

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Billesbach, Buan, Dam, Dawes, Eklund, Franco Cruz, Hanrahan, Kolbe, Krehbiel, Minter, Weissling, Woodman

Absent: Gay

Date: Tuesday, December 8, 2020

Location: Zoom meeting

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 (*Buan*)

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

2.0 Chancellor Green/EVC Spiller/VC Boehm

Buan wanted to give the Chancellor the opportunity to comment on the Academic Planning Committee's recommendations on the proposed budget cuts. Chancellor Green reported that the APC began working on the proposed budget reductions in August and continued working until the Committee's recommendation letter came to him on November 13th. He noted that the Phase 1 reductions were not directly related to academics and the APC approved those proposed reductions in late August after which the Committee began working on the Phase 2 reductions which were related to academics. He pointed out that the APC accepted the Phase 2 recommended cuts except for the elimination of the Textiles, Merchandising, and Fashion Design department. He noted that he recently met with the Committee to tell them that he agreed with the recommendations and told them that the remainder of the deficit, \$1.8 million from not eliminating TMFD, will need to be addressed with new budget reductions proposals which will be coming to the Committee in January. He stated that he told the APC how much he appreciated all of the work they had done and pointed out that these budget cuts were not easy to deal with.

Woodman asked if the faculty member whose program was being eliminated has any option to make an appeal to get appointed to a different department. He noted that AAUP best practices state that universities will make all attempts to place the faculty member elsewhere in the university. Chancellor Green stated that IANR administration will need to handle this and it is too early in the process since the faculty member was just notified yesterday. VC Boehm noted that the recommendation to eliminate the faculty position came out of IANR and he signed off on it. He pointed out that during the process there were communications with the professor, and he will be seeking to visit with her to review the transition. He stated that he believes it is in the purview of the faculty member to request a change in their tenure home department, but the difficulty is that the other part of the program is in CEHS which is dealing with significant budget

reductions. He reported that the professor is receiving a considerable amount of counseling from other faculty members.

Minter stated that in reviewing the Phase II budget reductions it appears that the College of Arts and Sciences had a significant budget reduction. EVC Spiller pointed out that the cuts were not disproportionate and each of the EVC colleges received a 9.6% reduction in their state-aided budget. Chancellor Green noted that each college choose how to handle their own budget cuts. Minter stated that the VSIP lines were being used for the cuts in CAS and this would cause long-term impacts on programs. EVC Spiller stated that the cuts were difficult for each college and it is the hope that once the pandemic ends that we might be able to grow programs again in the future. She stated that the deans thought carefully about using VSIP lines. Chancellor Green pointed out that these budget reductions are over a three-year period and stated that if things improve in the next 18 months, we might be able to pull back on some of the recommended reductions.

Kolbe asked if it was the deans who put the proposed budget cuts forward. EVC Spiller stated that each of the proposals originated from the college leadership, were then reviewed by her office, and then recommended to the Chancellor. She stated that in the summer each VC received a memo from the Chancellor and VC Nunez identifying what their budget reduction target was and the VCs then notified every dean of their budget reduction target. She noted that both her office and VC Boehm's office sustained budget cuts.

2.1 How effective was the pre-holiday testing for students and how many positive cases were reported?

Chancellor Green noted that students were encouraged to get tested before the end of the semester and over 4800 COVID-19 tests were conducted on students, faculty, and staff members. He stated that 77% of the tests were for students and the positivity rate for the 4800 tests was approximately 5%.

2.2 Is there a plan for the University Health Center to have a COVID-19 vaccination program? If so, would there be a priority scheduling for providing the vaccination?

Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny reported that the state has a vaccine distribution plan that will be handled centrally by various health departments across the state. He noted that it is likely that UHC will participate in the plan and we should have more information available about it after the first of the year. He stated that those people not in a priority category might not be vaccinated until April or May. Chancellor Green pointed out that the number of vaccines, and the roll out of them, will be lower than what was originally thought.

2.3 Will people coming back to campus in fall 2021 have to prove they have been vaccinated?

Chancellor Green stated that it is too early to tell, and we will have to see how the vaccinations will be dispersed throughout the population. He pointed out that we will have a significantly enhanced testing protocol for the spring semester which will be

announced tomorrow. He reported that the spring testing protocol will enable us to conduct a significant number of saliva tests per day with faster turnaround time on results and it will be ready by early January. He noted that it will be mandatory for any student, faculty or staff member coming to campus to show that they have been tested and are negative for COVID-19.

Billesbach asked how the University will know that someone has been tested and is negative. Chancellor Green stated that we will be using an app developed and used successfully by the University of Illinois which will indicate a green check which will give access into campus buildings. Woodman pointed out that some people have accommodations and come to campus during the off-hours. He asked if these people would need to have a negative test. Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny stated that under the current protocol they would unless someone is provided an exception. Hanrahan asked if the tests will be administered when a person comes to campus. Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny stated that if someone is planning to be on campus in the next two weeks, they would need to have a test in place. Hanrahan asked what the turn around time is for getting results from the test. Chancellor Green stated that results would just take 24 hours.

2.4 Academic Affairs seems to be keeping track of individual faculty's DFW rates, what does Academic Affairs learn from this data, with whom are they sharing it, and for what purpose is it being used when shared?

EVC Spiller stated that the University is not actively keeping track of the number of Ds or Fs that each faculty member assigns, but rather is gathering information to see if there are some courses that traditionally have a high number of these grades. She noted that equity data for these courses are being reviewed and the primary goal is to help us to increase undergraduate retention and graduation rates which is a goal of the N2025 strategic plan.

EVC Spiller reported that currently approximately 300 people on campus, primarily chairs, directors, and undergraduate advisors have access to the data. She stated that the goal is to make sure that we are being attentive and strategic to ensure that students are gaining the knowledge that they should learn from their courses.

Buan pointed out that email messages from contract faculty members have been received stating that they were informed that their contract was not renewed based on their DFW rates which is leading faculty members to believe that the reports are being used against them. EVC Spiller stated that the data is to help faculty members reach students that may not be grasping what a course is meant to teach. She noted that our 6-year graduation rates have increased but we still need to make further improvements. She stated that Professor Brassil has been working with the EVC office on reviewing the data and he is making himself available to any department to help develop individual plans to make sure that students get the most from a course.

Woodman noted that the situation with the non-contract faculty did occur and he asked if the University has an official DFW rate. EVC Spiller stated that it is difficult to

speculate on why someone's contract was not renewed when she does not have all of the information. She pointed out that factors such as course needs for the department and past performance are critical to renewing a contract. She stated that she does not believe there is any official DFW rate and noted that these rates often vary from department to department. She stated that the data is to see if there are equity gaps within departments and whether different cohorts of students perform differently. Woodman asked if the EVC's office has the same concern for courses where all the students receive an A and questioned whether such a course is offering the same rigor. EVC Spiller pointed out that the strategic use of the information is not based on individual faculty members but rather on courses and disciplines. She stated that the idea is to help faculty identify if different cohorts of students are not successful.

Franco Cruz reported that as an ombudsman he has seen the DFW information being mishandled and used in an inconsistent manner from what EVC Spiller just described and it has been used to judge whether someone's contract would be renewed. He pointed out that better communication is needed with the deans and chairs to convey precisely how the data is to be used. He noted that there are other ways to assess the quality of faculty teaching. EVC Spiller stated that this was a good point and encouraged Franco Cruz to meet with AVC Walker to discuss how additional guidance can be provided. She stated that she will make sure that she understands what directions are being provided to the people who have access to the data. She noted that the intent of the data is to help faculty see what is going on with their teaching in the classrooms that they may not have realized was occurring. She suggested that the Executive Committee invite AVC Goodburn to discuss how faculty members can benefit from the data. She pointed out that we have not reassessed our courses lately and in some recent academic program reviews there have been some very strong questions about the curriculum of the program. Kolbe stated that the data set can help make informed decisions as a unit, but it needs to be used correctly. Minter pointed out that the communication about the intent of the data needs to be conveyed to the local levels.

Woodman asked what is being done to take a pre-emptive approach to help students succeed who may be at-risk, especially if they are taking courses that have high DFW rates. EVC Spiller stated that Professor Brassil does create customized reports for departments which could help them make sure their curriculum is tailored to help students. She stated that this is something else that AVC Goodburn could speak about. Chancellor Green noted that we now have the Husker Starter program which could help students. EVC Spiller stated that it was held this summer with approximately 400 first-time students participating. She noted that we will be tracking these students to see if it has helped them be successful in their courses.

2.5 When would we know if the University would receive federal stimulus funding if it is approved by the federal government?

Chancellor Green noted that Congress is looking at a revised stimulus package, although if approved it will be less than the first one distributed. He stated that he hopes that there will be some stimulus funding for higher education, although most of the funding might be student based.

2.6 When will the first installment of funds based on the incentive-based budget occur? Have college governance committees been created and are they actively engaged?

Chancellor Green stated that the implementation will begin with the next fiscal year which begins July 2021. Hanrahan noted that VC Nunez had previously stated that there will be two years where the college budgets will be based on the previous year. Chancellor Green stated that this is correct.

2.7 How will the Provost position function with Chancellor Gold serving as both Chancellor of UNMC and Provost? Will the Provost remain as head of the Graduate College, and what would the timeline be if there is going to be a change?

Chancellor Green noted that Provost Fritz will be retiring in June and Chancellor Gold will become both the Chancellor of UNMC and the Provost. He pointed out that Chancellor Gold will be stepping down as Chancellor of UNO on June 30. He reported that the intent of President Carter is for the Provost position to become more of a manager for the academic committee of the Board of Regents. He stated that President Carter is thinking of decentralizing some responsibilities that Central Administration has taken control of and returning them to the campus level. He reported that it is his understanding that the role of the Graduate College at the system level will be returned to the campus level which means that Dean Carr will be the head of the UNL Graduate College. He stated that the timeline for when this would occur is up to President Carter.

2.8 Update on the Title IX Collaborative Report

Chancellor Green stated that the Collaborative produced the report and briefed him on it at the end of October. He stated that it has been reviewed by legal counsel since there are many legalities involving Title IX. He stated that the plan is to make the full report public before the holiday break. He noted that he was very pleased with the report and stated that it was very comprehensive covering many areas. He pointed out that much of the recommendations will be implemented but there are some things that legally we cannot do.

2.9 Tenure Clock Extension

Buan asked if a faculty member can petition for flexibility with the tenure extension. EVC Spiller stated that AVC Walker is working with a larger group about this topic. She noted that this is an issue across the Big Ten, and while everyone wants to be flexible given the difficulties caused by the pandemic, each department has its own standards that needs to be adhered to. She thinks it is fine to provide instructions to outside reviewers but pointed out that we want to uphold our standards of excellence while helping our faculty.

3.0 Accommodations for Extension Educators – Interim Dean Varner

Interim Dean Varner reported that Nebraska Extension is following the UNL alternative work arrangement accommodations as closely as possible and working through the established procedures. He noted that Human Resources has provided guidance with

consideration of the requests, particularly for those requesting alternative work arrangements who do not have a health-related issue. He stated that with each request Extension is working with the direct supervisor, zone leader, or program leader, and most of the time the requests have been granted. He noted that he is only aware of a couple of requests where the employee wanted to work at home but there was no real reason to justify the alternative work arrangement. He pointed out that these were requests that were made prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Interim Dean Varner stated that a challenge during the pandemic is being able to carry out Extension's mission while keeping everyone as safe as possible. He stated that the Extension offices are following local health department recommendations and the county offices have been depopulated. He noted that Extension is working with the faculty to keep them as safe as possible.

Interim Dean Varner reported that a table, the Nebraska Extension DHM Phase/Covid-19 Risk Dial Guidance, was developed and it provides information for Extension personnel regarding the Extension offices, small program, large programs, travel, Extension Boards, school programs, 4-H Councils, 4-H Clubs, and local requirements. He pointed out that the guidance is to help Extension offices decide on whether to work remotely or to do in-person programming. He reported that about 75% of the counties in the state are in the red zone and 25% are in the orange zone. He stated that the effort will be to keep the Extension offices open because we don't want to abandon the public and Extension has been encouraged to consider what conditions will be like in December and January.

Franco Cruz asked what the procedures are if an Extension faculty member feels that their request for an accommodation has not been appropriately considered by their immediate supervisor. Interim Dean Varner stated that the faculty member should contact him. Franco Cruz asked if a faculty member can work from home, shouldn't they be given the opportunity to do so. Interim Dean Varner pointed out that all of the 83 county offices are public faced offices and having an empty office would not sit well with the public. He noted that the zone directors are working in the offices. He stated that he has been encouraging people to engage working remotely whenever possible.

4.0 Announcements

4.1 Meeting with AVC Goodburn

Buan reported that she will be meeting with AVC Goodburn to discuss opening the campus for spring. She noted that AVC Goodburn has conflicts with the January Executive Committee meetings, but we would try to schedule a meeting with her soon afterwards.

4.2 Report on Board of Regents Meeting

Buan reported that she attended the December Board meeting and pointed out that Regent Hawks will not run for re-election. She stated that the Board considered recommendations to revise Regents Policies 5.8.3 by eliminating the language "scholarships" and replacing it with "remissions" for non-resident students. She reported

that UNL's enrollment is up compared to the other campuses. She noted that the Board approved the renovation of the Law Library.

Buan stated that after the meeting the Faculty Senate Presidents from the four campuses met with Provost Fritz and Vice President Mello to discuss whether there will be further federal stimulus funding.

4.3 Report of Information Technologies and Services Committee

Woodman reported that the ITSC recently met and discussed the end point management system which is being revised so the people can opt out rather than opt in to use the system. He noted that some publishers were thinking of putting spyware in the University Libraries system to track usages of their publications. He reported that a number of buildings will have their wireless router modified during the spring semester and there could be some downtime associated with this, but people will be notified when the router will be worked on. Billesbach asked if an impact analysis has been conducted on the possible impacts on remote learning that could occur if the wireless routers are down for a period of time. Woodman stated that he would forward this question to CIO Tuttle.

Woodman reported that ITS is considering having the sign-in period for Duo Authentication to last up to seven days. He noted that the email tagging system identifies non-UNL emails which most people appreciate. He pointed out that Canvas emails are still tagged as non-UNL and this problem is being worked on.

5.0 Approval of December 1, 2020 Minutes

Buan asked if there were any revisions to the minutes. Hearing none she stated that the minutes were approved by acclamation.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Review Faculty Senate Executive Committee 2020-2021 Goals

Buan asked the Executive Committee to review its goals and to prioritize what needs to be worked on. Hanrahan stated that the Committee needs to continue to help shape the University's COVID response and to champion shared governance and decision making. Other goals identified were to educate faculty members on their rights, to work with administration to see if Lecturers can have a small service component, work with administration to see what can be done to accommodate service work, and to possibly increase a faculty member's service apportionment after they receive promotion and tenure.

6.2 Results of Fall Faculty Survey

Buan reported that 318 faculty members responded to the fall faculty survey conducted by the Executive Committee. She noted that all colleges were represented with many respondents being tenured or tenure-track. She reported that most respondents strongly agreed that they had support of their supervisor during the fall semester, most did not have to enforce social distancing in the classroom, most agreed that students were more engaged during in-person classes, and many were comfortable with returning to campus

in the spring. She stated that data, minus the written comments, would be distributed to the Senators. She stated that she will follow-up with the administrators and the COVID-19 task force about issues raised by the respondents.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Letter of Endorsement for Spring COVID-19 Testing

Buan reported that the Executive Committee is being asked by administration to write a letter of endorsement for the comprehensive testing that will take place for the spring semester. She stated that it will be a saliva test and the results are to be within 24 hours. She pointed out that only people coming to campus need to get the test.

Woodman questioned whether being tested every two weeks will be an impediment and questioned who will be monitoring access to the buildings. Hanrahan pointed out that the test result will be linked to an app on your phone and people entering buildings only have to show the green approval on their phone. He noted that faculty members should not be prevented from entering the buildings during off hours. Buan stated that the University of Illinois, who developed the app, has been using the program successfully and many of the other Big Ten schools have had great success with the program. She noted that a pass will be provided to people who do not have a smart phone.

Buan stated that she would draft a statement and send it to the Executive Committee for review and approval.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be conducted via Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Lorna Dawes, Secretary.