

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Eklund, Franco Cruz

Date: Tuesday, March 23, 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 2:34 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Green/EVC Spiller/VC Boehm

2.1 Stimulus Funding for the University – how will it be used?

Chancellor Green noted that there have been three different stimulus funding acts passed by Congress that impact higher education: the CARES Act where UNL received a direct appropriation of \$15.8 million with \$7.8 designated for grant-in-aid for students, the HERRF, higher education relief funding act that resulted in \$23 million allocated directly to UNL with \$7.5 million designated for grant-in-aid for students, and the recent stimulus bill which will provide UNL with \$42 million, 50% of these funds are earmarked for grant-in-aid for students. The total amount of discretionary funding for UNL is slightly over \$45 million. Chancellor Green stated that the accumulated losses up to February are over \$120 million and noted that Athletics suffered a loss of approximately \$150 million. He pointed out that Athletics has been providing academics at UNL \$10 million in revenue each year, \$5 million which is used for scholarships, but this year Athletics was unable to provide the funds because of the financial losses the department suffered.

Chancellor Green reported that the stimulus funding does come with some guidelines in how the funds can be used. He noted that costs for providing PPEs, testing, physical adjustments in buildings are to be addressed first, and the auxiliary units, which have also had significant losses, would come next. He stated that in the end we will still wind up with a \$35 million deficit which will come out of the University's cash reserves. He pointed out that one day of cash operating for UNL's cash funding is approximately \$3.6 million, meaning that with no further funding or accumulated losses, we will have reduced our days on cash by about 10 days during the pandemic.

Billesbach asked if there are any concerns about how these funds can be used and whether taxes will change because of the stimulus funding. Chancellor Green stated that he is not aware of proposed changes. He reported that we have studied the guidelines for

the stimulus funding carefully and noted that the guidelines have been modified by the new administration but use of the funds needs to be COVID related.

Minter asked if there are provisions with the grant-in-aid funding for students. Chancellor Green reported that the guidelines for these funds also vary. He noted that with the current stimulus funding it appears the funding can be applied to student debt owed to the University, but we cannot use it for previously available scholarships and the funding is meant for current pandemic-related costs. EVC Spiller stated that we are trying to be proactive to see if some of the funding could be used for summer sessions to get students back on their academic trajectory which was sidelined by the pandemic. Woodman stated that it would be great if students could use some of the funding for summer session courses, but he noted that summer is quickly approaching and asked when this information would be available to the students. EVC Spiller pointed out that students can register for summer courses, but at this time we do not know if they can use the stimulus grant-in-aid funds for summer tuition.

2.2 Update on Graduate Student Health Insurance

Chancellor Green stated that there is a University-wide advisory committee that has looked at student health insurance this year and has made recommendations to the Chief Business Officers, but the President's Council has not seen the recommendations yet. He stated that it is his understanding that there would not be a requirement that all students have insurance, but this has yet to be confirmed. He pointed out that the President's Council must concur on whether to accept the recommendations before any changes could occur.

Buan noted that she has served on the advisory committee and the last time the committee met it was told that the recommendations were in the hands of the administration and that the committee was being dissolved. She noted that the committee met directly with the consultants who were putting possible insurance packages together, and the majority of the committee members recommended that the University change its insurance requirements. She stated that all of the packages presented would have reduced the cost for all students because a larger insurance pool would have been created. She pointed out that other Big Ten universities saw no change in enrollment when student insurance was required. She stated that the advisory committee wants to understand why there is the discrepancy between what the advisory committee recommended and what the CBOs are recommending.

2.3 Clarification on Salaries for Newly Appointed Part-time IANR Administrators

Agenda item postponed due to VC Boehm being unavailable due to another meeting.

2.4 Contract Faculty Proposal

EVC Spiller stated that this particular matter has had a long history on this campus, at a number of levels, particularly in departments and colleges. She reported that as part of several larger initiatives, she has directed each of the Deans to review compensation levels for all existing Lecturer positions, current appointments as of March 1, 2021, in all

EVC units and each Dean is to look at each Lecturer's salary to develop recommendations about salary adjustments. She reported that she has made a \$550,000 commitment in multi-year funding to support approved compensation adjustments. She noted recommendations for salary actions must be initiated by Deans and will be reviewed by her office. She noted that criteria for consideration will include expertise, credentials, and achieved performance. She stated that requests will be due by April 26 for salary implementation to occur in the July 31 paycheck for 12-month appointments, and in the September 30th paycheck for 9-month appointments. She noted that the funding from her office is intended to allow colleges to accelerate these pay increases. She stated going forward, as has been the case historically and as will be the case under the IBB, each college will be responsible for funding both initial salary determinations and reappointment levels. She noted that her office will be expecting that all new appointments will be reviewed with respect to ensuring that compensation levels are appropriate. She stated that additionally, there will be a one-time window of opportunity for deans to make recommendations to shift an existing Lecturer appointment to a position in the Professors of Practice series for faculty who are currently doing work that reflects the requirements, standards, and progression of responsibility for that series.

Hanrahan stated that he is very happy to hear that progress is being made to make improvements for Lecturers. He reported that some departments and colleges will use a complicated formula to hire Lecturers and Lecturer Ts whose contracts state that their apportionment of duties is 25% teaching, but they are actually teaching three classes a semester. He pointed out that this practice allows the college to skirt around paying a full salary to these instructors.

Weissling thanked EVC Spiller for the information on the lecturers and asked if there is any guidance about a minimum salary for lecturers. EVC Spiller stated that no salary minimum is being set. She noted that the Deans will be responsible for understanding their disciplines and the markets for each of the disciplines and every recommendation for salary improvements for non-tenure track faculty members will be reviewed by her office. She stated that the Deans are also being asked to review every Lecturer appointment to see if the individual in this role is actually conducting work that aligns more closely to one of the Professor of Practice positions.

Weissling asked if there has been any discussion about a promotion path for Lecturers. EVC Spiller stated that this suggestion was reviewed carefully, and it was the decision to create the opportunity to move Lecturers to a Professor of Practice position is recognition that there are some opportunities that need to be created. However, it was felt that we did not need to create another new series of positions since we already have the Professor of Practice positions which is a valuable series. Woodman stated that the idea of having a promotion path for Lecturers is to award those people who have been here for many years but perhaps do not have the time because they already have a heavy teaching load to conduct research work or commit to creative activities which would lead to the PoP series but are still performing a great service to the University year after year without receiving the rewards typically associated with a promotion.

Gay noted that Professor of Practice positions are a relatively new series of faculty positions. He pointed out that it would be helpful if departments had good articulation about these positions.

2.5 Strategies for Supporting the Success of Faculty (equity, tenure clock extensions, promotion, tenure, and retention) in light of COVID burnout and longer-term effects of COVID on careers.

EVC Spiller stated that this is an obviously important and ongoing topic noting that it is important that we consider staff, faculty, leaders, and students at all levels. She noted that the university is thinking more broadly about health and wellness resources for faculty, staff, and students. Looking at the academic enterprise, she enumerated some of the resources and commitments that have been made to support faculty. She reported that an opportunity has been provided for all pre-tenure track faculty members to request an expedited process to extend their tenure-clock for a one-year extension, and if someone was here last spring, they can stop the clock for two years. She pointed out that no faculty member needs to make the decision now but could do so later to see if extending the tenure clock makes sense for them. She noted that departments are required to allow faculty members to develop a COVID impact statement if they wish to do so.

EVC Spiller reported that emergency gap research funding is being provided by her office and the Office of Research and Economic Development to support research impacts for early career faculty and to date, 50 awards have been granted to Assistant and Associate level faculty members. She pointed out that there is still some funding available, and anyone interested should apply for it.

EVC Spiller stated that with respect to teaching, her office has provided a number of resources particularly through the Center for Transformative Teaching (CTT) and she wanted to acknowledge the hard work done by Director Nick Monk and his team. Since last March 1,184 courses have been supported by the CTT; 1,433 instructors have participated in 62 workshops about online teaching; 721 faculty have attended 4 institutes on teaching; and 285 faculty, staff, and students have attended two CTT symposiums.

EVC Spiller reported that AVC Walker has convened a work group that considered the impact statement protocol. The group also developed guidance for DEOs on how to conduct annual performance evaluations for this year.

2.6 How will faculty statement on the impact of COVID on their work be used in their annual evaluation?

EVC Spiller stated that the guidance on the impact statement was developed by the work group convened by AVC Walker and it was expected that departments would create an opportunity for faculty to provide a statement about the impacts the pandemic has had on their work. She pointed out that the statement is optional for faculty members and noted that AVC Walker provided clear language here, specifying that a COVID impact statement should be used to provide context and not directly as part of the evaluation. As AVC Walker noted, this is an optional statement so using them in a formal way would be inappropriate. She reported that the work group also provided some guidelines on annual

evaluations such as the evaluation emphasis should remain on rewarding productivity without doing additional harm to those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic; reviews should focus more on qualitative assessment of substantial contributions rather than strictly qualitative measures. The trajectory of work prior to the pandemic needs to be considered, and formative goals setting in the context of current circumstances rather than a more traditional summative evaluations should also be considered.

Minter noted that the COVID impact statements would reside in the department files but questioned whether we would be missing an opportunity to see how this year has impacted faculty differently, based on gender or rank. EVC Spiller stated that she appreciates the professional perspective from which the question arises, but she thinks faculty members wrote their statements for an implied audience and an expectation of privacy. She noted that AVC Walker's work group is having conversations about the impact of this year and developing guidance and seeing some patterns that occurred.

2.7 New teaching evaluation guidelines and reducing the impact of teaching evaluations by students. Will the data from DFW grades be used? What evidence needs to be submitted to demonstrate the excellence in teaching?

EVC Spiller stated that prior to her arrival at UNL a taskforce was formed to implement standards for evaluations and teaching performance using multi-dimensional sources. She noted that a work group of the taskforce was charged with creating a student survey and the second work group was to look at the peer evaluation process. She reported that the peer evaluation component was delayed due to the pandemic, but the final report is expected this June. She noted that there will be some questions about implementation of the peer evaluation process which will need to be addressed.

EVC Spiller pointed out that student evaluations are a single component in the performance evaluation of instructors. She noted that there is a distinction between wanting, appropriately, to understand student evaluations as one component in a larger process and creating a system in which students have no direct voice in the evaluation of the courses that they take. She expressed the hope that we will arrive at the former of these, not the latter. She stated that she has been concerned to hear that some departments have misunderstood the current guidance and are saying that they are no longer allowed to consider student evaluations in the review process. She will be asking for clear guidance on how we can thoughtfully implement each of the components into the evaluation process. Hanrahan noted that there are some departments that may need to rethink their evaluation process. EVC Spiller noted that some departments started implementing the new teaching evaluation forms in 2019, and this is the first merit cycle in which the new teaching evaluation forms could be part of the new evaluation process. She reported that the taskforce will consider how to give departments clear and thoughtful guidance on the recommendations made by the taskforces.

Hanrahan asked if the taskforce report on teaching evaluations has been shared with the DEOs. EVC Spiller stated that the report was definitely shared with the Deans and with the Senate, and she noted that the DEOs should have received it as well.

EVC Spiller stated that there are no plans to use the DFW grade reports in the formal evaluations of teachers. The DFW grade analysis was developed to help departments to understand student development in a program. She pointed out that AVC Goodburn has stated that there are no plans to use DFW grade reports in the evaluation of teachers, and she is not in favor of using any grade distribution reports in evaluations. She also noted that AVC Walker has stressed that supervisors are responsible for considering a faculty member's ability to teach successfully. She noted that Professor Brassil has been providing customized data to the departments on DFW grades to see if there are specific students who are struggling with their performance.

2.8 Why must the delivery of courses revert to how they were delivered prior to the pandemic? Are there best practices that we can learn from how courses were delivered during the pandemic?

Chancellor Green pointed out that we will definitely learn from the experience of continuing to teach and conduct research during a pandemic and we should always be looking for the most innovative ways to do our work. He stated that we are a resident institution and students expect to have in-person classes. He pointed out that our trajectory for UNL is not to go strictly online but noted that there will be some evolution of courses here and across the country.

EVC Spiller stated that our delivery mode needs to align with our University priorities one of which is that we are a residential institution which is part of our identity. She noted that a second priority identified for us is to provide some online education. She stated that we do need to think through our online delivery, not only for free-standing online degree programs, but for individual courses that might benefit from online delivery. She pointed out that we need to determine who we are and what we want to do, and solid data is needed before changes in course delivery can be made. Weissling reported that offering asynchronous courses gives online students the additional option to integrate with a live class. She stated that we should consider how we can do more with what we have that would be cost effective but could also help close equity gaps. Chancellor Green stated that it may make very good sense to offer some courses synchronously, but we need to get back to the brunt of our delivery mode.

Hanrahan noted that this is the first year where he has not become ill in December and January because he is not being exposed to sick students. He stated that it would be helpful if faculty members were able to have the option of being able to work remotely if a student is sick.

Chancellor Green stated that we will continue to learn more about our experiences and what worked well during the pandemic. He noted that we are consistently hearing from students that they need to be back in the classroom.

2.9 Update on NU Calendar Proposal for 2021-2022 Academic Year

EVC Spiller reported that the proposed changes to the 2021-2022 academic calendar needs to be approved by the Board of Regents at its April 9th meeting. She wanted to thank Kolbe and AVC Walker for their work on figuring out the contract dates. She

noted that she would share more once we have official approval from the Board of Regents. Kolbe noted that the proposed calendar protects the length of time that faculty members are under contract to work.

2.10 Other Issues

Chancellor Green reported that the Big Ten has approved allowing local health departments to provide guidance for the number of spectators who can attend the remaining athletic sporting events. He stated that Athletics will be coming out with guidance for baseball, softball, and volleyball games.

Chancellor Green reported that there has been very significant progress in getting educators vaccinated in the state, particularly in Lincoln. He stated that he is very pleased with the progress and noted that we are ahead of the expectations for the number of vaccinations that have been administered.

Chancellor Green stated that planning has been occurring to see what the phasing would be to improve or to construct new buildings should the Capital Renewal Bill in the Legislature be approved. He noted that if passed, UNL could see \$230 million phased in between 2021-28.

Chancellor Green reported that there has been a welcome and noticeable increase in philanthropic funds coming to UNL in the past month. He noted that several major gifts have been made to the University to provide student support and scholarships and he expects this trend to continue.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 I Love NU Week

Buan reported that it is “I Love NU Week” at the State Capitol and supporters of the University can engage with state senators to share their stories of how the University has touched their lives. She noted that faculty and staff can participate in the event which is being held virtually this year.

3.2 Summer Programs

Buan reported that summer programs will be allowed provided that the programs and activities follow the health guidelines and safety protocols. She stated that information on summer events can be found at <https://covid19.unl.edu/summer-event-guidelines>.

3.3 Screening of the Film Minari

Buan stated that given the concern people have about recent attacks across the country against Asians, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, she wanted to inform people that the Academy Award nominated film Minari will be shown at the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center from now until April 1. She stated that the film is about a Korean-American family that moves to a tiny Arkansas farm in search of their own American dream. She reported that there will also be a Dish It Up event on March 25 which will be sponsored by the Asian Community and Cultural Center and OASIS. She noted that this is open to the UNL community.

3.4 NCAA Concerns Over the Lack of Equipment for Female Athletes

Buan stated that she contacted Professor Blankley, Chair of the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee, to inquire whether women athletes have equal access to equipment and dining facilities at UNL. She noted that Professor Blankley responded confirming that all of our student athletes have access to equipment, training and dining facilities. Professor Blankley pointed out that Athletics annually conducts investigations to make improvements in Athletics.

4.0 Approval of March 16, 2021 Minutes

Buan asked if there were any further revisions to the minutes. Hearing none she declared the minutes approved by acclamation.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Conduct Committee Update (Minter)

Minter reported that she chaired a committee last year which was tasked with developing a Code of Conduct for faculty members. She stated that the Code includes premises and commitments that are articulated in the Regents Bylaws and in other University documents. She noted that the committee looked at conduct statements from the other Big Ten universities but ultimately liked the one that is used by the University of California. She pointed out that we were able to get permission from the University of California to use the statement, but it has been modified to fit our own culture here at UNL. She reported that the statement was brought to the Executive Committee last June and then shared with the Office of Research and Economic Development to ensure that the research misconduct information contained in the statement was accurate. She stated that the statement was also shared with the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee who felt that the Code needed to reflect the proposed revisions to the Regents Bylaws. She stated that once the Board approves the revisions to the Bylaws the Academic Rights & Responsibilities language in the Code will need to be revised and the Code will need to be reviewed by the committee that worked on it. Once it is ready for the Executive Committee, she stated that she would write a cover memo describing the drafting and revision process for the Executive Committee.

5.2 Faculty Senate Handbook

Buan asked the Executive Committee to please review the handbook and make comments which will be forwarded to Franco Cruz for review.

5.3 List of Recommended Redress to Remove AAUP Censure

Buan reported that she will put a draft of the list in Box for the Executive Committee to review and edit.

5.4 Syllabus Template from Director Monk, CTT

Buan reported that she contacted Director Monk and AVC Goodburn to provide the Executive Committee's suggested changes to the syllabus template. She noted that she also conveyed the Committee's feeling to have any policies not directly related to the course moved to a separate Canvas module for all students and instructors in addition to

appearing on University websites. She stated that AVC Goodburn and Director Monk are willing to do what the Senate wants and if the Senate approves the change, a module could be set up for the fall semester.

Woodman noted that the course syllabus is about a contract between the course instructor and the students. Kolbe stated that the course syllabus needs to go back to what its original intent is and that is to inform students about the course expectations and requirements. Weissling pointed out that having a module would not do any good unless the college curriculum committees allow for the use of the module in place of the many syllabus requirements they have. She asked if the Faculty Senate would need to vote on the syllabus policy to revise it. Griffin stated that the Senate would need to vote on any revisions to the policy.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Faculty Senate Statement Supporting Asian and AAPI Groups

Buan asked the Executive Committee if it wanted to write a statement of support for Asian and Asian American and Pacific Islanders. The Committee unanimously agreed to write a letter of support.

6.2 Proposal to Amend the Faculty Senate Bylaws

Buan noted that Hanrahan suggested revisions to the Senate Bylaws lengthening the term of the Senate President until after the May commencement ceremonies in order to let the outgoing President to attend commencement and to record a speech for the event. Woodman pointed out that there is no policy requiring the new Senate President to attend commencement, it is only a tradition and the tradition could be changed so the new Past President attends the ceremony. The Executive Committee agreed.

The motion was indefinitely tabled.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, March 30, 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.