

UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
February 4, 2020
City Campus Union, Regency Suite
Presidents Kevin Hanrahan, Nicole Buan, and Sarah Purcell, Presiding

1.0 Call to Order

President Hanrahan called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Board of Regents Meeting

President Hanrahan noted that the Board of Regents is meeting on Friday and items on the agenda include changing admissions requirements to the University by not requiring standardized tests like ACT. The agenda also contains proposed changes to the Regents Scholarships which include the minimum credit hours that Regents scholars must take each academic year, allowing Regents scholars to transfer their scholarship to the NU campus that best meets their needs, and capping the maximum credit hours paid by the scholarship to 120 credit hours.

2.2 Changes to the Agenda

President Hanrahan noted that he would like to change the order of the agenda because Chancellor Green has been delayed. He noted that VC Nunez will speak first, followed by Chancellor Green.

3.0 Vice Chancellor Nunez

3.1 Update on Incentive-Based Budget Model

VC Nunez thanked the Senate for the opportunity to provide an update on the incentive-based budget model. He reported that we are on target with the timeline and are now in Phase III, where we need to develop governance committees, and noted that faculty members would be on these committees. He stated that the campus is in the process of reviewing cloud-based budgeting tools proposals which will assist the university and units in examining their financial operations in the future.

VC Nunez noted that changing the university's budget model is a very involved process, but the new budget model will allow us to look at our budgets in a much more purposeful way. He stated that we are on schedule to begin implementing key parts in FY2021 and FY2022.

VC Nunez reported that when the working model was applied to numerous past fiscal years across the University and within the colleges there was not a large variance within the activity-level metrics driving the model resource allocation. This showed that the affirmed model is working at a consistent level from one year to the next. He pointed out, however, that we have learned from national best practices that budget models are adjusted over time as needed. He also noted that successful incentive-based budget models have strategic funds built in to invest in university-wide strategic priorities.

VC Nunez reported that embedded in the model are a lot of variables: credit hours, F&A, degrees awarded, etc. He pointed out that the budget works based on data from previous years which helps the units to deal with data fluctuations. He stated that it was determined that data would be used from a two-year period. President-Elect Buan asked if two years is too short. VC Nunez stated that actually resources and expenses are pretty stable for the most part, and it was determined that a one-year period was too short, and three years was too long. He noted that data from FY2018 and FY2019 were compared and there was not much difference between the two years, although there was a net drop in tuition due to enrollment declines and a reduction in state appropriations.

VC Nunez stated that the budget planning process will now be more inclusive and will need to begin well in advance of the next fiscal year (FY2022). He stated that the incentive-based budget

model provides more involvement and transparency thus the extended time period.

VC Nunez stated that the governance structure will have advisory committees that will make recommendations to the leadership level. He stated that the UNL Executive Leadership Team will receive recommendations from a University Budget Committee. In turn the University Budget Committee will be informed by work conducted by, and feedback received by, the Support Unit Allocation Committee, the Data Quality Committee, and the Space Management Committee. He noted that the Data Quality Committee is already operating, and we have existing Curriculum Committees (Undergraduate and Graduate) whose continued work will help provide oversight of potential duplication of courses. He stated the University Budget Committee will look at the overarching budget as presented by the Vice Chancellors, the Space Allocation Committee will manage the university's space inventory, and the Support Unit Allocation Committee will work to determine base-level services and costs provided to the university. This format is based on what has been seen as effective nationally but is a starting point here at UNL and can obviously evolve over time.

VC Nunez stated that in each of the colleges the academic business officers have been engaged in learning how the incentive-based budget model will function. He pointed out that the Deans have been heavily engaged in the process, and modeling tools will be purchased which will help with budget modeling and allow the units to look at budgeting and modeling in a more robust way. President-Elect Buan asked if the modeling tool will only be available at the college level or will it trickle down to the department level. VC Nunez noted that from the Business and Finance perspective the primary unit is the Dean and the college but the colleges would have the ability to share with whomever.

VC Nunez pointed out that the new budget model does not create any additional resources of funding, but it builds for incentives and ways for units to expand collaboration and optimize resource usage. . He stated that the new budget model will allow for a visible strategic investment funds designated for university-wide priorities. He stated that the Deans will be the conduit for making key budget decisions and investments.

VC Nunez stated that the implementation process includes finalizing the model enhancements, and begins work to formulate the FY21, FY22, and future budgets based on historical activity. He noted that the governance committees will need to be finalized and launched and data quality enhancements will need to continue to ensure that we have good data because it plays an essential role in the model. He reported that policies will need to be created around subvention and the appropriate uses of the strategic investment fund. He stated that strategic investment will be a responsibility of the academic leadership.

VC Nunez stated that the budget model redesign website (<https://budget.unl.edu/budget-model-redesign>) is updated frequently and contains a lot of information on the incentive-based budget model. He reported that there are plans for another forum on April 6 to update the campus on what is occurring with the budget model.

Professor Billesbach, Biological Systems Engineering, asked if the model has been tested. He noted that the University has occasionally lost a significant number of students which would impact tuition and college budgets. VC Nunez stated that it has been tested for two years now, and the data shows that there is a lot of stability, but acknowledges that enrollments can vary.

President Hanrahan asked what the faculty role is within the governance structure of the budget model. VC Nunez pointed out that every committee will have faculty representation. He stated that the Senate Executive Committee will have the opportunity to critique the membership of the University Budget Committee and all others.

President Hanrahan noted that the strategic investment decisions could strongly impact academic

programs which could eventually lead to the elimination of a program. He asked where in the governance structure there are procedures to review a Dean's decision. VC Nunez pointed out that these decisions are completely independent of the budget model decisions and in fact a decision that would eliminate a program still falls under already-existing governance structure of the University.

Professor Weissling, Special Education and Communication Disorders, noted that her department is waiting on the new budget model to figure out the available funding for providing graduate assistantships, yet we are competing with other universities for top students and the window of opportunity for getting these students is closing quickly. She fears that waiting for the budget to be in place will impact enrollment for next year. VC Nunez pointed out that the business of the campus continues and does not change how we run the University. He noted that the goal of the new budget model is not to defund any units and it will take years to fully implement. He stated that the Deans and the Vice Chancellors have the ability to deal with the kinds of issues that Professor Weissling has raised.

Past President Purcell asked what the definition of faculty members is for the governance advisory committees. VC Nunez stated that faculty members are defined by the Faculty Senate who recommends participants for committee participation.

President Hanrahan noted that if a Dean does not support graduate students the graduate programs could suffer greatly since the Deans have such control over the college budget. He asked if the only option for departments to ensure that they have funds to support a good graduate program is to go through the Dean, or can they go to the appropriate Vice Chancellor. VC Nunez noted that the current budget model has been in place probably since the founding of the university. He stated that with the new budget model we will need to look at how we allocate resources strategically and, for example, how we provide student incentives like remissions for undergraduate and graduate students. He stated that we will not stop supporting programs that make us distinct and nationally recognized, but we need to look at how we allocate resources and to be more strategic with our actions. President Hanrahan asked if the colleges will be taxed for students who have a Regents scholarship. VC Nunez stated that primary unit tuition allocation is based on net - meaning tuition receipts after remissions are deducted. So, it isn't a tax but reflective of actual revenue received by the university.

Professor Billesbach stated that he is sensing a lot of nervousness about the new budget model, and essential information about it does not seem to be getting down to the faculty. He asked what VC Nunez's office is doing to get the information out. VC Nunez noted that there have been numerous meetings with the deans and their teams, several open campus forums, ongoing emails and postings to the website. Further, the Chancellor has appointed Professor Ken Bloom as the Faculty Associate for the implementation of the incentive-based budget model. Professor Dunigan, Plant Pathology, suggested that a readable document be written to explain what the principles are behind the change to the budget model and why we need it.

Professor Bloom stated that he is trying to be a conduit between the faculty and the administration regarding the incentive-based budget model. He stated that he has written a 50-minute seminar explaining the budget model and he has been asked by AAUP to speak about it on March 2nd.

4.0 Chancellor Green

Chancellor Green wanted to thank VC Nunez and Dean Farrell for co-chairing the Incentive-based Budget Model Steering Team and all of the work they have done. He noted the process of changing the budget model began three years ago because the way our current budget works creates wide variability with some units being over-budgeted and other units being under-budgeted. He pointed out that the new budget model will be more revenue and incentive-based and allows us to have strategic investment of resources. He stated that the new model is not designed to hurt any of the units on campus, it is designed to strategically allocate our resources.

Chancellor Green stated that he thinks there is some confusion about the implementation of the new budget model. He stated that people believe that the way resources are allocated will be changed starting in July of this year. He noted that the model is being defined and currently a shadow pilot is running alongside our existing budget model. He noted that 2021 will be the first year to begin moving to the new budget model with be fully implemented, including the budget planning process being enacted during the coming fiscal year.

Chancellor Green reported that the State of Our University address will be held on February 14, and this is when the N2025 Strategic Plan will be rolled out. He noted that great work has been done on the plan, and it includes the incentive-based budget process. He reported that he will speak at the beginning of the address, and then each of the Deans will give a report on the state of their college which will help provide an academic portrait of the campus.

Chancellor Green stated that the Legislature is now in session, and things appear favorable for the University. He noted the Senate Executive Committee met with President Carter and had a robust conversation. He stated that he believes President Carter has made significant inroads working with the Legislators, and has met and talked with the Senators of the Appropriations Committee about bills that could impact the University.

Chancellor Green reported that the proposed Regents Bylaw changes that were approved by the Senate are moving forward, and currently, there are discussions with legal counsel to finalize some language, but there have been no substantive changes. He reported that he has had discussions with President Carter about the proposed changes and indicated that we want to move these changes through the process as quickly as possible. He noted that the hope is to get the revisions on the April Board of Regents agenda for the first read and on the June Board of Regents agenda for the second read. He pointed out that the proposed revisions do include the changes to the Extension Educators' Bylaws.

President Hanrahan noted that Central Administration has been dragging out the approval process for the proposed changes, in part because they wanted all the other campuses to approve the changes. He asked if the other campuses will be urged to act quickly. Chancellor Green noted that when the issue was raised with the Senate Executive Committee, the comment was that we want to move it as quickly and as expeditiously as possible. President Hanrahan noted that the Regents Bylaws do not state that the other campuses have to approve the proposed changes.

Professor Adenwalla, Physics & Astronomy, noted that we have a shadow budget model being conducted and asked when the faculty can see the comparison between the existing budget model and the shadow model. Chancellor Green noted that the Deans already have this information and they should be sharing it. He knows that Dean Button has shared the information with his department chairs. Professor Adenwalla asked if a bird's eye view across the campus could be obtained so they could view all comparisons. Chancellor Green stated that it would probably be possible to get this information.

Professor Lee, Communication Studies, asked what the university is doing to help those students with family in China may have been exposed to the coronavirus. Chancellor Green noted that he is meeting with the Chinese Student Association leaders to speak with the students to see if there is anything we can do to help. He pointed out that Interim EVC Moberly and Interim VC Bellows are doing everything that can be done to reach out and support our students who are from Asia, and those students and faculty who are in China.

5.0 Approval of January 14, 2020 Minutes

President Hanrahan asked if there were any corrections to the January Senate minutes. Hearing none, he asked for approval. The minutes were approved by the Senate, with two abstentions.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Resolution on Academic Freedom Statements

President Hanrahan asked if there was any discussion on the proposed resolution. Professor Harbison, Chemistry, stated that he has real problems with the statements and pointed out that the first amendment protects free speech and is more robust than academic freedom which doesn't have much legal protection. He suggested instead of a simple statement that says once a faculty member leaves the university and is not engaged in teaching, research, or service for the University, that person retains the same rights as any other U.S. citizen. He pointed out that there is a bad statement in the teaching and learning section, and the University has no business policing what faculty members do as private citizens. He noted that people have the right to believe how they feel and we should not police what people say in their personal time.

President Hanrahan reminded the Senate that it cannot edit the document, and the Senate is just being asked to endorse the statements. Professor Harbison stated that he is tired of getting statements and policies from the administration that the Senate can only vote yes or no on. He stated that given this, he would say that the Senate should not endorse the statements. President Hanrahan noted that the statements have been approved by the Council of Deans, and possibly ASUN. He asked for a vote on endorsing the statements. There was only one vote in favor of the statements. The vote failed.

6.2 Resolution on Housekeeping Revisions to Senate Documents/Policies

President Hanrahan noted that the resolution would allow the Executive Committee to make minor grammatical corrections, or updated changes to Senate policies previously approved by the Senate. He pointed out that any substantive changes would have to come back to the Senate for reconsideration. The motion was approved.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Motion to Approve the Ballot for Academic Planning Committee, Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee, and Academic Rights and Responsibilities Panel

President Hanrahan reported that the Committee on Committees is forwarding the ballot for elections to the APC, ARRC, and ARRP. He noted that the Senate would vote on approving the ballot at the March 3 meeting.

7.2 Motion to Elect Non-Tenure Track Faculty Member to Academic Planning Committee

President Hanrahan noted that, as stated in the UNL Bylaws, there will be a vote at the March 3 Senate meeting to elect a non-tenure track faculty member to the Academic Planning Committee.

7.3 Open Mic

Online Course Evaluations

Professor Glider, School of Biological Sciences, stated that he has spoken to several faculty members from various colleges regarding the online course evaluations who have concerns about the university questions. He noted that there was a taskforce that worked on developing the questions, but asked if the questions were discussed by the Senate Executive Committee and approved by the Senate. He pointed out that the information obtained by the evaluations is used in many important decisions about an instructor. President Hanrahan stated that the Executive Committee met with Associate VC Goodburn and Associate VC Walker to discuss the online course evaluations. He noted that Associate VC Goodburn and Walker presented their findings from the pilot studies, but the Committee was not asked to approve the questions.

Professor Lee stated that it is his understanding that departments can add specific questions related to their discipline. Professor Gorman, Classics & Religious Studies, noted that departments in the College of Arts & Sciences have recently received a message from the Dean's office stating that instructors cannot ask certain questions, and if an instructor wants to get this specific information, they will need to conduct their own evaluations. Professor Schwadel, Sociology, reported that he has viewed the questions and was told that faculty members have no choice but to use the online evaluations.

Professor Woodman asked if the plan is to have the Senate approve the questions, since this is a matter that involves all of the colleges. President Hanrahan stated that he is not aware of any plan to get Senate approval, although this is a curricular matter that the Senate should vote on. He noted that he viewed a memo to the Deans stating that it was their responsibility to implement the online course evaluations.

President Hanrahan stated that the Executive Committee will schedule a meeting with Associate VC Goodburn and Associate VC Walker to discuss the issue further, and he will report to the Senate after the meeting.

Conducting Research with Foreign Entities

President Hanrahan noted that there have been increasing questions regarding the federal regulations about conducting research with foreign entities, particularly with China. Chancellor Green reported that there has been increased scrutiny on relationships involving research with China, particularly with the Thousand Talents Plan, which was providing funds directly to researchers for shadow labs in China. He pointed out that this has become an intellectual property issue, and the federal government is asking institutions to screen all faculty involved in research with foreign entities. He noted that this has occurred here at the University. He pointed out that we have an annual reporting mechanism that faculty must complete each year, which goes through a normal approval process, ensuring some safety that the regulations are being followed.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2020, at 2:30 p.m. in the City Campus Union, Regency Suite. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Joan Latta Konecky, Secretary.