World Affairs Conference
Executive Planning Council Meeting
Friday, November 14, 2014
3:00 PM, COE B155

MINUTES

Present: Bonnie Payne, David Wiebe, Matt Mims, Megan Hartman, Barbara Amundson, Stephen Amundson, Carol Lilly, Toni Hill, Will Aviles, Fletcher Ziwoya, Yao Zheng, Chenxue Cai

Absent: Lorma Wiebe, Maria Gutierrez, Megan Forgey

A. New Members

a) Committee welcomed new members Fletcher Ziwoya, Yao Zheng, and Chenxue Cai.

B. Surveys

a) Payne brought copies of the survey results for committee to see. Discussion related to the survey results included:

(1) many of the survey comments from students were very positive related to sessions throughout the day as well as the keynote speaker. Many especially appreciated the doctors.

(2) how people hear about the conference. Nearly everyone hears via professors, with some hearing from posters and media. It was decided to not continue with E-Blast Advertisement since in the last 3 years, it has not drawn any community people to the event.

(3) Duration of the conference. It was noted that this year, a majority of conference attendees said they would prefer a one-day, multi-session conference. However, in the past 2 years, when we had two-day, multi-session conferences, attendees said this was their preference. The committee believes attendees are ultimately showing support for whatever format the conference is that they are attending.

C. September 2014 Conference

a) What Went Well

• Using sessions to show what impact Nebraskans are making around the world really turned out to be very effective. We should have one panel with this goal every conference.
• We had excellent speakers who represented Nebraska well, and attendees were able to identify with.

• It was really good that attendees, especially students, could see that there are things they can do to make a difference.

• September is an excellent time of the year to have the conference.

b) What to Improve Upon
• Consider not continuing to use speaker agencies. The speakers tend to not be as strong as we would like for the amount of money spent to obtain them. Faculty could use their own networks to find good keynote speakers at a fraction of the cost.
• Or, do we gamble and spend $10,000 to try to get a better quality speaker?
• Have academic colleges suggest speakers
• Do more with Fine Arts. Instead of a keynote speaker, have a film, music group, art exhibit, etc. These things have been done in the past and have been very effective. Need something strong as the centerpiece. It does not need to always be a speaker.
• Come up with several speaker ideas and vote
• We should get back to contacting faculty members about sessions specifically relevant to classes they teach. When we did that a year ago, the faculty members personally contacted like this were very appreciative.

D. Future Conferences: One-Day Annual or Two-Day Biennial?
• One disadvantage of one-day conference is drastic reduction in the amount of interaction between speakers and students. We had no “take a delegate to lunch” or “classroom visits.”

• Another disadvantage to one-day conference is that it will be harder to find diplomats willing to make the trip from Chicago or D.C. for one day.

• Having the next conference in September of 2016 would give the committee the opportunity to meet with student organizations to get their input on topics they would like to have covered.

• It would be beneficial to have the next conference in September of 2016 so the new Assistant Vice Chancellor for International Affairs would be settled in and able to be an active part of the conference planning.
The committee unanimously voted to have a two-day biennial conference, with the conference being held in September of 2016. This vote is, however, contingent upon the ability to carry forward the $10,000 commitment from the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, from 2015 to 2016.