The Faculty Senate Presidents (Wes Peterson – UNL; Wally Bacon – UNO; Ellen Davis-Hall – UNMC; and Debbie Bridges – UNK) met with President Smith and Provost Noren on May 14, 2004.

1. Wes Peterson (UNL) and Ellen Davis-Hall (UNMC) inquired about the status of the Presidential Search.

   The Board of Regent’s are scheduled to meet on Tuesday, May 18, 2004 to discuss the four finalists and come to some conclusion. Both President Smith and Provost Noren indicated that a decision would be forthcoming soon. The new president would be expected to start sometime between July 1 and September 1, 2004.

2. Wes Peterson (UNL) identified a system constraint on Academic Scheduling.

   Wes Peterson described the situation in Lincoln in which faculty with finals in the late afternoon on the Thursday before commencement have trouble completing their grading in time for the student to walk through graduation ceremonies. Wes indicated that it was his understanding that students who did not have a grade sufficient to pass a course would be prevented from participating in commencement, thus faculty often give their final exams early (e.g., the week before finals week, what is traditionally called dead week). To deal with this situation, UNL would like to investigate a change in the academic scheduling and perhaps provide a meaningful period of review for dead week (period in which no classes would be held) and provide adequate time for faculty to submit grades prior to graduation.

   The ensuing discussion revolved around what the other campuses were doing (e.g. submission of lowest possible grades, providing actual diplomas after final grades were due, etc.) and what the change in policy would mean for the other campuses, that enforcement of the current policies would help alleviate UNLs difficulty, and that additional information about the number of students impacted at UNL was needed. Wes Peterson decided to take the issue back to UNL to gather additional information.

3. Budget

   President Smith and Provost Noren provided a handout summarizing the UN System Budget Request for FY 2005-06 and FY 2006-07 (state appropriation budget). Both President Smith and Provost Noren emphasized that the request did not include salaries, but that a separate request to the Board of Regents for salary will be submitted.

   Wally Bacon (UNO) inquired if the new President will have the same budget. President Smith replied that probably, although the incoming president does have the authority to develop and submit their own budget request.

   Wally Bacon (UNO) inquired if funding for programs of excellence would continue and if there would be any new budget allocation. President Smith responded that funding would continue and that it is feasible that some programs would actually graduate, thus allowing another program to be designated. However, President Smith stated that the
Board of Regents would probably look unfavorably on campus who found some way to place all four quartiles of their programs in the programs of excellence.

4. Other

Wally Bacon (UNO) provided an update on the Dual Credit pilot program being conducted with UNO/Millard School District. The program is doing well, and they are asking to extend the pilot program an additional year so that assessment data can be collected and analyzed. The program provides quality college education at the high school level and has turned out to be a good promotion and recruitment tool for UNO. Only High Schools that have AP courses (credit) are eligible, and instructors in the high school work closely with the faculty at UNO to ensure quality is maintained.

Notes from the June Board of Regents Meeting (June 5, 2004). Special thanks to Senator Daryl Kelley for attending the meeting.

The Future of Higher Education Funding

In summary, the presentations built on President Smith’s previous talks that the future is bleak. Elizabeth Hoffman is the president of the Colorado system where the cuts have been much deeper. Laura Couturier, Associate Project Director of the Futures Project: Policy for Higher Education in a Changing World, Brown University. Terry Hartle, Senior Vice President, American Council on Education.

L. Dennis Smith:

Key financial issues
- Important to have a high percentage of population with college degrees
- Nebraska ranks in the 3rd quartile
- Higher Ed has fared better in other states
- In Nebraska Medicaid now equals higher ed funding

Elizabeth Hoffman and Laura Courturier:

Basically followed the enclosed power point.

Terry Hartle:

Issues and trends that are influencing what is going on in higher education:
- American higher education cannot exist without federal support. There may be a change in the relationship between the federal government and higher education. What Washington does will have a deep impact on higher education.
- Demography. Baby boom retirement (begins 2008) will increase deficits.
- Era of political partisanship. Political polls indicate that we will face another close election in the fall. Regardless of the winner – there will be no mandate.

The above three factors increases uncertainty and our ability to predict what will happen.

Contextual Issues and Debates in Higher Education:
- Enrollment Growth. In the next decade there will be a national growth in college student population. California is expecting an increase of 16-17%. Nebraska, however, is facing a 6% reduction.

Great strain will be experienced if the federal government does not help. In the last growth spurt (1975-1985) 500 new colleges were created. This will not happen. At this time education is not a primary priority, thus strain will be placed on existing resources.
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- Modified Student Aid. Presently, federal policy is based upon traditional (18-22 year old) students, but there will be a greater growth and a demand to help non-traditional students.

- Can federal government monitor how federal aid is effectively spent? Or will fly-by night distance learning centers with questionable credentials cash in on the government programs to help solve citizen complaints.

- Are colleges and universities accountable for the funds they receive? There may be a shift in the bureaucracy. For the past “30 years intellectual autonomy has been the practice.” We may not be able to do this in the future.

- Transfer of credit. How well our credit transfers to other institutions may become part of government criteria for accountability.

Notes from the August Board of Regents Meeting (August 6-7, 2004; Nebraska City).

The following is a summary of the power point presentation “Summer Sessions Analysis” by Jay Noren, Executive Vice President and Provost; John Christensen, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, UNO; Gail Latta, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UNL; Sheri Everts Rogers, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UNO; Kimra Schipporeit, Registrar, UNK.

Presentation provided a history and purpose of summer sessions and provided a summary of summer session direct expenditures for the three campuses for the period 1994-2003. Direct expenditures includes faculty, partial staff, partial operating costs, some decentralized departmental costs – excludes facilities, utilities, maintenance, some operating, and other indirect costs. Basically the budget reductions since 2001 have reduced support university wide for summer sessions.

Strategies implemented to achieve primary goal of maintaining access and credit hour production despite reduced funding included: enforced minimum class size policy, increased section sized and decreased numbers of sections, consolidating sections, proposed cancellation of upper division and graduate courses offered during fall and spring that did not have full enrollments.

Summary of the impact budget cuts on UNK Summer Sessions: 2001-2003
- Continuing budget reduction $71,375
- Course sections number reduced 30% (237-166)
- On average, section sizes increased:
  - Smallest sections (<15 students): -57%
  - Mid-size sections (15-25 students): -38%
  - Larger sections (25-50 students): +27%
- Enrollment reduced 12.8% (3,225-2,811)
- Credit hours reduced 10.6% (16,721-14,945)

Recent Trends in 10-year Context: UNK
- UNK summer session headcount enrollment reduced 13% between 2001-2003
- UNK summer session credit hour production reduced 11% between 2001-2003
- UNK summer course sections undergraduate/graduate reduced 30% between 2001-2003
- The largest decrease took place in 2003

In summary, despite budget cuts, headcount and credit hour reduction minimized by increased section sizes. Unfortunately, increasing sections sizes and decreasing the number of sections reduced the breadth of options for students and increased the number of students per faculty member.
Future Directions: Where Do We Go From Here?
- Alternative publication and marketing strategies for next year
- Adjust summer schedules to offer classes in different formats responsive to students’ needs
- Survey students summer needs (UNK: Pilot survey late July)
- Educate students on benefit (focus on single subject, reduce time to graduation)

Sandy Scofield, Director, Nebraska Rural Initiative led a panel discussion of the activities and progress of the Rural Initiative. Panel members included:
- Anne Byers, Community Information Technology Manager, Nebraska Information Technology Commission provided an overview of the Technology Activities.
- Odee Ingersoll, Director, Nebraska Business & Development Center, UNK, summarized the Business Development Activities.
- Jim Walter, Associate Dean, College of Education and Human Sciences, UNL presented the Activities Related to the Future of Rural Education.
- Mike Sitorius, Chair, UNMC Department of Family Medicine; Chair, UNMC Rural Health Education Network and Director of the Nebraska AHEC Program Office summarized the Activities Related to the Future of Rural Health Care.
- Alan Tomkins, Director, Public Policy Center, UNL summarized the activities undertaken by the Public Policy Center and Water Initiative.

Some of the activities undertaken by the Rural Initiative include:
- The Communities of the Future Team has been formed through a partnership with Cooperative Extension and engages seven educators and one specialist in fulltime community development work across the state. They are also responsible for documenting lessons learned to inform future University work.
- University students perform internships across the state to bring skills and technology to communities, businesses and nonprofits while building relationships for the future. Interns in 2004 work in Clay Center, Lexington, Knox County, Northeast RC&D (Plainview), Ord, Phelps County, Thedford, Wayne, Wisner, West Point and with two nonprofits: GROW Nebraska and The Nebraska Community Foundation.
- A map of DSL and wireless technology available across the state has been developed and will be continuously updated and expanded to assist economic developers and small business find broadband availability across Nebraska. The map will be posted on the web for continuous updates by communities. The Nebraska Telephone Network has expressed interest in being a cosponsor.
- The Rural Initiative is a member of the steering group for Technologies Across Nebraska which brings together over 40 organizations statewide to raise awareness of technology infrastructure and policy issues and works to educate the state on the applications of technology to increase competitiveness and quality of life.
- Software has been developed to facilitate the transfer of small businesses and professional practices to the next generation of owners and to encourage new entrepreneurs. After testing it will be released in fall of 2004. The Nebraska Business Development Center at Kearney is a partner on this activity. The Nebraska Press Association will partner with us to test the software.
- Training in e-commerce, e-government, emerging technology, leadership, entrepreneurship development, procuring federal contracts, rural tourism and small business management is provided.
- A memorandum of understanding with Nebraska USDA sponsored RC&D’s is being developed to connect with regional development organizations.
- Collaboration between the Ford Foundation’s Rural Community Colleges Initiative will engage Rural Initiative and Cooperative Extension staff in working with McCook and Little Priest Community Colleges.
- Publications and collaboratives to promote business and innovation in rural Nebraska have been developed. The Rural Initiative is an active partner with the Department of Economic Development and the Nebraska Rural Development Commission.
• Research clusters are supported. A cluster devoted to encouraging student entrepreneurship and research on networking to benefit small business and entrepreneurship was formalized and funded in July 2004.

• A statewide clearinghouse of information is being developed on the web in cooperation with the UNL Library to include rural oriented service providers and value added agriculture.

• The Director of the Rural Initiative serves on the board of the Rural Policy Research Institute which is a partnership between NU, University of Missouri and Iowa State, the Nebraska Rural Development Commission and the Nebraska Business Development Center

The Rural Initiative can be contacted at: http://ruralinitiative.nebraska.edu