

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Billesbach, Buan, Dam, Dawes, Eklund, Franco Cruz, Gay, Hanrahan, Kolbe, Krehbiel, Minter, Weissling, Woodman

**Absent:**

**Date:** Tuesday, January 19, 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 (*Buan*)

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

### 2.0 Announcements

#### 2.1 Town Hall Meeting for Chairs, Directors, Heads

Buan reported that she attended the recent Town Hall meeting where chairs, directors, and heads were informed of the spring semester opening including the new testing strategies that will be in place.

#### 2.2 COVID Testing for Spring Semester

Buan encouraged everyone to get their COVID testing done this week before the students come back to campus. She noted that scheduling a test is done through the Safer Community app. She pointed out that anyone having issues with the app should contact Information Technology Services. Billesbach noted that everyone is required to get another test in 10 days. He asked if you could schedule the test before two weeks. Buan reported that you can do it earlier, but you should get your next test within the timeframe. She stated that it takes about 24 hours to get the test results into the system. Dawes asked if the app would remind people to make a follow-up appointment. Weissling pointed out that the app asks if you want notification.

Woodman asked if a person receives a positive result if they have to self-report it or will the positive test be automatically entered into the University system. Buan stated that she will need to ask AVC Goodburn about this. She stated that the Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department will get notified of any positive results and noted that the app can be set for contact tracing to inform you should you have been exposed to the virus.

Gay asked if the app is linked to the NU ID card. He stated that he was able to enter his building with his ID card even though he has not been tested yet for the virus. Buan stated that the app and the ID card are not linked which is the reason why there will be building attendants, mostly student and other hourly workers, monitoring who enter the buildings.

Eklund stated that he is thinking of sending his students an email message reminding them that they need to get tested before they can come to class. Buan stated that this is a good idea and noted that the hours and access times for testing will be ramped up next week for the students. She suggested that Eklund might want to include the COVID FAQ page link: <https://covid19.unl.edu/faq-contact-us> and suggested that anyone with questions should check this website. She pointed out if anyone has a question that is not addressed on the FAQ page to let her know and she will contact the Spring COVID taskforce to see that it is included on the page. Weissling asked if the first week will be asynchronous teaching. Buan stated that it would not be, that this was only for the fall semester.

### **2.3 Meeting with Faculty Senate Presidents, Provost Fritz, Vice Provost Jackson, Vice President Blackman, CIO Tuttle, and Assistant Vice President Haugerud**

Buan reported that the meeting was to discuss the need for increased IT security, some of which is being mandated by federal oversight requirements. She noted that she was concerned about holding graduate students accountable and she encouraged ITS to have the campus-level information technology committees to look at the policy to see if the suggested changes are the best way to address the federal requirements.

### **3.0 Approval of December 8, 2020 Minutes**

Buan had some minor revisions to the draft minutes. After amending the minutes, the Executive Committee approved them.

### **4.0 AVC Goodburn and Faculty Director of Undergraduate Analytics Brassil**

#### **4.1 Spring Opening**

AVC Goodburn stated that many of the policies and practices to help us deal with the pandemic are still in place for the spring semester. She noted that there has been some change to the course attendance and engagement expectations, the course delivery format, and the Cornhusker Commitment that students must sign. She noted that over 21,000 students have already signed the commitment. She reported that a supervisor quarantine link had been added to the COVID-19 website and so has information on the testing program.

AVC Goodburn reported that in the Town Hall meeting it was reported that the vaccine distribution has changed because the State has now modified the categories with those 65 and above being moved ahead of educators. She noted that the University is still hopeful that we can have a large distribution of the vaccine but there will probably be delays due to the uncertainty of the availability of the vaccine. Buan asked if the university testing will automatically report any positive cases. AVC Goodburn stated that the test reports are going to the advocacy team. Buan asked how the campus would be notified of where to get the vaccine. AVC Goodburn replied that originally the idea was to provide the vaccines in a large setting. She noted that the university was asked by LLCHD to provide the number of faculty members who are in the classroom or working directly with students. She pointed out that once we know when we will be getting the vaccine, we will need to set up a priority schedule of who needs to get the vaccine first.

Kolbe asked who else is using the Safer Community app. AVC Goodburn pointed out that the University of Illinois developed the app, and most universities brand it. Kolbe asked if there are any data security questions regarding the use of the app. AVC Goodburn stated that this would be a good question to ask CIO Tuttle because he can provide more detailed information. She pointed out that the purchase of the app had to go through General Counsel and then through Procurement Services, so it was well considered before we purchased it.

#### **4.2 Response to Recommendations Made in Faculty Fall Experience Poll**

Buan asked if AVC Goodburn noticed any common themes in the responses to the Faculty Fall Experience Poll, particularly with technology quality and availability issues and whether the comments helped shape the university's response for the spring semester. AVC Goodburn reported that she is meeting with Nick Monk, Director of the Center for Transformative Teaching (CTT) and Dave Johnson, Director of Academic Technologies to discuss the comments that were raised in the survey and to figure out what things we could change now and what we could do in the future. She stated that if there are other recommendations, they would be happy to consider them as well.

Kolbe noted that a lot of faculty were still having trouble with figuring out how to deliver their courses. He noted that the College of Fine and Performing Arts purchased small Zoom cameras that were under \$300 and worked great. He suggested that anyone interested in learning more about these cameras should contact Jeff O'Brien, Director of Technology at the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts. AVC Goodburn asked Kolbe to have O'Brien contact Johnson.

Buan stated that there needs to be consideration of how we can put our resources into bringing our campus more into the virtual world since this is the direction that many universities and businesses are going towards and noted that there is an equity gap in terms of equipment that is required for instructors to do more virtual teaching. She pointed out that the lack of equipment could impact student evaluations and asked how we can get good equipment to those faculty members that are doing the lion share of the teaching. AVC Goodburn noted that students need good equipment too. She pointed out that not all students have access to good equipment or WiFi. She reported that her office is learning that having dedicated advising time done remotely is being more successful which is one of several things that we want to keep doing even after the pandemic is over.

Minter stated that she is hearing from other faculty members that there is anxiety about teaching evaluations and confusion about the use of teaching evaluations for the fall semester. She pointed out that it would be worth having some conversations with the deans about articulating the use of teaching evaluations from the fall semester. AVC Goodburn reported that AVC Walker has sent out an email message to the Deans about course evaluations and the impacts that the pandemic has had on faculty member's teaching. She noted that AVC Walker has been having ongoing discussions about this issue with the Deans. Woodman stated that a COVID impact statement was sent out by AVC Walker but not all faculty members were made aware of it and faculty reporting on the Activity Insight program is due tomorrow for faculty members in CAS. AVC

Goodburn suggested that the Executive Committee follow up with AVC Walker about the issue.

### **4.3 Use of DFW Data**

AVC Goodburn stated that the N2025 Strategic Plan calls for us to close equity gaps that exist with the students and the DFW data helps us to identify where these gaps exist. She reported that in 2018 UNL signed on to APLU, the Association of Public & Land-grant Universities, which seeks to improve the success of students. She stated that this initiative is comprised of 130 universities and is organized into 16 clusters. Our particular cluster is with other Big Ten schools and in 2018 the cluster identified a set of initial activities to focus on: identify large gateway courses, exchange D, F, or Drop/Withdrawal rate data, and to share practices on using data with departments and programs. She noted that students who are not successful in the large gateway courses usually do not have a successful academic career. She reported that future topics include advising and coaching, stopping out and dropping out, and using curricular analytics to examine degree maps.

AVC Goodburn reported that the Big Ten cluster shared the schools' data from 25 of their gateway courses over 3-4 years and looked at the impact of the DFW rates in the first semester for first-year retention, 4-year graduation rates, and 6-year graduation rates. She noted that focusing on the first semester identifies students who may fall into the equity gaps and we can focus efforts on how we can support them to close the equity gaps. She stated that the UNL's next steps are to expand professional development on inclusive excellence and pedagogy and provide instructors with CTT grants focused on equity. She reported that Faculty Director of Undergraduate Analytics, Chad Brassil recently conducted a professional development workshop with over 100 faculty members participating.

AVC Goodburn noted that Professor Brassil was hired last spring to be the Faculty Director of Undergraduate Analytics and he is currently conducting data analysis to provide data to the departments that request the information. Director Brassil reported that he is currently consulting and meeting with units about major and course specific equity metrics and program-specific equity metrics. He stated that he is also developing ACE rubric equity dashboards which will allow us to see if there are equity gaps in ACE assessment and noted that some of the same equity gaps in his department are showing up in the ACE courses.

Director Brassil stated that he is working with Casey Nugent, Assistant Director of Academic Technologies, and Jyotsna Ramanan, Learning Analytics Analyst in IT Academic Technology, to develop UNL analytics in Canvas to identify course-specific diversity information and create additional student performance dashboards. He noted that the goal is to reduce DFW rates and getting more useful information to the departments might help us achieve this goal. He pointed out that an example is looking at race/ethnicity data and by doing this we could see that equity gaps exist. He said that by bringing this information to the departments it will allow the faculty members to see if they follow the university trend, or if there are differences in their unit.

Woodman pointed out that students change majors and noted that the data shown by Director Brassil shows that students dropped a course but questioned whether it was because a student changed their majors or dropped out. Director Brassil stated that if a student changes major their data is credited to each major that the student, at some point, declared. Woodman asked if undeclared students are included in the data. Director Brassil stated that the data is only on students that have declared a major, but another analysis will be conducted on undeclared majors and students who are considered in pre-professional programs. AVC Goodburn noted that we do track the graduation rates of students who have been undeclared and work with the Explore Center. She noted that the Explore Center helps students who many not have the required GPA to be in some colleges that have a specific GPA requirement. She stated that the function of the Explore Center is to help these students identify another option if their original plan for a degree in a specific college or major is not successful. She noted that the Explore Center serves different populations of students and some of these are very high achieving students, but they have difficulty determining what career they want to go into. Weissling asked if the success of first-generation students is tracked. AVC Goodburn stated that there are filters used with the data to track these students.

Billesbach asked if the analyses take into consideration pre-college preparation because this would have impacts on the success rates of students. Director Brassil agreed and said that there is an opportunity to break down some of the available data on students and then we would need to determine how the information would change what we do.

Buan asked what size of the sample is considered too small. Director Brassil stated that other universities would only breakdown the data if there are 11 or more students in a course. Buan pointed out that if the data in for a small number of students in a course it would not provide meaningful statistics. Director Brassil stated that the data is only used to create awareness for the faculty and the department and means to be useful. AVC Goodburn pointed out that the administration's goal is not to identify instructors for evaluation and contract renewal but to close the equity gaps for students so they can be successful. She stated that the data is not to be used in the evaluation of faculty members. Director Brassil pointed out that a top-down heavy-handed approach is actually damaging to this effort and the changes need to be something that is internally driven by instructors.

Franco Cruz asked if the message is getting to the chairs about how this data is to be used because he has seen, as an ombudsman, several instances where the DFW rates are being used to determine reappointment and contract renewal. He asked how we can ensure that the data is being used correctly. AVC Goodburn noted that when the data is presented to the department faculty, chairs, and administrators are all in attendance and they are informed about how the data should be correctly used. She stated that part of our campus priority is to educate faculty and administrators how to ethically, and effectively, use the data, not to punish people, but to improve pedagogy.

Woodman asked how an instructor makes improvements to help these students succeed. Director Brassil stated that first people need to understand the data, then the next step is for instructors to ask what should be done to make improvements. He noted that what needs to be considered is how we change our structure and classes to make them more welcoming and inviting for all students. AVC Goodburn pointed out that one of the strategies is to provide feedback to students by the 4<sup>th</sup> week of classes. She stated that there are some courses where feedback is not being provided until the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> week. She noted that the idea is to provide faculty the data to provoke conversations in the department to determine what would be the best solution for reducing the DFW rates and closing the equity gaps within their particular courses and disciplines.

Woodman noted that we have a lot of Academic All Americans and asked what Athletics is doing to help students be successful. He asked what happens if he makes improvements, but a gap still exists. AVC Goodburn stated that the University's initial 2025 goal is not to erase the gap but to reduce it. She stated that Athletics' Student Academic Life Program is a model that is used across the country and we do employ some of the strategies in the program in other student programs. She noted that having a validating agent, support or resource person in a college would be helpful. She stated that when active learning and problem solving with some supplemental instruction is embedded in a course it tends to be more successful for the students.

Gay stated that new Assistant Professors may not be aware that providing early feedback to students helps the students be successful and there needs to be more effort into the promulgation of pedagogical techniques. He suggested that there be a handbook for instructors to help them identify techniques to help improve their students' success. AVC Goodburn stated that the issue of onboarding is very important, and she is aware that most graduate students are trained to be researchers, not teachers. She agreed that there needs to be some discipline specific guidelines and noted there is a Canvas course "Teaching at UNL" which provides information on the many different resources that are available for instructors. Buan pointed out that it is difficult for those in the STEM field to make changes to their pedagogy because of the rapid changes that occur in the discipline. She noted that faculty in these fields may need more assistance. Minter noted that one of the challenging things for the STEM instructors is the degree to which students come in at different levels of preparation. Buan and Woodman both agreed. Director Brassil reported that there will be teams to work on STEM specifics and to answer questions that may arise.

## **5.0 Unfinished Business**

### **5.1 Extension of Pass/No Pass Deadline and Withdrawal Deadline**

Buan reported that the Academic Affairs office wants to send out an announcement that the deadline dates for pass/no pass and withdrawals is being extended by two weeks, but first AVC Walker would like to get the Faculty Senate's endorsement. She stated that if the Executive Committee endorses the extension of the deadline dates, she will make it clear to AVC Walker that the pass/no pass option is only applicable to courses that allow it. She asked if the Executive Committee endorses the extension of the pass/no pass

deadline and the withdrawal deadline by two weeks for the spring 2021 semester. The Executive Committee approved endorsement of the extensions.

## **6.0 New Business**

### **6.1 Agenda Items for Chancellor Green, EVC Spiller, and VC Boehm**

The Executive Committee identified the following agenda items for the upcoming meeting with the administrators:

- Any changes or discussions regarding the fall 2021 semester
- Salary increases in the near future? Are salary increases included in the proposed University biennium budget?
- Are there any updates regarding improvements for non-tenure track faculty members?
- Do you have concern with the uptick in the number of Academic Rights & Responsibilities Special Hearing cases?
- Do faculty members have the option of not including their teaching evaluations for this year's annual evaluation process?
- Are faculty members being evaluated in multi-factorial ways rather than just using teaching evaluations? Has there been any discussion about having uniformity across the colleges with annual evaluations?
- How did IANR pay for the salary adjustments they made to address inequities? Were all IANR faculty salaries reviewed for inequities or was it only for Extension Educators?

The meeting was adjourned at 4:53 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, January 26, 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.