

UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
April 27, 2021
Presidents Nicole Buan, Steve Kolbe, and Kevin Hanrahan Presiding
Zoom Meeting

1.0 Call to Order

President Buan called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

2.0 President Carter

Chancellor Green stated that he wanted to thank the Faculty Senate for its counsel and support during this difficult year. He noted that although it was a challenging year to navigate, he believes that we are stronger than we were before. He also wanted to thank the Senate, and all those involved, for their persistence in working to change the Bylaws and he thanked President Carter for his leadership with this effort.

Chancellor Green stated that it is a pleasure to introduce President Carter who joined the University just over a year ago, shortly before the pandemic began. He noted that President Carter is an empowering leader who is a pleasure to work with and who really understands the importance of the flagship campus.

President Carter wanted to congratulate President Buan on her work as President of the Faculty Senate and stated that it was great to work with her this past year. He thanked the faculty for all that they do, and he appreciates how much he has learned about UNL. He noted that he respects UNL as the flagship campus and really appreciates Chancellor Green for the great job he has done, particularly during one of the most difficult times in the history of our country in the past 100 years. He stated that the revisions to the Board of Regents Bylaws was a great first step in getting us off the AAUP censure list and the changes strongly support academic freedom.

President Carter reported that Governor Ricketts signed the budget yesterday and the University was able to get everything it requested which included a 2% budget increase. He stated that the Legislature passed LB 588 which is the Capital Renewal Plan which extends funding for capital renewal projects through 2062 and increases funding for the projects incrementally during this timeframe. He pointed out that these funds will help us to sustain our buildings including 600 of them which are maintained by UNL. He reported that the Legislature has also added funding to the Nebraska Career Scholarship Fund.

President Carter stated that one of his focuses is to get tenure-track and tenured faculty salaries at UNL and UNMC up to at least the mid-point of their peers. He noted that even with a 1.5% salary increase this year and a 3% increase next year UNL faculty would still be paid less than their peers at other universities. He reported that in the 2021-2022 fiscal year he plans to have \$5 million available for UNL to use for faculty salary competitiveness to improve salaries and he plans to do the same the following fiscal year. He stated that he also plans to have an outside consultant to evaluate pay equity at the University.

President Carter stated that he would like to have an annual climate survey developed to get a feel for the culture of the University and an implicit bias training module for faculty and staff. He reported that he wants faculty and staff to first take a survey, which will be detailed for each of the campuses, and the data and feedback from the surveys will help to develop the training program. He noted that Chancellor Green will select who will be on the development team for designing the program.

President Carter reported that a five-year strategy for getting students internships with Fortune 500 Companies is being developed and these internships will provide the students with a pathway for

employment before they enter the workforce. He stated that the University is looking how to leverage our scholarships in order to increase our out-of-state enrollment noting that Nebraska's population only grew by 7% over the past few years and we need to be more attractive to non-resident students.

President Carter stated that a comprehensive fundraising campaign with the Nebraska Foundation seeks to raise approximately \$3 billion by the year 2027 when the campaign will end. He noted that already \$1 billion has been raised and the funds raised will not only benefit our campuses, but our students as well.

Professor Zuckerman, Educational Administration, asked why the University continues to pay outside consultants when we have research centers, the College of Business Administration, and other experts on campus who can help solve our problems. President Carter noted that the University is not paying an exorbitant amount for the pay equity consultant and pointed out that sometimes an outside perspective is needed to get the necessary information, but he stated that he will have his staff look into this issue.

Professor Herstein, Durham School of Architectural Engineering and Construction, stated that for members of the College of Engineering who teach at both UNO and UNL there was a significant amount of stress because of the difference between the UNL and UNO calendars this year. She asked if there would be any improvements in syncing the two calendars. President Carter noted that this year we were unable to sync calendars due to the pandemic and the landscape for 2022 may not be the same but we must do what is best for our faculty and staff. He reported that pilot calendars are being looked at and there is a focus to align the four campus calendars.

Professor Palmer-Wackerly, Communication Studies, stated that she appreciates the University looking at faculty salary parity, but she stated that a major issue is with graduate student stipends. She noted that we often lose out to other schools because of our low stipends. President Carter reported that this concern has been raised in discussions and work needs to be done in this area. He stated that some of the other Big Ten schools have greater resources from which to draw funds, but we might be able to help address the problem with funds raised through the capital campaign.

Professor Woodman, School of Biological Sciences, noted that there are many untenured and contract faculty whose salaries are low. He asked President Carter what the plan is to improve these salaries. President Carter stated that we are still focusing on the marketing competitiveness for the tenured and tenure-track salaries. He noted that each of the campuses gets a budget, but he does not want to be too prescriptive in telling the Chancellors how they should use their budget. He stated that currently we might not be able to deal with every challenge but there may still be opportunities to look at improvements for these important faculty cohorts. Chancellor Green noted that Executive Vice Chancellor Spiller spoke with the Senate earlier in the month and discussed the plan to improve non-tenure track and contract faculty salaries.

Professor Nicholas, Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design, asked how individual departments can interface with the NU Foundation to promote the goals and aspirations for the departments during the campaign. President Carter reported that the new campaign is more campus focused and there will be committees working at each level down to the department level to see what the needs are for the colleges and departments. He stated that it would actually be better to have faculty members speak to the donors because they are more familiar with what the needs and goals are of a department. He noted that faculty members would probably be pleasantly surprised to see how much impact and influence they can have. Chancellor Green stated that currently the campaign is in the silent phase, but it will go into the public phase in the fall of 2022. He reported that deans and the unit levels have been engaged in priority setting which will continue as we go into the public phase. He stated that there is an Executive Committee across the system that is working on the campaign, and he will be talking more about the campaign this coming academic year.

Professor Weissling, Special Education and Communication Disorders, noted that there are different sectors working differently across the university campuses. She asked President Carter what his vision is of the one university concept. President Carter stated that the one university concept when he spoke during his interview process comes from his belief that we are stronger as one system, but with each campus having its own distinct personality. He noted that he wants to make sure that he empowers the leadership of the campuses to make sure they have the right resources. He stated that there is strategic guidance so we can be successful in our mission, particularly our educational mission, and none of this would happen without the flagship campus. He pointed out that there are some things we can do that provide an economy of scale and makes as more efficient such as One IT. He stated that how we contract and procure things is another example which could provide us with significant savings. He stated that more collaborative research between the campuses, such as UNL and UNMC, would also make us more successful.

Professor Santra, Panhandle Research & Extension, stated that he has heard from colleagues that there are some farmers who could make donations, but they are not happy because we were considering another fundraising to construct buildings for the campuses in the eastern part of the state. President Carter noted that UNL is one of the first land-grant universities and pointed out that we are here for agriculture, water security, and to explore new activities in what we grow and how we grow the crops. He stated that he and Chancellor Green want to take UNL to another level, to be the top university in farming and ranching, and noted that there are some exciting projects coming up that benefit the farmers across the entire state. He stated that as a university we have a responsibility to not be limited and there is plenty of opportunities for us to go after the challenges that people face in western Nebraska.

President Carter thanked the Faculty Senate for letting him speak with the Senate. He noted that he grew up in Rhode Island where the state motto is hope and said that hope, optimism, and strength could not be said at the University without all of the work that the faculty are doing. He commended and thanked the faculty for all that they do.

Chancellor Green stated that he wanted to thank all of the outgoing senators for their service and thanked the Executive Committee who labored throughout the year to deal with the impacts of the pandemic. He especially wanted to thank Professor Buan who has been a phenomenal President during a very difficult year. He stated that her service has not gone unnoticed, and he is looking forward to working with Professor Kolbe in the year ahead.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Introduction of New Senators

President Buan thanked the outgoing Senators for their service and participation in shared governance. She welcomed the following new Senators: Erica Schauer, Modern Languages & Literature; Kim Bearnes, Extension Engagement Zone 5; Elizabeth Lewis, Teaching, Learning & Teacher Education; Susan Ourada, Glenn Korff School of Music; Massimiliano Pierobon, Computer Science & Engineering; John Shrader, College of Journalism and Mass Communications; Signe Boudreau, University Libraries; and Deirdre Cooper Owens, History who was re-elected.

President Buan also wanted to congratulate all the faculty that were recently promoted and recognized Senators Palmer-Wackerly, Brown-Kramer, Pennisi, and Weissling for their promotion.

4.0 Executive Committee Elections

4.1 Election of President-Elect

President Buan noted that Professor Minter, English, has been nominated for President-Elect. Professor Billesbach, Biological Systems Engineering, moved to elect Professor Minter by acclamation. Motion seconded by Professor Dam, Extension Engagement Zone 8, and the motion was passed by the Faculty Senate.

4.2 Election of Secretary

President Buan noted that Professor Herstein, Durham School of Architectural Engineering & Construction, has been nominated to serve as Secretary. Professor Woodman moved to elect Professor Herstein by acclamation. Motion seconded by Professor Minter and motion was passed by the Faculty Senate.

4.3 Election of Executive Committee Members

President Buan reported that Professor Nicholas, Textiles, Merchandising, and Fashion Design; Professor Zuckerman, Educational Administration; and Professor Gay were nominated to serve on the Executive Committee. Professor Wilkins, Biological Systems Engineering moved to elect all three candidates by acclamation. Motion seconded by Professor Rowen, Nutrition and Health Sciences, and approved by the Faculty Senate. Professor Gay will serve a one-year term to fill the remainder of Professor Minter's term on the Executive Committee.

President Buan wanted to thank the faculty for all of the work they have done through an incredibly challenging year. She thanked all those for their questions and service, particularly the Executive Committee members. She noted that she has learned so much from everyone and she appreciates how much everyone gives of themselves. President Kolbe thanked President Buan for her dedication and guidance through this difficult year.

5.0 Approval of April 6, 2021 Minutes

President Kolbe asked if there was a motion to approve the minutes. Professor Billesbach moved that the minutes be approved. Professor Weissling seconded the motion which was then approved by the Faculty Senate.

6.0 Committee Reports

6.1 Executive Committee Report (Past President Buan)

Past President Buan noted that this past year has been especially busy for the Executive Committee with numerous additional meetings during the summer and during the academic year. She reported that the Committee reviewed and provided revisions on all policies relating to COVID. The Committee also met with the Chancellor nine times during the year and met eight times with Executive Vice Chancellor Spiller and Vice Chancellor Boehm. She stated that further information can be found in the full report.

7.0 Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was discussed.

8.0 New Business

8.1 Ombuds Report (Professor Franco Cruz and Professor Kostelnik)

Professor Kostelnik reported that she is one of two Ombuds people on campus, the other being Professor Franco Cruz. She stated that the Ombuds service was created two years ago although the first year was a start-up for the service.

Professor Franco Cruz noted that he introduced the office to the Faculty Senate about a year ago and reported that there is now a website <https://executivevc.unl.edu/faculty/life/ombuds> where information can be found on the services that the Ombuds provide. He stated that he and Professor Kostelnik are still trying to make sure that all faculty at UNL are aware of the service.

Professor Woodman noted that the pandemic has created a lot of stress for faculty members and asked if the Ombuds have seen changes in the issues that are being brought forward. Professor Franco Cruz reported that faculty members first contact the Ombuds through email and a meeting is scheduled as quickly as possible and meetings were conducted by Zoom this past year. He stated that some of the issues related to the pandemic were regarding the renewal of contracts.

Professor Kostelnik stated that Zoom was a wonderful tool because many people don't feel comfortable being seen visiting an Ombud, plus Zoom is completely private. She reported that there is usually an initial meeting, but two or three meetings might be required.

Professor Weissling thanked both the Ombuds for taking on the responsibilities of the position. She asked if they could comment on the number of requests for service that were made and whether they felt the numbers were what they thought they would be. She asked if Zoom would continue to be used even after the pandemic. Professor Franco Cruz pointed out that peers at other universities have said that there is always an increase in the number of requests in the first year of the establishment of the Ombuds office. He stated that the use of Zoom will be kept as an option and information pertaining to Zoom meetings might be included on the website. Professor Kostelnik noted that during Ombuds training she asked peers what their case load looked like, and she stated that our case load was similar. She reported that during the first year there were over 50 cases which is in line with the size of UNL. She stated that there was a reasonable number of people meeting with the Ombuds this year although she does not have the actual numbers. She stated that eventually they would like to conduct a survey to see if people are fully aware of the Ombuds service. She noted that it would be helpful if Senators mentioned the service to their colleagues.

President Elect Minter asked if there is anything the Senate could do to facilitate the work of the Ombuds office, or if there are issues that need administrative attention that the Senate Executive Committee could raise. Professor Franco Cruz noted that a recurring issue is concerns about evaluations. He reported that some of the other issues are changes in leadership, compensation and equity pay, conflicts with assignments, dealing with difficult people, disciplinary actions, distrust, due process, fairness, perceived disrespect, relationships with colleagues and/or administrators, separation issues, working conditions, and workload. He stated that he and Professor Kostelnik will be meeting with Executive Vice Chancellor Spiller and Vice Chancellor Boehm to discuss the report. Professor Kostelnik stated that the Faculty Senate might think about how it can help faculty members, especially new faculty, figure out how to have challenging conversations with their colleagues. She stated that it might be useful to have some professional development training about working in teams or with colleagues. Professor Franco Cruz reported that both Associate Vice Chancellor Walker and Associate Vice Chancellor Bischoff have been willing to meet with the Ombuds to address concerns. He stated that it would be helpful for the Ombuds to continue having conversations with the Faculty Senate President and the Executive Committee.

President Kolbe stated that the Senate appreciates both Professor Franco Cruz and Professor Kostelnik and the new role they fill. He noted that there is a very valid need for the faculty to have the Ombuds service.

8.2 Ballot on Nominees for the Louise Pound-George Howard Distinguished Career Award

President Kolbe noted that the ballots will be sent to the Senators via a Qualtrics or SurveyMonkey survey after the meeting and voting will be anonymous.

8.3 Ballot on Nominees for the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award

Professor Woodman, chair of the Academic Freedom Award Committee, stated that the award recognizes the contribution of a faculty member(s) to protecting academic freedom. He stated that he and the other members of the Committee, Professor Schleck and Professor Lee reviewed three nominations. He noted that each nominee was excellent and worthy of the award, but the Committee decided to recommend two of the nominees for the award this year.

President Kolbe stated that the ballots will be sent to the Senators via a Qualtrics or SurveyMonkey survey after the meeting and voting will be anonymous.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:03 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, September 7, 2021, at 2:30 p.m. in the East Campus Union, Great Plains Room B-C. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Kelli Herstein, Secretary.

