

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Buan, Franco Cruz, Fech, Hanrahan, Latta Konecky, Peterson, Vakilzadian

Absent: Adenwalla, Kolbe, Minter, Purcell, Woodman

Date: Tuesday, October 22, 2019

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 2:43 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Big Ten Academic Alliance Faculty Governance Conference

Hanrahan reported that the conference went well, and noted that sexual misconduct was a topic that was heavily discussed. He stated that the University of Illinois provided a lengthy document on their policies, and suggested that this be reviewed when we begin working on a Professional Code of Conduct policy.

Buan noted that those in attendance would like a much more involved conference than what has occurred in the past, including having working groups that could address issues over the summer and then give a report at the conference which would provide a more formal dissemination of plans. She stated that people want more time for more serious projects and topics and they asked that subject experts from the Big Ten campuses be Zoomed in to the conference.

2.2 National Council of Faculty Senates Meeting

Vakilzadian reported that he, Purcell, and Woodman attended that National Council of Faculty Senates last week. He noted that the Council worked on developing its mission and vision and the role of the National Council. He stated that the Council developed several different committees, including a bylaws committee to revise the current bylaws. He noted that there was discussion of holding an annual meeting in Washington, D.C. over the summer. He pointed out that it would be good to have several people from the Executive Committee attend the meeting.

2.3 Update on EVC Search

Hanrahan reported that Chancellor Green indicated that he has identified a candidate that is being considered for the EVC position. He noted that the individual received the most support from the campus community.

2.4 College of Journalism and Mass Communications Dean Search

Hanrahan reported that he has been contacted by faculty in the College of Journalism about concerns of improper behavior by some members of the search committee. He stated that he will be speaking to the faculty members to hear their concerns.

3.0 Approval of October 15, 2019 Minutes

Hanrahan asked if there was discussion on the revised minutes. Vakilzadian asked for some clarification on changes made by Hanrahan who then explained the reason for his changes. Hanrahan then asked for approval of the minutes. The minutes were approved by the Executive Committee.

4.0 Interim EVC Moberly

4.1 Cost of Textbooks

Interim EVC Moberly stated that he had a group of students from ASUN visit him asking if there is something that can be done to help keep the cost of textbooks down. He stated that Associate VC Goodburn has been working on several initiatives, such as Unizen Engage which enables instructors to get online texts that can be made available through Canvas at a reduced rate. He stated that Follett Bookstores are doing something similar and there is a group of instructors that are looking at open resources, but noted that there are some cases where case books are needed. He asked if there could be incentives to get the faculty to use less costly resources for their textbooks and requested help from the Faculty Senate to get the word out to faculty urging faculty members to explore options to reduce the costs of textbooks for our students.

Buan pointed out that a good time to institute things like Unizen Engage or open resources is when an instructor first develops the course. She suggested that the new Teaching Center could be helpful with getting instructors involved with reducing the costs of textbooks. She stated that a possible idea is to provide a fellowship to instructors for redesigning a course through the Teaching Center.

Vakilzadian noted that some universities allow textbooks to be downloaded through their libraries. Latta Konecky noted that the University Libraries already does purchase ebooks, though not generally textbooks. She pointed out that some of the publishers have All Access campus-wide subscriptions. With these subscriptions, the university provides students with access to the publisher's inventory of textbooks, but she stated that this would require an infusion of funds for that purpose. She noted that there is also a UNL initiative called STAR: Successful Teaching with Affordable Resources, which provides a seed grant and support for faculty to identify and implement OER (open educational resources) in their courses, in order to reduce textbook costs. She stated that the challenge with some of these open resources is finding quality materials. She suggested that UNL could invest in campus-wide site licenses that would provide access to course materials, but would take the burden of the cost off of the students.

Buan stated that she thinks a lot of publishers are wanting to protect the intellectual property rights for the faculty who write these books. She stated that it would be helpful

if there was a policy of how to manage and incentivize people to put their work in open access, but the work has to be of value to the faculty.

Latta Konecky suggested asking faculty members which textbooks they are concerned about because of cost. She noted that Follett might be able to help provide some of this information, and the company would know the costs and how many students purchase the textbook. Buan suggested conducting a faculty survey and then compare it with the information Follett provides. Latta Konecky stated that another question that should be asked is if the textbook would be used significantly throughout the course, or whether it is just used for a small part of it. Interim EVC Moberly pointed out that publishers have gotten smart by charging the same cost for a book whether it is online or in print. Latta Konecky noted that some publishers attach an added value to purchased books by including a code for access to additional web-based resources. Hanrahan stated that some of these ideas might work for the larger classes, but for higher level classes and graduate classes they might not work.

Interim EVC Moberly stated that he would like to tell the students that the Executive Committee supports the concerns. He stated he will make sure the EVC Office will get the word out about the concerns and the ideas that are being generated to try to reduce the costs of textbooks. He asked that the effort be mentioned at the November 5 Senate meeting.

4.2 Data Bank of Course Syllabi

Interim EVC Moberly stated that another request from ASUN was the request to establish a data bank of course syllabi. He noted that ASUN would manage and have a bank of syllabi from faculty, and participation of the faculty would be voluntary. He stated that the students think it would be fair for them to know the expectations of a course before they enroll in it. He reported that the students understand that some syllabi are written shortly before a course begins, but having on file previous syllabi from courses would be helpful to the students.

Peterson reported that his department has made course syllabi available through the department website for some time now and he thinks it is reasonable if students would like to establish a data bank. Latta Konecky noted that it might be helpful to other faculty to know that syllabi are already being made available through a department website.

Hanrahan asked what kind of parameters the students would use when they are searching the database. Interim EVC Moberly assumed that the search would be by subject matter. He pointed out that some students want to see what learning style would fit them better with the way they learn. For example, he noted that some students are better at writing papers than taking exams.

Vakilzadian pointed out that for required, large section courses, the syllabi should be the same. Interim EVC Moberly stated that it could make sense to have a shared syllabus for the sections of the same course under certain circumstances.

4.3 Incentive Budget Model

Vakilzadian asked if vacant faculty lines will go back to the EVC office with the incentive budget model. Interim EVC Moberly pointed out that once the new budget model is fully operating the colleges will keep their open lines, although there may be some pullback of the funding in order to help with dual career hires or to provide additional faculty lines for other priorities. Vakilzadian asked if the EVC Office would also help with retention packages. Interim EVC Moberly stated that the scope of the EVC Office's role in creating retention packages was still being discussed with the college deans.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Incentive Based Budget Model Update

Peterson distributed information from the Huron Consultants regarding how the incentive-based budget model will require a comprehensive governance structure that would provide information for the UNL leadership to approve University budgeting decisions. He noted that some would question why we need a central level governance committee if the colleges will have greater control over their budgets. However, he noted that there are some decisions that will need to be made at the central level. He reported that several other committees will also be needed: Data Quality, Support Unit Allocation, Space Management, and Curriculum. He noted that we have an Undergraduate University Curriculum Committee but their charge would probably need to be revised to support the RCM governance. He pointed out that we cannot combine the undergraduate curriculum committee with the graduate curriculum due to state law. He stated that all of these committees, and their structure and responsibilities, are all under discussion.

Peterson stated that given the proposed governance structure, he does not think it necessary to have a separate Senate budget committee because there will be faculty representation on all of the committees. He noted that the thinking is that the Academic Planning Committee should have some kind of role in the governance because of its responsibility of approving academic programs. Hanrahan pointed out that colleagues at the other Big Ten universities that have the RCM budget model have repeatedly said that the Faculty Senate needs to be actively engaged with the governance process, and he has concerns that the structure of the proposed committees are being driven by the administration.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Draft Resolution in Support of Shared Governance of Financial Oversight at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

The Executive Committee reviewed a draft resolution calling for the faculty to oversee financial data quality, budget allocations, expenditures, and to participate with administration in making decisions relating to budget adjustments and reallocations in their colleges and administrative units, either through existing faculty-led college budgeting committees, or to create one if none currently exists.

Hanrahan stated that he would like the resolution to include language that indicates the percentage of faculty that should be on the governance committee. Peterson disagreed and pointed out that colleges are their own power center and are different from each other and may decide to set up their committee differently. He would recommend that the language be to encourage strong faculty participation with a majority of the members being faculty.

Buan pointed out that it is in everyone's best interest to have really good oversight. Peterson questioned who the people would be who would provide good oversight, and noted that all of the proposed governance structures include faculty participation. Hanrahan suggested that the faculty should make up the plurality of the committees. Vakilzadian pointed out that these kinds of decisions are ultimately up to the deans. Franco Cruz stated that the committee membership should be representative of the entire body of the college.

Hanrahan asked if the Executive Committee was in agreement to bring the resolution to the Senate at the November 5 meeting. The Executive Committee approved the revised resolution.

6.2 Formation of BTAA Faculty Governance Conference 2020 Committee

Hanrahan reported that UNL is hosting the event next year and Buan would be leading the subcommittee to arrange the conference. He stated that he would be willing to serve on the subcommittee and asked if others were interested. It was suggested that Kolbe would be a good member. Buan asked if there is a budget for it. Hanrahan stated that we need to work with Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny to determine the budget.

6.3 Discussion on Academic Freedom Training for Faculty

Item postponed.

6.4 Discussion of the Role of Faculty and Faculty Senate in the Governance of the University and the Protection of Academic Freedom

Hanrahan led the group in a discussion of academic freedom and what it means for faculty governance. Peterson pointed out that academic freedom is not the same thing as freedom of speech. He noted that academic freedom is a constrained right within the profession, and that academic freedom allows a professor to pursue truth in the parameters of one's discipline.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, October 29, 2019 at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in 203 Alexander Building. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Joan Latta Konecky, Secretary.