Executive Council
17 October 2012
Warner Conference Room

Discussion Items:

Academic Advising: General discussion about best practices and issues with academic advising. How does this dovetail into graduation rates? What is Faculty Senate’s general take on advising? Some issues discussed: there is an unevenness among faculty in a) number students b) skill level, and c) ability. There does not seem to be enough time to beyond filling in the blanks and checking off classes to truly gauge the student’s career aspirations. Advising is time consuming when done thoroughly, there should be a mechanism to document and assign value in advising. CTE commended on advising workshop earlier in the year.

There is a dilemma in assigning advisors: good advisors get more and share a larger fraction of the work load. Should there be some expectation in Promotion and Tenure guidelines regarding quality of advising? Or, in the same manner as student evaluation of teaching, should there be an advisee feedback mechanism to gauge advising? College of B&T developed an “Advising Syllabus” and it was shared with the council (included at the end of the packet).

The appears to be a need for a clearing house of best practices, perhaps the graduation task force to collect best practices and ideas. This issue is important since it directly ties to BoR accountability measures. Funding will be tied priorities and performance such as improving graduation rates.

Use of Technology: Looking forward, what do faculty need to be successful in the classroom? How should the bookstore change to the changing landscape of text books? How to prepare for it. Electronic text books are available as well as electronic homework services. It was pointed out that some homework services are hidden costs to students; technology not always free. Is it a true value or convenience? We need to have a dialogue; collecting information about the future of technology as it relates to pedagogy.

There was some discussion of entirely online classes. Laboratory based classes extremely difficult to offer online. Other schools have online labs, how should transfer credits from these classes be handled?

Other discussion centered on the non-consistent use of Blackboard in classes. Students would like to see universal adoption of Blackboard for syllabus, grades and major assignments.

Graduation rates and retention: UNK’s six-year graduation rate is solid at 60.6% while our four-year rate is lower at 21.1%. The BoR is interested in improving the four year rate of freshmen completing a single major. How do academic advising, Student Success Committee, and the upcoming Graduation Strategies Taskforce support each other in this endeavor? What is the goal for UNK? We need to accurately define what is meant by a relevant graduation rate, at least in the eyes of the public taxpayer and degree seekers. There are different expectations depending on ability (entrance ACT score) and other time commitments (such as a job). From the BoR perspective, what is a “student”? Transfer students, working students, are they changing majors? How many years does it take to effectively achieve 120 hours? To address graduation rate, we need to accurately measure the demographics of the student body.
There was some discussion regarding the present BoR four year graduation guarantee. It has many unwritten expectations and there is no organized mechanism to implement this policy. One way to show good faith effort in meeting the BoR policy is to publish departmental four-year advising plans.

FERPA Clarifications: There is some uncertainty in what faculty can ask for (grades, etc) regarding students. There appears to be a discrepancy between the Registrar’s interpretation of FERPA and other offices on campus. This needs to be clarified, particularly for crisis situations. Dr. Bicak will look into what can and cannot be done. A closely related issue: how do grade check forms fit in under FERPA? All of the classes are listed on one page. Ask student senate for input.

Administrative reports

Chancellor Kristensen a) will be making college-by-college visits. No agenda; informal general discussion. Also make available another session, such as an evening, for those that could not attend their college’s meeting. b) begin high-lighting “College Bound” tuition assistance program.

SVCASA Bicak. a) WI/CD announcement. Thus far not much campus comment/reaction. b) there are two open searches: 1. Honors director (0.5 to 1.0) and 2. Assessment (0.83 to 0.5), with a goal of having people in place by January 2013. c) Healthier Nebraska initiative/Health Science Education: goal to open doors August 2015, Architectural firm develop program statement to submit BoR Business Affairs committee by January with anticipated approval in March 2013. There is also a Building Steering Committee, Executive Steering Committee, Community Relations Committee, and an Academic Steering Committee. The Building Committee has been busy with a cohort of members from UNK and UNMC. d) Rural Futures Institute, pleased with number of proposals. Eight were stand-alone and two collaborative. e) April 4-6, 2013 UNK host Center for Great Plains Studies Symposium. Theme: School Consolidation, has a rural emphasis.

DSA Oravecz. a) Number of students in triple rooms reduced. b) Student travel committee members sent to President Mollenkopf.

Per written report:

C) Academic & Career Services Thursday, Oct. 4 Career Fair stats: Fall 2011, 59 companies, 350 students; Fall 2012 61 companies, 301 students.

D) Counseling & Health Care 2-day Sexual Assault Response Team training occurred last week. Next steps will include having SART meetings off-campus at partner agency (per Grant MOU).

E) Financial Aid: We have received both the two year and three year cohort default rates for UNK. This “cohort” is for Fiscal Year 2009. Our two-year default rate is 3.9%. Our three-year default rate is 5.5%. Schools will receive both a two year and three year cohort default rate until 2014 when the Fiscal Year 2011 default rates are released. From that point on, the three-year cohort default rate will be the “official” default rate for determining institutional eligibility to remain in the federal student aid business. We anticipated that the three-year cohort default rate would be higher. Logically one would assume that if you count heads over a longer period of time, it is likely that there will be more heads to count. Some analysts within the department felt that it was even possible that rates would double. So our rate of 5.5% is actually good news. In prior years, when we have looked at the specific borrowers who default (we do have access to this information through reports we can receive from the Department), the
majority are not graduates but students who left UNK without a degree. Therefore, our Student Success Plan and the upcoming work we will be doing on Graduation are the best efforts we can make to maintain a low default rate.

F) Student Life: Mock car accident (with assistance from LPAC) to occur on Tuesday, Oct. 30 on campus near the Cope Fountain.

G) Undergraduate Recruitment & Admissions: 2012-2013 recruitment plan has been shared with EMC, Deans, etc.

President’s Report
October 28, 2012

Selections from the Board of Regents’ meeting October 26, 2012

- **Energy Use on the Campuses**
  - Representatives for Facilities Management spoke about efficiency changes on each of their campuses. UNK’s director discussed the new meter system that has been put in place to allow UNK to track energy usage and address areas for future improvement. Boiler tuning is improving low-fire efficiencies and there is a pilot program using LED Fixtures in classrooms.

- **University Affiliated Research Center**
  - Although directly affecting the UNK campus at this time, the NU system has a contract between their newly formed University Affiliated Research Center (UARC) and the Military to do a series of projects, or task orders. Nebraska is one of 14 universities with a UARC. There is potential for a growing number of projects that can positively impact revenue in the NU system.
  - The current task orders are:
    - Nuclear detection and forensics
    - Detection of chemical and biological weapons
    - Medical passive defense against weapons of mass destruction
    - Consequence management—assessing how leaders make decisions.

- **Strategic Framework Report on Enrollment**
  - The data looked at the following categories:
  - First time freshmen: NU wide decrease is 1.7% or 116 students (UNK increased by 5.8%)
  - Other undergraduates: NU wide increase is 0.3% or 92 students (UNK increased by 3.3%)
  - Full-time freshman retention rate NU wide has been consistent at about 80% for the last 5 years.