

UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
November 2, 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 Update

President Kolbe reported that the County Health Department may be shifting some of the booster vaccine clinic dates depending on the FDA's approval of providing the vaccine to children in the 5-11 age group. He noted that providing the vaccines to the children will take precedent over the booster shots to provide the children some protection.

2.2 Executive Vice Chancellor Search Update

President Kolbe noted that he is co-chairing the search committee with Dean Sherri Jones of the College of Education and Human Sciences. He reported that this is an accelerated internal search with the goal to have a new EVC by January 1. He stated that the application due date is November 19.

2.3 Committee to Review Guidelines for Faculty Evaluations

President Kolbe reported that a committee is being formed to review the [Guidelines for Faculty Evaluations](#) which can be found on the EVC's website. He noted that the document is outdated and needs to be revised and he is seeking names of additional faculty members to serve on the committee.

3.0 Approval of October 5, 2021 Minutes

President Kolbe asked if there were any revisions to the minutes. Hearing none he asked for approval of the minutes. Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics, moved for approval of the minutes. Motion seconded by Professor Cupp, Animal Science and approved by the Faculty Senate.

4.0 Committees

4.1 Research Council (Professor Bovaird)

Professor Bovaird reported that the primary responsibility of the Research Council is to delegate research funding for faculty members. He noted that this past year the number of applications for funding was low in comparison to previous years and the Council discussed the reason for the decrease including whether the impacts of Covid may have contributed to fewer applications.

Professor Bovaird stated that the Council is continuing to evaluate the efficacy of the proposal review process and make improvements, and to examine the assessment and ranking procedures in the grant review process. He also noted that the Council continues to work on how to improve research and scholarly contributions at UNL and faculty mentoring. Professor Weissling, Special Education and Communication Disorders, suggested that better advertisement of the available funds and clarity of the application process might be helpful to increase the number of applications. Professor Bovaird agreed and pointed out that typically the total amount of funds awarded is less than \$250,000 but this figure can fluctuate depending on the number of applications. He noted that there is a quality threshold for the applications so not everyone receives funding just because they applied for it.

4.2 Faculty Senate Diversity and Inclusion Committee

President Kolbe reported that the Committee report will be presented at the December 7 meeting.

4.3 University Commencement and Recognition Committee (Professor Gorman)

Professor Gorman, Classics & Religious Studies, reported that the 2020 May, August, and December commencements occurred completely online. He noted that the graduating students all received a Go Big Red graduation celebration box, and every student had the opportunity to submit a slide of themselves that was included on the graduation website. He pointed out that the online ceremonies were successful, and the administration made sure that the ceremonies were handled as seriously as the in-person ceremonies. He noted that any 2020 graduate is welcome to come back to any commencement ceremony in the future to walk through the ceremony.

Professor Gorman reported that this May the ceremonies were once again held in person. He stated that the doctoral hooding and master's degree ceremony was held in the Pinnacle Bank Arena and the two undergraduate ceremonies were held in Memorial Stadium. He pointed out that there were considerable costs associated with conducting the ceremonies in the Stadium and even though the afternoon ceremony had to be moved to an earlier time due to impending inclement weather, everyone seemed to have attended. He noted that the December graduation ceremony will be held in person this year.

President-Elect Minter stated that she has really appreciated this committee and its leadership over the years for all of the work that it does. President Kolbe noted that this is an important committee and encouraged faculty members to attend the graduation ceremonies. Past President Buan reported that she attended the undergraduate ceremony, and it was obvious that the efforts to make it successful were a labor of love and it was an incredibly special event which meant so much to the students. Professor Weissling noted that one of her students participated in an online graduation ceremony and the family was very appreciative that they could observe it remotely. She did want to convey a point made by a graduating student that when the speakers are all superstars it can make the student feel that they will not be successful if they don't reach that kind of status, and she suggested having alumni that are teachers or doctors speak at the ceremonies. Professor Gorman stated that this is a good point and noted that the August commencement ceremony usually has a faculty member as the guest speaker, but he would convey the idea to the committee.

President Kolbe asked when the application is due for faculty to attend the December graduation. Professor Gorman stated that he would find out this information and pass it along.

4.4 Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee (Past President Buan)

Past President Buan reported that she is serving as chair of the committee which is responsible for advising the Chancellor on matters affecting faculty salaries. She noted that each year the FCAC compares faculty salaries to see if there are salary inequities and the committee worked with EVC Spiller to develop an annual report from each college assessing salary equity based on faculty role, gender, and market competitiveness. She pointed out that with the advent of more institutional data analytics, the FCAC has been revising the data that the committee would review.

Past President Buan stated that the key recommendations from the FCAC are to address salary compression and inequities, to monitor administrative FTE's noting the faculty FTE has remained flat over a five-year period which is a historical trend across the country, and to improve Lecturer salaries and develop a path to promotion based on the recommendations made by the College of Arts and Sciences' ad hoc committee on Lecturers. She stated that the FCAC would also advocate for Central Administration to adjust the mileage rate to the federal level.

Professor Zhu, Supply Chain Management and Analytics, noted that 63% of tenure line faculty received a salary increase of approximately 6.8%. He asked how this was determined and whether the Faculty Senate had any input into the raise distribution. Past President Buan stated that the only time faculty had input into the process was during the annual evaluation of faculty members and it is up to the department chairs and deans to decide how the yearly merit raises are rewarded. She reported that the FCAC will be asking for more clarity about the process of the recent salary

increases which was funded by Central Administration. She noted that benchmarking comparisons with our peer institutions was used, and the salaries in some units are competitive with our peers while other units are well below our peers.

Professor Woodman, School of Biological Sciences, noted that the report stated that the FCAC has requested 10 years of data on Professors of Practice and asked whether the funds for these positions are different from the funds for tenure line faculty members. Past President Buan stated that recently the Executive Vice Chancellor's office provided \$500,000 to improve Lecturer salaries, but no path to promotion has yet been established. She reminded the Senate that the funding to increase salaries for tenure line faculty was designated by President Carter. Professor Woodman asked if funding allocated to departments and colleges is broken down into non-tenure track and tenure line positions and whether non-tenure track faculty are ranked separately from tenure track faculty. Past President Buan stated that it is up to each unit as to how it spends their funds for instruction, but she is aware that there are some conversations with the Deans about how instructional funds should be used. She noted that some units have more clear guideline metrics and there are college specific guidelines for evaluations so there is a great deal of local variability in how salary increases are distributed. Professor Woodman stated that in 2017 when he chaired the FCAC the information on non-tenure track faculty comparisons was requested but never received, and he asked if there is a realistic chance that this information would be made available. Past President Buan stated that when the Committee met last week it was her understanding that data across all ranks of faculty would be requested.

Professor Lewis, Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education, pointed out that salary compression and gender equity issues have frequently occurred over time and noted that previous Senate President Purcell worked hard on addressing this issue, particularly in IANR. She stated that we don't have collective bargaining power like UNO and UNK have and there can be significant variance in faculty salaries here. Past President Buan pointed out that diversity equity data has been a part of the data that the FCAC has looked at for many years. Professor Weissling asked if there are any gender differences among the ranks. She noted that there appears to be more female Lecturers and suggested that there could be some equity issues. Past President Buan stated that the FCAC has absolutely looked at these issues. She noted that historically there have been more women and under-represented people in the Lecturer position. She stated that the data that the FCAC receives includes some ethnicity data. She noted that the [NU Fact Book](#) provides data and lists administrative and faculty information that Senators might want to review. Professor Cupp pointed out that there are less women at the full professor level. Past President Buan stated that this is historical as well, and while we recruit many women at the lower level, they haven't been promoted as quickly as male faculty members.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 New Faculty Senate Syllabus Policy and Template

President Kolbe noted that last month the Faculty Senate approved revisions to the syllabus policy and created a template for faculty to use if they wish. He noted that it can take time for all the administrative units to incorporate the revisions in their processes. Professor Sollars, Veterinary & Biomedical Sciences, stated that the link to the resources that is provided in the revised syllabus policy is active and faculty are welcome to use the link in their syllabus and to encourage students to look at the available resources. Professor Weissling asked if this information can be sent to all faculty members for next semester. Professor Sollars stated that the information can be put in [Teacher Connect](#) which provides a lot of information for faculty members.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Presentation and Report on IChange Action Plans (Past President Buan)

Past President Buan reported that for the past couple of years the Institutional Change towards Inclusive Excellence, Diversity, and Teaching (IChange) team has been working with the Deans and AVC Walker and VC Barker on a project to increase inclusive excellence and diversity in the STEM fields. She noted that the project is an initiative of the Association of Public and Land-grant

Universities (APLU) that is funded through the NSF project called ASPIRE.

Past President Buan noted that when looking at faculty demographics the IChange team saw trends with training and promoting diverse faculty and noted that while the initial efforts were to make improvements in the STEM fields, the hope is that any policies and practices would become institution wide. She pointed out that the women in STEM initiative was quite successful with the hiring of more women and promotion of some women to a chair or head position.

Past President Buan reported that three of the aims in the N2025 Plan are closely related to the IChange efforts. She noted that with the ASPIRE framework the team is working with other institutions to share and identify best practices, and the framework also looks at the outreach and hiring efforts across the institutions and then looks at what the institutions are doing to retain faculty. She stated that the ASPIRE grant has a set process that helps walk an institution through the process, including the institution's team attending seminars and developing what metrics are important for assessment and evaluation. She pointed out that the administration has spearheaded the effort which demonstrates that the administration cares about diversity in the faculty ranks.

Past President Buan stated that current efforts include looking to expand and improve search committee training. She noted that a Qualtrics survey has been developed addressing recent events and campus initiatives related to campus climate and diversity, recruitment of new faculty members, transition period between the time someone is hired and starting employment, and retention. She asked that Senators please share the survey with their colleagues and encourage them to complete it. She noted that the IChange team is seeking faculty member's input and pointed out that comments are also being sought from non-STEM fields, including the arts and humanities which have great ideas regarding recruitment and retention. She pointed out that the survey is anonymous and if anyone is interested in becoming more engaged with IChange, they should contact AVC Walker's office.

Past President Buan stated that first a self-assessment was conducted looking at what our existing efforts are to increase diversity and inclusiveness in STEM faculty and what other challenges or opportunities there are for diversifying faculty. She noted that the IChange team feels that we need to do greater outreach and to track analytics for how we recruit faculty. She stated that in looking at the data that is currently available we can see how diverse our faculty is and what the campus climate is like for underrepresented faculty.

Past President Buan stated that a perennial challenge for faculty and staff is to make all of our spaces accessible for those with physical challenges. She noted that prioritizing this challenge would go a long way in helping us to diversify our faculty. She stated that the IChange team wants faculty to let them know if there are things that can be done on campus to improve diversity and inclusiveness and what changes would be the most impactful. She stated that four themes have been identified: hiring and onboarding practices, faculty evaluations, data collection and assessment, and retention of diverse faculty, and the team wants to know which of these themes should be prioritized.

Past President Buan noted that it may seem like these kinds of efforts are only done when the campus has extra funding, but she pointed out that the APLU/ASPIRE initiative does not have funding associated with it, but it provides institutions the ability to figure out how they can make improvements to making their faculty more diverse which is consistent with our N2025 plan.

President Kolbe thanked Past President Buan for her report and the work that she and the other members of the IChange team are doing. Professor Nixon, Extension Engagement Zone 1, asked if the slide presentation can be shared with the Senators. Past President Buan stated that she would be happy to provide the presentation and will send it out in an email to the Senators.

6.2 Open Mic

Professor Woodman noted that he served as the co-chair on the CAS taskforce dealing with the lack of opportunity and poor salaries for Lecturers and a report with recommendations was submitted to Dean Button who submitted it to EVC Spiller. He noted that President Carter designated \$10 million over a two-year period to improve tenure line faculty salaries, but funds were not provided for non-tenure track faculty members. He pointed out that the FCAC has not received data yet on salary inequities for non-tenure track faculty members and he hopes the administration is listening to the people at the bottom end of the spectrum, especially the Lecturers, and he hopes that salary increases for non-tenure track faculty members will not be ignored. Professor Lippman, Classics and Religious Studies, agreed and stated that he would like to hear the rationale from administration of why the non-tenure track faculty members were excluded from receiving salary increases through the designated funds.

Professor Sollars noted that a survey was sent out to every instructor who has taught an ACE course to gauge their value of ACE. She pointed out that instructors can respond anonymously. She asked the Senators to encourage faculty members to respond to the survey, particularly encouraging those faculty members who teach many ACE courses.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:36 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, December 7, 2021, at 2:30 p.m. via Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Kelli Herstein, Secretary.