

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Billesbach, Buan, Dam, Dawes, Eklund, Gay, Hanrahan, Kolbe, Krehbiel, Minter, Weissling, Woodman

**Absent:** Franco Cruz

**Date:** Tuesday, September 29, 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.

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### 1.0 Call (*Buan*)

Buan called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

### 2.0 AVC Goodburn and AVC Winter, ASEM

#### 2.1 Enrollment and student Success during the Summer and Early Indicators for Fall

AVC Goodburn reported that during the second five-week summer session this year the Husker Starter Pack was encouraged for first-year scholars. These students were able to take one of 62 online courses for only \$350 and 460 students took advantage of the offer. She noted that 300 students received a grade of A- or above and there was only 10 Fs, one withdrawal and one incomplete. She stated that the Husker Starter Pack will probably be offered again to help students get acclimated to campus and noted that this year was a learning experience which will enable them to offer a more integrated introduction to campus in the future.

Buan stated that she was involved in a similar program when she was at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and they also tied cultural events into the starter program. AVC Goodburn stated that this should be considered once we are post-COVID and noted that some of the colleges have been considering having a bridge program to help new students navigate the campus culture. She noted that there is something similar for first generation students and there is a potential model for conducting the program either in person or online.

Billesbach asked if there is any background high school information on the students that participated in the starter program. He wondered if they were high achievers who have taken AP classes and stated that there could be useful information on the students' prior learning system which affected their transition into college. AVC Goodburn stated that she does not have that data and students may have been from out of state since the courses were online. She pointed out that students typically don't like taking classes during the summer and this summer they may have been bored and looking for something to do so it is difficult to assess whether they would be interested in the program when the pandemic ends.

Woodman asked if the students will be tracked to see how they do in their first year and asked what subjects were offered. AVC Goodburn said that would be a good idea. She stated that the courses spanned the colleges and many were ACE courses. Woodman asked how it was determined which courses would be offered. AVC Goodburn reported that the colleges were asked which courses they wanted to offer. She noted that when students went through New Student Enrollment they met with advisors who suggested what the best courses would be for the student to take.

AVC Goodburn reported that last fall the Husker Power Survey was given to first-year students and transfer students to gauge their transition to the University. She stated that the survey asked 12 yes or no questions and each question is tied to an outreach team such as housing or student involvement and if a student answered no to a question a member of the team reached out to the student to get them better connected and to provide resources. She noted that there was a 60.3% response rate this year on the survey. She reported that last fall 45% of respondents indicated they were struggling with one or more courses but this year there is a decrease. However, the amount of students not attending in-person or remote classes doubled this year from 2.1% to 5.0% and students who reported that they have not found a friend or group of students jumped from 7.4% last year to 19% this year which illustrates the impact of COVID. She noted there are few events for students to participate in this year, although the Office of Student Affairs is working to create virtual study groups and over 500 students have participated. She stated that a lot of outdoor experiences have been promoted and a great deal of work is being done to reach out to the students because a student's sense of belonging is critical for first year retention. She stated that the Husker Survey Power Team is debriefing the results of the survey on Friday and she will get more information which should help us to determine what we can do better to help the students.

AVC Goodburn reported that the fall three-week session already has 811 students enrolled and the representation from each of the class levels is fairly even. She stated that the spring courses are being finalized and the web pages on the spring three-week session will be ready by mid-October so students can review them before priority registration begins.

## **2.2 Status of Instructor Evaluations for Fall**

Buan noted that instructor evaluations for the spring semester were suspended unless the instructor wanted to have them included in their annual evaluation and she asked if this will also be done for the fall semester. AVC Goodburn stated that she spoke with AVC Walker about this issue who has consulted with the colleges this summer to get their perspective and they want to have evidence of teaching for their faculty. She noted that it is worthy to have a discussion with the deans and colleges about this and the Faculty Senate could make this recommendation.

Woodman asked how comparative evaluations were done in the spring semester for those people who choose to include their teaching evaluations. AVC Goodburn stated that she believes this is decided at the department level. Woodman pointed out that there are

faculty on campus who only teach and questioned if they are being compared to people who don't have teaching evaluations. AVC Goodburn reiterated that this would be decided in the department and noted that it would probably be more problematic for those that do not have any evaluations. Goodburn reported that English uses a three-year rolling average of evaluations.

### **2.3 Potential Impacts of Not Requiring ACT/SAT Scores**

AVC Winter reported that in February the Board of Regents approved changes to the admissions requirements by stating that a cumulative high school GPA could be used to meet performance criteria. In addition, students must have earned a minimum of 3.00 cumulative high school GPA at the conclusion of their sixth semester of high school or later. He stated that due to the pandemic many students were unable to take the ACT/SAT exams so applications for admission will be revised on core competencies along with their high school GPA, but test scores can be included if a student wishes to submit them, although they are not required.

Dam asked if this change in requirement is only for this year or whether it is permanent. AVC Winter stated that it is not clear whether it will be temporary, but the expectation is that it will be permanent.

Woodman asked if these changes negatively affect a particular demography for obtaining scholarships if the primary criterion will just be the high school GPA. He added that this is an academic institution and should emphasize academic achievements not whether someone is an athlete or is in drama club. AVC Winter pointed out that this needs to be looked at in the aggregate. He noted that high school class grades are often the best predictor for student success in college and the change may expand access to the university because some students just do not test well. AVC Goodburn pointed out that there are a lot of criticisms about the ACT/SAT tests and how they reflect privilege because students in higher income families can participate in test preparation seminars and camps.

Weissling asked if a standardized test score can be used for admission because some students do not have a good GPA but test well. AVC Winter stated that students can definitely use the test score if they want, but it is no longer required.

Gay stated that he believes not using a standardized test score is profoundly racist. He pointed out that the University of California-Berkeley has a quota system to restrict the number of Asians and Asian-Americans in their classes and is now not using test scores in order to reinforce this. He stated that the elimination of the standardized test is often used as a tool to diversify the class, with the implication that "diverse" groups should be held to a lower standard, to a lower standard which he believes is unacceptable. AVC Winter pointed out that the University of Nebraska has a qualified admission process, and we have a fairly high admission rate. AVC Goodburn noted that Regents' Scholarships, and other scholarships, will be based on the required criteria for a particular scholarship. She pointed out that we do not manage our enrollment for general admission into the

university because we are not restricted in how many students we can admit. Woodman commented that we do have a limited number of Regents Scholarships.

Kolbe noted that his department, the Johnny Carson School of Theatre & Film, have higher requirements for admittance and often cannot accept all of the students that apply. He questioned how a student's ability can be adequately judged without the standardized test scores. AVC Goodburn pointed out that the change is for the whole university systems, but departments can have additional requirements and noted that there are different ways to filter information on students to understand their strengths and weaknesses besides their high school GPA.

Billesbach pointed out that it has been a priority to keep Nebraska students here within the state. He asked if there has been an analytic look at how this change could impact the number of students who stay here. AVC Winter reported that the only state university system requiring SAT/ACT scores for the fall 2021 the University System of Florida. He stated that most other universities are standardized test optional. He noted that with COVID-19 we have seen an increase in enrollment in the number of in-state students.

#### **2.4 Course Delivery Models and Planning Guide for Spring**

Buan stated that in a previous meeting with EVC Spiller the EVC stated that the instructors are the best people to decide on the course delivery model for their courses, yet the recent email about course delivery models and planning for the spring semester contradicts that.

AVC Goodburn stated that a lot has been learned from the fall experience with how instructors were teaching their courses. She noted that many students found that having several hybrid courses was confusing and it was felt that students need to know how a course will be delivered in the spring semester when they are registering. As a result, three course delivery models have been defined: in-person classes where every student will be in-person for at least one period a week; web conferencing or real time remote teaching; and online courses which are wholly delivered asynchronously.

Buan pointed out that some faculty members have developed class formats that don't really fit into these models and asked what would happen if the lecture for a course was conducted via Zoom, but a lab was required. AVC Goodburn reported that the lab would be scheduled as in person, but the lecture could be coded as web conferencing. She noted that the University Registrar's Office has provided instructions on how to set up a course like this and class schedulers have been instructed on how to list the various courses.

Kolbe pointed out that many faculty members have put a lot of effort into teaching a high flexibility course and he is leaving it up to the students to decide whether they want in-person or Zoom courses. AVC Goodburn stated that if the students met just once a week in person it would be considered an in-person course and the instructor would still have the option to conduct part of the class asynchronously. She reported that there are some faculty members who expect students to attend in person classes and the students have attended unless they are in quarantine.

Hanrahan asked if the situation can be viewed from a student schedule perspective. AVC Goodburn noted that it would be difficult to coordinate the schedules of the students and there are some logistical issues that need to be considered for students attending online courses. She noted that many study spaces for students have been created on campus for students to use.

Buan stated that this semester faculty members were told they could decide what the best option is for their course delivery but now the spring guidelines are stating that a faculty member must get approval from the dean. AVC Goodburn pointed out that historically the chair assigned the courses, and the delivery model was predominantly in-person classes, but this fall the instructors made the choice themselves due to the pandemic. She stated that the deans need to know if a course is being changed for the long term to a different delivery format.

Billesbach stated that the faculty were told that students wanted in-person classes, but in many of the classes only a third of the students attend the class. He asked why we are staying with in-person classes while other universities are going solely to remote learning. AVC Goodburn pointed out that any faculty member that wanted accommodations was granted it. She pointed out that no classroom transmission cases have been detected and noted that the students she has spoken with have stated that they are glad to be on campus and to have some semblance of life on campus. She reported that she meets with the Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department everyday to look at the COVID data and to see what changes are occurring.

## **2.5 Update on COVID surveillance testing. Will volunteers give samples at an alternate site?**

Buan asked if we are conducting surveillance testing. AVC Goodburn reported that we are now starting randomized mitigation testing. She noted that surveillance testing is picking a select population and testing everyone in that population. She stated that 750 people on campus have been invited to participate in the randomized testing this week and a testing site for this has been set up in front of the Coliseum. She stated that of the 750 people random sampling, 20% are faculty and staff and 80% are students. She noted that it is free, quick testing and those who are invited receive a link to schedule it.

## **2.6 Home Football Game Scheduled on Final Exam Day**

Woodman noted that a football game has been scheduled on a final exam day and raised concerns about the disruption this could cause. AVC Goodburn reported that Chancellor Green has been in conversations about this and is trying to get the game rescheduled to Friday evening instead, but we will not know if this will occur for a couple of weeks. She pointed out that as soon as we know whether the game time will be changed, we will start looking at buildings close to the stadium to see if exams need to be moved. She noted that faculty, staff, and students will still have their regular parking.

Woodman asked if there will be an active method to prevent people on campus. AVC Goodburn stated that no tailgating will be allowed on campus except at the Champions

Club where people must be a member, and the Club polled their members but only 40 people responded that they plan to be at the Club. She stated that there will likely be security people at each lot to prevent the public from using the lots. She reported that there could be barricades around the stadium and noted that the weather could be a factor in how many people come to campus. She stated that there have been discussions with our Emergency Management Director Mark Robertson, VC Bill Nunez, and others to talk about the best way to handle things on campus gameday.

### **3.0 Announcements**

#### **3.1 IT Security Recommendation**

Buan reported that there was a computer attack on Nebraska Medicine's system and pointed out that our computer systems are somewhat related so it has been recommended that people install Cortex on their university and personal devices. She stated that there is a free download at <https://its.unl.edu/services/antivirus/>.

Billesbach stated that he was not aware that Symantec was no longer under contract since July. Woodman pointed out that he is on the Information Technologies and Services Committee and the committee was never notified of this either. Buan stated that communication from ITS to the campus community needs to be improved.

### **4.0 Approval of September 22, 2020 Minutes**

Buan asked if there were any additional revisions to the minutes. Hearing none she asked for approval of the minutes. The Executive Committee approved the minutes.

### **5.0 Unfinished Business**

#### **5.1 Follow up on Meeting with Dean Button and Lecturers**

Woodman reported that Dean Button is sympathetic about the concerns of the Lecturers but unfortunately the timing is difficult to make improvements for them due to the budget situation and the impacts of the pandemic. He stated that he believes there might be an opportunity for some symbolic increases and pointed out that it is a serious problem when Lecturers are only getting paid \$14 an hour. He stated that Dean Button is very supportive of the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations.

Minter noted that she did not attend the meeting, but she was co-chair of the Ad Hoc Committee. She pointed out that the Committee made a modest request to increase salaries for CAS Lecturers. She reported that the total amount for improving CAS Lecturer salaries was \$500,000. She noted that the opportunity for advancement seems to have been stopped at the Academic Affairs level but stated that it would be a good will gesture to get some changes made for the Lecturers.

Buan reported that she attended the meeting and agreed that Dean Button was very sympathetic but many of the recommendations were stopped by Academic Affairs. She stated that AVC Walker and Dean Button have agreed to have a meeting with the Executive Committee to discuss the issue and how we could possibly move things forward. Hanrahan suggested that EVC Spiller be invited to the meeting as well. Buan noted that there is the proposal from Central Administration to improve faculty salaries and stated that non-tenure track faculty should be included. Minter pointed out that

tuition funds have not been recalculated to pay for instruction and this should be considered.

## **6.0 New Business**

### **6.1 Faculty Senate Meeting**

Buan noted that at the October Senate meeting the newly proposed revisions to the Regents Bylaws will be presented along with the changes to the UNL Bylaws and the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Procedures. She stated that there is concern with the mental health language added by General Counsel, but voting will not take place until the November election. Hanrahan asked if the Chancellor has reviewed the latest changes. Buan stated that the Chancellor has, and he is fully supportive of the changes.

### **6.2 Policy Advisory Board**

Buan stated that the Policy Advisory Board meets once a month and faculty members are needed to serve on it. The Executive Committee suggested faculty members to serve.

### **6.3 James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award Plaque**

Griffin reported that the Academic Freedom Award Plaque had been displayed on the first floor of Canfield Administration, but the plaques have been removed due to the creation of the Husker Hub and the administration wants to know if these should be displayed in the Nebraska Union. Hanrahan noted that there had been discussion about creating an Honor Walk of Faculty members and suggested that the plaque be located there. The Executive Committee agreed to inquire whether there are still plans for the Honor Walk.

### **6.4 Fall Experience Survey**

Buan stated that she would like to conduct a fall experience survey of the faculty. She reported that she has asked CIO Tuttle about what tool the university has to conduct anonymous polling of the faculty. She noted that she would like to conduct the survey later this fall and anyone with suggested questions should let her know.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:41 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, October 6, 2020 immediately following the Faculty Senate meeting. The meeting will be conducted via Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Lorna Dawes, Secretary.