Members: M. Bacon, N. Bacon, Barnes, Betanabhatla, Boucher, Boyer, D'Souza, Dwyer, Edick, Elder, Gershovich, Heidel, Hewins-Maroney, Holley, Ilcisin, Lamsam, Mei, Miller, Morcous, Mordaunt, Noble, Novikov, Ottemann, Parnell, Paterson, Sollars, Stanton, Tarry, Thorp, White, Winter

Excused: Chundi, Reames, Reilly, Smith

Absent: Lin, Tixier y Vigil

Presentation: Steve Bullock and Lanyce Keel addressed accreditation and assessment initiatives on campus (AQIP and myMAPP)

I. The meeting was called to order at 2:20 p.m.

II. The January 16, 2008, minutes were approved as written.

III. Officers’ Reports

A. President’s Report: Senator Tarry

1 The Board of Regents met on January 18, 2008. The Regents heard a presentation from the Office of the Provost regarding graduation rates as they relate to the Board's accountability measure which calls for each campus to maintain or reach the average six-year graduation rate of its peers. The data show that UNO has moved from being 15.4% below its peer average in 2001 to 3.8% below its peer average in 2006. This improvement is noted by the Board, but there is concern that UNO's 2006 40.1% six year graduation rate is considerably below the rates for UNL (62.6%) and UNK (51.7) even though UNL has fallen 6.1% behind its peer average after closing the gap to 4.3 in 2005. One of the key issues here is whether or not graduation rates as calculated by the board are the best indicator of the university's efforts to move students along towards the successful completion of their degree programs. Not included in these statistics are rates of completion for students who transferred in and completed their degrees at UNO or students who transferred out and completed their degrees elsewhere. The impact of transfer students on a metropolitan campus is thought to be higher than at other types of campuses and should probably be taken into account. Tuition rates continue to receive attention from the Board as they begin to grapple with a likely funding
shortfall in the second year of the biennium. While the Regents' accountability measure calls for a tuition increase of no more than 6% for the coming year, there is discussion of lower rates of increase. In response to a call from the Student Regent from UNL to link or index tuition to the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) which would put the total tuition increase at 3.5% for the coming year, Regent Hawks asked Varner Hall to provide analysis that would show the impact of a tuition increase at that level. While there does not seem to be much support for linking tuition increases to the HEPI, there is apparently growing concern among the Regents that tuition is increasing too much. It is important to point out, however, that UNO, UNK, and UNL remain below their peers in terms of tuition costs and behind the same groups when considering the rates of increase in recent years. UNO is closest to its peer average in terms of tuition costs and the rate of increase over the last ten years. President Milliken provided an update on Need-based Financial Aid. He reported his interest in extending the Tuition Assistance Plan (TAP) to include students from families who are just beyond the Pell Grant eligibility threshold, which is currently the trigger for TAP support. This effort will require additional state aid as well as private support for the initiative. The Board is considering the President's call for more funding of need-based aid within the university's budget. Related to the need-based aid initiative is the newly announced William H. Thompson Learning Communities program which was unveiled at the Board's meeting by Provost Pratt. The Thompson Scholars program will expand the Buffet Scholarship program by adding as many as 139 funded students at the three undergraduate campuses within the system. The learning community concept was an important condition of the funding for the program because there is increased concern that students in need of financial support are also likely to need academic and social support. More information is expected on this program as it is rolled out on each of the three campuses. Regent Ferlic introduced a motion opposing the Connerly petition initiative which seeks to place limits on the use of race, gender, and ethnicity among other characteristics in the development and support of programs designed to enhance diversity within the university. Carmen Maurer, Associate General Counsel for the University of Nebraska, addressed the Board on the implications of the Connerly petition and suggested that, if passed, the university would have to look carefully at many of the programs it has used to enhance opportunities for under-represented students and faculty. Regent Ferlic's resolution passed and he asked that a copy of Chancellor Perlman's speech from UNL's Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast be appended to the resolution. The Board also heard presentations on the use of indirect or facilities and administration (F&A) funds which are recovered from external grants and help fund university operations as well as the development of research infrastructure. These presentations from UNMC and UNL highlighted differences in the approaches the campuses take to allocated F&A dollars once they reach campus, but also emphasize the importance of these funds in the competition for future research awards. UNL in particular emphasized the use of F&A dollars to support the redevelopment of the Whittier Building for research labs and related space. This project was discussed in the context of UNL's efforts to take over the current State Fair Park and convert the property into a public-private "innovation campus." There are a number of issues that need to be addressed before this plan can be implemented, namely the relocation of the State Fair to a new site.
Apparently, a few Nebraska communities are seizing the opportunity to wrest the State Fair away from Lincoln. The SIS project continues to roll along and the University is preparing its deficit request for the legislature. The university's task has been eased somewhat by a pledge from the governor to include $10 million in his 08-09 budget. The governor's pledge comes in response to the university's willingness to include the Nebraska State College System in the SIS project. The deficit request will go to the Appropriations Committee in February and the Governor and Legislature are expected to agree on adjustments to the 08-09 budget in April.

2 The Executive Committee and UNO Administration met January 23, 2008. The Chancellor reported reactions to the Regents' concerns about six-year graduation rates and tuition increases. He discussed the potential impact of tuition increases below the 6% accountability measure. The administration will continue to monitor tuition discussions. Sr. Vice Chancellor Everts provided an update on the Sr. Vice Chancellor search. Interim Vice Chancellor Totten provided an update on the VC for Business and Finance search. Both searches are in the process of bringing four finalists for each position to campus. Wade Robinson provided an update on the HPER project and the work of his committee to select a design firm. He noted that the concept for the building has been updated through the process of selecting the architects for the renovation and expansion. There is some concern that the campus community does not understand the impact the new parking garage located near the new residence halls will have on parking for faculty and staff. In short, the vast majority of the stalls in the new garage will be allocated to students living in the residence halls. These students will have a spot in the garage, but will not be allowed to park elsewhere on campus, which should free up spaces for students and potentially for faculty and staff as well. Unfortunately, the HPER project, which is slated to start in fall 08 will necessitate the closure of the lots that currently serve that building. The administration pledged to continue its efforts to share information about parking as broadly as possible. Robinson also noted that a number of faculty are not submitting grades by the published deadline. In addition to a paperwork headache for the units and colleges involved, there are more significant consequences for students, which include negative impact on financial aid, employment status, and eligibility for awards. The administration encourages the faculty to meet the deadline for the submission of grades to minimize the adverse impact on students. The Chancellor discussed the potential impact of the Connerly petition on the university and urged the senate to consider the issue carefully given the likely consequences for a variety of programs on campus if the petition succeeds.

3. President Tarry announced that Associate Vice Chancellor Smith-Howell has asked the Senate to work on a slate of candidates for membership on the NEW **Chancellor's Advisory Committee for Inclusiveness & Diversity**. The Rules Committee will work on this during their 2/27/08 meeting. A resolution will be brought to the Senate during the March meeting. The Rules committee has a list of individuals who expressed interest in the now disbanded **Chancellor's Comm. on Multicultural Affairs** from the spring 2007 survey.
IV Treasurer’s Report: Senator Sollars presented the January 2008 budget report.

V. Executive Committee: Senator Barnes

The following motion from the Executive Committee was introduced by President Tarry while Senator Barnes moderated discussion. Resolution passed unanimously by voice vote:

Resolution 2896, 2/13/08: Opposing LR233CA

WHEREAS, an educated citizenry is among the highest policy goals of any democracy; and

WHEREAS, the University of Nebraska at Omaha serves the interests of the State of Nebraska and all of its citizens by providing educational opportunities that make Nebraska more competitive in the global economy; and

WHEREAS, the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s efforts to create a more diverse faculty, staff, and student body serve the educational interests of its students by attempting to provide the most inclusive environment for their personal and professional development; and

WHEREAS, despite clear evidence that they are ultimately able to meet the challenges of and reap the benefits from higher education, certain groups within our state remain woefully under represented in Nebraska’s colleges and universities and in certain disciplines within the university; and

WHEREAS, the State of Nebraska already suffers by not fully engaging under represented groups in educational opportunities that would improve their lives and enhance their communities; and

WHEREAS, the University of Nebraska at Omaha has developed and implemented a number of policies and programs that take into account, among other factors, race and gender in an effort to address this challenge and has done so in ways that are consistent with the relevant decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States as well as state and federal statutes that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin and disability; and

WHEREAS, LR233CA introduced by Senator Mark Christensen in the Nebraska Legislature seeks to amend the Nebraska Constitution in ways that would eliminate the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s lawful and beneficial strategies for promoting diversity, inclusion, and the fullest development of our state’s most important asset, its people;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Faculty Senate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha affirms its support for programs and policies that serve the broad and legitimate interests of the state by providing educational opportunities to all of the state’s citizens; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Faculty Senate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha believes the consequences of the proposed amendment to the Nebraska Constitution will include the elimination of lawful strategies for engaging under represented groups in higher educational opportunities as well as a real reduction in the economic and social benefits that accrue to the state as a whole; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Faculty Senate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha opposes LR233CA and urges members of the Legislature to vote against it.

VI Standing Committee Reports

A. Committee on Academic and Curricular Affairs: Senator Sollars reported the committee met on January 30, 2008. In attendance: Gershovich, Morcous, Reames, Sollars. A Student Senate Resolution was presented to A&CA by the Speaker of Student Senate (Nathan Edwards) for our consideration. The resolution requests all faculty be required to include their grade appeal policy in their syllabi. It was adopted in 2005 and again in October 2007. Discussions in earlier meetings of the A&CA this year produced questions regarding the need for such a policy. However, after numerous requests, information from the Student Senate has not been forthcoming. We discussed the issue in detail at the current meeting and determined that no resolution from the Faculty Senate was appropriate at this time. Further, Scott Tarry noted that the Student Senate Resolution of 2005 was brought to A&CA in the past. The previous A&CA Committee requested changes to the undergraduate course catalog to make the information more accessible to students. We noted that the information appeared to be readily available in the student catalog. The Committee continued with a spirited discussion regarding possible formulation of a resolution regarding student Jury Duty and classroom attendance. We are in the process of writing a resolution likely to be presented to Faculty Senate next month.

B. Committee on Educational Resources and Services: Senator Boucher reported the committee met on January 23, 2008. Members present: Senators Boucher, Boyer, Parnell, Stanton, Thorp; Members absent: Senator Ottemann. We will finalize the deadline and category/award amounts for the Paul Beck Memorial Scholarship during our February meeting. We discussed ideas for requesting donations for the scholarship, and will obtain more history about the scholarship from the library archives. We also discussed library issues related to our previous meeting, and will be following-up on some unresolved questions with Dean Shorb. Senator Parnell plans to attend a Course Evaluation Task Force meeting on February 7. The Task Force provided a report from their previous meetings, and are now examining the possibility of using outside vendors.

C. Committee on Faculty Personnel and Welfare: Senator Hewins-Maroney reported the committee met January 23, 2008. Members in Attendance: Dr. Karen Dwyer, Dr. Griff Elder, Dr. Jack Heidel, Dr. Jay White, and Dr. Barbara Hewins-Maroney (chair). Members Absent: Dr. Meredith Bacon.

Revisions to the Regents’ Policy for Emeritus Status

The committee met and discussed the draft of revisions to the Regents’ Policy for
Emeritus Status. The FPWC reviewed input from senators and other faculty and felt the report was acceptable; however, further clarification was needed regarding the origination of the request for emeritus status. Subsequently, wording regarding the origination of the award was forwarded to Dr. Pratt, University Executive Vice President and Provost. Further discussion on the topic indicated that information regarding the difference between emeritus and retired faculty should be more widely known among the faculty.

Twelve-Month Concept
The FPWC continues to discuss the twelve-month concept. Committee members agreed that they would like more information on the initiative and the rationales regarding how the concept will improve and affect the teaching, research, and service obligations of UNO faculty.

Funding for Endowed Professorships
The availability of funds to support endowed professorships was an issue brought to the FPWC’s attention during the fall. The FPWC will invite a representative from the University Foundation to its February meeting to provide further details on the funding.

U.S. Academic Culture
The ad hoc group continues to work on this project.

Mentoring
Most of the deans have responded to the request to provide information on faculty mentoring efforts at the university. The committee will review the material and the responses from the UCLA survey, so it can make more cogent recommendations on mentoring for tenure track, untenured, and part time faculty.

The Committee on Faculty Personnel and Welfare wishes to thank all faculty who provided input during its review of the proposed revisions to the Regents’ Policy for Emeritus Status.

D. Committee on Goals and Directions: Senator Reilly submitted this report of the committee meeting. In attendance were: Robert Smith, Doug Paterson, Jayaram Betanabhatla, Laura Ilcisin and Hugh Reilly. We discussed the potential impact the "Building Bright Futures" and the new "Thompson Learning Community" programs might have on UNO. We are continuing to research both programs and are preparing a draft of a resolution to help us to prepare for the potential impact of these two programs. We believe the bulk of the students that qualify for these programs will be attracted to UNO and we want to be prepared as possible to meet their needs.

E. Committee on Professional Development: Senator Noble reported that on January 30, 2008, the committee met and discussed the final version of the “research climate survey”. The survey is scheduled to be an addendum to the “UCLA survey” which is scheduled for a February 12th release. The committee discussed ways to optimize faculty response to the survey, and how we were going to go about dispersing results from the survey. We hope to urge faculty senators to implore colleagues from their respective units to participate in the survey process. A meeting has been established with Deb Smith-Howell and her office to discuss a potential workshop to educate participants on how to effectively evaluate teaching effectiveness (beyond course evaluations) from myMAPP entries. Senators Present: Noble, Novikov, Lamsam Senators Absent: Winter, Mei, Tixier y Vigil
F. Committee on Rules: Senator Miller reported the committee held a January 2008 electronic meeting. Committee members approved the new design and wording for the spring recruitment flyer. They also approved mailing dates and due dates for both the print version and the email version of the spring recruitment flyer.

VII. Non-Senate Committee Reports

A. Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska (AFCON): Senator Paterson reported the board met February 9, 2008, in Lincoln Nebraska.

President’s Report: Comer said that Sarah Swift had not responded to AFCON’s request that she be a student board representative. Comer noted that someone had made a donation in her name to the National Coalition Against Censorship Activities (www.ncac.org/) and that organization might be a good match with AFCON.

Treasurer’s Report: McMurtry distributed copies of the treasurer’s report, showing a balance of $951.06, with six individuals and three organizations current with dues. Ball noted that the IRS requires non-profit organizations to file an e-postcard of form 990N annually or risk being fined. He has filed the e-postcard for this year.

Newsletter: (Black) The next deadline for the Sentinel will be Feb. 25.

Legislation Report: Board members are urged to contact their respective organizations to enlist their support of the Student Free Expression bill.

Paterson called attention to the plight of the North High School drama department, which was forced to move its production of Carson McCuller’s drama, The Member of the Wedding, off campus, when the school administration cancelled performances at the school. Ball volunteered to write letters to the Omaha World Herald and the school administration, stating AFCON’s support of the drama department.

Old Business: Ball has updated the AFCON website, including current officers, membership lists and newsletters in PDF format. Ball attended the Writers Guild Meeting recently in York. The directors had considered not renewing their AFCON membership, in part due to the fact that their membership had dropped from 300 to 125 members. After Ball’s presentation, the Guild did decide to remain an AFCON member.

New Business: Members reviewed the AFCON membership brochure and made corrections and updates.

B. Graduate Council: Professor Blair wrote that the Graduate Council met February 12, 2008. The minutes of the January 14, 2008 Graduate Council were approved. It was noted that Nicole Kirsten, Assistant to the Graduate Dean, is now on Family Medical Leave and that will temporarily impact the efficiency of the office. The Graduate Dean, Deb Smith-Howell, discussed several items of interest to the Council. She discussed her attendance at the Executive Graduate Council which met February 5 in Lincoln. Dean Smith-Howell and 2 representatives from UNO Graduate Council meet periodically with Graduate College representatives from the other 3 campuses to discuss topics of mutual interest and well as approve programs and other academic requests. This past meeting the Executive Council heard a grade appeal. They also approved an MA in Art History at UNL. At the Executive Council they also discussed the nominating process for Graduate College members who are not hired at that level.
Provost Linda Pratt will be distributing an electronic newsletter to Graduate College members in the near future. Committees A and B gave brief reports. Committee A continues to work on revising the Graduate College Strategic Plan. One of the first tasks for Committee A will be coordinating input to a new strategic plan from graduate faculty. March 10, the Graduate Council will meet at Peter Kiewit Institute to begin the strategic planning process. Later graduate program chairs will be asked to provide input on mission, goals, and strategies. Committee B approved several new course syllabi and areas of concentration. No New Business was raised.

C. Strategic Planning Steering Committee: Senator Smith submitted this written report. The Strategic Planning Steering Committee met Wednesday, January 23, 2008 in the Chancellor’s conference room and was presided by Dr. B. J. Reed. The sole topic of the meeting was the Strategic Planning Event scheduled for Friday, February 15, 2008 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Milo Bail Student Center Ballroom. The focus of the forum will be community engagement. About 300 community leaders have been invited to attend and about 15% are expected to respond with their presence. Faculty are invited and encouraged to attend at least a portion of the forum as individual schedules allow. Faculty were mailed invitations to attend from the Chancellor during the week of January 21. Students and staff will also attend. Presentations and table discussions will ensue. Organizations to make presentations include the Nebraska Shakespeare Festival, United Way Neighborhood Center, Service Learning Academy, IS&T Supercomputer Facility, UNO Collaborative Institute, UNO School of Social Work, OPS Magnet Schools, and First National Investment Fund. Information gathered during the forum will be disseminated in various ways, including on the Strategic Planning website.

VIII. New Business

A. University Wide Teaching Award: At last week’s Executive Committee & Cabinet meeting, Senator Miller, as requested by her constituents, asked the Senate to look into why the University Wide Teaching Awards have never been awarded to Instructors or Lecturers. Should there be an award just for Instructors of Lecturers? President Tarry asked the Faculty Personnel & Welfare Committee to look into this.

B. Processing and Policies of Student Evaluation of Instruction Forms: Also at last week’s Executive Committee & Cabinet meeting, Senator Miller asked the Senate to look into the difficulty in handling Instructor Evaluations. This includes missing or lost packets, student workers scanning the evaluations along with possible breach of confidentiality, and if there are any official policies on how to handle Evaluations. President Tarry asked the Educational Resources & Services Committee to look into this.

C. Bomb Threat Discovered in Arts & Sciences Hall: During the Executive Committee & Cabinet meeting it was noted that someone discovered a bomb threat written on a rest room wall in ASH. It was reported to the proper authorities. The threatened bombing was about two weeks away - - February 14. Has this been handled well? Should more information have been given, especially to those working or taking classes in
ASH? President Tarry will talk with Tim Kaldahl, Director, University Relations. Also discussed were text messages not getting through to those who thought they had signed up for them.

IX The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.