Executive Council Minutes
14 November 2012
Warner Conference Room

Discussion Items

1) Technology in the classroom. The Executive Council discussed the changing nature of technology use in the classroom, with a particular emphasis on the gradual changes associated with eBooks and the use of iPads/tablets by students and faculty in the classroom. Vice Chancellor Johnson indicated that hard copy books account for 80% of the book sales at the bookstore, but expects this number to change and wants faculty input as to how to direct resources within the bookstore. The faculty noted that an increasing amount of supplemental material is now available online and via app stores, such as iTunes. This presents a challenge for students who are unable to use scholarship funds to pay for supplemental materials not purchased through the bookstore. The council agreed that this is an issue that should be addressed. Further, the council agreed that the Faculty Senate AIT committee should investigate the future of eBooks and how this will change the configuration and services that need to be provided by the bookstore.

In addition, Senator Carlson noted that there is a lack of requisite bandwidth to complete online quizzes using iPads in the classroom. Relatedly, Chancellor Kristensen noted that there is a desire by some faculty and students to have lectures recorded and available, but additional memory is needed to store these large files. These are primarily infrastructure issues that administration will attempt to address over time.

2) Student success initiatives. The council discussed the committees and taskforces that are engaging in various initiatives aimed at improving student retention and graduation. Vice Chancellor Bicak described the complementary roles of the Enrollment Management Council, the Academic Advancement Plan, the New Student Orientation & Transitions Task Force, the Student Success Council and the newly formed Graduation Task Force. Dr. Bicak indicated that each of these groups is engaged in important work aimed at improving the student experience and overall outcomes, with an eye toward collecting metrics that will be useful for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of our campus. In particular, Dr. Bicak highlighted the Graduation Task Force (GTF), its 21 members and the sub-groups that have been formed within this body, which are investigating potential outcomes and progress metrics, information on graduation rates/metrics at comparable institutions and linkages to the student success plan and other UNK programs. The near-term outcome of the GTF will likely be a white paper highlighting a SWOT analysis related to graduation rates. Chancellor Kristensen added that the GTF is playing an important role in proactively building an understanding of how graduation rates can meaningfully be defined and how they can best be collected and reported. This is important information to have as more-and-more states move toward a model of performance-based funding.

Administration Reports

Chancellor Kristensen. The Chancellor has met with two of the colleges, and is still planning to meet with the other two colleges to discuss various issues on campus and to describe the changes and initiatives that are likely to occur at UNK. The forums have provided a meaningful exchange and the Chancellor appreciates the feedback he has received thus far. The Chancellor also indicated that he and Vice Chancellor Bicak had a very productive meeting with UNK alumni currently working at UNMC in Omaha. In addition, the Chancellor noted that the campus is currently in the midst of a search to replace Vice
Chancellor Carlson. The duties of the position have been rearranged and the new person will serve as a Director of Communications, rather than as a Vice Chancellor.

SVCASA Bicak. Dr. Bicak discussed the new health sciences complex and the process that is unfolding with the design of the new structure. He’s been pleased with the input that has been shared by the UNK community and with the adjacency diagram that has been produced by the architecture firm. Dr. Bicak also noted that he is currently leading searches to fill two positions on campus – the Honors Program Director, and the Director of Assessment. He hopes to have both positions filled by the end of the semester.

VCBF Johnson. Vice Chancellor Johnson discussed the south campus project and the recent 4-day design charrette that included UNK faculty, staff, students and members of the Kearney community. VCBF Johnson indicated that the anchor property of the new campus will be University Heights 2 (more creative names are being discussed). The campus will also likely include residential space for members of the community, a business incubator, retail shops and a new home for UNK’s Child Development Center. VCBF Johnson indicated that this is a joint venture between the university, the state, and the city so it is likely going to take 2-3 years before ground is broken to begin the project and a substantial amount of time before the entire campus is developed.

DSA Oravecz. Dean Oravecz noted that the number of students in triple rooms is down to 12 (was 87 at the beginning of the semester). Dean Oravecz also noted the ongoing efforts of the CARE team, with a particular emphasis recently on notifying adjunct faculty about the services offered by the CARE team. The development of the student travel policy was also discussed with Dean Oravecz emphasizing the importance of having emergency contact information collected and stored for students engaged in travel for academic-related purposes. The team is working to create an online form that can be used by campus organizations and academic units sponsoring student travel.