

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Adenwalla, Belli, Buan, Dawes, Fech, Hanrahan, Leiter, Purcell, Renaud

Absent: Franco Cruz, Peterson, Vakilzadian

Date: Tuesday, November 13, 2018

Location: 203 Alexander Building

Note: These are not verbatim minutes. They are a summary of the discussions at the Executive Committee meeting as corrected by those participating.

1.0 Call (*Hanrahan*)

Hanrahan called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

2.0 Faculty Rights Document (Professor Woodman)

Woodman noted that a subcommittee of the Senate was formed last year to look at documents and policies relating to faculty rights and to create a resource document that would include information on all of these policies and documents. He reported that the subcommittee included Professor Hames, Anthropology; Professor Minter, English; Professor Renaud, College of Journalism and Mass Communications; and himself. He noted that the subcommittee also met with Assistant to the Chancellor Tami Strickman who was very cooperative and helpful in making suggestions with the document.

Woodman stated that the idea is to include the finalized Faculty Rights document with the Senate's Professional Ethics Statement and it is important to make sure that administrators receive a copy of the document. He noted that relevant Board of Regents Bylaws and Policies would be included at the end of the document.

Woodman stated that his goal is to get feedback from the Executive Committee so the document can be improved and eventually voted on by the Faculty Senate. The Executive Committee reviewed the draft document suggesting revisions and identifying clarifications that needed to be made in the document.

Fech pointed out that the document would be great for onboarding new faculty members and suggested that it be distributed at the new faculty orientation meeting.

3.0 Senior Associate to the President Marjorie Kostelnik

3.1 Where are we in the implementation of the BRT recommendations?

Kostelnik reminded the Executive Committee that the BRT process began due to the State rescinding \$46-49 million of the University's budget after the University received the funds. She pointed out that the University received three budget cuts within 14 months.

Kostelnik reported that the BRT process was based on three criteria: to spare the academic programs as much as possible, to keep tuition as low as possible, and to find best practices that would allow us to continue finding savings over time. She noted that one of the goals of the BRT process was to try to reduce the pressure of the cuts on the academic faculty and students, but she acknowledged that reducing services still affects faculty in challenging ways.

Kostelnik reported that we have recently finished stage two of the budget reduction process. During this stage the budget cutting proposals were put forward to the campuses and feedback was gathered. She assured the Executive Committee that the feedback was read/heard and proposals were revised based on feedback received from all four campuses.

Kostelnik stated that we have now entered stage three of a five stage process - Stage Three is called Interim Products. She said that during this phase comparisons of intended inputs, processes and outcomes will be made with actual inputs, processes, and outcomes. These processes will be refined, and long-range standards for accomplishment will be developed. She noted that the entire BRT Evaluation model is based on an academic model introduced by scholars such as Robert Stake, a Nebraska native who began his career at UNL, and Malcom Provus. The model should help us better understand what has happened, what we are actually doing and what our next steps could be in terms of budget reductions and efficiencies. She pointed out that different operational units will finish stage three at different times.

Purcell stated that she understands that funds were taken away, particularly with the mileage reimbursement, but she wanted to know if money was taken away from other places. Kostelnik reported that reducing the mileage reimbursement proposed to save at least \$350,000-\$370,000 a year for a total of nearly \$700,000 for two years. She pointed out that the mileage reimbursement rate affects anyone in the university system who uses their own vehicle to conduct university business, and noted that this is a two-year strategy that will be re-evaluated at the end of the two-year period. She stated that there are some BRT strategies that could possibly be short-term time frame, while others involve a reorganizations that will be permanent. She pointed out that the university lost 118 staff positions with the budget cuts. She stated that one question that needs to be addressed is whether we have been able to adjust to our reductions.

Kostelnik reported that Human Resources, Information Technology, Procurement, and Facilities Management reorganized their structures so they could still deliver their services while reducing the number of people employed. She stated that each unit tailored their operations so they could continue to do their work effectively, but do it more efficiently.

Kostelnik stated that during stage four, Established Products, we will look at our efficiencies to see if they are sufficient. However, she pointed out that this will be challenging because we do not know what the state's budget will be from year to year. She stated that stage five, Program Efficacy, will probably happen in two to three years.

At this stage we will see if we can make additional refinements to the processes we have developed and the outcomes we are achieving so that there are continued savings.

Kostelnik reported that an example of efficiencies that have taken place is with Facilities Management. She pointed out that with this type of service you still need on-campus personnel to maintain each campus, but some positions, such as the architects, can work across the system. She noted that the university is still work on trying to figure out if this kind of savings can be found elsewhere within the operations of the university. She stated that the campuses are still adjusting to changes in procedures and processes, so we are at what can be called a mechanical state of adoption (not entirely smooth or routine). Eventually the changes will become routinized to the point that they can be done more fluidly. She reported that in order for the budget efficiencies to be considered successful, there needs to be a 75% rate of routinization, and although we are not there yet, we are heading in that direction.

Buan asked if assessments are being made on whether we are actually saving funds when we assess the amount of labor and the costs associated with the BRT efficiencies. Kostelnik reported that there have been some assessments and others will be developed. Buan pointed out that the travel policy requiring the use of Concur software to file an expense report for reimbursement is in her estimation causing faculty and staff to expend at least 10% more time. She asked if central administration is receiving feedback on the problems the faculty and staff are encountering with Concur, and what the plan is to get feedback from staff members who might be afraid to speak up about the problems. Kostelnik pointed out that the front end of any change is labor and time intensive, but once mechanical use of a new system becomes routinized, people become faster at the task. She noted that there is a lot of support inside the operations of Human Resources, Procurement, Financial Operations and Accounting, and Travel to support the staff. She pointed out that we cannot create efficiencies without there being some costs. At the same time, the campuses are developing feedback mechanisms to respond to concerns from faculty and staff as they arise.

Adenwalla stated that she has two concerns with Concur. The first is that faculty members are now having to spend their working time to file their expense voucher where it was previously done by the staff, which allowed faculty members to do what they were hired to do: to conduct research and teach. The other question is how the new travel policy saves money if the travel funds are paid through a faculty member's grant. She pointed out that research grants are not part of the state appropriations.

Purcell reported that another concern with Concur is that Extension Educators are now having to file their own expense vouchers because the County support staff, who used to file the expense vouchers for the Extension Educators, do not have access to the university's Firefly system, and this is adding to the faculty workload. Fech noted that the impact is substantial because this change involves about 200 people. Kostelnik thanked Purcell and Fech for this information and stated that she will point this out to individuals associated with Travel.

Hanrahan noted that he went through Concur to get reimbursed for a trip and it went through the approval process up until the last stage where it was returned to him because of an error. Buan stated that there seems to be this fallacy that requiring multiple approval processes improves surveillance of the use of funds, but when it creates so many different approval processes and those making the approvals are being inundated with the emails, then it could actually reduce surveillance.

Kostelnik pointed out that currently one reason why Concur may be challenging is because faculty and staff are in the mechanical stage of its use, and it has not yet become familiar and routinized. She noted that once its use becomes more familiar using Concur will not be as time consuming. She reported that some advantages to Concur is that it is an SAP and that enables the state colleges and the university to have a standardized way of handling travel expenses. She pointed out that using Concur will also provide the university with reliable data which will be used to help us get better services from vendors. She noted that Concur is considered an upgrade of SAP so the cost is not as high as if it was a standalone program, and it can be updated and refined as needed. She reported that there are over 800 staff members in the NU system whose jobs require them to assist with travel in some way. She pointed out that as people become more proficient in using Concur that savings will occur. Adenwalla asked if there are any figures on how much money can be saved in staff time as compared to the cost of the Concur program. Buan stated that UNK has been piloting Concur and she has heard that the problems being raised by the faculty are not being resolved. Kostelnik stated that she wants to hear the Executive Committee's concerns, but suggested that it might be better to have someone from the Travel Team speak to the Committee so they can address the Committee's concerns more directly.

Buan wondered how the efficiency of the Concur program will be evaluated, how long it should take to become routinized for people, and if the program would be discontinued if it is not saving money. She asked if there is a mechanism for leveraging our experiences with Concur. Kostelnik stated that these are good points and noted that we have expertise on campus that can help us address these concerns.

Kostelnik stated that feedback on Concur is important and will allow us to refine the system, but it could take multiple months for this to occur. She noted that if people have concerns that are part of the structure of Concur they should share this information. She noted that UNL just came online this semester with Concur so it is still in the earliest stages of adoption.

Kostelnik stated that in regards to research funds, when the research funds come into the university the use of the funds must comply with state and federal regulations (termed uniform guidance). Adenwalla stated that she understands the need to comply with regulations, but she resents having to go through Travel & Transport because they are oftentimes more expensive. She stated that the state's restrictions on reimbursement for meals is also a problem. Kostelnik pointed out that the new travel policy took into account some of these concerns and travel support staff will continue to address them.

Adenwalla asked why we have to use Travel & Transport. Kostelnik pointed out that within in the policy if you can find cheaper fares you can go with those fares. Adenwalla pointed out that employees still have to provide Travel & Transport with documentation that a rate is cheaper. Kostelnik stated that one of the reasons for using one travel agency is because of non-refundable tickets not being used. She reported that every year the university has the potential to lose nearly \$250,000 on non-refundable tickets. One requirement of T & T is to put unused tickets in a pool so travelers across campus can use them without loss of dollars whenever possible. Adenwalla asked how the travel policy changes save money. Kostelnik stated that when all of the travel savings are accumulated it amounts to nearly \$1 million a year. She stated that to date the university has realized \$22 million in savings from all of the BRTs. She pointed out that the Travel BRT included people from all four of the campuses and the policy was not developed by central administration.

Purcell asked if Concur was purchased before the BRT work was completed. Kostelnik stated that it was purchased following submission of BRT proposals in Phase 1, prior to the completion of the BRT work, with the approval of the Chancellors and the Board of Regents. In addition, it was purchased in conjunction with the state colleges which impacted the purchase rate. She noted that feedback was solicited for eight months as part of Phase 2 of the BRT process and forums were held on each of the campuses about the travel policies. She stated that the response received from the faculty at the UNL forum demonstrated a high level of frustration and concern. She pointed out that the travel policy today represents refinements of what was presented in January and the policy is not the same as what had been a first-draft proposal last year. For instance, faculty members reported that it is often cheaper for them to use Airbnb than a hotel, and the policy was changed to allow the use of Airbnb. She stated that there is a genuine effort to ensure that peoples' voices are being heard. Adenwalla pointed out that the faculty of UNL do a large portion of university research and travel on federal grants and they had grave concerns at the UNL forum because at that time only preferred hotels would be accepted. She stated that people were nervous because there did not seem to be the sense that the BRT understood research travel. Hanrahan pointed out that there is a sense of frustration at UNL because faculty members are still being paid less than our peers, we have seen some of the campus budget allocated to UNO and UNK, and there is the feeling that UNL is being carved up and ignored by Varner Hall.

Purcell noted that it has been reported that approximately \$350,000 is being saved through the reduced mileage reimbursement rate, but this is on the backs of the Extension Educators. Kostelnik pointed out that the change impacts anyone whose job requires travel and she wishes this was not the case. She noted that when the budget cuts were being tackled, staff made clear that the top priority was to try to save as many people's jobs as possible and to maintain the academic enterprise, even if the proposals were otherwise painful. She stated that travel remains a sensitive issue with faculty and that she understands the concerns that are being raised. She also hopes that people remember that academic programs are not being cut in large measure because of the BRT savings. Purcell pointed out that she can stay at a hotel with rates that are 150% more than the federal rate allowed, but if she drives she gets less than half of the federal allowed

mileage. Kostelnik stated that it is ultimately the state that approves the mileage. She noted that the federal rate was actually meant to be used as a tax deduction, not necessarily as a reimbursement. She reported that the state gave the university the approval to reduce the mileage rate and that some other universities are doing the same thing. She again stated, that the policy will be reviewed following 2019.

Buan asked if there is anything the faculty can do to push the legislature to accept per diem instead of itemized receipts. Kostelnik stated that the university is talking to the legislature about this issue and trying to explain how this would be a much better way to go. She stated that many in the university would really like to go to a per diem system. She stated that the university is trying to gather data and experiences from travelers on the use of a per diem to demonstrate that it would save money. Hanrahan asked if the university has reached out to the state agencies to see if a per diem would be advantageous to them as well. She stated that this is an idea to explore.

3.2 Update on Vacation Policy

Kostelnik reported that there will be no change with the vacation policy -- the 280 hours maximum will remain. She noted that the ¼ time sick pay-out allowance for staff that retire was grandfathered in, but it will not apply to new employees.

3.3 Update on desktop printers

Kostelnik stated that the desktop printer proposal did not go forward as originally proposed. Instead pilot testing is being done on the UNK and UNL campuses this fall. She noted that ink jet printers cannot be recycled because they contain some hazardous materials. She pointed out that it is not the cost of the printer that is the problem, it is the cost of the toner that adds up. She stated that as we find ways to save dollars, those strategies will be shared across the campuses.

Kostelnik thanked the Executive Committee for providing input and stated that she will refer the concerns to relevant implementation teams across the campuses.

4.0 Announcements

4.1 University Libraries Dean Search

Hanrahan noted that he has been contacted by EVC Plowman regarding individuals to serve on the search committee for the Dean of University Libraries and asked if the Executive Committee wanted to suggest some additional faculty members. The Executive Committee suggested faculty members from the biological and physical sciences. Hanrahan stated that he would send the additional names to EVC Plowman.

5.0 Approval of November 6, 2018 Minutes

The Executive Committee voted unanimously to accept the revised minutes.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Update on Ad Hoc Committee Addressing AAUP Censure

Hanrahan reported that the Ad Hoc Committee is now constituted with the following members: AAUP representatives are Professor Julia Schleck, English and Professor

Regina Werum, Sociology; Administrative representatives are Associate Vice Chancellor Judy Walker and Assistant to the Chancellor Tami Strickman; the Faculty Senate Representatives are Professor Christina Falci from the Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee, Professor David Woodman, School of Biological Sciences, Professor John Lindquist, Agronomy & Horticulture, Professor Kristen Blankley, Law College, and himself as President of the Faculty Senate. He stated that the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee is scheduled before the Thanksgiving break.

Hanrahan reported that the first task of the Ad Hoc Committee will be to define suspension. He noted that the Ad Hoc Committee will be broken into three subcommittees. One will work on defining instructors, another will review procedures and policies, and the third will look at the campus climate for academic freedom. Purcell asked when the proposed revisions to the university's free speech policy will be given to the Board of Regents. Hanrahan stated that he hoped that the Ad Hoc Committee would have something ready for the Board in January.

Fech asked what would happen if the Ad Hoc Committee did its work but the AAUP did not remove the censure. Hanrahan stated that there will be an on-campus visit by AAUP members and we will have to show that we are making progress to improve academic freedom on campus and that we have a better rapport with the administration. He stated that the one thing that could hinder the removal is in regards to restitution.

Leiter stated that he disagrees with the AAUP's comment that we need to improve the campus climate because he sees no evidence that academic freedom is in bad shape at UNL. Buan stated that she hopes that there can be mediated agreements between the university and the AAUP so we can move forward and have the censure removed. Hanrahan pointed out that would be difficult for the AAUP to say that academic freedom is an issue if the faculty feels that we are fine.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Questions for Chancellor Green and Vice Chancellor Boehm

Hanrahan asked the Executive Committee to send questions for the November 27 meeting with the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor to Griffin by Friday.

7.2 Statement on Academic Freedom/Free Speech

Hanrahan noted that he drafted a statement on academic freedom/free speech. He stated that the goal is to provide a statement for the campus that shows that the Faculty Senate supports academic freedom and free speech and also provides information on the history of why academic freedom is so important. He pointed out that it would not be a statement to address politicians.

Belli asked if the Senate should provide some real statements addressing the concerns of faculty members that have recently been targeted by politicians. He pointed out that the Senate has previously made resolutions that address academic freedom. Fech agreed and stated that the Senate needs to support the faculty, and noted that a request was made from a Senator to make a statement. Hanrahan pointed out that the request was to have

the Executive Committee discuss the issue. The Executive Committee discussed possible revisions to the statement on academic freedom and agreed to discuss the issue further at its next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, November 27, 2018 at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in 201 Canfield Administration. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Lorna Dawes, Secretary.