

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Adenwalla, Buan, Franco Cruz, Gay, Hanrahan, Kolbe, Latta Konecky, Minter, Peterson, Vakilzadian

Absent: Fech, Purcell, Woodman

Date: Tuesday, March 10, 2020

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 2:30 p.m.

2.0 Update on COVID-19 (Associate to the Chancellor Mike Zeleny)

Zeleny noted that campus efforts to deal with the COVID-19 situation in the country is a rapidly evolving situation. He pointed out that the Chancellor created a taskforce which is meeting daily and working closely with the Lincoln-Lancaster Health Department, Lincoln Public Schools, the Mayor, and two and four-year colleges in our community. He stated that sub-teams have been created to address academic planning, research, international travel, communications, and campus operations. He noted that the academic planning committee includes a large representation of faculty members. He stated that Central Administration is now meeting weekly and currently decisions are being made at the local campus level.

Zeleny stated that the focus is to minimize the spread of the virus as much as possible so the health care system does not become overwhelmed. He noted that LPS is currently on spring break and our spring break is coming up soon. He pointed out that the University will not close down completely because we have some students, particularly international students, who cannot return home. He stated that on-campus classes might be moved to an online only format. Adenwalla pointed out that research labs need to be run and asked if this would be allowed. She also asked if there will be help for the faculty who are not experienced with teaching online. Zeleny noted that IT personnel have been pulled from other responsibilities to assist faculty and students if courses go online. Adenwalla stated that she asked students which method they would prefer to use for an online course and those students she spoke to stated they would prefer Zoom. Zeleny pointed out that Zoom may not be able to handle all of the people who will be using it. He stated that Canvas has the opportunity to share. He noted that everyone will need to be flexible as we deal with this pandemic. He stated that the focus is on minimizing the disruption to classes.

Kolbe inquired about students having access to things that cannot be provided by remote access, such as biology students needing to work on cadavers. Zeleny stated that research is a huge priority for the University and those faculty members, staff, and students involved in research with living organisms will be defined as essential personnel. He reported that the University has a statewide plan for animal care at its facilities.

Zeleny stated that the research team is considering how graduate students and under graduate students can continue their research. He noted that consideration is being given to who is considered an essential employee, and some people may need to be redeployed to do other responsibilities. He stated that the University is encouraging people to work from home, and anyone who is sick should NOT come to work.

Buan asked if our Emergency Preparedness Group has prepared for this kind of event. Zeleny stated that the group was prepared for the avian flu, but not a pandemic. He stated that the emergency operation command has not been operationalized yet, but it is being engaged and briefed. He pointed out that the Emergency Preparedness Group would immediately be mobilized if the University would be shut down. He reported that the administration is monitoring the Big Ten and the national environment to determine what steps we should take next.

Hanrahan thanked Zeleny and stated that the administration is doing a great job. He also appreciated the administration including faculty governance in the communications. He reported that there have been some questions from faculty members concerning whether there will be adjustments to the sick leave policy. Zeleny noted that this issue hits employees that may not have built up their sick leave bank. He stated that Human Resources is working to create a leave option for these people.

Zeleny stated that people need to do what is in the best interests for their health, and to listen to what is being recommended by the local health authorities. He suggested that people avoid large groups of people. He stated that we have been following the CDC recommendations for universities.

Hanrahan asked if the annual evaluations of faculty will take into consideration the disruption that will be caused if classes have to be taught by remote access. He pointed out that course evaluations might be impacted by the change in the delivery of the course. Zeleny stated that some students may have difficulty in terms of access to the needed technology to submit course evaluations. Hanrahan suggested that the Chancellor convey to the Deans and Chairs that they need to take into consideration the impact of delivering the courses by remote access.

Kolbe asked about graduation in May. Zeleny stated that no decision has been made yet about graduation. He stated that there was some discussion about inviting students to come back to campus to walk across the stage at a later commencement if the May graduation ceremony is cancelled.

Hanrahan asked if the taskforce has considered delaying the implementation of VSIP for those who signed up for it, given the stock market situation and the impacts of it on retirement plans. Zeleny stated that he will raise this issue with the taskforce.

Minter asked if the consensus is that the University will close. Zeleny stated that he thinks it is very possible that classes will not be meeting in classrooms. He stated that he believes we will do something operationally this month, with possibly getting through spring break and then moving to a remote access mode.

Adenwalla asked if any guidelines can be provided on how to conduct tests online. Hanrahan stated that there are modules or software in Canvas where this can be done and information on how to do this is available on line (see <https://covid19.unl.edu/faculty-staff>).

Latta Konecky asked if CCTV is ramping up in preparation for remote access teaching. Zeleny stated that they are, and tip sheets are being developed. He stated that the academic planning sub-committee is working with CCTV and more information can be found at teaching.unl.edu/keep-teaching.

Zeleny wanted to thank the Faculty Senate for moving so quickly on the vote to temporarily relax the class attendance policy.

Adenwalla asked how announcements will be made regarding what actions the campus will take. Zeleny stated that if there is an emergency an announcement will be made by email, but if there is an immediate emergency that needs to be announced quickly, UNL Alert will be used.

Adenwalla noted that the Student Health Services might be inundated, and she asked whether the health insurance for graduate students will be sufficient. Zeleny stated that the head of the Health Center is on the taskforce and the Health Center is encouraging people to call, before coming in. He stated that he is not aware of any insurance problems.

Zeleny thanked the Executive Committee for its time and told people to check the COVID-19 website and their email for updates.

3.0 Incentive-based Budget Model Governance (Professor Bloom)

Bloom noted that VC Nunez was originally scheduled to attend the meeting, but has had to cancel to attend meetings on COVID-19.

Hanrahan asked how faculty merit raises will play out with the new budget model, particularly if there is a department that has salary inequities, but the enrollment is dropping in the department. Bloom pointed out that he is not speaking on behalf of VC Nunez and cannot speak authoritatively on decisions about the new budget model, but this would be an interesting case. He suggested that these kinds of issues could be buffered in a college, and it would be up to the Dean's discretion to some extent. He

noted that state appropriations fund the salary raises, but Varner Hall distributes the state appropriations fund to the campuses. He stated that colleges and departments could get increased funding through teaching and research efforts. Hanrahan stated that if a department gets less funding, covering salaries could be a problem. Bloom stated that the budget model is not a purely mechanical system, and there are subvention funds and other mechanisms in place to help deal with situations similar to what Hanrahan is describing. He pointed out that the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors would need to make policy decisions to address these kinds of situations.

Hanrahan stated that it is his understanding that the tuition revenue will be broken down to the colleges getting 75% and the administration getting 25%. He noted that departments that do not have funded research will get less money than the departments that have heavily funded research. Bloom stated that the departments that do not have funded research also have lesser costs of performing research.

Kolbe noted that for the arts and humanities, creative activities represents research work and these are often not externally funded. Bloom stated that there is the question of how the University continues to support academic programs that are important to the mission, but that do not bring in much revenue. He stated that there needs to be discussion if we find that the campus is not expressing the right values once the budget model is in full use.

Hanrahan stated that the emphasis with the budget model and the N2025 Strategic Plan is on research, but the arts and humanities which are involved in creative activities are being left out. Buan noted that discussions she has been involved with as a member of the N2025 Strategy Team were inclusive of research and creative activity and there was acknowledgement that there were multiple ways of delivering research/creative activities. Kolbe stated that it would be good to attach the words creative activity behind research in documents which would help people associate the importance of creative activity. Buan stated that she thinks the arts and humanities departments will need to define what metrics indicate good work for a creative activity.

Vakilzadian asked what the difference is between research and creative activity. Hanrahan stated that the act of creating something is considered research for some areas of the arts and humanities. He stated that the question is whether the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellors, and the Board of Regents value creative activity as if it was research.

Bloom pointed out that part of the challenge is that research costs money to support. He stated that funding is required to fill in the gaps that can be created in covering the cost for conducting research, but noted that creative activity may not create these kinds of gaps in department and college budgets.

Buan asked if there are other creative activities that help generate funding. Hanrahan stated that most creative activity is funded internally, and pointed out that it is difficult to get external funding. Adenwalla asked if outreach, such as offering musical events or plays for a fee would be a source of revenue. Hanrahan stated that charging a fee could

reduce attendance to some of the events. He stated that there needs to be some way for the creative parts of the campus to get their portion of the appropriated funds. Bloom stated that he is trying to facilitate discussions on the budget model to raise these kinds of issues that need to be considered.

Hanrahan asked if faculty lines can be used to fund scholarships. He noted that VC Nunez stated in an email that this could be done, but it is not a wise thing to do. Bloom pointed out that this would be a decision that the department and the Dean would need to make. He noted that with the new budget model there shouldn't be the concept of faculty lines anymore. He stated that a Dean ought to be able to just create a new faculty position under the incentive-based budget model, and stated that the colleges should have the freedom to make these kinds of decisions. Adenwalla stated that when the Chancellor was asked about faculty positions he said that the faculty lines will remain the same for departments.

Peterson stated that previously when a faculty member retired or left the university in IANR, the position would be returned to the VC and departments had to make an argument to get the position back. He pointed out that with the incentive-based budget model there will be three main sources of funds: state appropriations, research, and tuition. He noted that currently, the State Legislature decides on the University's budget which includes the percentage of salary increase. He noted that the state appropriations will be allocated 40/40/20 in the incentive-based budget model.

Bloom pointed out that there will always be a subvention mechanism and strategic investment mechanism which can help support units. Hanrahan asked if the state appropriations was unrestricted. Bloom reported that there are some funds that are designated for specific purposes, such as the tobacco settlement funds, but the big pool of funds is unrestricted.

Hanrahan asked what was happening with tuition remission. Bloom reported that many of the scholarships are not backed up by actual dollars, rather they are a discount on tuition which are funded by the campus. He said that individual colleges do not make decisions about financial aid and remissions for students and thus those costs should be spread across all colleges in some way. He stated that previously the remissions has come out of the administration's funding. Vakilzadian noted that Regents scholars get free tuition and he thinks the state should fund these scholarships.

Hanrahan asked what happens if a Regents scholar transfers to a different college. He asked which college would fund the scholarship. Bloom stated that these costs will be distributed over the colleges. Hanrahan suggested that it might be better to keep all of the remissions in one pool.

Bloom stated that he wants to stimulate these kinds of discussions across the campus, and he is trying to work on having more discussions in the colleges and departments because he believes there is still a communication gap regarding the new budget model. He reported that he is working on developing a database of questions and answers on the

incentive-based budget model. He noted that the Deans have not seen the governance document yet, and he believes there needs to be more discussion about the governance committees. He pointed out that we don't have rules yet on the subvention fund, and come fall we need to have rules in place if the budget model is going to work properly.

Hanrahan suggested that Bloom contact the college and/or departments to see if they are interested in having him come and speak about the incentive-based budget model. Bloom noted that the Deans have had more briefings about the model than support unit leaders or department chairs. Hanrahan stated that the sooner we get the rules out, the better. Bloom pointed out that currently it is difficult to have the needed conversations about the governance of the budget because of the COVID-19 situation.

Gay stated that the faculty really appreciate all of the work Bloom is doing to make sure the faculty voice is heard as we approach the time when the incentive-based budget model is fully operational. Bloom pointed out that the budget model is just a tool, it should not drive our activities on teaching and research. He stated that if there are parts of the budget that are not working, we will need to adjust the model.

Minter stated that some colleges are feeling downsized by the new budget model, and noted that there is real concern that the college is now responsible for paying for everything. Bloom pointed out that the new budget model will have some better features than our current budget model.

4.0 Announcements

4.1 Faculty Senate Vote on Temporary Policy to Relax Class Attendance Policy

Hanrahan wanted to thank the Executive Committee and the Faculty Senate for its quick response to voting on the temporary policy to relax class attendance policy because of the COVID-19 situation.

4.2 Meetings of the Executive Committee

Hanrahan stated that the Executive Committee should plan to meet via Zoom for the remainder of the semester.

4.3 Upcoming News Article on the Report on Lecturers

Hanrahan stated that Rick Ruggles of the Omaha World Herald is planning to write an article regarding the report of the committee to look at Lecturer salaries in the College of Arts & Sciences. He noted that he told Ruggles about the forum that was held by the Faculty Senate several years ago for non-tenure track faculty members. Hanrahan stated that the Executive Committee should receive a copy of the final report of the Lecturer committee. Minter reported that the Lecturer's Committee is wrapping up the report and she will get a copy of it to the Executive Committee.

4.4 Proposed Revisions to Regents Bylaws

Hanrahan once again reported that the campus is still waiting to see the suggested revisions from General Counsel on the proposed changes to the Regents Bylaws. He noted that the main problem now appears to be with the proposed changes to the

Professional Code of Conduct section. He noted that General Counsel feels this is a problem because each of the campuses has its own process. He pointed out that the unions of UNO and UNK signed off on the proposed changes, and making the changes would be an opportunity for there to be a system-wide process.

4.5 Academic Freedom Statements

Kolbe asked what the status is of the academic freedom statements. Hanrahan stated that at this point it is in the administration's hands.

5.0 Approval of March 3, 2020 Minutes

Hanrahan asked if there were any further revisions to the minutes. Hearing none, he asked for approval of the minutes. The minutes were approved with one abstention.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 NSSE Survey Results - How can the Senate help to make improvements?

Agenda item postponed.

6.2 Diversity and Inclusion Committee Syllabus

Hanrahan stated in reviewing some Big Ten universities' diversity and inclusion committee syllabus he found the members to be a mixture of faculty, administrators, and some students. He noted that many of the responsibilities of these committees were similar to what the Chancellor's Commission on the State of People of Color (CCPSC) and the Council on Inclusive Excellence and Diversity are already doing.

Buan suggested that since this will be a Faculty Senate committee, it should be faculty oriented. She stated that one of the issues that the committee could address is the difference in promotion and tenure practices in the colleges. She questioned whether we would want to charge the Committee to establish procedures about following metrics and using the same process. Hanrahan suggested that the Committee would look at policies related to how diversity is considered in annual reviews. Hanrahan noted that a key issue for under-represented faculty members is the high amount of service they are asked to do, yet they get penalized for this in their annual review and in promotion and tenure.

Vakilzadian asked when hiring new faculty members should we look at diversity and inclusion. Minter suggested that there needs to be a statement about this. Buan pointed out that the Faculty Diversity and Inclusion Fellows team developed a statement, but it is currently in the hands of Associate VC Walker. She stated that there should be a rubric for judging candidates and links to online training for search committees to make sure there is a diverse pool of candidates. Franco Cruz asked if the Fellows team was still meeting. Buan stated that it is not. She noted that Professor Combs was working on a PowerPoint presentation and others on the team were working on activities that would go along with the search committee training.

Hanrahan stated that he will draft a syllabus for the Executive Committee to review next week.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be conducted via Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Joan Latta Konecky, Secretary.