

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent:

Date: Tuesday, September 8, 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 2:31 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Green/EVC Spiller/VC Boehm/VC Bellows/Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny

2.1 What is the role of the University on oversight of Greek housing: both in the physical modifications to residences and to registered activities?

VC Bellows reported that Assistant VC TJ McDowell, Student Affairs, oversees the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life. The staff, student leaders, and house boards have been provided with the Fall to Forward guidelines on safety and well-being. She noted that COVID-19 related policies, recommendations on quarantine procedures, information on de-populating the residences have all been distributed and she as well as AVC McDowell have had numerous meetings with the chapter presidents in the past 3-4 weeks.

VC Bellows reported that three years ago the Greek Vitality Initiative was created to focus the Greek houses on community building and valued-based decision making. She noted that a number of the Greek chapters have identified risk managers presentations around sexual misconduct, bystander intervention, and responsible behaviors have been conducted. She stated that there is a new community score card on each of the chapters which displays the cumulative GPA of the chapters and the standing of each chapter with the University. She noted that many of the students in the fraternities and sororities have strong GPAs and are good students.

Woodman stated that there seems to be a propensity of violations of the COVID-19 policies with the Greek houses and cited the recent video of activities taking place on Labor Day in front of sororities. He asked if there had been a failure to communicate the policies by the university to these facilities and why we do not take a harder stance with the Greek houses like other universities are doing. Chancellor Green pointed out that there have been no direct violations of the COVID-19 policies here until yesterday's reported activities, and those activities

are now being investigated. He reported that it is likely that there will be temporary suspensions of the Greek organizations implicated in those reports to allow the activities to be investigated to determine if behavior was unacceptable and puts the campus and Lincoln community at risk as a result.

Chancellor Green stated that all data on test results come from the Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD) which also does the contact tracing. He noted that if a cluster of cases emerges, directed health measures are enacted and quarantines are put into place. Billesbach asked if the process of identifying clusters is different between dorms and Greek houses. Chancellor Green pointed out that due to the size and structure of the Greek houses the threshold for placing a house in quarantine differs from a dorm floor which is more spread out. He stated that if a residence has four or five cases over a period of several days the house will be placed in quarantine. He noted that COVID-19 cases are tracked in the same way in the dormitories, but the threshold level is appropriate to the density and layout of each floor of the residences, and so far only one floor has hit the threshold and that is in the Eastside Suites.

2.2 What is the University's responsibility/obligation in assuring health and safety of Greek students?

VC Bellows reported that the University takes into account all student activities, and we partner with the Greek houses to create a safe environment in order to prevent misbehavior. She stated that educational training is provided for new members of the Greek houses, including training provided by the Title IX office on sexual misconduct.

Buan pointed out that the relationship between the University and the Greek houses is not clear to the campus community. She noted that we understand all the efforts that are being taken with the dorms to ensure safety measures are in place, but it is not obvious what is being done with the Greek houses. VC Bellows reported that each house had to submit a plan for the fall on how they would operate to ensure the safety of their members, and safety prevention measures were created. She pointed out that while the houses are university approved, each Greek living unit is operated and managed by a private housing corporation board, and while we can provide them with best practices, it is up to the corporation board to determine how they will handle things within the house.

Chancellor Green noted that a number of the houses are on University property, but the houses are owned by their alumni corporation board. He stated that under an agreement with the University, we give guidance and expectations to meet University requirements for approved residence housing, but this pertains primarily to the fraternities because freshmen can live in Greek housing. By national Panhellenic policy, sororities first-time freshman students do not reside in the houses. He stated that most of the regulations are related to no allowance for alcohol, student misconduct, and fire protection.

Weissling asked if there was any follow-up to see if the Greek houses actually were following the plans they submitted. VC Bellows stated that it is generally the house mother/parent who has oversight in the houses. Weissling asked if the UNL Police should have been called about the activities taking place at the sororities on Labor Day. Chancellor Green pointed out that no criminal activity occurred so the UPD wouldn't have been called. He noted that there were rules put into place for sorority "bid day", which was what occurred on the day in question, and while most of the sororities appeared to follow the rules, there were some that did not, and appropriate action needs to be taken to address any violation of the rules related to health and safety under COVID-19.

Woodman pointed out that some of the freshmen who attended the Labor Day activities at the sororities likely went back to their dorms. He asked if any interventions were being taken because it is possible these freshmen were exposed to the virus, particularly if they visited one of the quarantined houses. Chancellor Green stated that it is unclear whether students in quarantined houses took part in the outside activities, particularly since most of the quarantined houses are closed with the students living elsewhere at the current time.

2.3 At what point could rampant spread through University and Greek housing threaten to shut the University down?

Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny stated that there is not a single metric for shutting down the university, and the COVID-19 Task Force would consider a number of things before a decision was made to go completely remote. He pointed out that there are no known cases of transmission of the virus from a classroom but indicated that behavior may need to be restricted. He reported that if there was rampant spread of the virus the LLCHD could close part of our campus operation.

Chancellor Green noted the experience at peer universities, e.g. University of Iowa and Iowa State University, 1600 or more cases have been reported on their campus since the beginning of the year; the University of Missouri has over 700 and the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign has over 1200. He stated that all universities are working with their local health departments, and if there are issues of safety for UNL or for Lincoln, the Health Department will tell us. He stated that he is continually having conversations with the Mayor, and if our growth in cases increased to where we couldn't control further spread, we would pivot to a different mode of operation which we are prepared to do if needed. He pointed out that we could further restrict movement on campus, if needed, to slow the spread of virus transmission, including further restricting activities and limiting the use of the recreation centers and the Nebraska Unions, but our academic mission could still continue.

Hanrahan stated that from a pedagogical standpoint some instructors could deliver more of their curriculum if teaching was done remotely given the current classroom limitations. EVC Spiller pointed out that faculty members are the best

people to evaluate if they need to make a shift in how they deliver their courses, and she reported that she shared this information in a letter she sent to the Deans. She noted that we are in an evolving situation and there is an unevenness of the learning experience for different students. She stated that students have expectations for their courses and it is very important that instructors have a conversation with the students to see if there is a consensus about changing the way a course is going to be taught. She stated that the chair of the department would need to be notified if there is a change in the delivery format. Minter stated that she does not think the message that the faculty are the best person to evaluate whether their course needs to shift to a different format is getting down to the faculty and teaching assistant level, and suggested that better dissemination of this information could help ease the tension that instructors are feeling. EVC Spiller noted that everyone is doing the best they can, and she appreciates all of the Executive Committee's leadership in dealing with the situation we are in and conveying accurate information to the faculty. She stated that she is happy to facilitate conversation about this issue.

Weissling stated that faculty are feeling very stressed and there is a sense that they must be in the classroom, and worried that they may feel pressure to teach during the three-week session due to the looming budget cuts. EVC Spiller pointed out that the three-week session is entirely optional, and in fact, we are unable to accommodate all of the requests from faculty wanting to teach during the session. She stated that she stressed to the Deans that no one should feel compelled to teach a three-week course, and the three-week session is intended to provide an opportunity for both students and faculty.

2.4 Is the Mayor and Health Department concerned about the recent spike in cases in the Greek houses? How does the University respond?

Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny reported that the University is having daily briefings with the Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department and the Chancellor meets weekly with the Mayor. He noted that both the LLCHD and the Mayor are closely watching the number of cases at the University, Wesleyan University, and at the State Penitentiary.

2.5 Is there a plan for implementing surveillance or required COVID testing in high-density residences or athletics?

Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny reported that we are increasing random testing and increasing testing at the Greek houses and resident halls, as well as looking at the wastewater information. He noted that student teachers are required to be tested biweekly.

2.6 Will UNL campaign for students/faculty/staff to get flu shots? Requirement for flu shots?

EVC Spiller stated that the Forward to Fall Committee recommended that everyone get a flu shot. She reported that the University Health Center has ordered 6,000 flu doses which are expected to be here by mid-to-late October.

She noted that University Communications will conduct a campaign to encourage people to get a flu immunization.

2.7 Proposed Budget Cuts Including Programmatic Cuts

Chancellor Green reported that the Academic Planning Committee reviewed and accepted Phase 1 of the proposed budget cuts and is now in the next stage of the budget reduction proposal review. He noted that Phase 2 of the proposed reductions directly impact academic programs, and the APC will be meeting tomorrow to begin discussion and prepare for the public hearings which will be publicized when the dates are finalized.

Minter asked if the Phase 2 cuts were proposed by the colleges. Chancellor Green reported that the Deans did propose these cuts and stated that EVC Spiller and VB Boehm spoke at length about this with the APC last week.

Hanrahan asked if any consideration was given to the fact that most of the programs designated for elimination have a high number of female faculty members. VC Boehm reported that an enormous amount of time, including engaging faculty and staff in discussions, occurred in the deliberations to propose elimination of these programs. He stated that gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual identity never entered into the conversations. He noted that half of the IANR proposed cuts were suggested by the faculty to the IANR leadership team, and the focus was to minimize the impact to IANR's ability to achieve its mission. He stated that 20% of the reductions is targeted towards academic programmatic reduction and 80% of the reductions are non-academic. He pointed out that these were awful decisions to have to make but were required in order to cut the state-aided budget by \$38 million.

Billesbach noted that it has been reported that students currently in the programs slated for elimination will be allowed to finish their studies. He asked how this equates to a financial savings given the immediate financial problems we have. Chancellor Green pointed out that the programmatic cuts will be implemented over a three-year period which will allow the students to complete their studies.

Buan asked if Deans were directed to exclude administrative salaries from the proposed cuts. VC Boehm stated that Deans were not given these instructions. He stated that everything was on the table in IANR, and in Phase 1 IANR cut \$1.2 million in administrative positions. He noted that 10% of IANR's cuts are in administrative reductions. He pointed out that the trade-off is that the elimination of these positions will shift the workload to others who already have a full workload.

Buan reported that she did receive an email message from EVC Spiller addressing the question. She noted that EVC Spiller stated that deans were directed to include ALL categories of expenses and administrative positions were stressed in

discussions with the deans in order to minimize academic impacts. The COVID-19 budget task force discussed, at the Chancellor's request, a desire to see more attention to administrative costs across the campus, at all levels. No new administrative positions are allowed under the hiring freeze, and the EVC office is denying college-level requests for national searches for administrative positions, along with any proposals to increase administrative FTEs.

Hanrahan stated that he was in a college meeting where he thought he heard that the Dean was told not to cut administrative salaries. Chancellor Green pointed out that there was direction to not cut salaries, but there was no direction that administrative positions could not be cut. Kolbe asked if the Service Delivery Initiative is being impacted due to the staff and administrative cuts. VC Boehm reported that the SDI seeks to bring greater efficiencies to the campus and there was an elimination of an Assistant VC position for the SDI. He stated that the state-aided staff positions in the SDI are mission critical because they support so many faculty members. Chancellor Green pointed out that most of the \$16.4 million cuts in Phase 1 are administrative and services. He noted that there were some questions about salary reductions but that is a conscious decision from the University system. He stated that he is giving part of his salary back this year, but this is his choice and he is not asking the other administrative leaders on campus to do this.

2.8 When will there be clarity on Fall/Winter/Spring sport schedules?

Chancellor Green stated that he hopes to know something definitive soon, and reported that there are still ongoing discussions with the Big Ten, mostly around the health protocols for the student athletes. He expects that the discussions will be concluded soon.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Big Ten Academic Alliance Faculty Leadership Governance Conference

Buan reported that the schedule for the BTAA Faculty Leadership Governance Conference being hosted by UNL on October 15 and 16 has now been finalized.

3.2 Proposed Revisions to Regents Bylaws

Buan reported that she sent EVC Spiller the few additional revisions to the Regents Bylaws suggested by the Executive Committee and that she will be meeting with the EVC to go over them with her. She thanked everyone for their comments and noted that EVC Spiller is optimistic that the revisions will go forward to the Board of Regents.

4.0 Approval of September 1, 2020 Minutes

Gay moved for approval of the minutes. Motion seconded by Billesbach and approved by the Executive Committee.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Discussion of Executive Committee Goals and Objectives for the 2020-2021 Academic Year

The Executive Committee worked on identifying its goals for this academic year. Suggestions included: 1) surviving the year of the pandemic; 2) continue to be a conduit for concerns raised around COVID-19 for faculty; 3) ensure shared governance is followed by the University; 4) finish developing handbook for Faculty Senators; 5) continue to support AAUP guidelines regarding academic freedom and work on finally getting the revisions to the Regents Bylaws approved; 6) continue to work on non-tenure track rights and concerns; 7) work on getting service valued more by administrators and possibly reducing teaching time for those who serve as a Faculty Senator.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Letter from UNL Journey Co-Leaders

Buan reported that the Executive Committee received a letter last Thursday afternoon from the Co-Leaders of the UNL Journey informing the Committee about a strike of academic faculty at universities across the country. She noted that it was unclear if the Co-Leaders just wanted to inform the Senate Executive Committee about the possible strike or whether it wanted to take some kind of action. Hanrahan noted that the letter needed to be more direct in what it was asking the Committee. Dawes pointed out that the Executive Committee should have contacted the Co-Leaders to ask for clarification about the letter. She stated that some UNL faculty members might participate in the strike, and asked what the Committee's response would be if a faculty member got into trouble for it. She noted that the strike was to occur tomorrow and the issue should have been dealt with earlier.

Dawes asked how the Senate responds to things that need more immediate attention such as this, and what the role of the Senate is and whether it wants to play a more active role. She stated that we need a mechanism to allow the Executive Committee to deal more quickly with last minute issues. Buan agreed, but noted that it could be difficult to get people to meet at a different time due to the variance in people's schedules. She suggested that a quick Zoom meeting could be called. The Executive Committee members stated that they would be agreeable to having snap meetings.

Minter suggested that the Executive Committee respond to the Co-Leaders stating that the Faculty Senate has always supported faculty members' right to academic freedom, and to notify the Co-Leaders that their letter prompted useful conversation for the Executive Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:27 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, September 15, 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.