

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Adenwalla, Belli, Dawes, Fech, Hanrahan, Leiter, Peterson, Purcell, Renaud, Rudy

**Absent:** Buan, Franco Cruz, Vakilzadian

**Date:** Tuesday, September 25, 2018

**Location:** 201 Canfield Administration Building

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

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### 1.0 Call (*Rudy*)

Rudy called the meeting to order at 2:36 p.m.

### 2.0 Chancellor Green/Executive Vice Chancellor Plowman

**2.1 What do the Chancellor and EVC see as their role in improving and/or staunching the drop in the rankings? Are there suggestions, specific initiatives, money and/or concrete steps in the offing? How do they see the roles of the university as a whole, the upper administration, the colleges and the departments?**

Chancellor Green reported that there are numerous rankings with U.S. News & World Report being a frequent one, and recently the Wall Street Journal has created a new survey for ranking. He stated that for a period of time we were trending in the high forty rankings for public universities in the U.S. News & World Report, but we have dropped incrementally in recent years to 61 at the present, tied with Kansas and Missouri. He stated that this was in part due to the slight adjustments that the U.S. World News & Report has done in its rankings, as well as an expansion of the number of Universities classified as Carnegie R1s in the evaluation, as pointed out by Dr. Plowman. He noted that other universities, such as Iowa State, the University of Kansas, and the University of Missouri, as well as others have dropped in their rankings.

Peterson asked which universities had improvements in their rankings. Chancellor Green stated that the major private universities have always had high ranking, and more of them have had improved rankings. He stated that one public university example is Arizona State University which has improved in the past decade primarily through their growth. He noted that they had a huge increase in enrollment and they have changed their business operations which impacted their financial data used in the rankings.

Chancellor Green pointed out that there are only a limited number of ways to approach making improvements in our ranking and EVC Plowman's office has been very involved with this. He noted that one thing being done is to look at the accuracy of data being used in the rankings. He stated that there were some errors in the Wall Street Journal's data relative to the way faculty are counted and categorized. He reported that one area we get

hit hard on in the rankings is our faculty to student ratio. For example, the University of Michigan has 46,000 students, but 56,000 faculty and staff as compared to approximately 26,000 and 6,200 for UNL, respectively.

EVC Plowman stated that there is a new director for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics and she suggested that he could give a presentation to the Faculty Senate on the analysis that the IEA has recently conducted. She stated that IEA has identified at least four variables where we could make improvements for the rankings if we re-thought how we submit the required data. Several working groups from her office are looking at these variables for the next ranking. She stated that one score is based on the percent of class offerings that are larger than 50 students. Her office is looking at this variable for the next ranking. EVC Plowman stated that another variable has to do with alumni giving. She stated that some other universities are doing more creative fundraising to increase donations. Her office is also examining what we currently report to make sure it is accurate.

EVC Plowman stated that UNL's reputation (perception of presidents and provosts) is another area where we could possibly make some improvements. She reported that a strategy is being developed to encourage high school counselors to fill out the survey that is sent asking them to rate universities. Purcell asked if the survey is just sent to Nebraska high schools. EVC Plowman stated that the survey is distributed nationally.

EVC Plowman noted that another factor in our decline in rankings is due to changes made to the definition of classifications used in the rankings which has added more Carnegie I schools. She pointed out that the first four divisions in the rankings are largely private universities, but we should be able to rank better than we currently ranked.

Peterson asked if any checking is done to ensure that universities are submitting accurate data. Chancellor Green pointed out that the data is not totally self-reported, and it is assumed that information is correct, but we found that we were reporting faculty numbers incorrectly. EVC Plowman stated that there was a university that was caught falsifying data and that school was publicly shamed.

Adenwalla asked what proactive measures can be done in our quest to improve our academic reputation. She believes that faculty are looking to see how the administration is working to improve academic standards. EVC Plowman stated that we need to have a long-term strategy about raising our academic quality. Adenwalla pointed out that retaining faculty members, touting our successes, and getting more faculty fellowships are some ways to raise our academic quality. Chancellor Green agreed and noted that people have been hired in the Office of Research and Economic Development to do the things that Adenwalla outlined. He stated that there is a plan associated with targeting faculty members to get them further recognized through national and international awards for their accomplishments, and it has been successful in the past several years in increasing awards and recognitions of our faculty and staff.

Renaud asked if rankings have an impact on how we improve. EVC Plowman stated that currently the planning for improvements is being done in the colleges because this is where the faculty are hired and retained. Purcell recalled Chancellor Green stating that he wants to increase the academic rigor of the campus. Chancellor Green stated that he is looking forward to the N150 Commission's recommendations and strategic plan. He noted that he wished that we could increase funding that is necessary to compete with other universities in order to retain all of our faculty members. He pointed out that universities that suffered considerably during the 2008 recession have now recovered from it and are now competing heavily for faculty. Adenwalla asked how the administration lets faculty members know they are appreciated which might help to retain them. EVC Plowman noted that this needs to happen at the college and unit level. Adenwalla pointed out that departments and colleges have less discretionary funds and it is ultimately up to the administration to help provide the necessary funds to retain faculty members. EVC Plowman stated that her office quickly acts when it is brought to her attention that there is a retention problem with a faculty member, and she thinks that nearly half have wound up remaining when the issue was addressed. Hanrahan pointed out that there is concern that the response from the administration in the colleges is that there are no funds to help retain a faculty member because all lines have to be returned back to the EVC office, and there has to be justification for why the line should be returned to the department. Consequently, some units choose not to go through all of the effort. Peterson stated that one way to help retain faculty members is to provide a chaired position. EVC Plowman agreed and stated that we need more chairs and fellowships. She reported that every dean on campus is actively pursuing and thinking ahead in trying to retain faculty members.

**2.2 N150 Commission - What capital fundraising would be a part of the plan? What is the role of GTAs in the plan? What is the plan to provide funding for graduate students while increasing compensation so that there can be healthy graduate programs?**

EVC Plowman reported that the N150 Commission working groups have put together a set of bold suggestions for the strategic plan. She noted that a summary of the suggestions will be made public and there will be listening sessions about them during the month of October.

Rudy asked if there will be a capital campaign fundraiser in association with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Chancellor Green reported that there were long conversations with the NU Foundation on whether to use the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a platform for a capital fundraising. He noted that the last University of Nebraska Foundation capital campaign ended in 2014-15 and raised \$1.9 billion across the University system, but there is usually a gap of five years before the next capital campaign begins. He stated that the next one is set for initial development in 2020 and the plan is that the launch N150 strategic plan in 2019 will set the stage of what the capital campaign's focus will be. He reported that there is a need to raise programmatic funding to support more faculty and graduate students and to support endowed chairs for professors.

Hanrahan pointed out that some units are having to dip into their endowment funds to cover stipends for graduate students, and there is concern that this practice will erode the endowments. He asked if any replacement funds would be put into these endowments. EVC Plowman stated that this is an issue that needs to be addressed by the colleges and the units.

Adenwalla asked for clarification about the current fundraising campaign. Chancellor Green noted that currently an employee giving campaign is underway which focuses on scholarship support, as well as broad needs across the University. He pointed out that an employee campaign used to be done periodically, but because of the uncertainty of the budget this was not done for the past couple of years.

### **2.3 Administration's Committee to Review Policies and Procedures following Academic Freedom Issue**

Chancellor Green reported that EVC Plowman is leading this effort and he suggested that the administration's committee and the Senate's Ad Hoc Committee to Review Policies and Procedures in Place and Executed Following the Suspension of Courtney Lawton should work together. Rudy noted that the co-chairs of the Senate's Ad Hoc Committee are James O'Hanlon and Kristen Blankley.

EVC Plowman stated that her office thinks the first step would be to examine the procedures and processes that need to be fixed. She proposed that the working group of faculty from the Faculty Senate, faculty who are members of the AAUP, and the Associate to the Chancellor Mike Zeleny. She noted that Associate Vice Chancellor Judy Walker will lead the efforts. She pointed out that we have some policies and procedures that contradict each other and these need to be corrected. She stated that it would be great if the Senate's Ad Hoc Committee could work together with the administrative committee.

Belli noted that UNL's chapter of AAUP is having a meeting tomorrow to discuss the censure of UNL's administration and the plan is to discuss what the censure means for UNL, and what we can do to be removed from the censure list. He suggested that this might be something that the task force might want to participate in. EVC Plowman stated that we should rely on our shared governance approach and involve the Faculty Senate. Chancellor Green noted that Professor Julia Schleck is serving as the AAUP representative. Hanrahan stated that it would be helpful if one of the charges for the committee is to ask what steps need to be taken to remove us from censure. EVC Plowman agreed, and stated that she would be open to hearing what the Senate feels the committee needs to do.

Adenwalla noted that the committees can work together but they should still need to be independent. Rudy agreed and said that it should not become an administrative committee. Peterson suggested that there be a task force on how to move the UNL administration off of censure. Hanrahan suggested that the chair of the administrative committee should be a Faculty Senate representative.

## 2.4 Response to Gallup Survey

Chancellor Green stated that the overall results of the Gallup survey were very much in the mainstream of national data on most issues, which was a bit surprising given the national climate and dialogue as well as various events of the past year in Nebraska. He stated that he was not surprised by the responses on racial issues. He stated that we need to take the results of the survey, try to interpret them, and then have conversations in the units on where we need to make improvements. He suggested that faculty members study the survey and talk about what it means to their unit. He noted that Business & Finance has already done this. EVC Plowman reported that the Deans are planning to undertake this task, but she pointed out that there is no specific formula for how each college will do this because the colleges are so different. She noted that if we want to attract more diverse faculty we must recruit them heavily. She stated that the Deans talked about what could be done in the short-term and some colleges already have active diversity committees. She thinks everyone is sensitive to that fact that we need to do some things now.

Chancellor Green stated that one of the results that stood out is that our students do not seek out difficult conversations, and they do not feel like they can challenge someone in a discussion, outside of social media. He pointed out that we need to think hard about this to see how we can address the issue. Belli stated that he has seen similar things with students in the classroom. He noted that they are quieter and do not engage as much. Chancellor Green stated that he asked Professor Bruning, who was just awarded for 50 years of service at UNL, how we can be an effective learning environment, who indicated we need to continue to work hard on the learning environment as students and society change.

Rudy stated that there were some surprising things about the survey. He stated that conservative students had similar responses to Muslim students. Hanrahan pointed out that the survey showed that we were above the national average for conservative students feeling that they were free to express themselves at UNL.

Adenwalla reported that there was recently a Christian preacher in front of the Nebraska Union who was saying terrible things about Muslims and none of the students gathered around challenged him. She asked how that would make a first year student from a Muslim country feel. Chancellor Green stated that the bottom line is that we have work to do to make improvements, but we need to start at the units first.

## 2.5 BRT Impacts - How can administration help faculty increase amount and quality of creative activity or student contact and public engagement without requiring them to spend more energy filling out web forms? Is administration listening to staff feedback, so that impact on students and faculty is minimized?

Hanrahan stated that there is concern that the administration is shifting the cost of generating the paperwork, normally done by staff members, to the faculty. Chancellor Green stated that it is too early to tell what the impacts will be with Concur. He pointed out that over the years financial transactions such as travel expense vouchers and travel authorization have changed tremendously and Concur is another evolution of this

process, which will hopefully enhance efficiency. He stated that, at this time, it is too early to assess cost and time savings from the Concur system. He is hoping that it will be an easier, simpler process that will allow for more accountability.

Leiter reported that he has heard from colleagues that there is this presumption that employees are stealing from the university. He noted that not only is there more paperwork that is time consuming, it impacts employee morale because they are made to feel that they can't be trusted. He stated that he is losing interest in doing any travel because the process has become more and more cumbersome. Hanrahan pointed out that auditors seems to dictate what has to be done.

Chancellor Green noted that anyone associated with the government has to comply with standards set by the government. He realizes that there is additional work required, but because we are a state institution we must comply with the requirements. He pointed out as another example that the University alones gets numerous freedom of information act requests on an ongoing basis, and a lot of time is required which takes away our ability to concentrate on the ongoing work of the University.

### **3.0 Student Code of Conduct (Professor Lenich)**

Professor Lenich noted that he has revised the Student Code of Conduct to reflect the concerns that the Executive Committee had regarding graduate students. He stated that he will be meeting with the Graduate Student Assembly to get feedback on the revisions. Peterson stated that he thought Lenich's revisions were very good and were on target. He noted that the role of graduate students as teachers was clarified.

Lenich pointed out that graduate students who hold a teaching appointment are held to the Standards of Academic Integrity and Responsible Conduct in courses for which they are enrolled as a student, but they do not apply to conduct on a graduate student's part that is related to their teaching responsibilities. He stated that this provision will not interfere with their rights of academic freedom. Renaud asked what would happen if the graduate student did something outside of the classroom. Lenich stated that they would be treated as a student and the Student Code of Conduct would apply.

Belli asked for clarification about the areas in the proposed revisions that state "update as necessary." Lenich pointed out that this allows for the Code to be updated when basic housekeeping needs to be made, such as changes in policy names or office names. This would allow the changes without having to go through the entire process and getting Board of Regents approval. Peterson noted that this is an excellent way to handle documents.

Hanrahan suggested that a frequently asked questions page be added. He noted that this would make it easier for people reading the proposed revisions.

The Executive Committee agreed to put the proposed revisions on the November 6 Faculty Senate agenda.

#### **4.0 Announcements**

##### **4.1 Meeting with Executive Committee**

Belli reported that Professor Schleck stated that she would be willing to speak to the Executive Committee about what steps need to be taken to remove UNL administration from censure.

#### **5.0 Approval of September 18, 2018 Minutes**

Hanrahan moved for approval of the revised minutes. Motion seconded by Belli and approved by the Executive Committee. There was one abstention.

#### **6.0 Unfinished Business**

No unfinished business was discussed.

#### **7.0 New Business**

##### **7.1 October Senate Meeting**

Hanrahan reported that Rudy agreed to have the motion to replace him as President of the Faculty Senate first on the agenda. The Executive Committee agreed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:23 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, October 2, 2018 immediately following the Faculty Senate meeting. The meeting will be held in the City Campus Union, Regency Suite. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Lorna Dawes, Secretary.