

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Kolbe

Date: Tuesday, June 2, 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 2:30 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Green/EVC Spiller

2.1 Report on Progress of Proposed Bylaws Revisions at the NU system level

Chancellor Green stated that he appreciated the support of the Senate with the proposed revisions to the Regents Bylaws, including the revisions to the Extension Educators language. He stated that in subsequent conversations with General Counsel there have been concerns about using the term involuntary administrative leave, and some additional language due to changes in the federal Title IX guidelines. He stated that Central Administration wants the Executive Committee and General Counsel to meet to discuss the suggested changes, and the hope is that this will be done as soon as possible because the goal is to have them approved by the start of the fall semester.

Hanrahan pointed out that he does not understand what the issues are when the revised document was sent to Central Administration with a clear explanation for the changes. He stated that it would be helpful to the Executive Committee if General Counsel could put their concerns in writing. Chancellor Green stated that he would make this request.

2.2 Forward to Fall Update: testing availability, PPE requirements and availability, clarification on the start of classes

Chancellor Green reported that at the recent Town Hall meeting there was considerable discussion around the changes in the academic calendar announcement, as well as discussion about work accommodations. He noted that the change in the academic calendar is to the fall semester only with classes starting asynchronously on August 17th. He pointed out that that this will allow students to come back to campus at a slower, more gradual rate. He noted that the faculty on the Academic Planning Task Force requested the asynchronous teaching. He reported that there have already been significant conversations about PPEs for the campus, and a policy around face coverings is already in progress.

Woodman asked if it is true that the construction of classes will be left to the unit and their departments, and whether this would create different expectations for courses which could lead to confusion for the students. EVC Spiller stated that the F2F Committee and the Academic Planning Task Force, as well as the Deans, have been discussing this, and it is felt that the faculty have ownership over their pedagogy. She pointed out that there will be a uniform standard of safety that must be maintained for classes, and currently that calls for the six foot social distancing rule which will mean that there will be a substantial impact in the number of students that can be accommodated in classrooms. She reported that a process is being established whereby a faculty member, or a department, could propose teaching with less social distancing, but the request would need to be approved by the Health and Safety Task Force.

Billesbach noted that in a department meeting yesterday there was discussion regarding what is required to run classes and maintain research and creative activity, and he felt that it was up to the individual investigators to provide the necessary PPEs. He pointed out that research being funded by grants have no allowance in funding to purchase PPEs. Chancellor Green reported that the University has requisitioned face masks, hand sanitizers, and other hygiene in large scale, and the University is negotiating with the State of Nebraska to see if federal funding can be obtained to assist with these necessary purchases.

2.3 Will schools and daycares, etc. be open at full capacity in the fall to allow faculty of young children or other dependents to work on campus?

Chancellor Green stated that the University's current understanding from the State indicates that schools are expected to be back in session this fall, and he anticipates that the University child care center will be up and running. He noted that families involved with the child care center have received communication and places are being held to accommodate the children.

2.4 What assurances do faculty have that their supervisors won't pressure them to teach in-person if they are worried about their health or the risk to the health of household members? Can supervisors legally require medical documentation for workplace accommodation approval due to members in the household who are in a COVID-19 risk group?

Chancellor Green stated that considerable work has been done around this issue. EVC Spiller reported that a remote work policy, which includes faculty, staff, and student workers, is being developed, but still needs to be reviewed by General Counsel. She noted that the policy identifies individuals who are considered vulnerable by the CDC, and the mechanism being developed does not involve the sharing of medical documentation with a supervisor. Instead the approval process would go through an expanded version of the ADA managed by the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance. Chancellor Green stated that a lot of work has been done on this issue and great care has been given to protect the rights of all individuals. He stated that the hope is to get this policy completed very soon because it is on the minds of many of our colleagues across the campus.

Woodman asked if we can ask for student's temperatures. Chancellor Green stated that the question is whether this is legal. He noted that it is being done in some places as a screening tool, but we have not addressed it here yet. He reported that it is being done at UNO through a phone app. Woodman stated that he has heard that student athletes are being screened before they can enter the weight room. Chancellor Green pointed out that this is a NCAA guidance for reengaging conditioning for student athletes. Weissling stated that clarification on this would be helpful, especially for those people who are involved with clinical practice. Chancellor Green asked Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny to add this agenda item to the next meeting of the F2F.

Eklund asked if there was additional language for course syllabi so there will be uniform information across the campus pertaining to the additional measures being taken as the campus deals with COVID-19. EVC Spiller reported that the Academic Planning Task Force is looking at syllabus language which would be available for faculty to use to provide guidance for students. In addition to normal learning modules and videos, there will be language about campus safety. She noted that the Task Force is also looking at the possibility of developing a social contract for students that would allow them to positively confirm some of the safety protocols. She stated that many of the Big Ten universities are working on developing a social contract.

2.5 What are the thresholds or metrics we are looking for to know when it is safe to increase density on campus?

Chancellor Green stated that the six foot social distancing guidelines are based on recommendations from the CDC and UNMC, but this might be flexible if things improve. He noted that UNMC has a model that looks across the state at the availability of health care facilities, the volume of caseloads, and the positive test rates over time. He noted that there is now over 75 days were this data have been in place and we will continue to use the data to help us make decisions. Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny reported that the accelerated recovery model being used by UNMC focuses on health districts across the state which helps mayors and the Governor to make decisions.

2.6 How do you intend to improve communications with faculty about the fall semester, and when do you intend to give guidance to faculty who are not comfortable with teaching on campus?

Chancellor Green stated that general communication has been provided at the Town Hall meetings and the information provided should be cascaded down from the Deans to the departments and the faculty. He noted that EVC Spiller's office has also been providing communication.

2.7 With projections of federal aid for the University being \$31.6 million, which is higher than previously anticipated, what will be the impact for the UNL campus? Will UNL's expected share of the federal aid money now increase, and how will this impact our potential budget cuts?

Chancellor Green wanted to first clarify the federal stimulus funding. He reported that to date, the University has received funding through the CARES Act. He stated that this funding went directly to institutions of higher education and UNL received \$16.2 million.

He reported that approximately half of the funding, \$7.8 million, has been provided as grant-in-aid to students who were directly impacted by the COVID-19 situation. He noted that the rest of the funding will be put towards the fall semester to help with increased instruction costs, making classrooms Zoom capable, to improve safety measures, and to help accommodate the bus service between the campuses.

Chancellor Green reported that there is conversation in Washington D.C. about providing more funding through the Heroes Act, and it does call for additional aid for higher education, but no action has been taken on the Act yet. He stated that UNL will not receive additional funding from the CARES Act beyond the \$16.2 million.

2.8 Online cheating problems with remote learning due to increased use of Chegg and other online sources.

EVC Spiller reported that there were some issues during midterm and with finals in the spring semester with students cheating on exams through the use of Chegg and other online sources. She noted that the cheating seemed to be localized in some disciplines, and the Academic Planning Task Force has been actively looking into this problem. She stated that Dave Johnson, Director of Academic Technologies, is putting together a work group to see how we can maximize our resources, such as possibly using ProctorU to prevent cheating. She pointed out that the academic integrity of testing needs to be protected. Chancellor Green pointed out that one of the reasons behind the idea to change the fall schedule is so finals can be completed on campus before the Thanksgiving break, rather than having finals being conducted remotely.

Gay stated that there is nothing more important for the academic body to discuss than academic integrity. He stated that initially a message was being sent that the increased cheating was the fault of the instructor, which is totally the wrong message to send. He noted that cheating in Physics was very high, and when the department chair contacted Chegg he was told that they only will talk to Deans. He stated that we need to develop a really uniform, monolithic approach with these companies whose business model is to help students cheat, and he believes that EVC Spiller or the Chancellor need to lead this charge. He stated that he is glad to see that the Academic Planning Task Force is making a vigorous effort to look into the problem.

Buan stated that faculty really do need help with the academic integrity issue. She pointed out that online proctoring programs can be costly with some contracts charging \$4 per student per test. She suggested that online testing needs to be more secure, and stated that perhaps the administration can help by communicating with Chegg.

2.10 What is the total cost of hiring consultants over the past three years for various university functions?

Chancellor Green noted that search consultants are the most common consultants hired, especially for higher level administrative appointments and they have been tremendously helpful with assessing the national market. He stated that the issue is that not all searches are successful and we wind up conducting an internal search. He stated that he thinks we could reduce the use of some of these consultants from what we have traditionally done.

Chancellor Green stated that our biggest single contract is with EduCo Global which assists us with recruiting international students. He reported that consultants were hired to help with the incentive based budget model, the service delivery initiative, the N150 strategic planning, and the Office of Research and Economic Development has used a consulting firm that has been very successful. He reported that he would be happy to provide a report that would summarize the consultants. (The report is being developed and will be attached to the minutes of a future Executive Committee meeting.)

Woodman stated that he asked the question about the consultants because he is frequently being asked by faculty members why we are marketing out to consultants for things like the Grand Challenges which was recently announced by the Chancellor, particularly when we have high-priced administrators who should be leading the campus in these efforts. He pointed out that people are feeling that consultants are an extraneous cost when we are potentially being faced with significant budget cuts, and there is the question whether consultants actually deliver on their services. Chancellor Green noted that in the greater context of the budget, the cost for consultants is not that high and they have been successful. He pointed out that he is looking for reduction in administrative overhead, including looking at positions and other costs.

2.11 Other Issues

Chancellor Green noted that everyone is consciously aware of the tragic situation that the country is in, but today there was an online conversation in the “Dish it Up” discussion session to reflect on the recent nationwide protests in the response to the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and Tony McDade. He pointed out that over 400 people participated. He stated that the Black Student Union wrote to him over night about the change that is needed, and the plan is to have more of these conversations across the campus.

Buan reported that a call has been sent out to the faculty seeking faculty members to serve on the Senate’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee. She stated that she hopes the campus will take the current momentum to make a dent in our strategic investments to align our policies and practices, and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee is one of the actions being taken by the Senate to make things better.

Chancellor Green reported that the enrollment data for the fall is actually quite positive, and we are net positive over last year at this time. He pointed out that extending our enrollment deposit for another month may have helped. EVC Spiller noted that we are 2% over last year, and we are seeing an increase in Nebraska students and out-of-state students, and there is a significant increase in the diversity of the incoming freshmen class. She stated that in wrangling over all of the details for the fall semester, we are looking to make sure that we are finding ways to continue our education and research missions to the fullest extent. Chancellor Green reported that we do not have a huge number of international freshmen students enrolling, but we have held up fairly well with the number of international students, although we do have less enrolled than previously.

Gay noted that President Trump is threatening the visas of Chinese students and asked how that would impact us. Chancellor Green stated that we are keeping a close eye on this, and pointed out that the restriction is tied to tensions around Hong Kong and would impact Chinese students conducting research.

Chancellor Green stated that he appreciated the letter the Executive Committee sent to the faculty about planning towards the fall semester. He acknowledged that there are many questions as we work our way towards making adjustments for the semester.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Town Hall Meeting Report

Buan reported that at the Town Hall meeting last Friday the Chancellor reported that the University was not anticipating a budget rescission this year, but we could see a budget cut of 7.5%. However, she pointed out that this was prior to the new enrollment figures mentioned earlier by EVC Spiller. Buan stated that it was reported at the meeting that the Academic Planning Task Force is seeing whether a marker can be used in MyRed to indicate if a course will be taught in person, or if a course will be taught by other means.

3.2 UNL Faculty Senate Hosting the Big Ten Academic Alliance Faculty Leadership Governance Conference

Buan noted that the Faculty Senate is scheduled to host the BTAA Faculty Leadership Governance Conference this fall, October 15-17, but it will now be conducted by remote format. She stated that a committee consisting of herself, Kolbe, Griffin, Director Annette Wetzel, Director Melanie Nunez, and Manager of Special Events & Projects Corrie Svehla are working on making the arrangements for the conference. She noted that at last year's conference there was discussion about putting forward a joint resolution from the Faculty Senate President's on faculty governance this year. She stated that there may be speakers from the Big Ten universities participating in the conference.

3.3 Updated Summer Executive Committee Schedule

Buan reported that AVC Goodburn and VC Wilhelm, co-chairs of the Fall to Forward Committee will be meeting with the Executive Committee on June 16th to discuss what the F2F is working on for the campus.

3.4 Emergency Executive Committee Meeting

Buan reported that the Executive Committee will be meeting with AVC Walker on June 11th to discuss syllabus language changes being proposed by the Academic Planning Task Force.

4.0 Approval of May 19, 2020 Minutes

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

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Policy on Anti-plagiarism Software and Services

Buan reported that the proposal is to update the language in the original Safe Assignment policy. Woodman stated that the Information Technologies and Services Committee voted to approve the changes. He noted that the revisions make the policy more generic to cover learning management systems, rather than to identify a specific software program that may currently be in use. Billesbach moved to approve the changes. Motion seconded by Woodman and approved by the Executive Committee.

5.2 Request from Academic Integrity Committee to Survey Faculty Members

Buan noted that the Academic Integrity Committee is seeking approval from the Executive Committee to survey the faculty about their experiences with content-sharing platforms such as Course Hero. She stated that the information gathered from the survey will be used to help set academic integrity policies for the fall semester. Weissling moved to approve the request to survey the faculty. Motion seconded by Minter and approved by the Executive Committee.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Professional Code of Conduct (Minter)

Minter reported that the committee created to work on the Professional Code of Conduct was charged in late October and met every other week until recently when it started meeting weekly. She noted that the committee surveyed Professional Codes of Conduct at other Big Ten universities. She pointed out that the Code does not seek to rewrite policies, but to create a concise representation of existing policies and procedures, and to serve as a guidance document on professional conduct. She stated that the idea is to first share the draft with the Executive Committee, and eventually others as the draft is revised.

Buan thanked Minter and the committee members for all of their work noting that it was a huge undertaking. Minter pointed out that it was a great committee with good conversations, with the biggest problem being how concise the language should be. She reported that some of the language parallels language in the Student Code of Conduct.

The Executive Committee then reviewed and suggested revisions to the draft Professional Code of Conduct. Buan suggested that once the Faculty Senate Committee on Diversity and Inclusion is established, it should also review the document.

6.2 Statement in Support of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Buan asked if the Executive Committee should issue a letter of support of equity, diversity, and inclusion to send to the faculty given the recent national events. The Executive Committee agreed to send a letter.

6.3 Request for Support for Temporarily Changing the 15th week Policy

Buan stated that AVC Walker has made a request for the Executive Committee to support the temporary change regarding the 15th week policy so it occurs over the weekend prior to the Thanksgiving holiday in order to accommodate the modified fall semester

schedule. Woodman pointed out that the Executive Committee needs further clarification on how finals week is going to be arranged because if finals occur on Saturday and Sunday it could conflict with religious observances.

6.2 Facial Coverings Policy

Buan asked if the faculty should be polled to see how they are feeling about PPEs, what mode of instruction they are comfortable providing, and other concerns for teaching during the fall semester. Woodman suggested that the Executive Committee wait to hear what the formal recommendations will be from the F2F Committee before a survey is sent to the faculty. The Executive Committee did discuss possible questions for a survey.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, June 16, 2020 at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be conducted via Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Lorna Dawes, Secretary.