

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Billesbach, Dam, Eklund, Gay, Herstein, Kolbe, Krehbiel, Minter, Nicholas, Weissling, Woodman, Zuckerman

**Absent:** Buan,

**Date:** Tuesday, June 15, 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.

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### 1.0 Call (*Kolbe*)

Kolbe called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

### 2.0 UNL Chief of Police Hassan Ramzah

#### 2.1 Are there any groups at UNL asking the Campus Police to not carry any firearms?

Ramzah reported that he has not heard or been made aware of either any requests or discussions regarding disarming campus police, although he does know that there has been discussion nationally on this issue. Eklund stated that he believes there is wisdom in campus police being armed. Ramzah stated that with the rise of violent crimes nationally he can understand both sides of the issue but noted that campus police have an understanding of what the use of force means, and they have had training to make sure they first try to deescalate a situation.

Woodman asked if there are any guidelines for when a weapon will be drawn. Ramzah reported that the university does have a use of force policy that outlines under what circumstances officers can use force. He pointed out that changes have been made since the death of George Floyd and an officer can only apply force that is justifiable if the officer is in fear of their life or that of someone else. He noted that the use of force policy is always under review because things change over time and UNL is currently looking at the use of force policy to make sure it meets best practices and meets our accreditation requirements.

Zuckerman stated that she appreciates that the Campus Police first seek to deescalate a situation but noted that fear is an emotion impacted by biases and asked how training for police officers addresses these differences in biases. Ramzah stated that it can be difficult to evaluate how people will interact, but the Campus Police are continuing to work on training for how to deescalate a situation and the training focuses on different types of scenarios that can occur on campus, particularly with students in crisis. He stated that an important component for a Police Chief is knowing your officers and how they may respond to an incident. He pointed out that our officers are not exposed to

incidents that police officers in large cities encounter but ensure that they receive proper training, and we clearly articulate response protocols.

Nicholas asked if the training includes the ability to recognize a mental health crisis. Ramzah stated that it does and reported that officers are required to attend a mental health first aid and crisis and response training. He pointed out that as first responders the police officers are trained to recognize when someone is in crisis. He noted that the best approach is time and distance along with communication, and the officers utilize the skills they attained through training to develop a solution at the time of crisis. He stated that every officer must go through training which was instituted as a requirement when the campus police started using tasers, but officers first should try to deescalate a situation before using any kind of force.

**2.2 Can you identify a situation where police action/response could have been better and how has that affected/modified current practices.**

Ramzah reported that there was an incident several years ago at a fraternity house that resulted in a search warrant, but after investigating the incident he found that the actions of the officer and the search warrant were inappropriate and there were concerns about how the officers approached and interacted with the students. He stated that this kind of incident now requires supervisory notification for approval before any further action can be taken, and he noted that the requirements for a search warrant have changed. He reported that there is now a police officer who serves as a liaison to the Greek community and works closely with the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life and our fraternities and sororities which provides more communication between the Campus Police and the Greek community. He stated that Campus Police is also opening the doors for members of the Greek community to work with the Police and our policies and addressing accountability have been expanded.

Gay asked if the Campus Police is trying to eliminate the culture of enforcement against smoking weed. Ramzah stated that enforcement is an approach that can be used for certain situations, but it is one of the primary responsibilities of the police, however it should not be used as a broad-based approach. He pointed out that campus police officers have to understand the campus itself, the environment, and perception and experiences of the faculty, staff, and students. He noted that there are some students that fear the police, but the role of the Campus Police is to be the protector of the campus community.

**2.3 Describe the role the UNL Police Department played in the Black Lives Matter protests last year. What was learned from the experience that would help the UNL community trust the Police more?**

Ramzah reported that the UNL Campus Police did not participate in the protest and did not send officers to serve as a response to the demonstration. He noted that we have a limited number of officers on campus, they are not trained to respond to civic unrest, and they do not have the tools or the equipment for these kinds of situations. He reported that there were still some students living on campus, some of whom were ill with COVID, and the Campus Police response was to make sure the campus was safe.

Ramzah stated that officers attended a meeting of a group at the Malone Center speaking about holding police accountable. He noted that students and faculty were in attendance. He reported that there were some peaceful protests on campus last summer, but the Campus Police did not police the protests and noted that students are allowed to have a voice on campus. He stated that his philosophy is to take a more collaborative approach and partnership with the students and to let them know that the police appreciate them, understand their concerns, and support them. He noted that the Campus Police want to be a part of the solution and he has spoken with a number of different student organizations and groups on campus to foster a better relationship with Campus Police and he wants to make sure that those who feel threatened by the police eventually overcome this feeling.

#### **2.4 How is UNL Police promoting community policing with student and faculty populations?**

Ramzah responded that promoting community policing is a work in progress but acknowledged that the Campus Police need to do a better job. He noted that he came from a municipal police department, but he recognizes that some of his officers and staff may not fully understand what community policing is and how to build a good relationship with a community. He stated that his goal is to instill the concept in the department and acknowledged that it will require a cultural shift. He pointed out that the department is vastly underrepresented with women and the department as a whole is not representative of what the campus community looks like which creates challenges. He stated that he is working to change the dynamics and noted that the Campus Police have to do a better job at defining itself which will result in how it can better serve the campus.

#### **2.5 How has UNL Police Department integrated with risk assessment, CAPS, or other social services? How do those relationships across units inform the UNL Police response to report an event of concern?**

Ramzah reported that the Campus Police meets with the Office of Student Affairs and CAPS about the department's response to various incidents, however we need to continue to work towards improving the availability of resources for serving students. He noted that some police departments around the country have shifted to having mental health providers in the departments and these people can respond when someone is in a mental health crisis. He stated that the campus needs to determine what would be the right kind of approach in dealing with situations where someone is experiencing a mental health crisis.

Ramzah reported that the Campus Police department is getting ready to participate in the Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE) program by Georgetown Law. He stated that this program prepares officers to successfully intervene to prevent harm and to create a law enforcement culture that supports peer intervention. He noted that this program will provide officers with the skills of looking at officer response and de-escalation and accountability to ensure that officers are staying within the proper framework. He stated that the training will help the Campus Police respond better to the campus community.

**2.6 How is the UNL Police Department working with the Threat Assessment team, how much are they involved with the TIPS Incident Reporting System, and how are the Campus Security Authorities designated and trained and how do they fit into the other methods of reporting?**

Ramzah reported that the Threat Assessment Team is an interdisciplinary group on campus that includes representatives from the faculty, Human Resources, Academic Affairs, Title IX, and others along with the Campus Police. He noted that the Team is not linked directly to TIPS but whenever there is a situation where an individual could be a threat to the campus the Police are notified. He stated that the Police will call the Threat Assessment Team together for them to investigate any possible threats. He reported that online training is available for members of the Team which includes a PowerPoint presentation which was prepared by a UNL Police Department Compliance Officer.

Gay asked what the campus policy is for student possession of guns. Ramzah stated that firearms on campus are prohibited under state law. He stated that student members of the Rifle Club and ROTC students who have access to guns must store their weapons with the Campus Police. He stated that someone must have a university sanctioned reason to have a firearm on campus. Gay asked if concealed weapons are allowed. Ramzah stated that they are not allowed and would be considered a violation of state law. Kolbe asked if the same policy applies to faculty and staff. Ramzah stated that it applies to everyone, including visitors to campus.

Kolbe thanked Ramzah for meeting with the Executive Committee and stated that he would like to see the ABLE training program promoted through University Communications. Ramzah stated that the plan is to share the information once the initial officers have gone through the training. He thanked the Executive Committee for the opportunity to meet and stated that he wants the Campus Police to serve the campus and be the department that is representative of the faculty's expectations of the unit.

**3.0 Continuity of Instruction – Associate Dean Blankenship**

Kolbe asked what the faculty are being required to do with the proposed Continuity of Instruction policy. AD Blankenship stated that the policy requires the instructor to inform students how they will communicate to them whether a class will be cancelled or taught remotely if the campus is closed due to unforeseen circumstances. She stated that the faculty member decides whether they want to cancel class or conduct it remotely or record it for the students. She noted that the plan is to have a permanent policy for short term closures. Zuckerman asked about online courses. AD Blankenship noted that since online courses do not meet in class the instructor would just need a statement on the course syllabus stating that the class will proceed as normal. She pointed out that there could be difficulty if people do not have power due to inclement weather.

Woodman asked if the Chancellor says the university is closed, would instructors still need to contact the students, and, if so, would it be a redundant statement. AD Blankenship stated that the Chancellor's office could state that the campus is entirely closed or closed with instructional continuity. Kolbe asked if the instructor would need to email or post in Canvas what is happening with the class. AD Blankenship stated that it would depend on the statement the instructor includes in their course syllabus. She noted that the instructor could simply state that students need to check Canvas in the event the campus is closed.

Woodman asked how the policy will be communicated to the students. AD Blankenship stated that she was not on that committee that was addressing this concern. Kolbe stated that AVC Walker would like the Executive Committee to endorse the policy before University Communications would be involved.

Minter asked what would necessitate an instructional continuity date even if the campus is closed. AD Blankenship stated that this was not in the purview of the committee, but instructional continuity days would become the norm rather than inclement weather days. AD Blankenship stated that if in-person classes are cancelled then it could be an instructional continuity day. Weissling stated that it is difficult to predict what will happen because even if there is an instructional continuity day an instructor could prepare to teach remotely only to find that the servers are down. AD Blankenship stated that the committee did think about the inability for faculty to have access to the internet and she suggested that the statement on the syllabus could say that if there are technical difficulties the class would be cancelled. She stated that if an instructor is going to use web-conferencing they will need to record it so students have access to the class.

Woodman pointed out that having two different messages, the campus is closed, or campus is closed but it is an instructional continuity day, could create confusion for the students. He noted that he has a class of 300 students and stated that absolute clarity is needed if the campus is closed, and all classes are cancelled.

Billesbach asked if students will have full knowledge of the policy when they enroll. Kolbe noted that most students are already enrolled. AD Blankenship reported that the communication plan for the students is to have it clearly laid out and disseminated to them.

Weissling asked if other universities have a similar policy. AD Blankenship stated that she does not know about other universities, but there is at least one school district in Nebraska that has such a policy and has stated that there will be no more snow days.

Woodman pointed out that some non-tenure track faculty members are not hired until a few days before the semester begins. He asked how they will be informed about the policy and what would happen if they did not include a statement on their syllabus. AD Blankenship stated that she believes the information will be posted on the Teaching @UNL website. She stated that she does not know of any penalty checks on syllabus. Minter stated that there needs to be clarity on who is responsible for getting the

information out to the faculty. AD Blankenship agreed and noted that the committee also thought about communications with graduate teaching assistants. Kolbe stated that the Executive Committee could let AVC Walker know that there needs to be communication plans in place for non-tenure track faculty members and graduate teaching assistants.

Kolbe thanked AD Blankenship for meeting with the Executive Committee. He then asked the Executive Committee if it wanted to endorse the policy. Woodman stated that he would want more information on the communication process before he could consider whether to endorse it. Minter pointed out that she has concerns over the confusion the policy could cause for students and she questioned how many of the Big Ten universities have, or are, considering such a policy. No motion was made to endorse the policy. Kolbe stated that he would communicate the Committee's reluctance to AVC Walker.

#### **4.0 Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny**

##### **4.1 Department of Justice Amicus Brief**

Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny reported that the articles in the Lincoln Journal Star and on ESPN are misleading because the amicus brief from the Department of Justice is a legal technical issue which refers to University's General Counsel interpretation of the Title IX law. He noted that while UNL has a Title IX case pending, the brief does not fault UNL's handling of the process or its protocols for handling Title IX cases. He reported that the University is filing a response to the brief to have it dismissed and it will be up to a judge to make this decision. If it is not dismissed, then a judge will have to determine if the University's interpretation of the Title IX laws was correct. He pointed out that since this is pending litigation, it is difficult to comment on the case.

Minter stated that she can understand why the new federal administration would want to shift Title IX policies and regulations, but the headline stories do not match the account that Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny just offered. Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny stated that the expectations are that the Biden administration will push for changes to Title IX, and he noted that this has occurred with new administrations for decades now. He stated that the question is what the changes will be. Weissling asked if the University will ask for a retraction of the stories. Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny pointed out that the LJS article did not say that the Department of Justice brief faulted UNL for how it is handling Title IX cases. He stated that he believes the University is working hard to implement the current federal guidelines in Title IX cases.

Woodman asked if the University worries about the negative publicity that is occurring because of the amicus brief. Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny stated that the case is a question of a legal position. He noted that the Department of Justice might feel that our interpretation of the law was incorrect, or this could be a test case to challenge the law. He stated that both sides will have to agree to move forward once a judge has rendered a decision. He pointed out that we work with the same Title IX experts as other universities and our legal team are confident with their position but ultimately the judge will decide.

##### **4.2 COVID Protocol Updates**

Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny stated that the Chancellor will be making a statement soon regarding the plans for the fall semester and COVID protocols.

## **5.0 Announcements**

### **5.1 Search Committee Members for Assistant Vice Chancellor for Inclusive Leadership and Learning**

Kolbe reported that he has been asked by VC Barker to provide names of faculty members to serve on the search committee for the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Inclusive Leadership and Learning. He noted that VC Barker has suggested a couple of names and asked if the Executive Committee would like to suggest some people. Kolbe suggested including some of the members of the Senate's Diversity and Inclusion Committee. He asked that suggestions be sent to him and/or Griffin.

### **5.2 Interviews for Dean of Graduate Education**

Kolbe reminded the Executive Committee that interviews for the three candidates for the Dean of Graduate Education will be held on Monday, June 21; Wednesday, June 23; and Friday, June 25.

### **5.3 Executive Memorandum #41**

Woodman reported that the Information Technologies and Services Committee met with Vice Provost Jackson to discuss [Executive Memorandum #41](#) and [Executive Memorandum #42](#) which is a policy on research data and security. He stated that any faculty member who has research data should carefully read through the policy and pay close attention to it.

## **6.0 Approval of June 1, 2021 Minutes**

Woodman moved for approval of the minutes. Motion seconded by Minter and approved by the Executive Committee.

## **7.0 Unfinished Business**

No unfinished business was discussed.

## **8.0 New Business**

### **8.1 Agenda Items for Chancellor Green**

The Executive Committee identified the following agenda items for its upcoming meeting with Chancellor Green:

- Who gets the revenue generated by Husker advertisement?
- Update on the Budget Advisory Committee
- Is there any data on faculty who are leaving the University?

Kolbe noted that any other agenda items should be sent to either him or Griffin.

### **8.2 Agenda Items for Executive Committee/Administrators Retreat**

Item postponed due to lack of time.

### **8.3 IANR's New Travel Policy**

Item postponed due to lack of time.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:17 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, June 29, 2021, at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in 201 Canfield Administration Building. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Kelli Herstein, Secretary.