

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Billesbach, Franco Cruz

Date: Tuesday, May 19, 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 Title IX Collaborative Update - Professor Swearer

Swearer reported that the Collaborative is composed of 75 members representing faculty, staff, and students, and divided into three parallel groups which was done to maximize students' voices. She stated that the co-chairs have been working well together and each group is to provide a report by August 15. Once the reports have been submitted, she will review them and submit the final for the Collaborative to review. She stated that the final report will go to the Chancellor, and she can send a copy of it to the Executive Committee.

Swearer reported that three candidates will be interviewed next week for the Associate to the Chancellor for Institutional Equity and Compliance, who will be responsible for hiring the Director for Title IX. She stated that it is her understanding that there are two external, and one internal, candidates for the position.

Weissling reported that Central Administration is eliminating the University Chief Compliance Officer who works with campus Title IX and ADA Coordinators. She asked if this will impact UNL's Associate to the Chancellor for Institutional Equity and Compliance, and the Director for Title IX. Swearer stated that she does not think the elimination will create more responsibilities for the Associate to the Chancellor of IEC. Dawes pointed out that if the system-wide position is permanently cut there could be repercussions down the road which could result in more responsibility for the Associate to the Chancellor.

Buan noted that Swearer was quoted about the new Title IX regulations, and asked if the Collaborative would recommend UNL follow more stringent policies than what the federal guidelines are suggesting. Swearer noted that she has read the summaries about the new federal guidelines, but she does not know what the Collaborative will be recommending. She pointed out that ultimately the decision will be up to the Chancellor. Buan questioned if there could be legal implications if universities were to have more

stringent policies. Swearer stated that she has been reading what different universities are considering, and there is concern that with the new guidelines people will be retaining lawyers more often which leads to an issue of equity because not everyone can afford an attorney. Woodman noted that the original Title IX guidelines were more restrictive and there were a lot of challenges to them. He questioned whether we would be setting ourselves up for more lawsuits if we have more restrictive policies. Swearer pointed out that the General Counsel office will more than likely be involved in deciding if we can have more restrictive policies.

Buan asked if there is the expectation that the Collaborative will become a permanent group. Swearer stated that the Collaborative will need to make that recommendation. She pointed out that currently it is too large to become a permanent committee, but she does believe it is important that we have a continuing commission or campus-wide committee. She suggested that people would need to submit applications in order to become a member of a commission or committee. Minter stated that she would like to see the Collaborative continue in some form because there are several different issues occurring: how the campus responds to Title IX violations, issues involving professional misconduct which may not rise to a Title IX violation, but would still be considered misconduct. She noted that the NCAA lawsuit was disturbing, and there are some pervasive campus climate issues that need to be addressed.

Buan pointed out that it is important to protect our students at all levels, but there is also the faculty-staff interaction that needs to be considered. She asked if the Collaborative has been thinking more broadly about the climate on campus. Swearer stated that the Collaborative discussed doing a climate survey. She noted that the campus does not have good data, and the Clery Act information is not adequate. She stated that we need to know what students are experiencing, and what faculty and staff are experiencing. She pointed out that unprofessional conduct definitely affects the campus climate.

Minter noted that the Senate is working on a professional code of conduct, and there has been talk about creating a separate sexual relationship policy, but there are not many Bylaws that refer to a relationship policy. She suggested that the Professional Code of Conduct Committee might want to work with the Collaborative in the future to work on a sexual relationship policy. Hanrahan pointed out that if a faculty member engages in professional misconduct, it should be handled by the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee.

Hanrahan asked if Swearer feels confident that the recommendations pertaining to Athletics will be enacted. Swearer stated that if the recommendations are not enacted it would look bad for the University. She pointed out that how the University responds to Title IX incidents involving student-athletes really matters. She stated that there may be some very specific recommendations from the Collaborative regarding Athletics.

Weissling noted that there was a big push to have responsible employee training to deal with Title IX violations, but now we don't hear anything about it. Swearer stated that she thinks one of the recommendations from the Collaborative is to have more consistent

training. Dawes stated that she believe the new guidelines remove the responsible employee guidelines.

Buan questioned whether having increased training and more policies might scare away some students. Swearer stated that as a parent she would be grateful for a university to talk about these issues, and she believes that parents would feel better if there was increased training and more policies in place. She pointed out that we want to be a caring campus that has compassion and care for anyone who experiences trauma.

Woodman asked if the federal guidelines would be considered the required minimum standard, allowing universities to develop higher standard guidelines. Swearer said that she thinks universities around the country will be grappling with this issue. Woodman asked if data on Title IX cases would be available for our campus. Swearer stated that we need informed data collection and she believes this will be a recommendation from the Collaborative.

3.0 Proposed Changes to the Fall Semester (Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny)

Zeleny reported that the Fall to Forward Committee is looking at a modification of the fall semester to best optimize it given that it is likely that a second wave of the COVID-19 virus will probably occur in the winter months. He noted that other universities across the country are making similar recommendations.

Zeleny stated that the suggestion is to start classes remotely on August 17, and then have in-person classes begin on the 24th. He noted that starting earlier would allow a two-week period for incoming freshmen to come to campus, and it would allow the move-in dates for other students to be spread out. He reported that finals week would begin on November 21 and be completed by November 25, and pointed out that this arrangement would provide instructors with more time to submit their final grades. He reported that the modification also includes a three-week session in December.

Zeleny noted that the suggested modifications are based on trying to limit the rates of infection that could occur if the virus is seasonal like the flu, and also limit the amount of people traveling off-campus during the semester. He stated that EVC Spiller was meeting with the Deans now to present the proposal.

Kolbe asked if the proposed modifications reduce the semester by two weeks. Zeleny stated that there would be classes on Labor Day and there would be no fall break, making a more consolidated semester. Woodman pointed out that the 15th week would be compressed to two days. Zeleny noted that there are some contractual issues that would need to be considered.

Dam asked if there was consideration of student burnout due to having no breaks. Zeleny stated that a break often means more people leaving campus and the goal is to try to prevent people from traveling as much as possible in order to reduce infections. Dam asked if students will be granted any grace if they cannot start classes on August 17th due to previous commitments. Zeleny stated that he hopes that this will be allowed, although

he understands that many internships have been cancelled so there may not be too many students who would have difficulty starting class a week earlier. Minter pointed out that she works with a number of GTAs, who not only teach courses during a semester, but they take classes as well and the workload on these students would be enormous. She suggested that the graduate student loads should also be considered.

Dam noted that incoming freshmen have to learn to adjust to college and balancing their life. She asked if consideration has been taken about the freshmen not being in a classroom since March. Zeleny reported that this year the Husker Start Pack program is being offered which allows resident and non-resident students to take summer school classes at half the tuition rate and will help first-year students to quickly connect with the university. Minter suggested that students be advised on their course load for the semester. Zeleny pointed out that one of the benefits of having the 3-week session is that students could take a slightly lighter load in the fall semester, and make up the additional credit hours in the 3-week session.

Woodman asked if in-person classes would apply to large classes. Zeleny stated that decisions about the size of classes will be guided by recommendations from UNMC and the local Health Boards. Woodman pointed out that moving courses with large enrollments can be difficult to transition to remote access and instructors need to know well in advance if their courses will be going to an online format. Zeleny reported that as of now, the physical distance should be 6 feet, but this could change depending on the number of COVID-19 infections.

Minter asked how faculty would be paid if they teach the 3-week session. Zeleny reported that options are being discussed, but he guesses it would be similar to the summer sessions 3 week courses. Weissling stated that it needs to be considered whether people would be willing to teach the 3-week session, and if adaptations will be made for those faculty members who are willing. Buan pointed out that the holiday break is usually a time when STEM faculty members are busy writing grant proposals or conducting research, and having to teach a 3-week course could interrupt their research/creative activity projects. She stated that it is important that the careers of faculty members who are willing to teach are not harmed. Zeleny stated that he will tell the F2F committee about these concerns.

Weissling questioned where the funds will come from to pay people for the 3-week session. Zeleny stated that tuition would cover the costs. Dawes pointed out that faculty members may get sick, and colleagues may have to help cover courses. She noted that adding additional courses to the schedule might cause difficulties. Zeleny pointed out that students can also get sick, and the current best health advice is that the next wave could occur in late November and December.

Kolbe asked if everyone in a classroom is wearing a mask and using PPE, does the 6 foot distance rule still have to be maintained. He noted that for some courses the use of specialized equipment would make it difficult to maintain this distance. Zeleny stated

that face coverings are not a replacement for less physical distancing. He noted that this could possibly change in the fall if disinfectants are in place.

Buan asked if the overall proposal is agreeable to the Executive Committee, if the 3-week session offering is removed. Minter suggested that there needs to be some qualifications regarding the 3-week session. Weissinger stated that there should not be a blanket statement about the 3-week session because not all departments have courses that will fit in the limited session. Zeleny pointed out that we do have a number of students who live on the campus throughout the year, and it is important to offer them courses during the projected long break before the spring semester. Krehbiehl stated that she enjoyed taking the intersession courses when she was a student and found that many students like these courses. Zeleny noted that the 3-week session courses would be conducted online.

Hanrahan asked if there has been a conversation about the entire academic year and shifting all of it. He suggested having a 10 week session in the fall, with 3-week and 5-week sessions in the winter, and spring break occurring in March and into the summer. Zeleny stated that the F2F committee is focusing on the next six months, although the issue of modifying the entire academic year has been raised. He pointed out that we do not have enough information yet to consider the spring semester, but it is possible that the spring semester will also need to be modified.

Griffin noted that Labor Day is a scheduled holiday for employees. She asked if there would be some adjustment to the holiday schedule if employees will now need to work on Labor Day. Zeleny stated that it is possible that Labor Day could become a floating holiday that could be used during the winter break when employees usually need to use one or two days of vacation pay. He stated that it is also possible that some employees would still be able to observe the Labor Day holiday.

Eklund asked if a modified fall semester would be university wide, or whether it was just for UNL. Zeleny stated that currently it is just for UNL. He pointed out that we are in a different health zone than UNO and UNK, and each campus would need to make their own decision regarding their semester calendar. Buan asked what would happen with programs such as nursing and engineering where students take classes on a campus different from where they are enrolled. Zeleny stated that the students would follow the campus where their courses are held.

Buan asked if the Center for Transformative Teaching will be ready to assist with all of the remote teaching that will need to be conducted in the fall. She questioned whether the Center has the budget to purchase remote testing tools. Zeleny stated that he thinks the idea, at this time, is to have the testing period be conducted in person as much as possible.

Buan asked how the August and December commencements will be affected. Zeleny stated that it is too early to know what will happen with the commencement ceremonies, and we have to wait until there is guidance from the Lincoln/Lancaster Health department

about large gatherings. He noted it is possible that we will not be able to have commencement in August or December, but could possibly have it in May 2021.

Eklund pointed out that there has been some discussion in the past about shortening our semester like some other universities. He asked how the modified fall semester compares to our regular semester in terms of the number of weeks of classes. Hanrahan reported that our fall semester is 15 weeks, and spring is 16 weeks. He believes that the modified semester would line up with the same number of weeks as a semester with normal breaks. Weissling pointed out that federal financial aid guidelines state that students must have courses that are equivalent to 15 weeks.

The Executive Committee discussed whether to support the proposal to modify the fall semester schedule, with some revisions to the language pertaining to the three-week session. Hanrahan moved that the Executive Committee support the amended fall semester schedule with the suggested revisions to the language, but encouraged modification for the complete academic year. Eklund seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

4.0 Announcements

4.1 Report on Town Hall Meeting

Buan reported that she attended the Town Hall meeting last week where plans about the COVID-19 response were presented. She noted that it is anticipated that there will be testing for COVID-19 as we transition to the fall opening. She stated that for incoming students the testing will be done on a rolling basis and through UNMC. Eklund wondered how student-athletes will be tested. Buan stated that testing is being discussed with UNMC. She reported that the State has received federal disaster funding to cover some of the COVID expenses.

Buan noted that the question of contract tracing was raised and how it will be done on campus. She reported that the tracing will be partnered with UNMC. She stated that there was discussion regarding about going back to Level 3 operations, which has now been pushed back to June 1. She reported that even with in-person classes, people will be encouraged to work from home in order to reduce the density of people on campus.

Buan stated that the university is planning for a 10% cut in our budget, and Central Administration has already cut 20 positions, 13 of which were IT services personnel. Hanrahan noted that 10 of the 13 were associated with UNL.

Buan stated that questions regarding travel also were asked, and the message was that for the foreseeable future traveling will be reduced as much as possible to reduce the health risk. Hanrahan asked if there was any conversation regarding the aerosol issue. Buan reported that 60,000 masks have been ordered for the campus. She noted that Krehbiel checked and found out that the masks are not N95s. She pointed out that the number of students being allowed in a class should be based on the availability to keep the 6 foot distance between students and instructor. Krehbiel reported that Facilities personnel have gone through each classroom to determine how many students could fit into the room

based on the 6 foot distance rule. Buan stated that the Chancellor did mention in the Town Hall meeting that faculty, and their departments, will decide how to adjust their pedagogy to adhere to the requirements that will be made by the F2F committee.

Woodman noted that some universities will have hybrid classes particularly with large classes. Minter pointed out that the colleges and departments need to be given some guidelines around what classrooms might look like in the fall. She noted that the notion of going to a hybrid course is already being considered along with other alternatives for teaching. Eklund asked if there has been discussion for hybrid classes teaching some students on Monday-Wednesday-Friday, and the other students on Tuesday-Thursday. Kolbe stated that there has been some discussion about teaching additional sections of courses in order to accommodate students under the 6 foot requirement. He pointed out that having faculty members teach more courses impacts apportionment. Hanrahan stated that an option is to have the course content online, and half of the class would be taught in person while the other half is online. He noted that everyone would be taught at the same time, just in different locations.

5.0 Approval of May 5, 2020 Minutes

The minutes were approved with two abstentions.

6.0 Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was discussed.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Policy on Anti-plagiarism Software and Services

Item postponed until June 2nd meeting.

7.2 Temporary Attendance Policy

Buan reported that AVC Walker is asking for the temporary attendance policy that was approved for the spring semester be extended through the fall semester. Hanrahan suggested tabling this until August when we have a better idea what the fall semester will look like. Minter pointed out that August would be too late for some instructors, especially if they are monitoring numerous sections taught by graduate teaching assistants. Weissling stated that there is concern that students may think the policy is a free pass so we might need to have a more refined attendance policy than the current temporary policy. Dawes pointed out that students are still responsible for their course attendance and work. She noted that what is different about the temporary policy is that the student does not need to get a formal doctor's notice if they are absent.

Buan asked if we should approve the temporary policy for the summer session courses. Kolbe stated that we need to address this now because instructors are taking attendance even though the courses are being taught remotely. He moved that the temporary policy be extended through the summer sessions. Hanrahan seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

7.3 Request from Academic Integrity Committee to Survey Faculty Members
Item postponed until June 2nd meeting.

7.4 Fall Planning - Update from F2F Committee

Buan reported that AVC Goodburn will be providing a bullet point report every two weeks on the work of the F2F committee to the Executive Committee. She noted that the first report listed that the membership of the F2F committee was finalized, core principles were developed, working groups were created, and a proposal on developing face coverings was discussed.

7.5 Draft Statement to Faculty on Fall Opening

The Executive Committee drafted a letter to be sent to the faculty acknowledging the concerns of the faculty about on-campus courses in the fall semester.

7.6 Chegg Cheating

Item postponed until June 2nd meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, June 2, 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.