

UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
September 7, 2021
Presidents Steve Kolbe, Deb Minter and Nicole Buan, Presiding
East Campus Union, Great Plains Room

1.0 Call to Order

President Kolbe called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

2.1 Faculty Senate Fall Meetings

President Kolbe reported that today's meeting is the singular meeting that will be in person this fall semester. He stated that the remainder of the Senate meetings will be conducted via Zoom until further notice.

3.0 Presentation of Louise Pound-George Howard Distinguished Career Awards

Past President Buan presented the Louise Pound-George Howard Distinguished Career Award to the following: 2020 Award to Dr. Deb Hamernik, 2021 Awards to Dr. Carol Levin and Dr. Al Steckelberg.

4.0 Presentation of the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award

President Kolbe presented the 2021 James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award to Dr. Christina Falci and to Dr. Kevin Hanrahan.

5.0 Chancellor Green

Chancellor Green welcomed back the Faculty Senate and noted that it was great to see everyone in person. He stated that he wanted to recognize and appreciate the work of the Pound-Howard Award winners and stated that it was great to see Dr. Hamernik, who he worked with over the years, and thanked her and Dr. Levin and Dr. Steckelberg for their tremendous contributions to the University of many years. He also wanted to acknowledge the hard work of Dr. Falci and Dr. Hanrahan to support academic freedom and for winning the prestigious James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award.

Chancellor Green reported that in May we had the largest single graduating class in the history of the university with just under 3600 degrees awarded. He noted that approximately 800 of these students took courses during the winterim session allowing many to graduate earlier than they had originally anticipated. He pointed out that as a result, the early graduation has impacted our enrollment numbers for this fall. He stated that at the August commencement ceremony some students who graduated in 2020 were able to come back to campus and participate in the commencement ceremony and this will occur again in December and May 2022. He reported that the same was true for the doctoral hooding ceremony and we were given the opportunity to speak to the 2020 doctoral graduates to learn what they are now doing. He stated that he was very impressed with the various sectors where our doctoral alumni are working which include post doc positions, faculty positions, and positions in industry.

Chancellor Green stated that last Tuesday, August 31 was the 6-day census date and Central Administration will be releasing the figures to the public tomorrow. He noted that in overall enrollment UNL is down 2.7%, or approximately 700 students, but as he pointed out earlier, this also reflects the high number of graduates in May. He noted that the freshman class enrollment was essentially flat with the same number of students as in 2019 and 2020. He stated that we continue to see a decline in international enrollment but reported that 25% of our freshmen class are first-generation students and our minority enrollment diversity enrollment held steady. He stated that while we are down in out-of-state students, we saw slightly more Nebraska resident students. He noted that the College of Architecture had the largest increase in enrollment, and the Hixson-Lied

College of Fine and Performing Arts and the College of Engineering also saw increases. He reported that the administration is hard at work looking at a one-tuition model and how it could be implemented next year.

Chancellor Green noted that the University was very optimistic when the vaccines became available, and our community showed a good vaccination rate. However, the surge in the Delta variant of the Covid virus has required us to be vigilant again resulting in the decision to have a re-entry test to the campus. He stated that over 28,000 tests were conducted before the start of the fall semester, and he wanted to praise the work of those who have helped to conduct and process these tests. He noted that it has been a tremendous and exhausting amount of work. He reported that the testing did show an increased positivity rate for the campus over the first couple of weeks, but we are starting to now see a decline. He reported that 82% of faculty have registered that they received the vaccination, 75% of staff, and 70% of the students have registered. He stated that no student has required hospitalization and there have been a few clusters of cases, but we are managing these with students being quarantined in specific locations.

Chancellor Green reported that, like many organizations and businesses, we are experiencing a shortage of staff, particularly in the dining halls and at the football games concessions which rely heavily on student workers.

Chancellor Green noted that the campus is seeing some major progress in the construction of buildings on campus. He reported that Mabel Lee Hall is on track and the Scott Engineering building is nearing its final year of construction. He stated that the Kiewit Engineering building is underway as is the renovations to the Stadium but reported that due to the cost of materials for construction, additional funds had to be raised for some of the buildings. He stated that the Scarlet Hotel on Nebraska Innovation Campus is on track for completion and scheduled to open later this year. He stated that with the deferred maintenance fund approved by the Legislature the Westbrook Music Building, Architecture Hall, Kimball Hall, Andrews Hall, Bessey Hall, and Morrill Hall will either be replaced or renovated, and these proposals will be going to the Board of Regents for approval. He stated that plans are underway for the redevelopment of the Textron site located on Vine Street.

Chancellor Green noted that during the last two weeks there has been great adversity on campus with report of alleged sexual assaults that and the ensuing protests which have occurred by students, community members and others. He stated that this is a problem nationally and we are working hard to prevent sexual misconduct on our campus. He reported that there is due process involved in the case that must be complied with due to federal regulations and the law. He pointed out that the campus has been involved in a lot of work over the past three years to try to prevent sexual misconduct and noted that sexual misconduct issues were raised by the "Dear UNL" group and since then the Collaborative on Sexual Misconduct was created with over 75 faculty/staff/students involved. He reported that in October 2020 the Collaborative filed a report which included an extensive list of recommendations. Since then, 15 recommendations have been adopted, 17 are being further developed for implementation, and 3 are under legal review. He pointed out that mandatory training in sexual misconduct is now required for all members of the campus community and the training rolled out in the spring of 2021, although he is hearing some concerns that it is not optimal training due in part to the online nature of it. As a result, he reported that he has met with student government leaders and there was discussion about taking action to immediately develop live training that would be peer mentored and delivered throughout the year. He noted that the campus has also committed to increased support for survivors by doubling our staff and we have committed to hiring a director of education to prevent sexual misconduct. He stated that the University continues to take this issue very seriously and noted that we need to do more and to do it better. He stated that he will be announcing the permanent appoint of the Chancellor's Commission to Prevent Sexual Misconduct and members will be notified soon.

Chancellor Green noted that a resolution to prohibit critical race theory teaching was presented to

the Board of Regents in August, but it failed, and the administration of all four campuses and Central Administration made it clear that they did not support the resolution. He pointed out that he is so proud of our campuses for speaking against the resolution and for those who stood up and spoke about the issue at the Board meeting. He stated that our co-leaders for the Journey Toward Anti-Racism and Racial Equity continue to do very strong work and are advising the efforts to address anti-racism and racial equity. He reported that he is creating the UNL Native American and Indigenous Advisory Board and the first meeting will occur on October 9th, in advance of Indigenous People's Day (October 11th).

Chancellor Green stated that there will be gatherings soon for people to talk about the Grand Challenges themes and how we can move forward on them. He stated that \$40 million will be available over the next four years (\$10 million per year) to fund proposals that will help us achieve the Grand Challenges. He noted that people would need to apply this fall for funding and would be notified in the spring.

Chancellor Green reported that the process for removal of the AAUP censure is moving forward and interviews with people on campus are now continuing. He noted that he and EVC Spiller spoke with the national AAUP representative in late June and the goal is for the AAUP to be in a position for recommending a decision in November.

Chancellor Green stated that the State has approximately \$1 billion dollars in Covid stimulus funds and the appropriations process for the funds will begin in January, as directed to the Appropriations Committee of the Legislature by Governor Ricketts. He noted that the University has a number of significant funding proposals to submit.

Chancellor Green reported that the process has begun for distributing the first year's \$5 million for improvements in tenure-track and tenured faculty salaries. He stated that evaluations will occur this fall and the intent is to make the increases retroactive to July 1. There will be a second year of an additional \$5M in FY 23.

Chancellor Green pointed out that there have been more changes to college athletics in the last three months than has occurred in a very long time. He noted that student athletes can now be compensated for their name image and likeness, changes are occurring in the NCAA including the possibility of Division 1 becoming its own organization, and an alliance is being formed to expand scheduling for football and basketball games between the BIG10, PAC12, and ACC. He stated that he is already very pleased with the work of Trev Alberts, our new Athletics Director.

Chancellor Green stated that the future of work, and how we work is being considered and was a topic of discussion at the leadership retreat in August. He noted that this is occurring nationwide, and Gallup has the largest poll of data on the changes in the workforce. He reported that terms of the "great resignation" are being used as people are retiring or resigning to take a completely different approach in how they work, and he does not think the University is immune from this, particularly for our staff. He stated that the University is looking at this situation and studying it carefully.

Chancellor Green reported that the Senate Executive Committee and the upper administration met for a retreat in August. He stated that the conversations were very good and focused on the importance of transparent communication from the Executive leadership to the faculty.

Chancellor Green stated that we are now 18 months into the pandemic, and he knows that everyone is tired, but he encouraged everyone to hang in there and to do the very best they can. He stated that the University really appreciates the work everyone is doing and for those that have stepped up in ways that they haven't done in the past.

Professor Vakilzadian, Electrical and Computer Engineering, asked if there are procedures that the

colleges must follow in order for faculty to receive a salary increase from the \$5 million fund. Chancellor Green stated that the Senate Executive Committee would be provided with the information about the process. He noted that EVC Spiller has designed the process and will be working with each of the deans to determine where the gaps are in the ranks of faculty members. He stated that she will be able to provide greater detail about the process when she meets with the Executive Committee.

Professor Woodman, School of Biological Sciences, stated that UNL lacks diversity in its upper administration, and even when interims are appointed, there is still a lack of diversity. He asked what the Chancellor is going to do to make sure that the number of minority administrators increases. Chancellor Green stated that he understands the concern and noted that while we have good gender diversity, the ethnic and racial diversity has ebbed and flowed somewhat, but it has not elevated. He pointed out that when we look at the opportunity for hiring, we look at the diversity issue very carefully, and we try to get a diverse candidate, but we are not often successful. He stated that we do need to be more intentional in looking at opportunities to hire more diverse candidates when it arises, and we want to develop more diverse pools of candidates. He noted that VC Barker has been working very hard to develop diversity in administrative searches.

Professor Palmer-Wackerly, Communication Studies, said that she has heard that there is a budget shortfall. She asked if that is accurate or if this is a college situation due to the new budget model. Chancellor Green stated that he is not aware of any budget shortfall and last year we showed a net positive for the first time in many years, but this was in part due to the \$38.2 million budget cuts we had to deal with. He stated that he does not know college specific budget information. He pointed out that with our enrollment numbers being down, there will be some adjustments in tuition revenue that will be made at the university level.

Professor Nixon, Extension Engagement Zone 1, asked how we do with retaining diverse students. Chancellor Green stated that we have seen a gradual increase in the number of first-generation students, and we have increased our resources to help these students be successful. He noted that we are doing reasonably well in retaining these students compared to the general student population and pointed out that we saw our six-year graduation rate increase by 2% which is a significant increase.

Professor Brantner, Modern Languages & Literature, asked how long the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity house would be suspended and whether it's charter on campus would be terminated. Chancellor Green stated that he could not talk about this because the process of investigation is underway, and it is currently in the hands of the Student Conduct office and the University Police. He stated that he hopes a conclusion would be reached quickly.

6.0 Approval of the April 27, 2021 Minutes

Professor Billesbach, Biological Systems Engineering, moved for approval of the minutes. Motion seconded by Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics, and then approved by the Faculty Senate.

7.0 Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was discussed.

8.0 New Business

8.1 Election of Executive Committee Member

President Kolbe stated that an election was needed to replace Dr. Nicholas on the Senate Executive Committee who left the University. He noted that the vote would be done electronically starting tomorrow and continuing until 5:00 on Thursday, September 9. Professor Eveline Baesu, Mechanical and Materials Engineering, Professor Jennifer Sheppard, College of Journalism and Mass Communications, and Professor Hamid Vakilzadian, Electrical and Computer Engineering, the three candidates for the open position spoke on why they would like to serve on the Executive Committee.

8.2 Election of Extension Educator Executive Committee

President Kolbe stated that an election to fill the Extension Educator seat needed to be conducted to replace Professor Karna Dam who left the University. Professor Kim Bearnese from Extension was the sole candidate for the position. Professor Billesbach moved for approval by acclamation. Motion seconded by Professor Fech, Extension Engagement Zone 9, and approved by the Faculty Senate.

8.3 Approval of Ballot to Replace a Member on the Academic Planning Committee

President Kolbe reported that there is an opening on the Academic Planning Committee which needs to be filled. He declared this as an emergency motion so the ballot can be sent out to the UNL faculty. The emergency motion was approved by the Senate. President Kolbe then asked for approval of the ballot. The motion was approved by the Faculty Senate.

8.4 Resolution to revise the Faculty Senate Syllabus Policy

Secretary Herstein noted that the Senate Executive Committee organized an ad hoc committee consisting of Professor Sollars, Professor Brassil, Brian Wilson of the Center for Transformative Teaching, and herself to review the existing policy to see if it could be improved. She noted that the changes are minimal, but the most prominent change is recommending that professors only need to provide a weblink to a site that will contain all of the links to different resources on campus for students. She stated that the change is to try and eliminate the bloat of information that is being required on a course syllabus. She reported that a fillable syllabus template has been created for use but noted that it is not required.

President Kolbe stated that the motion is being presented today but would be voted on at the October 5th meeting.

Secretary Herstein stated that the site listing the resources will be maintained by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Professor Sollars, School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences, stated that the site will be housed in the EVC's office but would be maintained by the Director of Undergraduate Education.

8.5 Open Mic

Professor Sollars reported that faculty members are still needed to participate in the ACE program review this year. She noted that there will be two subcommittees that are disciplined base for each ACE outcome, and she really needs people for ACE 5 and 7 (Humanities and the Arts). She asked Senators to please ask their colleagues who teach ACE courses to reach out to her (patricia.sollars@unl.edu).

The meeting was adjourned at 4:14 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, October 5, 2021, at 2:30 p.m. via Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Kelli Herstein, Secretary.