

UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
December 7, 2021
Presidents Steve Kolbe, Deb Minter and Nicole Buan, Presiding
Zoom Meeting

1.0 Call to Order

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

2.0 Announcements

2.1 COVID Vaccination Clinic

President Kolbe reported that there will be Covid vaccination clinics held tomorrow on both City and East Campus, and he encouraged Senators to notify their constituents of the clinics.

2.2 Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee Procedures

President Kolbe announced that the Board of Regents approved revisions to the Academic Rights and Responsibilities procedures at the Board's December 3rd meeting. He noted that some of the revisions were approved by the Faculty Senate in 2018 but were delayed due to the revisions to the Board of Regents Bylaws which were approved earlier this year.

2.3 Executive Vice Chancellor Search

President Kolbe reported that he is serving as co-chair of the search committee for the Executive Vice Chancellor. He noted that this will be an internal search that will be completed by the end of the semester.

3.0 Chancellor Green

Chancellor Green wanted to first thank the Faculty Senate for its leadership, and all of the faculty, for making this a successful semester during the continuing pandemic.

Chancellor Green noted that we are very carefully watching the enrollment numbers for the fall 2022 semester, and he is very pleased to say that our applications have been up over 20% from a year ago, and deposits for first-time freshmen are just over 7% from last year. He pointed out that this is provisional data and early in the process, but we are encouraged to see improvements in numbers from last year in all categories, including international students. He stated that a new program for recruiting students is being tested in four states: California, Colorado, Texas and New Jersey and he will be interested to see the results of the new program.

Chancellor Green reported that December graduation is approaching and while the number of students who will be graduating are down from last year, this is probably due to the larger than anticipated graduation numbers we had in May.

Chancellor Green announced that the Board of Regents approved the first wave of projects associated with LB 384, the state's deferred maintenance bill which was approved this year. He noted this first wave of projects includes replacing Westbrook Music Building, renovation of Kimball Recital Hall, renovations for the Military & Naval Sciences Building, Morrill Hall, and Bessey Hall. He stated that the total for these projects is \$118 million, and construction will occur from 2022-2024. He stated that the Board also approved the expansion of the Lied Center which will include a larger entrance space and he noted that funding for this project is through matching grant funds. He reported that planning is beginning for an addition to the depository facility for the University Libraries and further renovation of Love North. He stated that there will also be an expansion of the Raikes School which will increase its students from 45 to 65, noting that these students live in the same facility and take courses together throughout their four-year career.

Chancellor Green noted that the internal search is underway for a new Executive Vice Chancellor

and tomorrow he will publicly announce the three finalists which will be interviewed next week. He stated that there will soon be a national search to replace Vice Chancellor of Business and Finance Bill Nunez who is leaving to become the Chief Financial Officer at Texas Christian University. He reported that Associate Vice Chancellor Mary LeGrange has delayed her retirement to serve as Interim Vice Chancellor of Business and Finance until the search is completed. He stated that a national search will also be started after the first year for a Director of Institutional Equity and Compliance.

Chancellor Green announced that Charles Stoltenow has been hired as Dean of Extension and he will assume the position on January 1.

Chancellor Green stated that he is very pleased that we have received word from the AAUP that UNL has been removed from the censure list and noted that this comes after a great deal of hard work in revising the Regents Bylaws. He pointed out that the revisions to the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee procedures, just approved by the Board, now match the revisions made to the Regents Bylaws.

Chancellor Green reported that for the 11th year in a row UNL has had a graduation success rate of 95% for student athletes, ranking us 4th out of 109 institutions. He pointed out that this is third in the Big Ten and 13 of our athletic teams have a 100% graduation success rate. He stated that there have been significant conversations occurring nationally about intercollegiate athletics and what it will look like in the future. He stated that one of the pending issues is whether student athletes should be considered as an employee of an institution. He noted that he will keep the Senate informed as further developments occur over time.

Chancellor Green noted that there have been a lot of conversations concerning our Commitment to Action Plan for Racial Equity and Anti-Racism, and unfortunately a considerable amount of misunderstanding about what it is. He stated that it is in the intent of the University to fully move forward with the Plan, but we will work first to ensure that the campus community, external stakeholders, and Board of Regents has full understanding of the plans for implementation of the commitments.

Chancellor Green reported that our Covid-19 protocols for the spring semester will change and there will be random mitigation testing even if people are in the vaccine registry. He noted that with the Omicron variant being highly transmissible, it is important that we have a broad scope of what our transmission and prevalence rates are. He stated that the Safer Community app will be used for testing results but there will no longer be wellness attendants in the buildings. He noted that Lincoln-Lancaster County was still under a mask mandate, but it is set to expire at midnight on December 23 and it is unclear what the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department will do after that. He pointed out that transmission rates are up both locally and on campus and the administration will be thinking carefully about the density in our classrooms and how to provide the most flexibility for facial coverings for large auditorium classrooms. He noted that we are approaching two years in the pandemic and he, like everyone else, is tired and suffering from burnout and exhaustion. He stated that it has been difficult and challenging but he is so proud of the campus and how we have completed a successful semester. He thanked everyone involved for making this happen.

Professor Zhu, Supply Chain Management, asked if there will be a replacement app that will be used to enter buildings. Chancellor Green stated that there will not be any replacement app. He stated that the testing is purely for surveillance and if the data reflects that we need to go into a more protective mode we will do so.

Professor Dauer, School of Natural Resources, pointed out that everyone has been under extreme stress and many teaching faculty members feel that this is the hardest semester they ever had. He stated that he appreciated the recent survey that was sent to employees seeking information on how

they were coping with the pandemic. He asked what has been done to proactively address the mental health of everyone. Chancellor Green noted that he does not have hard data but there are surveys that are helping the university get some insight into how people are doing. He stated that conversations are occurring on how we can expand our focus on the students and also on faculty and staff. He stated that he worries about everyone, particularly faculty and staff who have young children at home who cannot get vaccinated yet. He stated that we need to explore how we can provide some level of relief and noted that some other universities are providing a longer holiday break. Professor Weissling, Special Education and Communication Disorders, asked when the results of the survey would be available. Chancellor Green stated that he believed the data would be available in February.

The question was asked how the campus would manage Covid. Chancellor Green pointed out that surveillance testing is based on a targeted number of people that need to be sampled in order to have meaningful data and we will use random mitigation testing to achieve a targeted number which would give us an accurate sense of the number of cases of Covid. He stated that people could still get tested on campus whenever they need it. He noted that we have had generally good compliance with our testing through the fall semester and hopes this would continue during the spring semester. Professor Woodman, School of Biological Sciences, asked if there would be any consequences if someone refused to get tested. Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny reported that the plan is that there would be a series of reminders sent to students to ensure that they get tested. He stated that for faculty and staff the campus will work with the individual's supervisor to make sure they get tested. He noted that ASUN recommended that the university do the surveillance testing. Secretary Herstein asked how many people would need to get tested to reflect the campus population. Chancellor Green stated that 800-1000 people would need to get tested per week.

Professor Zhu asked what is being done to encourage people to get booster shots. Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny stated that the vaccine clinics tomorrow will offer booster shots and students are being encouraged and if they get vaccinated, lunches would be available at no cost. He noted that depending on how it works we might do have more incentives to encourage vaccination.

Professor Khalimonchuk, Biochemistry, asked if those who have already received their booster shot will have to get tested. Chancellor Green stated that they would, and the testing will be conducted regardless of a person's vaccination record.

Chancellor Green wished everyone Happy Holidays and hoped that they get some down time to enjoy their families and to get some separation from work. He stated that he hoped everyone has the chance to disconnect and that they take some time for themselves and their family.

President Kolbe noted that the Faculty Senate and many faculty members across the campus were very upset to see the recent attacks against Chancellor Green and people were very impressed with how he has handled the situation. Chancellor Green thanked President Kolbe and the faculty for their support and noted that he will continue to practice principle, value-based servant leadership every day.

4.0 Approval of November 2, 2021 Minutes

President Kolbe asked if there were any revisions to the minutes. Hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Professor Billesbach, Biological Systems Engineering, moved for approval of the minutes and motion seconded by Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics. Motion approved by the Faculty Senate.

5.0 Committees

5.1 Faculty Senate Diversity & Inclusion Committee (Professor Holman)

Professor Holman noted that last year was the Diversity & Inclusion Committee's inaugural year and during this time the Committee identified two priorities to focus on with the goal of developing action items for each priority. She reported that the priorities were systemic racism in the

promotion and tenure process and coordinating with the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee's ACE subcommittee to work on changes to ACE 9 to better conceptualize diversity in curricula. She stated that task forces were created to work on specific action items for both priorities.

Professor Holman reported that she met with the Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee (FCAC) to discuss equitable pay and there was discussion of having the chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee serve as a member of the FCAC.

Professor Holman noted that the Committee lost almost half of its members for a variety of reasons, but the new members have stepped in, and the Committee hopes to have some deliverable action items by the end of this academic year.

President-Elect Minter thanked Professor Holman for all of her work on the Committee and for her efforts to keep the Committee moving forward.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Update on Revised Syllabus Policy (Professor Sollars)

President Kolbe reported that there seems to be some confusion with the Faculty Senate revisions to the syllabus policy that were recently approved and the syllabus template, so he has asked Professor Sollars to provide clarification. Professor Sollars, Veterinary & Biomedical Sciences, noted that with the Senate's approval the syllabus template can be included in Canvas, but she pointed out that if the Senate wants an active link, it would be available starting with the summer courses.

Professor Sollars stated that she wanted to get clarification from the Senate on the revisions to the Syllabus Policy because what was approved stated that faculty members must either include the link to the website with the pertinent policies, or individually list these policies in the syllabus. She noted that the website includes some policies that were not included in the syllabus policy, and pointed out that she does not think the intent was to have faculty add more information to their syllabus. President Kolbe stated that if these resources and policies are deemed important for the students there should be a link, or they should be added to the syllabus. Professor Billesbach noted that one of the reasons for revising the syllabus policy and a template was to shorten the syllabi to eliminate syllabus bloat. He stated that he thinks it is best to urge faculty members to use the weblink. Professor Sollars asked if a faculty member does not include the link, then they must provide the information in their syllabus. Professor Billesbach said yes.

Professor Weissling stated that the Senate should decide what is considered essential to a course syllabus and noted that she is tired of the university using her course syllabus as a means of getting information on various policies to the students. She said that some of the additional information is good for the students to know but cautioned that the Senate needs to be careful of what we are requiring the faculty to do.

Professor Wood, Animal Science, pointed out that it appears that the Senate is trying to provide information on two different things: what students need to know for a course in order to do well in the class, and resources that students should know. She suggested it would logistically be better to have two separate documents. President Kolbe noted that this is what essentially has been done by creating a website containing the resources for the students.

Secretary Herstein stated that the intention behind the link is to keep the actual course syllabus shortened so it pertains to the actual course. She noted that the website listing all of the resources could be easily updated by the Office of Undergraduate Education so faculty members would not have to check each time they teach a course for an updated policy.

Professor Woodman stated that it is the responsibility of the university to provide this information to the students and the course syllabus should not be used to distribute university-level policies.

Professor Xia, Child, Youth & Family Studies, stated that she does not see the conflicts of whether the information needs to be provided via a link or included in the syllabus as long as the course information is provided first in the syllabus. She stated that personally she prefers the link and appreciates that the information would be kept up to date.

Professor Weissling pointed out that the website includes additional resources which the Senate has not approved for inclusion in a syllabus and stated that only those policies and resources approved by the Senate should be required in the syllabus should an instructor not want to provide the weblink.

President Kolbe stated that he has heard from some college curriculum committees about the syllabus policy, and we need to make sure before changes are made that they are on board with what the Senate is proposing.

Professor Sollars stated that she will suggest revisions and bring them to the Executive Committee for approval before they go to the Senate for final approval.

6.0 Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was discussed.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Open Mic

Problems with SharePoint and Transition from Box

Professor Paul, Center for Children, Families and the Law, reported that there is a great deal of concern regarding the switch from Box to OneDrive and SharePoint, especially since her unit is involved in a great deal of collaboration with both internal and external organizations and has to share a lot of files including research data. She noted that the transition from Box to OneDrive and to SharePoint were a fiasco which created significant delays and increased the workload for the department's IT person and the staff and when additional support from ITS was requested they did not receive it. She stated that her unit is still recovering from some of the changes, and the barriers which the switch created with the federal files required enormous changes. She pointed out that if changes in software programs are needed, ITS must understand the needs of the units, how the change could impact the units, and better implementation is required. President Kolbe noted that the change to SharePoint has really had an impact on research collaboration across state lines. Professor Paul stated that her department has had to do a lot of apologizing to organizations outside the university and pointed out that these difficulties could impact the ability for the Center to obtain grants in the future. She reported that her unit sought to get its own Box account but ITS would not allow it even though the unit had already paid \$18,000 for the Box account and communicated this with ITS months in advance of the purchase. She noted that her unit has worked with Procurement to get a refund, but Box has refused, even though the Box account was never set up and used. She reported that the unit's final solution was to move its files to one of its university partners that is still using Box, because the SharePoint solution was untenable.

Professor Wonch Hill, Social/Behavioral Science Research Consortium, agreed with Professor Paul and reported that her department has had multiple meetings with Microsoft to make changes that would allow the Consortium to share files with partners in the state. She noted that it has taken 5-10 hours a week of each person in her unit to work on dealing with the problems that have been created with switching to SharePoint. She stated that it is a systematic problem that is still occurring.

Professor Powers, Chemistry, concurred with each of the points that have just been made and pointed out that there has been a specific problem with people who have recently departed from the university prior to the transfer. He reported that the department has had graduate students who have moved on in their careers, but they can no longer legally access the tremendous amount of data that

they worked on while here because their email address was no longer active, and the system would not allow them to have access.

President Kolbe stated that the Executive Committee is setting up a meeting with CIO Tuttle and will raise the concerns presented today. He stated that he hopes to have CIO Tuttle speak to the full Senate in the spring semester.

FOIA Request of Virologists' Emails

Professor Dunigan, Plant Pathology, reported that recently a request from the General Counsel's office has come asking to look at the emails from the virologists of the Nebraska Center for Virology. He noted that this started in the summer and is ongoing. President Kolbe reminded the Faculty Senate that FOIA requests to view emails can be submitted to the university.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:02 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, February 1 2022, at 2:30 p.m. via Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Kelli Herstein, Secretary.