

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bearnes, Billesbach, Buan, Gay, Kolbe, Krehbiel, Minter, Woodman, Zuckerman

Absent: Baesu, Bearnes, Eklund, Herstein, Weissling

Date: Tuesday, October 19, 2021

Location: 201 Canfield Administration Building

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 (*Kolbe*)

Kolbe called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

2.0 EVC Spiller

2.1 Updating the Evaluation of Faculty Guidelines Document

EVC Spiller stated that the last time the document was revised was in 2001 and she appreciates the Executive Committee asking for it to be updated. She noted that she will be meeting with AVC Walker to get a full briefing about this effort. She suggested that there be a working group of Associate Deans, a few DEOs, representatives from the Faculty Senate, and representatives from Extension. She noted the working group can make needed updates and go through a discovery process to see if there are some procedures that are not working correctly.

2.2 Changing Apportionments of Responsibilities to More Accurately Reflect the Work of a Faculty Member

EVC Spiller noted that this issue was raised during the Executive Committee/Administrators retreat and she started talking with AVC Walker about it after the retreat. She stated that one of the first discussions revolved around the annual evaluation and the way in which different units define what the highest level of performance is, but she thinks we should have a similar taxonomy across the campus for the evaluations. She stated that there may be opportunities to clarify and revise some things but noted that AVC Walker would probably like to talk with the Executive Committee first.

EVC Spiller pointed out that there is a distinction between workload apportionment and course load apportionment. She noted that some units have a robust system for dealing with these different apportionments but there needs to be a way to recognize and acknowledge when a person goes beyond the boundaries of their apportionments. Billesbach stated that confusion comes in when there is a disconnect between workload and expectations. He noted that he used to serve on graduate committees and guest lecture in classes but when he was evaluated at the end of the year, he did not get recognized for this additional work that he did. EVC Spiller stated that there should be

the opportunity for the faculty member to have a meaningful conversation about this with their supervisor, and if not, it is a problem.

Woodman pointed out that Regents Bylaw 4.3 refers to the apportionment of a faculty member and if there is a disagreement about the apportionment there is a process that is to be followed. He noted that people have seasons in their careers when they may be more productive in research, teaching, or service and their apportionments should reflect these changes. EVC Spiller stated that this is a point well taken and she believes AVC Walker is highly cognizant of the discussions that should occur between the faculty member and the supervisor. She stated that she believes there is the desire to robustly capture things that may not get said in the conversations. Kolbe pointed out that this becomes more important as we go forward with the Grand Challenges and it needs to be codified how faculty members are evaluated, especially for those involved in interdisciplinary programs and those with joint appointments. Zuckerman stated that having common and shared language as people get evaluated and prepare for tenure would allow better conversations to occur and would allow a better situation for people to advocate for themselves.

Kolbe stated that it would be good to get this issue resolved because he knows of some DEOs that don't adhere to the practice of having discussions with their faculty members during the evaluation process. EVC Spiller noted that she thinks some DEOs would appreciate the guidance. Billesbach pointed out that there needs to be a balance between existing contracts and new contracts. EVC Spiller agreed and stated more so for the existing contract.

2.3 How do you envision the transition of current EVC initiatives and projects after you step down from your responsibilities?

EVC Spiller provided a summary of the projects that are either at the completion stage or moving forward in time:

- Budget cuts due to the Covid pandemic. She developed and oversaw the budget allocation and budget cutting process for the colleges and departments and noted that because the cuts span over a three-year period it is technically ongoing. She stated that the summer and fall of 2020 was devoted to having substantive discussions about the cuts and the Academic Planning Committee, of which she is a member, reviewed and made recommendations on the proposed cuts which were accepted by the Chancellor in December and implementation of the first phase of the budget cuts began in January 2021. She pointed out that the impacts of the cuts showed up in the hiring plans for the colleges with decreases in hiring faculty members. She stated that her office provided a significant amount of cashflow to minimize the cuts in units.
- Co-chaired Covid Advisory Taskforce. EVC Spiller reported that the insights from this group provided a number of recommendations pertaining to the infrastructure and continued operation of the campus to the Chancellor. She stated that the Taskforce developed a plan to provide successful and safe delivery of residential education during the spring and summer of 2020. She noted that the Husker Starter Package was offered

during the summer, graduate education and opportunities continued to be provided in the fall, two 3-week interim sessions were provided for students in December and January, the instructional continuity policy was developed, the academic calendar for 2021-2022 was integrated across each of the system campuses and plans for having in person classes and mask requirements for fall 2021 were developed.

- Lecturer Compensation Package. EVC Spiller reported that this was a 25-year issue that was on her desk when she arrived at UNL. She noted that a report by an ad hoc committee in the College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) was generated and it listed a number of recommendations to improve the compensation for Lecturers. She stated that she worked with Dean Button to address the issue, but it also needs to be addressed with the other colleges that have significant Lecturer appointments. She stated that her office provided \$500,000 to improve Lecturer salaries and the average compensation increase was 16%. She noted that some Lecturers were also moved to a Professor of Practice position and reported stated that pay raises went into effect September 1, and an annual review process that the Deans are responsible for conducting each year is now in place as well as an approval process for new contract hires.

EVC Spiller stated that it may be of institutional value to have a longer conversation about the Professor of Practice ranks. She pointed out that some of the Professors of Practice have work experience in a field, while others have the rank of pedagogy experts in teaching, and both of these are needed, but in conversations with the colleges it was clear that there is great variance with how these positions are used.

- Faculty Salary Competitiveness. EVC Spiller reported that this was another long-standing problem that needed to be addressed and she noted that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Faculty Senate were influential in getting the issue considered by Central Administration. She stated that an analysis salary gap was conducted to look at tenure line faculty salaries in comparison with our peers. She noted that President Carter has committed \$10 million divided over a two-year period to address the salary gaps. She stated that it will become clear that we are bridging the gap for many tenure link faculty members.

Billesbach noted that the University talks about excellence and how we have to be outstanding, yet we strive to be mediocre in our salaries. EVC Spiller noted that one of the long-term consequences of this initiative is that it could help in retaining people. She stated that a significant amount of money has been put to try to retain people, but this has not always been successful. She stated that the administration has been consistent with the deans that achieved performance is essential and we have some benchmark data of what is considered average performance.

Billesbach asked if the peer group for faculty is different than the peer group for administrators. EVC Spiller reported that the peer group is the same. She stated that Deans are provided with peer salaries as well as a survey by Oklahoma State University which reviews the salaries of hundreds of institutions and is a wider data set that includes the high and low salaries and not just the averages.

Woodman stated that he is disappointed to hear that Professors of Practice are not going to be included in the salary adjustments and noted that this seems like a way to separate the faculty and create division. He asked if she could justify why they are not included given that they have been doing a huge amount of additional work due to the pandemic. EVC Spiller pointed out that the funding was determined by President Carter.

- Incentive-Based Budget Model. EVC Spiller stated that as we lean into the incentive-based budget model, annual college meetings will be created that will review how the funds are aligned with the resources in association with the N2025 plan and it is an opportunity for cross-college collaborations and for developing these collaborations through the available funds. She reported that undergraduate targets by major could be developed, annual evaluations of remissions and effectiveness of student outcomes would be transparent, and an annual reporting from business and finance to the academic colleges will allow them to understand whether or not the budget actually aligns with real time revenue. She stated that there will also be annual reporting of the college resources to the Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee and the APC.

- Curricular Innovation. EVC Spiller reported that guidelines are being developed for the administration of shared academic programs which will create a robust governance process to allow faculty to develop shared programs. She noted that these proposed shared programs will need to go to the APC for approval.

- One Tuition Model. EVC Spiller stated that the administration is working with ASUN to develop and implement a one tuition model which won't impact students for this year but could impact next year's enrollment. She stated that this is an initiative that is still in progress.

- Learning Groups. EVC Spiller stated that the idea to create learning groups rather than learning communities arises from the recognition that students feel that learning communities are too limited. She noted that also being considered is that an academic degree program might not be the only way for students to get through their college career. She stated that learning communities that are well done often show greater student success. She reported that this is another initiative that is in progress.

- Research Data Work Group. EVC Spiller reported that this work group is making sure that we get a definition of research data that accurately reflects the particular research profiles of UNL which could then be released system-wide and could further collaboration with others.

- International Recruitment. EVC Spiller stated that a strategic plan for international recruitment is being developed and she has asked AVC Josh Davis and AVC Patrick Winter to collaborate on this project. She pointed out that we need to have our own strategy to recruit international students and noted that this would be a three-five-year effort. Buan asked if this would include recruitment for graduate students and

post docs. EVC Spiller stated that graduate students and post docs would be absolutely included in the strategy plan.

- University Academic Calendar. EVC Spiller stated that this is a Central Administration initiative to develop a system-wide calendar that each of the campuses would follow. She noted that this year's academic calendar is a trial period to see how well a system-wide calendar would work.

- Graduate Faculty and Faculty Professional Status. EVC Spiller stated that this is an initiative that is being worked on at UNL and will go to the Central Administration level for consideration. She noted that there needs to be discussion about how faculty members who do not meet the traditional criteria for Graduate status can still teach some graduate courses, and there will be more substantive discussion about the Professors of Practice rank in association with the Graduate Faculty status. She stated that there would be greater articulation of the possibilities within the rank, and more than likely increased compensation would be provided. She noted that instructions have been given to the Deans to make sure they are reviewing salaries at the Professor of Practice levels and there will be discussion about the categories in the future.

2.4 As we implement the new budget model (with uncertain impacts for interdisciplinary work)—and given that we have institutional goals for incentivizing interdisciplinary work—what suggestions do you have for facilitating more cooperation between units in IANR and Academic Affairs? (For example, it seems like there are important federal initiatives coming out of the Biden administration that hold promise for interdisciplinary research on our campus if we build some synergy between units across both campuses.)

EVC Spiller stated that she is strongly supportive of interdisciplinary courses and programs. She thinks that the modular template for shared programs in the incentive-based budget model is designed to let the revenue from one source be disbursed to cover the costs in other areas. She stated that she hopes the Chancellor's strategic fund is designed to provide funding for new multi-disciplinary programs for a year and VC Wilhelm is very attuned to interdisciplinary research. She noted that shared programs with the other campuses allows faculty to work together which could generate more grant proposals to be submitted for funding. She pointed out that the reality is that there are many opportunities for faculty to collaborate with others.

Billesbach stated that he believes the question is whether faculty members can get the support through the incentive-based budget model to have interdisciplinary programs. EVC Spiller stated that there is a version in the incentive-based budget model which allows for shared academic programs and suggested that Professor Bloom speak to the Executive Committee about it. She noted that recently the budget model was tweaked to bring university-wide research centers together to create a primary unit which means they will function in a shared budget unit. She stated that we want to prioritize cross-disciplinary research and ORED was successful in getting funds for interdisciplinary research that achieve the strategic goals.

Krehbiel asked how faculty get credit for doing interdisciplinary work. Buan pointed out that this is a critical question because there needs to be incentives for faculty members to be engaged in interdisciplinary work and they need to have the space to do it. Krehbiel noted that interdisciplinary work can take much longer to see results. EVC Spiller stated that these are the right questions to be asking and she noted that some universities have been very agile in how they address these issues. She stated that there are best practices at other universities that we can certainly learn from.

Buan asked when a research center should become a department in a college or when should it be discontinued. EVC Spiller stated that this is very complicated but worth thinking about. She noted that the question is whether it is an academic center, a research center, or an outreach center and once you know what kind of center you have, it should align with what it fits in. She stated that research centers typically have shared facilities and pointed out that centers are not intended to be in existence forever, but the budget model should allow consideration of whether a center should be retained. She stated that Professor Bloom can discuss the vision of what the ongoing review process for centers should be. She noted that the budget model did not change the requirement that centers needed be reviewed and doesn't undermine the discussion of evaluation, but the budget model does allow better clarification on how the funds are used for centers.

3.0 University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUC) Questions and Concerns (Professor Hanrahan)

Hanrahan noted that he serves on the UUC as the Senate President's appointee and wanted to bring some concerns the Committee has to the Executive Committee. He reported that with the implementation of the incentive-based budget model the Senate has said that the UUC needed to police the duplication of courses to ensure that departments and colleges were not creating courses just to increase their enrollment. He pointed out that there are many courses that are very similar but are designed specifically for a particular discipline.

Hanrahan asked what the criteria for duplication are, does duplication apply to all level of courses or just some levels, and what kind of information should be included on the course syllabus that would indicate if a course is a duplicate. He stated that the UUC would like the Senate Syllabus Policy to require that the learning objectives and prerequisites for a course must be on the course syllabus.

Kolbe noted that he has a class that was copied by another college, but his course is only open for majors in theatre and film. Minter stated that this information needs to be shared with the UUC. Hanrahan stated that the course syllabus is usually what is submitted to the UUC. Griffin recalled that a form needs to be submitted along with the course syllabus whenever there is a request for a new course. She suggested that the questions be added there. Woodman pointed out that the Faculty Senate just approved revisions to the Syllabus Policy to remove unnecessary information and most syllabi already include the learning objectives for the course. Buan suggested that the form could ask if the course is an overlap of an existing course, and Billesbach suggested adding what the prerequisites of the course are and what program(s) it satisfies. Minter

suggested also asking if the skill learned is crucial, what courses are students currently taking to get the skill.

Hanrahan asked who would be responsible for checking to see if a course is a duplicate. Woodman pointed out that each of the academic colleges has a representative on the UUCC and that person should defend their college if they have a similar course that is being offered.

Buan asked if the duplication of courses is occurring more at the 100 and 200 level courses or the 300 and 400 level courses. Hanrahan reported that there are several courses at the 300 and 400 level that appear to be very similar to existing courses. Buan pointed out that the 300 and 400 level courses may offer specialization in a particular discipline and suggested that the 100 and 200 level courses should be looked at more carefully for duplication while the 300 and 400 level courses should be provided with more flexibility. Minter suggested that there could be some sign-off from units with similar courses. Hanrahan stated that the person submitting the form could be responsible for searching to see if there are similar courses already in existence and providing a justification for any similarities.

Woodman noted that there are still a lot of courses on record that have not been taught in many years. Hanrahan reported that before the new budget model was implemented many of the colleges went through and removed many of the dead courses and the UUCC is still looking for more of them.

Hanrahan stated that he would take the suggestions back to the UUCC.

4.0 Announcements

4.1 Meetings with EVC Spiller

Kolbe reported that he is continuing to meet regularly with EVC Spiller and will do so until she steps down from her responsibilities.

4.2 Search Committee for EVC

Kolbe reported that the EVC search committee will be meeting with the Chancellor to discuss the search effort.

5.0 Approval of October 12, 2021 Minutes

Kolbe asked if there were any revisions to the minutes, hearing none he asked for approval. Buan moved to approve the revised minutes. Motion seconded by Minter and approved by the Executive Committee.

6.0 Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was discussed.

7.0 New Business

No new business was discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, October 26, 2021, at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in the City Campus Union, Chimney Rock Room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Kelli Herstein, Secretary.