

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Franco Cruz,

Date: Tuesday, February 16, 2021

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 2:33 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Random Mitigation Testing for COVID

Buan reported that the University is moving to randomized mitigation testing. She noted that people should check their Safer Community app to see if they have access to buildings and pointed out that building attendants will still be in place. She said while our positive rate has been low and is decreasing, we are still not out of the woods until there is wider vaccine distribution. She noted that there might be some loosening of the restrictions, but we will still need to wear masks and social distance.

Woodman asked if people who receive the vaccine will still be on the list for random testing. Buan pointed out that it is still possible for people who received the vaccine to be infected with the virus and could pass it on to others so they would still need to be tested.

2.2 President Carter to Speak at Faculty Senate Meeting

Buan reported that President Carter is currently scheduled to speak to the Faculty Senate at the April 27 meeting.

2.3 Letters of Appreciation

Buan noted that letters of appreciation from the Executive Committee were sent to faculty members and administrators who worked on developing the revisions to the Board of Regents Bylaws.

2.4 Graduate Student Health Insurance Update

Buan reported that a proposal about graduate student health insurance was being considered by a university-wide committee but the recommendation of the committee was overruled at the system level. She noted that instead of slowing the rates of the insurance cost for graduate students they will probably now see a large increase.

3.0 Approval of February 9, 2021 Minutes

Buan asked if there were any further revisions to the minutes. Eklund moved to approve the minutes. Gay seconded the motion, and the Executive Committee approved the minutes.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 Plan to Increase Contract Faculty Salaries to Peer Institution Rates

Buan stated that she wanted to discuss a plan to try to get the administration to increase faculty salaries to our peer institutions' rate. She stated that at the Board of Regents meeting President Carter noted that he hopes to use earmarked funds from the next biennial budget to improve faculty salaries and Chancellor Green mentioned this in his State of the University address.

Woodman asked if the College of Arts & Sciences' (CAS) proposal to improve contingent faculty salaries has moved forward. Buan stated that she only knows that there have been discussions with Dean Button, but she does not know what these discussions have been about. Woodman stated that the proposal had a reasonable suggestion on how to adjust salaries and the amount was not significant. He pointed out that some of the salaries are deplorable for these faculty members and some of them have worked here for 15 plus years.

Billesbach stated that he thought the Chancellor of EVC Spiller was putting some pressure on the deans to improve the salaries for contingent faculty members. Woodman stated that the committee that worked on reviewing the conditions for non-tenure track faculty members thought this was occurring but was told that adjusting the salaries would be a college-level decision. However, when Dean Button proposed adjustments to the salaries, he was told by administration that they did not want to make salary adjustments on an individual college basis because this would create inequity in contingent faculty salaries between the colleges. Woodman pointed out that with the incentive-based budget model the deans are responsible for their budget and should be allowed to act independently. Buan stated that if the deans solely make the decision shared governance is removed. She questioned how involved non-tenure track faculty members are in college-level decisions. She also questioned what happens when there is a disagreement between college-level governance and the dean.

Hanrahan noted that with the current budget constraints there is probably not much, if any, funding available for salary adjustments. He reported that the Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee has been concerned about contingent faculty salaries but at this time the only way to obtain funding to address the salary discrepancies is to eliminate positions. He stated that in the FCAC's discussions on equity it has been acknowledged that there is probably little that can be done right now to adjust salaries. Woodman asked whether there is a plan to address the contract faculty salary issues. He noted that when faculty salary increases for the next biennium are discussed there is no mention of Lecturers receiving increases.

Billesbach asked if the new budget model will impede salary improvements for contingent faculty members. Buan stated that currently the new budget model is based

on data from the previous fiscal year. She noted that the Senate is working on developing a budget governance structure that could potentially put pressure for some changes in salaries. She reported that the State's budget is looking good right now and tax receipts are up. She stated that a question will be how much of the \$10 million that President Carter plans to earmark will be used to improve the salaries of non-tenure track faculty members.

Weissling noted that Lecturers are often hired to teach courses and she questioned whether we don't have enough FTE to cover all of the teaching needs. She questioned whether there is a way to make sure that departments have adequate FTE for teaching to cover courses. Billesbach suggested that a question with the new budget model is whether colleges are adequately funded to cover their mission.

Woodman stated that an improvement for non-tenure track faculty members that would not need funds is to create a minimal college level, and potentially a university level, involvement of contingent faculty members in decision making committees such as curriculum committees.

Gay asked whether there was conversation about the increase in the hiring of Professors of Practice. Woodman stated that the Professors of Practice positions were created in 2008 to provide Lecturers with more security and longer contracts and faculty were involved in the process. However, not all Lecturers wanted to move to the positions because some of them would have to reapply for a position they already had, or some Lecturers did not have a terminal degree which was a requirement for Professors of Practice. He pointed out that the proposal on Lecturers last year included having three different levels of Lecturers, I, II, and III which would be based on their years of service.

Gay stated that the Faculty Senate should be a key player in decisions about the different types of faculty positions. Hanrahan noted that AVC Walker once said that the Faculty Senate should pass a resolution on what the ratio of non-tenure track faculty members to tenure-track and tenured faculty should be in order to help maintain a higher number of tenure-track and tenured faculty members. Buan pointed out that there are different classifications of faculty and each one has its role and strength. She stated that she can see some departments where more Professors of Practice should be hired and other areas where more tenured faculty are needed, but she noted that this does not have anything to do with paying a fair wage to non-tenure track faculty members. Eklund wondered if accreditation restricts the percentage of non-tenure track faculty members to tenured faculty members.

Buan questioned whether the Executive Committee needs to keep asking EVC Spiller about the process to make improvements for contingent faculty members or whether there are other avenues that should be pursued. She asked Hanrahan if the FCAC is going to look into the problem. Hanrahan stated that it could but currently the Committee's priority is equity. He asked about the Faculty Senate openly encouraging non-tenure track faculty members to unionize and noted that there are universities where the contingent faculty are unionized. Billesbach stated that graduate teaching assistants

could also unionize. Minter pointed out that during the Open Mic session at the February 2nd Faculty Senate meeting Buan stated that the Senate would continue working on addressing the low pay for contingent faculty. She stated that she believes the new budget model will eventually help address the pay rate for contingent faculty, but currently there is no new source of funds and a lot of instruction will need to be floated.

Woodman questioned whether there needs to be an evaluation of the FTE required for instruction at departmental levels. Buan asked if we need to involve the Academic Planning Committee to see if we are stretched too thin with FTEs. Gay stated that in looking at the various positions and budget in the University he believes there are funds that could be used to help address the low salary for some contingent faculty.

Eklund reported that there are some universities that have differentiated tuition rates which help pay for scholarships. He wondered if differentiated tuition rates could help with contingent faculty pay. Hanrahan pointed out that we have colleges at UNL that have differentiated tuition rates because of how the curriculum is delivered.

Hanrahan asked if Professors of Practice require a doctorate degree in all disciplines. He stated that there may be a proliferation of Professors of Practice because they can do more teaching. Woodman disagreed and noted that Lecturers teach more than Professors of Practice. He stated that Professors of Practice are recognized as teaching professionals with a Ph.D. Kolbe asked if Professors of Practice in other colleges have a research component to their contract. Buan stated that it depends whether they are relegated to different tasks. Minter pointed out that the Academic Affairs criteria states that research activity for Professors of Practice cannot be more than 20% of their FTE. Hanrahan noted that the Academic Affairs website states that service is not a requirement for Professors of Practice unless you get a reapportionment of your responsibilities. He stated that the five-year trend shows that Professors of Practice have increased by 40%, but this is mostly at the expense of having Lecturers.

Weissling noted that it is difficult for Professors of Practice who have a 100% teaching apportionment to get the national reputation needed for promotion to full Professor of Practice. Woodman stated that this is when a Professor of Practice needs to negotiate their apportionment to reflect their efforts. He stated that people are supposed to be evaluated on their primary appointment.

Billesbach wondered how closely departments stick to the criteria listed on the Academic Affairs webpage when conducting evaluations. He pointed out that promotion committees often do not evaluate according to what the contract or apportionment states. Hanrahan noted that this has been a problem. He stated that for Professors of Practice there is a tendency to put heavier weight on teaching evaluations. He believes that the Faculty Senate should say how Professors of Practice should be evaluated. Woodman stated that the College of Arts & Sciences reviewed the University of California's appointment system where NTT faculty reappoints are based upon their annual evaluations (primarily in teaching). Buan stated that she would contact EVC Spiller to ask her what progress has been made in improving the evaluation process.

Gay stated that another thing that needs to be addressed is people not getting credit for their service participation, especially non-tenure track faculty members. He noted that strengthening this could also be beneficial to the Senate. Billesbach stated that he heard that the service component for new faculty members was going to be increased. Buan stated that she believes this is occurring in IANR and it will be increased to 5% of a new faculty member's apportionment. Hanrahan suggested that this might be something the Senate Diversity & Inclusion Committee could consider as they are already looking at promotion and tenure issues.

Buan stated that there should be a review to make sure people's duties actually match what they are doing which would impact evaluations. Woodman asked how much Academic Affairs should dictate to the departments in terms of evaluation and tenure. He noted that former Chancellor Perlman stated that all issues of promotion and tenure and evaluation were up to the individual departments. Weissling pointed out that there is a great deal of unevenness in how the evaluations are done and Academic Affairs only gets involved if there are equity issues. Billesbach stated that to get equity some autonomy at the local level might need to be reduced.

Kolbe stated that he is concerned with the way some units are fabricating their Professors of Practice contracts and he thinks some units may be using these positions to get away from tenure-track positions. He stated that departments need to be held accountable with respect to overuse of these positions. Billesbach suggested that there should be a University wide minimum level of salary for contingent faculty. Woodman pointed out that the CAS Lecturers taskforce had made this suggestion.

Buan stated that she will reach out to the Diversity & Inclusion Committee and will contact EVC Spiller again about the issues.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Redistricting Extension Senators

Buan reported that last year Extension changed from having districts to now having engagement zones, however this change sets up a conflict with the Faculty Senate Bylaws. She noted that the Bylaws state that "each of the research and extension district and/or centers shall be treated as a single department" and there is no mention of zones. She stated that any changes will need to be approved by the Faculty Senate. Griffin asked that the resolution to make the change be considered an emergency motion because Senate elections are now being conducted and there are three Extension Senators whose terms are ending.

Buan pointed out that Extension now has just three research and extension centers: Eastern, West Central, and Panhandle and all Extension Educators are identified in SAP as belonging to one of these centers. She stated that the Faculty Senate has had five districts for Extension and there is representation on the Senate from each district. If the Senate were to follow the Senate Bylaws Extension would have only three centers that could have representation which would decrease the number of Extension Senators to six

(it is now at nine). She stated that if the Senate changes the Bylaws to include Zones there would be an increase of two additional Extension Senators (a total of 11, one Senator from each zone).

Dam stated that for appropriate representation each zone should have a Senator. Griffin suggested changing the language of the Bylaws to include zones. Billesbach suggested having more flexible language that could cover any additional changes that Extension might make. The Executive Committee agreed to put the language on the agenda for its next meeting.

5.2 Agenda Items for Chancellor Green, EVC Spiller, and VC Boehm

The Executive Committee identified the following agenda items for the administrators:

- Will we have full in person courses this fall?
- Is there any update on contract faculty improvements?
- Will there be a change to the academic calendar next year?
- Is there consideration for conducting web conference classrooms for larger classes?
- When will decisions be made about summer activities?
- Unified scheduling – who will have input and who will make the decision for the campuses?
- How will tuition remission scholarships be paid and who will be paying for Regents Scholarships?
- Is there any plan to pull back approved faculty lines if there is a delayed or failed search?

The meeting was adjourned at 4:21 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be conducted via Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Lorna Dawes, Secretary.