

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Billesbach, Buan, Eklund, Gay, Herstein, Kolbe, Krehbiel, Minter, Weissling, Woodman, Zuckerman

Absent:

Date: Tuesday, August 24, 2021

Location: 201 Canfield Administration

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 (*Kolbe*)

Kolbe called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Green/EVC Spiller

2.1 Consultation

Chancellor Green and EVC Spiller discussed the Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department’s indoor mask mandate and what it means for the campus. Chancellor Green noted that the indoor mask mandate would continue through September 30th but there may be some nuances with it on campus if people are in a work environment where there is a distance of at least six feet between people. Krehbiel asked if Extension personnel should continue to follow the local health measures. Chancellor Green stated that they should follow the local health directives.

Chancellor Green reported that the COVID testing went very well last week with probably over 28,000 tests conducted by the end of today. He noted that our positivity rate is .69%, with the highest percentage of positive rates seen in students. He pointed out that those who have not signed up in the vaccine registry will be required to get testing frequently. Billesbach asked how many students have signed up with the registry. Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny reported that over 56% of the students have registered and the number is growing; faculty and staff have a registry rate of over 70%.

EVC Spiller stated that, because the mandate has not yet been approved by the county, the final text is not yet available, but noted that, once it is available, any university-specific implementation details will be widely shared with the campus.

2.2 Current Enrollment Numbers for Fall Semester

EVC Spiller noted that the official enrollment numbers would not be available until after the census date later next week. She noted that there has been an increase in professional students and a slight increase in graduate students from last year, but there has been a slight decrease in undergraduate students; some part of this shift may reflect, both record graduation numbers and students who took advantage of the courses offered during the winter allowing these students to advance their class year more quickly.

EVC Spiller stated that there is an increase in the number of first-generation students and an increase in students from under-represented groups. She pointed out that this was the first year that we were test option where students did not have to submit an ACT score and a certain percentage of incoming students admitted provided only their high school record. She noted that many schools are using this option which was partly motivated by the difficulty for students to take the ACT during the pandemic.

Billesbach asked if the impact on tuition revenue is known yet. Chancellor Green reported that we will not know this information until later. He stated that the biggest impact on tuition revenue is due to the loss of international and out-of-state students. Woodman asked if the loss of international students is due in part to students not applying or being issued visas. EVC Spiller stated that travel is difficult with the pandemic and pointed out that some students, both nationally and internationally, who typically would be ready to come to UNL not want to travel too far from home. Chancellor Green pointed out that the biggest impact on the loss of international students is with Chinese students and the ending of the Rwanda program. Buan stated that we have a reputation of not having enough support for minority students despite the great work of faculty and Student Affairs. Gay asked how we can squelch this kind of reputation. EVC Spiller stated that decisions for students to come to the campus were made much later this year by students and their families and the level of uncertainty is much higher.

Chancellor Green noted that the Huskers Scholarships, supported by the Athletics department, will return this year and there are some new scholarship programs that provide real funding to students in a couple of the colleges. EVC Spiller stated that each dean is looking at their foundation accounts to ensure that there are no under-utilized scholarship funds.

Herstein wanted to thank the administration for the flexibility in graduate assistantships for those graduate students who have had difficulty returning to campus. She noted that graduate certificate programs are a great way for departments to increase enrollment and her department is working on developing more of these programs.

2.4 Update on the AAUP Censure Removal Process

Chancellor Green reported that he heard from Mark Criley of the National AAUP, and they have agreed to move the censure removal process forward. He noted that he and EVC Spiller were interviewed in June and the next step is to interview additional constituencies. He stated that the timeline is to have the AAUP consider removal of the censure at its November meeting.

2.5 Announcement on Athletics Alliance

Chancellor Green announced that the Big Ten, Pac-12, and ACC has formed an alliance that will enable the institutions in the conferences to schedule football and women and men's basketball games with each other.

Chancellor Green reported that with the recent hiring of Athletics Director Trev Alberts the position now includes a Vice Chancellor title. He stated that this was done intentionally so the Athletics Director would be included in meetings of the leadership team. EVC Spiller pointed out that it is unusual for an athletics department to give \$10 million to the academic enterprise and having the AD involved in discussions in the operational meetings is a direct benefit.

Billesbach asked if there would be any fallout with the Big Ten academic alliance because of the athletics alliance. Chancellor Green stated that it would not affect the Big Ten academic alliance. He pointed out that the 41 universities involved with the alliance contain some of the top research universities in the world, but the alliance is purely an athletic scheduling alliance. Billesbach asked if the alliance would increase revenue. Chancellor Green stated that it would because of the television contracts that will be created. EVC Spiller noted that the Big Ten academic alliance is the oldest and strongest of the academic alliances in the country and it is more robust than ever.

Woodman noted that the Garth Brooks concert made millions of dollars for UNL Athletics and asked if any of those profits will be going towards academics. Chancellor Green stated that having events such as the concert would help to leverage the university and he thought we should do a similar event each year when we return to normal circumstances. He pointed out that it is a morale booster and also helps the university and Lincoln. EVC Spiller noted the stadium was used for graduation this past May and it was a remarkable experience and a great partnership with Athletics. Chancellor Green pointed out that Athletics helped to cover the cost for having the graduation ceremony in the stadium.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Wellness Attendants Needed

Kolbe reported that more wellness attendants are needed. He noted that he has signed up and gone through the training and encouraged other faculty members to volunteer. EVC Spiller reported that some deans are manning the wellness tables as well. She stated that if faculty members know of students who are looking for work to encourage them to sign up for the attendant jobs.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 Executive Committee Goals

The Executive Committee reviewed the draft of the Executive Committee goals. Minter moved that after hearing the discussion about the goals she would volunteer to rework them and bring them back to the Executive Committee. Motion seconded by Weissling. Gay suggested a friendly amendment to define and include a goal relating to increasing diversity. Woodman seconded the motion and Minter accepted the friendly amendment. The Committee then approved the motion.

4.2 Executive Committee Survey Results

The Executive Committee reviewed the preliminary results from the recent survey that was sent out regarding COVID and the fall semester. Zuckerman reported that at the

present time 770 faculty responded. The Committee agreed to share the aggregate data as shown below with the faculty.

For question #1: UNL Should follow the CDC guidelines regarding masks and vaccinations.

768 responses: 467 strongly agreed, 154 agreed, 55 neither agreed or disagreed, 32 disagreed and 60 strongly disagreed.

For question #2: Vaccinations should be required for everyone affiliated with the university who can safely take them when we return to campus this fall.

769 responses: 512 strongly agree, 88 somewhat agree, 34 neither agree or disagree, 36 somewhat disagree, 99 strongly disagree.

For question #3: CDC recommended face coverings should be required indoors for everyone on campus this fall, regardless of their vaccination status.

769 responses: 432 strongly agree; 129 somewhat agree; 53 neither agree nor disagree, 60 somewhat disagree, 95 strongly disagree.

For question #4: I plan to request that CDC recommended face coverings be worn in my in-person classes.

766 responses: 277 strongly agree, 82 agree, 83 neither agree nor disagree, 76 disagree, 80 strongly disagree, 168 not applicable.

For question #5: I have received adequate, clear, and timely information regarding COVID-19 policies and procedures for the start of the fall 2021 semester.

769 responses: 71 strongly agree, 270 agree, 148 neither agree nor disagree, 184 disagree, 96 strongly disagree.

For question #6: COVID-19 exposure at the university could place me and my family in danger.

759 responses: 290 strongly agree, 187 agree, 115 neither agree nor disagree, 85 disagree, 82 strongly disagree.

For question #7: I anticipate the use of personal leave time to accommodate child or dependent care disruptions caused by COVID-19.

760 responses, 91 strongly agree, 91 agree, 267 neither agree nor disagree, 159 disagree, 152 strongly disagree.

For question #8: The uncertainty surrounding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is negatively affecting my own mental well-being.

760 responses, 60 strongly disagree, 105 disagree, 133 neither agree nor disagree, 287 agree, 175 strongly agree

For question #9: Additional work expectations placed upon me due to the COVID-19 pandemic are unrealistic.

Responses 758, 55 strongly disagree, 163 disagree, 228 neither agree or disagree, 202 agree, 110 strongly agree.

For question #10: I plan to deliver my course via (select all that apply).
Responses 840, 475 fully in person, 50 fully remote/synchronous, 69 fully remote/asynchronous, 143 hybrid, 103 other.

5.0 New Business

No new business was discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:54 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, August 31, 2021 at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be conducted via Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Kelli Herstein, Secretary.