

UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
February 2, 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 2:32 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Election to Faculty Senate Executive Committee

President Buan noted that elections to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee are coming up in late April. She stated that positions needing to be filled are: President-Elect, Secretary, and two Executive Committee members. She stated that any Senator interested should contact her or Karen Griffin, Coordinator of Faculty Governance.

2.2 Faculty Fall Experience Poll

President Buan wanted to thank all those faculty members who completed the Senate's Faculty Fall Experience Poll last semester. She stated that the Executive Committee provided results of the poll to AVC Goodburn and Director Monk of the Center for Transformative Teaching (CTT). She noted that the CTT has many materials and workshops that can help faculty members with the delivery of their courses.

2.3 Spring COVID Taskforce

President Buan stated that anyone with questions about COVID testing and vaccinations should contact her as she serves on the Spring COVID Taskforce and if there are questions she does not have the answer to, she would be happy to bring the questions forward to the Taskforce. She reported that the University will make an announcement very soon regarding the next steps with COVID testing.

3.0 Chancellor Green

Chancellor Green hoped that everyone's semester is off to a good start. He noted that we continue to be pleased with our enrollment during the pandemic although we are slightly down in enrollment this semester as compared to a year ago, and in line with our previous fall semester 2020 enrollment. He pointed out that nationally higher education has seen a 16% decline in enrollment and many of our Big Ten schools have seen a decrease. He noted that our resident Nebraska enrollment was up, and our national domestic enrollment had a slight increase.

Chancellor Green reported that the 3-week interim sessions in December and January had an enrollment of over 4,000 students for almost 10,000 credit hours. He wanted to thank the faculty who participated in the interim sessions for their creativity in developing new courses.

Chancellor Green stated that he is very pleased that we have significantly expanded our risk mitigation with the saliva based COVID testing. He noted that it was a Herculean effort which began in mid-November to prepare the campus for the testing and he wanted to acknowledge the work of Professor Bruce Broderon, Director of the Nebraska Veterinary Diagnostic Center, for all of the efforts of him and his team to make the Center ready to conduct the saliva testing. He reported that to date, over 30,000 tests have been conducted and the testing has gone well. He wanted to express his thanks and appreciation for all those that have been involved with the implementation of the testing. He pointed out that the results have showed that our rates of infection were lower than anticipated with the second round of testing showing a positivity rate of approximately .44%. He noted that the data being collected is being shared with the Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department and we will work with them to determine what the optimized testing protocol will be through the remainder of the semester. He stated that he wanted

to thank President Buan for her work on the Spring COVID Taskforce along with all of those involved in the spring forward planning.

Chancellor Green reported that the last part of identifying the budget reductions has been completed by the Academic Planning Committee and noted that a total of \$38.2 million of budget cuts will be made over the next three years. He stated that while a lot of positions have been eliminated, the cuts do put us in a position of strength for moving us forward as we emerge from the pandemic.

Chancellor Green stated that the University continues to get good reception from the Legislature on the University budget, noting that Governor Ricketts has supported it. He reported that the proposed budget calls for a 2% base state appropriations budget increase in each of the next 2 years and included in the budget is a 1.5% salary increase in year one, and a 3% salary increase in year two for UNL faculty and staff. He noted that there is a proposal to add \$2 million for each of the next two years into the Nebraska Career Scholarships fund which was started last year.

Chancellor Green reported that the Legislature is discussing a longer-term solution and plan for capital planning which would definitely impact UNL since we have the largest footprint of state buildings in Nebraska (600 of the 900). He noted that there is a proposal in the Legislature to extend the State's partnership with the University of Nebraska on deferred maintenance through 2061-62

Chancellor Green stated that with enrollment holding fairly solid we are in a strong financial position, much better than some of our peers who have experienced cuts in their state funding. He reported that just before the holidays the U.S. Congress approved the Omnibus Bill which provided some stimulus funding for higher education. He noted that the CARES Act last summer provided the University \$15.3 million, half went to students, and the rest went to offset our costs relating to dealing with the pandemic. The funding in the Omnibus Bill adds an additional \$23.9 million funding, with \$7.5 million designated for students. He pointed out that even with the additional funding we lost approximately \$120 million since last March, but the University is excited to receive the latest funding.

Chancellor Green reported that the proposed revisions to the Regents Bylaws are now moving to the Board of Regents February 12th agenda for the first reading with the vote taking place at the April Board meeting. He stated that he is pleased with the Bylaw revisions and while they are not word for word from the revisions approved by the Faculty Senate on November 3rd, in spirit the revisions still cover the majority of the revisions, including the revisions on Extension Educators and Administrative Leave. He noted that he met and discussed the revisions with the Senate Executive Committee last week and he and President Buan met with President Carter who accepted more clarity on some of the proposed language. He pointed out that the purpose of the revisions was to enhance academic freedom, due process, and to put in place protections for both our faculty and administrators. He noted that the other campuses have endorsed the proposed changes and he wanted to thank everyone for their hard work in this effort.

Chancellor Green reported that Phase 1A for COVID vaccinations has now been completed in Lincoln/Lancaster County and we are now moving into Phase 1B. He stated that educators are in Phase 1B but in a lower tier so many faculty members and staff at the University are probably 4-6 weeks out from getting their first vaccination, but this will depend on the availability of the vaccine.

Professor Zuckerman, Educational Administration, asked how the support of the other campuses is being gauged given the recent change to the proposed revisions. Chancellor Green reported that President Carter has been engaged with the other campuses and has already had dialogue with the UNMC, UNO, and UNK Faculty Senates and UNMC and UNO wrote a letter to President Carter expressing their concerns with some of the revisions. He noted that President Carter addressed UNMC's and UNO's concerns with the latest revisions. Professor Zuckerman asked if the Faculty Senates will have another round of voting. Chancellor Green stated that they will not because the

revisions have now been forwarded to the Board.

Professor Vakilzadian, Electrical and Computer Engineering, asked how the revisions will impact the AAUP censure. Chancellor Green reported that our process has been to protect our faculty and academic appointees which is the main purpose behind the changes and pointed out that the revisions provide a more comprehensive set of Bylaws that outline so many aspects of protection for faculty, with academic freedom at the root of the changes. He stated that it will be up to AAUP to determine whether the revisions satisfy their interest.

Professor Santra, Panhandle Research and Extension, asked how long the hiring freeze will continue, particularly for temporary positions. He pointed out that some research work for the Extension Centers depends on hiring temporary help. Chancellor Green noted that the hiring freeze was put into place at the very beginning of the pandemic and currently it is still in place, but the University hopes to relax this later in the spring. He pointed out that having the University budget approved by the Legislature, and having the COVID vaccinations in place, may help to relax the freeze.

Professor Lindquist, Agronomy and Horticulture, asked what the next steps would be if the AAUP does not remove its censure even after the Bylaw revisions have been made. Chancellor Green pointed out that first we would need to understand from AAUP why the censure was not removed given the changes that would be made to the Bylaws. He stressed that the revisions to the Bylaws really protects academic freedom, but if AAUP does not want to remove us from the censure list we will need to have another conversation about the issue.

Professor Billesbach, Biological Systems Engineering, asked the Chancellor if he has heard of any talk about the University being targeted to receive funding from the new gambling revenue. Chancellor Green stated that he has not heard anything about this, although it is an interesting question. Professor Billesbach wondered if the University would plan on any lobbying strategies given the new revenue. Chancellor Green stated that he does not think there has been any discussion about this at the system level.

Professor Falci, Sociology, stated that there were many changes she thought the AAUP will be happy with but in the recent revisions a process was put back in place that was the cause of us getting censored in the first place. Chancellor Green disagreed and noted that the process is in place with the latest revisions. He noted that the process now included in the revised minutes was not in place in 2017 when the incident that prompted the AAUP censure occurred. He pointed out that the revisions now call for a faculty committee to review an administrative leave and the process ensures that academic freedom is protected. Professor Woodman, School of Biological Sciences, asked if a faculty member is suspended through the end of their contract whether this would be a termination. Chancellor Green stated that the revisions have a review process if a person is suspended through the end of their contract. This review process would be to ensure that the individual's academic freedom is not being violated.

4.0 Approval of December 1, 2020 Minutes

President Buan asked if there were any revisions to the minutes. Hearing none she declared the minutes accepted by the Faculty Senate.

5.0 Committees

5.1 Teaching Council (Professor Kautz)

Professor Kautz noted that the Teaching Council's responsibilities include improving instruction across the campus, assist in determining who should receive teaching awards and provide and support initiatives related to teaching. He stated that the Council met several times to review excellent faculty nominations for the Annis Chaikin Sorensen Award, OTICA, and University Department Teaching Award. He reported that the Council also co-sponsored the UNL Parent Certificates of Recognition Award ceremony with the UNL Parents' Association. He noted that the

Council partnered with the Center for Transformative Teaching to reformat the Century Club and monthly meetings of the Club are being held at 3:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month through October. He pointed out that the Century Club is for faculty members who teach large classes.

Professor Brown Kramer, Psychology, asked what is the new format of the Century Club? Professor Kautz stated that the Council is working with Director Nick Monk of CTT to develop the format, but one idea is to bring guest speakers in to speak to the Club.

5.2 University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (Professor Dodd)

Professor Dodd noted that the UUCC is responsible for providing a campus-wide perspective on curricular issues and to act as the final phase of the review process for course actions. He reported that last year there was a huge number of course changes to update course numbers across departments and to delete courses. He stated that the UUCC is responsible for the review of the ACE review.

Professor Dodd stated that in 2017-2018 ACE assessment and recertification was conducted for ACE outcomes 1-3, and in 2018-2019 the same was done for ACE 4-6 outcomes. He reported that in 2019-2020 assessment reports for ACE 7, 8, and 9 were due and the review and compilation of feedback for the courses in these outcomes was targeted to occur in April 2020, but this was delayed due to the pandemic. He noted that work is still being done to assess these outcomes. He stated that the ACE 10 assessment report was scheduled to have a submission deadline of November 1, 2020 but due to the stressors from the pandemic the deadline date for submission of these assessment reports has been moved to September 30, 2021. He noted that the review of the entirety of the ACE program is still scheduled to occur during the 2021-22 academic year.

Professor Dodd reported that the UUCC has had numerous discussions about the new budget model and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee has asked the UUCC to be aware of potential duplication of courses or the elimination of prerequisites in order to compete with other units for students. He noted that the UUCC has been getting more input from the college level advisors because they are more familiar with the overall curriculum of a college, and although they do not see course proposals, the advisors do see a list of the proposals that they can make comments on. He pointed out that very rarely is there true duplication of courses proposed by departments.

Professor Dodd reported that another concern the UUCC addressed, related to the new budget model and the potential for programs to increase the number of their ACE courses in order to produce more credit hours. He stated that currently the UUCC is in a moratorium right now for giving ACE certification on existing courses. He stated that the UUCC is proposing the establishment of a minimal delivery frequency for all ACE-certified courses of at least once every three years. He pointed out that this will be beneficial to students and will be of value to the regular 5-year rotation of ACE program assessment. He stated that departments are being encouraged to make courses inactive if there are no plans to offer them in the near future. He stated that this does not delete the course, but it does remove it from the catalog of courses.

5.3 Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (Professor Blankley)

Professor Blankley reported that the IAC meets monthly and its role is to provide input and feedback on academic issues pertaining to athletics, but the IAC does not have jurisdiction over Athletics. She noted that the IAC has two subcommittees which provides an annual report: Assessing Academic Support Services Subcommittee and the Scheduling Oversight Subcommittee. In addition, there is the Transfer Appeals Committee and the Athletics Scholarship Appeal Committee. She stated that the Assessing Academic Support Services Subcommittee looked at the transfer portal and found that the numbers of transfers for student athletes was not being reported by Nebraska, but this has since been corrected.

Professor Blankley reported that our six-year graduate success rate for student athletes continues to

improve and we are now at 94% which is the second highest in the Big Ten. She reported that students who transfer out are not counted in the graduate student success rates, but those who transfer in do count.

Professor Blankley stated that the IAC selects the student athletes of the year and the winners for the 2019-20 academic year were Sierra Hassel, an accounting/management major participating in gymnastics; and Luke Siedhoff, a biological sciences/Spanish major participating in track and field.

Professor Blankley reported that Athletics has been keeping the IAC updated on the many protocols required for athletes to compete during the pandemic. She noted that initially all sports were cancelled for the fall semester, but the IAC did approve the football schedule, and the IAC worked to ensure that student athletes would be able to take their finals on the day when there was a home game. She pointed out that the University did not have control over when this particular game was scheduled.

Professor Blankley stated that faculty members teaching student athletes received a message asking for some grace this year with the student athletes' schedules because of the impact of the pandemic. She noted that all of the sport schedules were reviewed by the IAC and met the missed class policy with the exception of golf for both men and women.

Professor Blankley asked the Faculty Senate for assistance in getting more representation from women on the IAC. She noted that with the change in the Faculty Athletics Representative there is little representation of women on the committee. She stated that another request is to have the President of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee be a member of the IAC. She noted that it has been a practice of the committee to invite this person to meetings but the Committee would like to see the person be formally included in the Committee membership. She pointed out that it would be helpful to have ASUN appointments made in the Spring for the IAC so that the students are appointed by the time the IAC begins work in August.

Professor Woodman asked when student athletes are traveling and need to take an exam if there is proctoring available. Professor Blankley stated that proctoring is available and faculty members just need to contact Executive Associate Director LeBlanc to arrange it. Professor Woodman asked if a FAQ document could be prepared for faculty members wanting to request a proctor. Professor Blankley stated that she will bring this to the attention of the IAC.

5.4 Academic Planning Committee (Professor Geisinger)

Professor Geisinger noted that the APC is a very hard-working committee, even more so this year due to having to address the budget cuts. He noted that the APC took its job in dealing with the budget cuts very seriously and with great care. In the end, the Committee recommended \$38.2 million in budget cuts to the Chancellor. He stated that the APC has a wonderful working relationship between faculty, students, and administrators, and while there may be some disagreements at times, the Committee always works through them.

Professor Geisinger stated that one of the responsibilities of the APC is to have a representative serve on the review team for academic program reviews. He noted that there was one APR conducted virtually this fall but many of the APRs have been postponed until the external review teams can once again come to campus.

Professor Geisinger noted that the APC approved a number of program proposals which speaks positively about our faculty who are coming up with ideas to attract students.

Professor Geisinger reported that Professor Hachtmann, College of Journalism and Mass Communications, will be the chair of the APC next year.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Update on Proposed Regents Bylaws Changes

President Buan wanted to thank all of our colleagues over the past few years for the hard work that has been done on the proposed revisions to the Regents Bylaws. She noted that changes to the Extension Educators' section of the Bylaws originated over ten years ago. She reported that in her meeting with President Carter he stated he was very happy that UNL was taking the lead in the process. She stated that the proposed Bylaws revisions are now in the hands of the Board and President Carter, but she thinks the Board will accept the proposed changes.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Motion to Approve the Ballot for Elections to the Academic Planning Committee, the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee, and the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Panel

President Buan noted that the ballot for elections to the Academic Planning Committee, the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee, and the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Panel is being presented to the Faculty Senate and will be voted on at the March 2nd meeting. She pointed out that there are three openings on the ballot for the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Panel and one for the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee. She asked Senators to please encourage their tenured colleagues to run for election to these important committees and pointed out that Senators who are tenured can also run for election.

Professor Woodman asked if the proposed Bylaws revisions included revisions so that non-tenure track faculty members can serve on the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Panel. President Buan stated that the language is included in the proposed revisions to the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee procedures.

7.2 Open Mic

Professor Sollars reported that there will be a critically important review coming up on the entire ACE program. The plan is to look at the assessment processes and whether they are too onerous, to see if there are best practices that we could adopt, to look at the discipline specific outcomes to see if we can get more depth in them, and to look at ACE 9 to see what we want to do with it. She asked that Senators reach out to their colleagues to see if anyone is interested in working on the review committee and to contact her if there is interest.

Professor Zuckerman thanked Professors Hanrahan and Gailey for their email messages to the Senate for clarifying the concerns over the change in language made by administrators to the proposed Bylaws revisions. She pointed out that the administration continues to fail in addressing the removal of contingent faculty members and the proposed revisions do not protect academic freedom. Furthermore, contingent faculty members will be forced to have to fight for their own case in the event they should be suspended. She noted that these changes unjustly impact women and people of color and does not provide protection for vulnerable faculty members. She questioned why General Counsel continues to undo the work that the Faculty Senate and the Ad Hoc Committee to Address the AAUP Censure has done. She stated that the Senate should vote against the latest round of revisions and voice support for all contingent faculty members.

Professor Falci stated that she believes the Faculty Senate should get the policy that was previously negotiated back in place. She noted that the Censure Committee was told that they had to work with General Counsel which they did, and now to find out changes were made without faculty input is upsetting. She pointed out that the faculty does not have all the needed protections.

Professor Gailey, English, noted she explained her thoughts in the email message she sent to the Senators, but she feels disheartened by the conversation at today's Faculty Senate meeting. She stated that the reason the AAUP censured UNL is due to the backdoor firing of a Lecturer due to political pressure and she does not see changes in the proposed revisions that prohibits this kind of thing from happening again and will not remove us from the censure list. She stated that it seems like there has been a 180 degree change in the stance of the Senate Executive Committed given the

emails that were recently sent by the Senate President about the Bylaw revisions.

President Buan stated that there has not been a 180 if the Executive Committee's stance with the proposed changes and in every interaction she has had with President Carter and the Chancellor they have indicated they are interested in getting us removed from the AAUP censure list and she has advocated very hard to have language in the Bylaws that will accomplish this goal. She pointed out that the Executive Committee has had very frank counsel for her, and she has tried to make the best case for the protection of the faculty when she has been in discussion with the administrators about the proposed revisions. She noted that there are protections in the revisions for faculty members which are definitely better than what is currently in the Bylaws and President Carter is open to continued dialogue about the Bylaws.

Professor Stevenson, English, noted that EVC Spiller was to provide an update of changes being made at the system level yet when the Executive Committee met with the Executive Vice Chancellor in January no update was provided. She stated that it is almost a year when a committee was formed to address the situation for non-tenure track faculty members and there has been some updates from the Deans, but she asked if the Executive Committee will continue to press for updates. President Buan stated that the Executive Committee will continue to ask questions about improvements for non-tenure track faculty members.

Professor Woodman noted that getting off the AAUP censure list is in the greatest interest of the faculty and those who have a vested interest can speak to the Board of Regents at the February 12th meeting to express their opinion.

Professor Weissling asked if the Senate has the most recent language that will be going to the Board. President Buan stated that we do not because it is still of President Carter's desk.

Professor Billesbach noted that the AAUP is not happy that the University used a backdoor method to fire someone and not provide them with due process. He stated that the new revisions put the backdoor process in place. Professor Falci pointed out that there was a process in place in 2017 and a lot more process is being put in place with the revisions, but the reason the AAUP censured us was because the administration did not use the existing process that was in place in 2017.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:14 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at 2:30 p.m. via Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Lorna Dawes, Secretary.