John Fech, John Lindquist, Kathy Prochaska Cue, Presiding

1.0 Call to Order

President Fech called the meeting to order at 2:31 pm.

2.0 Announcements

President Fech pointed out that the Senate had an effective year on a number of items such as approving the changes to the budget reduction procedures, approving the research misconduct policy, and raising concerns about health care benefits. He noted that the Faculty Senate President at each of the four campuses agreed to make health care benefits an important issue to work on this past year. He stated that input from the UNL Faculty Senate helped to get a few things accomplished with respect to health care benefits, but it is important to keep working on issues in order to keep things moving. He stated that it is important to keep the lines of communications open with Varner Hall.

President Fech reported that this past year has been a labor of love for him. He stated that he learned a lot about what goes on beyond the normal activities of a faculty member and he appreciated the opportunity to lead the Faculty Senate.

3.0 Senate Elections

3.1 President Elect

Professor King, Agricultural Leadership, moved to accept by acclamation the nomination of Professor LaCost, Educational Administration, for President Elect. The move was seconded by Professor Flowers, Psychology. The motion was approved by the Senate.

3.2 Secretary

Professor King moved to accept by acclamation the nomination of Professor Shea, School of Natural Resources, for Secretary. The move was seconded by Professor Stock, English. The motion was approved.

3.3 Executive Committee Members

Professor Anaya, University Libraries, Professor Berg, History, and Professor Nickerson, School of Biological Sciences were all elected to the Executive Committee.

3.4 Committee on Committees Member

Professor Sarroub was elected to the Committee on Committees.

4.0 Chancellor Perlman

President Lindquist noted that Associate to the Chancellor Poser will be speaking for the Chancellor and that this is the last opportunity to see her before she assumes her duties as Dean of the Law College. He wanted to thank her for her work and service and stated that he appreciates having the opportunity to work with her.

Associate to the Chancellor Poser noted that the Chancellor recently sent out an announcement about another \$1.5 million budget cut. She reported that this cut will be considered by the Academic Planning Committee (APC) this summer. She pointed out that the other budget cuts for this year have already been approved by the APC.

Associate to the Chancellor Poser reported that an announcement listing the members of the search committee for a new SVCAA was made this morning. She noted that the search committee will meet with the hiring consultant in May but the search will not be conducted until the fall semester.

Associate to the Chancellor Poser reported that the on campus interviews for a new VC of IANR was coming to a close and the Chancellor hoped to complete the hiring of the new VC by the fall semester.

Associate to the Chancellor Poser stated that this summer the legislature passed LB 935 requiring all state agencies to look at ways to become more efficient and innovative. She reported that all of the agencies are to turn in a two year efficiency plan by September 1. She stated that she thinks the Chancellor is seeing this

exercise as a way to deal with budget cuts for the next biennium. She reported that the efficiency plan will be worked on over the summer.

Professor Starace, Physics & Astronomy, asked if a committee on efficiency has been appointed yet. Associate to the Chancellor Poser stated that the Chancellor had talked about this issue during his state of the university address but a committee never got off the ground, in part because there was not a legislative mandate at that time. She pointed out that a committee will probably not be formed until the fall since many of the faculty members are not on campus during the summer. She stated that if anyone has any suggestions on how to make the university more efficient they should send the Chancellor an email message.

5.0 Welcome New Senators

President Lindquist welcomed the following new senators: Professor Giertz, Economics; Professor Irmak, Biological Systems Engineering; Professor Rudy, Nutrition & Health Sciences; Professor Mitra, Plant Pathology; Professor Sollars, Veterinary & Biomedical Sciences; Professor Hubbard, School of Natural Resources; Professor Archer, School of Natural Resources, and Professor Nickerson, School of Biological Sciences. He reminded the senators that the Senate represents the faculty and it is not only important that they attend the meetings but also participate in the meetings. He pointed out that members of the Executive Committee get to know each other and discuss many things but unfortunately this does not happen very often at the Senate meetings. He stated that the Senate can accomplish more when senators have more interaction and asked that members please stand up and discuss what is on their mind. He pointed out that it is important for the Executive Committee to hear what the senators have to say.

6.0 Approval of 4/6/10 Minutes

Professor Zoubek, Southeast Research & Extension, moved for approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Professor McCollough, Anthropology. The minutes were approved with one abstention.

7.0 Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was discussed.

8.0 New Business

8.1 Changes to Blackboard

Professor Zorn, Finance, stated that the latest changes made to Blackboard are too complicated and make the program unwieldy. He stated that he does not appreciate the complexity of the program and feels that the Senate should discuss the issue and see if other faculty members feel the same way. President Lindquist stated that the issue will be discussed by the Executive Committee.

8.2 Health Care Benefits for Retirees

Professor Zorn stated that it does not make sense that retirees are put into a separate pool if they want university health insurance. He pointed out that in the insurance industry employers want to have the widest pool possible for health insurance, but separating retirees from the active employee pool deviates from this principle. He stated that he hopes the Faculty Senate Presidents from the four campuses discuss this issue with President Millikan. President Lindquist noted that Professor Hope, one of the UNL faculty representatives to the University Wide Benefits Committee, will be meeting with the Executive Committee and this issue will be discussed.

Professor Zorn pointed out that more people might want to retain the university health insurance because the health care reform might make changes that will make it more difficult for people to find a doctor or a specialist if they just have Medicare.

Professor Starace asked that Professor Zorn clarify what the issue is for the University Wide Benefits Committee. Professor Zorn stated that the Faculty Senate should lobby for having one risk pool so when people retire they are not put into a separate pool. He pointed out that putting retirees into a separate pool creates a smaller pool and the people in this pool have higher rates that will increase over time.

Past President Fech stated that this is an important issue and the UNL representatives have been in touch with the University Wide Benefits Committee about it. He noted that there was some discussion about it and how much it would cost to have one pool again. He reported that there was some discussion about the issue at the last meeting of the University Wide Benefits Committee. He stated that something to consider if the pools are joined is that the premium rates for health insurance could go up as much as \$30 a month for active employees.

Emeritus Professor McShane reported that most retirees opt out of the Blue Cross/Blue Shield plan when they

retire because it is too expensive. He noted that insurance rates, supplemental to Medicare have risen twice since January and access to university health care is important if it is not prohibitively expensive. He stated that there are members of the Emeriti Association who could assist the Executive Committee on this issue if more meetings are anticipated. President Lindquist reported that the UNL representatives are very good and know what they are talking about. He stated that it might be worth looking into facilitating the change back to one pool when the University Wide Benefits Committee next meets.

Professor Sarroub suggested that discussions about the health insurance should be more holistic. She noted that as an employee with small children, a person has to get really sick in order to reap any substantial benefits from health insurance because the deductibles have to be met first. She stated that our health care plan should be compared with the health insurance at other universities. She reported that the complaint she has heard over and over again from new employees is that our plans are not progressive and how much they have to pay out of pocket for medical issues.

8.3 Meeting with Candidates for Vice Chancellor of IANR

President Lindquist reported that the Executive Committee members have the opportunity to meet with the candidates for the Vice Chancellor of IANR and suggested that other faculty members attend as well. He stated that anyone interested in attending the interviews should contact him (jlindquist1@unl.edu).

8.4 Domestic Partner Benefits

President Lindquist stated that he received an email message from a faculty member encouraging the Executive Committee to look at domestic partner benefits. He noted that the Faculty Senate has passed resolutions in the past calling for domestic partner benefits but with little affect. He stated that he plans on discussing the issue with the Executive Committee to see what can be done and how to take it a step further. He stated that there could be a potential resolution coming to the Senate in the fall to address this and other health care issues.

8.5 Ad Hoc Committees

President Lindquist reported that some concerns have been raised about the way ad hoc committees interact with the faculty on important policies. He stated that there is now a committee working on UNL's conflict of interest policy. He noted that this work is being done as a result of changes made by the Board of Regents to the university's conflict of interest policy. He stated that anyone who is interested in providing input should contact him (jlindquist1@unl.edu). He stated that other faculty members on the ad hoc committee are Professor Awada, School of Natural Resources, and Professor Shane Farritor, Mechanical Engineering.

President Lindquist reported that the Chancellor came to the Executive Committee asking the members to work on a suspension of pay policy for faculty members who are not performing their duties. He pointed out that a Nebraska State statute states that no one shall be paid if services are not rendered. He stated that this policy will be discussed by the Executive Committee over the summer and eventually a resolution will be presented to the Senate.

President Lindquist reported that at a luncheon of IANR senators the Assistant Chief of Police spoke about building an emergency plan. He stated that these plans will be presented to the full Senate in the fall.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:29 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, September 14, 2:30 p.m. in the East Campus Union, Great Plains Room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Patrick Shea, Secretary.