

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Adenwalla, Belli, Buan, Franco Cruz, Dawes, Fech, Hanrahan, Peterson, Purcell, Renaud, Rudy, Vakilzadian

Absent: Leiter

Guest: Associate VC Amy Goodburn

Date: Tuesday, September 11, 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 (*Rudy*)

Rudy called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

2.0 Associate VC Amy Goodburn

2.1 Update on Teaching and Learning Initiatives

Goodburn noted that last year she briefly mentioned the idea of developing a proposal for a new Teaching and Learning Center, and this year an abbreviated proposal for the Center for Transformative Teaching was created. She reported that there were several retreats with faculty and staff and focus sections with graduate students, as well as recommendations from the Student Matriculation Task Force to gather information needed for developing the proposal. She stated that strong Learning and Teaching Centers were also examined, both within the Big Ten schools and nationally, to see what makes these centers successful.

Goodburn stated that through a collaborative process initial priorities for the Center were identified: college-embedded instructional and pedagogical design consulting; provide opportunities for learning communities and cohort groups to meet regularly to discuss and investigate different topics of interest; provide individual instructor consultation on instructional innovations and improvement; to develop initiatives around curricular development, innovation and course transformation; provide inclusive teaching and learning pedagogies and promote instructor awareness and confidence in building inclusive classroom environments that support all students; have regular workshops, symposia, and institutes for all university instructors on teaching and learning topics; provide structured experiences for ongoing professional development around teaching and learning that may lead to university credentials or recognitions; provide research/scholarship of teaching and learning initiatives.

Rudy noted that there have been frequent comments that we do not onboard new faculty and graduate students very well, and asked if creating the Center would address some of these concerns. Goodburn stated that she believes the Center would help. She noted that

this summer a course was rolled out on Canvas called “Teaching at UNL” and it provides information on various policies such as grading and syllabi, but the Center could be a home resource center of needed information and resources for the faculty. She reported that an initiative is being developed on successful teaching with affordable resources. She noted that we just purchased membership with an open textbook consortium and there are some faculty members working with Kelly grants that are being funded.

Goodburn pointed out that right now we have embedded in the colleges 13 instructional design technology people and these people help support instructors across delivery systems, from online to hybrid to face to face instruction. She stated that the idea is to bring these 13 instructional designers into the Center and to hire a new director to oversee the Center. Adenwalla asked if the instructional designers are disciplined based? Goodburn stated that two new instructional designers are being hired and the colleges will participate in the searches and vet those instructional designers for their disciplinary expertise. She stated that faculty members can email the instructional design team and the Center can determine which of the instructional designers would be best for the faculty member to work with.

Adenwalla asked if the instructors can assist with course design. Hanrahan stated that the designers can do this and will help give your strategies to make improvements. Renaud stated that he has had a very positive experience working with an instructional designer and faculty members should take more advantage of working with these people. Goodburn stated that the process is very iterative and the designers will meet with you to determine what you feel are the priorities for your students.

Goodburn reported that there are other units on campus that have expertise, such as the University Libraries, and they are being asked to collaborate with the Center. She pointed out that there are many people on campus that provide teaching-focused services, and we are now trying to determine what all of our current resources are, and where they are located.

Goodburn reported that the Center will be located in Brace Hall. She noted that there is some extra space that could be used and a variety of classrooms that offer good demo spaces.

Goodburn stated that the plan is to launch a search for the director of the Center, but she wanted to vet the idea of the Center with the Executive Committee first to make sure everything is covered. She provided a list of the qualifications needed for Director of the Center and asked to get feedback from the Executive Committee on whether this list is complete. Hanrahan suggested that demonstrated teaching experience should be required. Buan stated that it is important that the person have higher education experience, and that a level of questions should be asked to determine if the individual has the skills to develop synthesis and a different level of pedagogy.

Adenwalla asked how the Center would fit into assessment of teaching. Goodburn reported that another taskforce is looking at the student evaluation form and reviewing it.

Buan stated that she is seeing more nurturing at the undergraduate level, but pointed out that it is important to have a graduate education where students feel prepared. She noted that going from an undergraduate to a graduate student is a big jump and some students have a hard time transitioning. She stated that she believes it is important for the director of the Center to understand this. Goodburn noted that she is sensing that the faculty needs to be able to respect the experience and qualifications for the director and the faculty want to know that the person has taught in a college classroom. Buan pointed out that requiring some level of experience would produce stronger candidates. Vakilzadian stated that knowledge of educational technology should also be required. He asked what happens if no candidates can be found with all of the required qualifications. Goodburn stated that the search would be considered a failed search.

Adenwalla asked how many members of the search committee have hands on experience. Goodburn stated that a director is needed to direct the staff of the Center and many of these staff members have Masters or Ph.D.s. She noted that there will be open forums and presentations expected of the candidates and all stakeholders will have the opportunity to attend the presentations. She welcomed any recommendations of people for the search committee.

Rudy asked how Huskers Dialogues went. Goodburn stated that there were 3,410 first-year students in attendance with 340 facilitators and the event went well. Renaud asked if some changes were made from last year's Huskers Dialogues. She reported that this year they worked with ASUN and a program called Converge that provided a 20-question survey to pair students with people that have very different perspectives from them. Goodburn stated that the facilitator training was changed. She noted that about 1800 students have completed the survey on the event and the planning committee will be meeting next week to debrief from this year and begin work on developing the event for next year.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Promotion and Tenure Policy

Belli reported that he is serving on a committee headed by Associate VC Walker to review the policy on promotion and tenure. He noted that the policy has not been revised since 2001. He reported that he mentioned in a meeting of the committee the recommendations that were made for best practices of non-tenure track faculty members. He stated that Walker had not reviewed the best practices report, but the P & T policy will be drafted to include recommendations from the best practices document.

3.2 Removal of Regents Bylaw 4.4.5

Purcell stated that Interim VC Nunez had reported that the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Regents is recommending the removal of Bylaw "4.4.5 County Employees of the Cooperative Extension Service of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln from the Bylaws." She pointed out that this Bylaw had been out of date for a considerable amount of time. She noted that the Faculty Senate asked that this Bylaw be removed a couple of years ago.

3.3 N150 Commission

Rudy reported that the N150 consultants are back on campus and are meeting with subgroups. He noted that the consultants will be back at the end of October and there will be forums for public comment.

3.4 Nebraska Union Board

Rudy stated that a faculty member is needed to serve on the Nebraska Union Board. He said that interested people should let him know.

4.0 Approval of August 28, 2018 Minutes

Renaud moved for the approval of the minutes. Motion seconded by Peterson and approved by the Executive Committee. There were two abstentions.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Non-tenure Track Faculty Survey

Rudy noted that Fech and Purcell have suggested some revisions to the survey making it more inclusive for Extension Educators. He thanked them for their work. He pointed out that we should not need two IRB's to do the survey.

Belli pointed out that it would be beneficial to have a comparable survey for tenured and tenure-leading faculty members because we do not have any information of this nature on them.

6.0 New Business

6.1 President's Newsletter

Purcell noted that a President's Newsletter was not sent out to the faculty before the September 4th meeting. The Executive Committee discussed the importance of maintaining communications with the faculty in order to make them aware of the work of the Senate.

6.2 Faculty Senate Meeting

Rudy stated that he was going to recuse himself as President for the remainder of the meeting and that President-Elect Hanrahan would moderate the meeting.

Rudy stated that he wanted to apologize to the Executive Committee for not informing them more clearly about what he planned to do at the September 4th Senate meeting regarding the presentation of the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award. He noted that he had drafted a letter of apology and he would like feedback from the Executive Committee on the letter. He stated that his plan was to send the letter to the Senators and to the English Department.

Belli thanked Rudy for the apology and stated that it was very helpful and constructive. However, he stated that there are two related issues. The first is Rudy's concern that there is a "mole" within the Executive Committee and that Rudy stated that he did not consult with the Executive Committee regarding his planned actions at the September 4th

Senate meeting because of his concern that the “mole” would leak information to the media. He pointed out that it is critically important for the Committee to understand what evidence Rudy believes he has that demonstrates that someone on the Executive Committee is leaking information to the media.

Belli stated that the second issue is that Rudy set about organizing the “Ad Hoc Committee to Review Policies and Procedures in Place and Executed Following the Suspension of Courtney Lawton”, and the Executive Committee never saw a final version of the charge for the Ad Hoc Committee nor had the Executive Committee had the opportunity to vote on it. He stated that at this time there is uncertainty about the Ad Hoc Committee, even though he has heard that committee members have been assigned, but they are anonymous. He pointed out that this creates distrust. He asked Peterson if members of an Academic Rights & Responsibilities Special Hearing Committee are anonymous. Peterson replied that they are not, but they are bound to confidentiality while serving on the Committee. Belli stated that the rationale for keeping the members of the Ad Hoc Committee anonymous is not appropriate. Rudy stated that the members of the Ad Hoc Committee need to be free to criticize the administration if they feel it is needed, and some of the members on the Committee are not fully promoted. Belli asked if there will be an overall report from the Committee. Rudy stated that there would be a report. Peterson stated that one option might be to set up the Committee with just tenured faculty members. Rudy noted that the Executive Committee suggested adding a graduate student to the Committee and pointed out that a graduate student has very little protection. Dawes stated that she did not think that an edict of the Committee is that it would criticize the administration. Rudy stated that the Committee should feel free to criticize the administration if they feel it is fair. He reported that he was contacted by several AAUP members who wanted the committee to have a lot of AAUP members on it. He stated that he believed the local AAUP chapter may be conducting its own investigation. He pointed out that he did not ask the Ad Hoc Committee members if they were members of the AAUP. Adenwalla stated that she believed it would be valid to have the viewpoint of an AAUP member on the Committee. Rudy stated that he did not recall the Executive Committee advocating that there must be an AAUP member on the Ad Hoc Committee.

On the matter of there being a “mole” on the Executive Committee, Rudy pointed out that many people on the Executive Committee have been contacted by the media over the past year. He noted that the media is usually seeking a document, and if you look at the August 17th Omaha World Herald article you can see that information is in the article that was discussed at the August 15th Executive Committee retreat so it was obvious that the media received advanced notice. Adenwalla stated that she does not understand which part of the OWH article was sensitive information. Rudy stated that there was some information included in a correspondence that was part of a chain of communication that did not include identifiers, and he deleted it immediately. He noted that the sensitive information would become public knowledge at some point, but it was leaked before it was intended. He pointed out that a copy of the draft syllabus of the Ad Hoc Committee was shared with the press and the press knew the type of people who would be on the Ad Hoc Committee.

Purcell stated that she believed that Rudy is claiming that the “mole” is being used to justify Rudy’s actions and also the responsibility of his own inactions. She stated that she is aware that Rudy considers her to be the mole. She pointed out that Chancellor Green copied her, as well as others, on every letter and email that he sent to AAUP, and every letter AAUP sent to Chancellor Green. She noted that she contacted VC Mark Askren to have him generate the Freedom of Information Act on all of her emails to the press to see if she leaked any information. She stated that Griffin received the documentation of the records and there is no indication that she leaked any information. Rudy stated that he had multiple requests via UNL email systems for information from members of the media that Past President Purcell was included on; in every instance Purcell strongly denied the request for information. Rudy has no evidence that would implicate Purcell leaked information, and in fact, the evidence he has exonerates Purcell.

Purcell pointed out that at the September 4th Senate meeting Rudy did not just recuse himself and sit down quietly; instead he made comments regarding the recipients of the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award that were negative and that negatively reflected on the Senate President and the Executive Committee. She read an excerpt from Robert’s Rules of Order on the duties of a President which basically states that the President’s main responsibilities are to facilitate meetings, protect the rights of members, and to remain impartial and fair.

Dawes stated that what concerns her is that Rudy made an assumption that information is being leaked, but he is not presenting any evidence of this. She observed that he used this assumption to reprimand the Executive Committee, and as justification for by not informing the Committee members until just a few minutes before the start of the Senate meeting (when many of them were in transit or already at the meeting) that he was going to recuse himself and there was no mention of the political statement he was going to make. She stated that she finds it troubling that he introduced the notion of a “mole” without providing any corroboration or evidence. She pointed out that this was not a good way to engender collegiality on the Executive Committee. She asked the Past Presidents on the Executive Committee if they ever had a leak during their term as President, and if so, how they handled it. She wondered whether Rudy’s behavior in dealing with the media would change if he were to remain President, and asked how the Past Presidents can help Rudy deal with the media.

Fech noted that he used his previous experience in dealing with the media as an Extension Educator when he was President. He stated that he operated on the basis that if information was clearly non-confidential he could provide some information to the media and would talk freely when he thought he could, but he remained extremely careful about what he said because he values the other members of the Executive Committee and would not want to misrepresent them.

Purcell noted that when she served as President her experience with the media was that reporters were very persistent and she urged the Executive Committee to be careful with their emails. Griffin noted that there had been in the past leaks of information, and the

Executive Committee was reminded that information shared in the meeting was confidential. It was also pointed out to the Committee members that leaking information, particularly after meetings with the administrators, would result in the administrators sharing less information with the Committee and would create a sense of distrust. She noted that it was not an issue again that year.

Adenwalla asked why Rudy thought someone acted maliciously. She pointed out that his accusations destroys the collegiality of the Executive Committee.

In getting back to Rudy's apology letter, Peterson suggested some revisions and stated that an apology is much better if the person owns up to the mistakes he/she made. Purcell stated that she has a hard time accepting Rudy's apology, especially given the email he sent to the Executive Committee stating that he did not want to reveal the statement he was going to make at the Senate meeting because of concerns that it would be leaked to the media.

Adenwalla pointed out that Rudy's personal opinion is his own personal opinion. However, when he is serving as the Faculty Senate President, he is representing the faculty and he needs to serve that role. Vakilzadian stated that the Academic Freedom Award went through the Senate process: nominations were made to the Academic Freedom Award Committee, the AFA Committee reviewed the nominations and recommended two people to the Senate, the Senate voted on whether the nominees should receive the award (Senate voted 48 in favor, 7 against). He stated that the President's personal feelings should not have been involved in the presentation of the award and to do otherwise would be unprofessional.

Adenwalla stated that the issue of trust was repeatedly coming up in this meeting, and the Executive Committee and the Faculty Senate could not be seen acting against the interest of the faculty. Renaud pointed out that the bottom-line is that if the Committee doesn't have trust, then it won't be able to accomplish anything. Renaud said the Executive Committee needed to find a way to restore trust. He stated that one way to do this would be to ensure the Ad Hoc Committee Reviewing the Procedures on the Suspension of Courtney Lawton had credibility. Peterson stated that this could be done by being very transparent with the Committee and by listing the names of the Committee members. Buan pointed out that the Executive Committee had not resolved what information needed to be considered confidential.

Fech asked what the next best steps would be to move forward. Hanrahan stated that Rudy making an apology was a good thing. Belli stated that the apology would be stronger if Rudy admitted that the manner in which he recused himself was a mistake. He stated that the second step would be to publically announce the members of the Ad Hoc Committee and to reinforce what the Committee's charge is.

Dawes questioned whether Rudy felt that he can handle the media as the President and wondered how he would respond to the media on other issues. Rudy pointed out that reporters can be very persistent and demanding. Renaud noted that this is how most

reporters operate. Dawes stated that she wanted to know if another member of the Executive Committee is implicated, whether Rudy would go and directly talk to that person first rather than making a blanket statement that implicated all the members of the Committee. Renaud pointed out that it is important that the President trusts the Executive Committee.

Franco Cruz stated that Rudy had provided no evidence that there was a leak and asked if Rudy expected the Executive Committee to just accept that there was a leak and move forward. Rudy stated that he does not have any physical evidence, but he still believes there is a "mole." Dawes stated that she found it difficult to work under this kind of suspicion. Buan asked if Rudy trusted the Executive Committee members. Rudy stated that he trusts the Committee members, but he still believed there was a mole. Griffin questioned whether Rudy would withhold information in the future from the Executive Committee, information that the Executive Committee should know about, because he is concerned that there is a leak. Franco Cruz noted that the leak could have been a mistake on the part of someone. Rudy stated that he did not believe this to be true because he thought there has been a leak of information more than once.

Hanrahan pointed out that the Executive Committee needed to say what it wanted Rudy to do, and if Rudy chose to accept the Committee's decision, the Committee could then move forward. If Rudy chose not to abide by the Committee's decision, then the Committee would need to decide on its next actions.

Hanrahan asked Rudy to step outside of the meeting to allow the Executive Committee to determine its next step. Rudy left the meeting.

Hanrahan asked what Rudy would need to do to bring this issue to a close. Vakilzadian pointed out that the issue of trust had not yet been resolved. The question was raised as to whether the Executive Committee wanted Rudy to resign as President. Buan suggested that Hanrahan ask Rudy to resign. Then she asked what the next step should be if Rudy refuses. Adenwalla made a motion that the Faculty Senate be presented with an option of whether to retain Rudy as President of the Faculty Senate. Motion seconded by Dawes. Renaud asked if the Committee was recommending that he resign, and suggested that he be given the option and if not, then a motion would be presented to the full Senate for its decision. He questioned what would happen if the Senate voted to retain Rudy as President and how the Executive Committee would function if the distrust still exists. He stated that he had a grand concern that the Senate will not be able to move forward if Rudy remains as President.

Hanrahan asked for a vote on the motion to put before the Faculty Senate the question of whether Rudy shall remain as President if Rudy refuses to resign. Motion passed 9 in favor, one against.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:53 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, September 18, 2018 at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in 203 Alexander Building. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Lorna Dawes, Secretary.