

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Billesbach, Buan, Dam, Eklund, Gay, Herstein, Kolbe, Krehbiel, Minter, Nicholas, Weissling, Woodman, Zuckerman

Absent:

Date: Tuesday, June 1, 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 (*Kolbe*)

Kolbe called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

2.0 EVC Spiller and VC Boehm

2.1 Will the University require students to prove that they have been vaccinated for COVID?

EVC Spiller noted that neither she nor VC Boehm are on the COVID taskforce, she did report the University has not made changes to current planning regarding vaccination. She stated that our testing protocols for the fall are being reviewed by the Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD) and we are anticipating that the campus protocol will include a different pathway for fully vaccinated individuals than those who are not vaccinated or who may choose not to share their vaccination status with the University.

Billesbach asked if there will be assurances for faculty that they will be safe for in-person classes, particularly since proof of vaccination will not be required. EVC Spiller noted that it would be worth directing this question to Chancellor Green at the next meeting. She shared that the University is anticipating that the CDC will be issuing more guidance for higher education sometime this summer and noted that the campus and the University system have been planning and looking at the safety of our university community. She noted that there is not a single state depository that provides information on who has been vaccinated, but the campus will be working on identifying vaccinated people through a voluntary process which is expected to start at the end of June or in early July. She stated that there has been some evidence showing that a high number of students, especially incoming freshmen, have been vaccinated.

Woodman pointed out that there are some immune-compromised faculty members on campus that are unable to take the vaccine. He asked how we can be assured that those individuals that are unmasked are vaccinated, and if the University will change its stance once the emergency status of the vaccine is changed. He noted that Rutgers University and the University of Maryland are requiring proof of vaccination. EVC Spiller pointed out that this is a good question and noted that this continues to be a very fluid situation.

She stated that two of the vaccines will more than likely become permanent and will have the emergency status removed. She pointed out that at various times different universities have made the decision to require proof of vaccination. She highly recommended that anyone on campus who is immune compromised should go through the established accommodations process.

Buan noted that businesses can require proof of vaccination but there may be states with certain laws that might prevent this requirement at public universities. Eklund asked for clarification regarding the emergency status of the vaccines. EVC Spiller stated that the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines were approved under emergency status and there are some who question whether a vaccine approved for emergency use has the same status as an approved drug. She stated that some institutions may have received legal advice that makes them comfortable with requiring proof of vaccination.

2.2 Are there any thoughts on providing an incentive to students for getting vaccinated, such as raffles for free volleyball tickets or other sporting event, free Lied Center tickets, etc?

EVC Spiller stated that some of our social scientists on campus are brainstorming and considering what incentives would work to get students and employees vaccinated. She noted that some people may not have had the opportunity to receive the vaccine and others may intend to get it but just haven't done so yet. She stated that anyone with good ideas for incentives should contact AVC Goodburn.

2.3 Update on Lecturer Pay Increases and Lecturer to Professor of Practice Promotion

EVC Spiller stated that there are still some things being worked on to make sure that the contracts are being set at the appropriate level, but she can report that requests have been received from six colleges and noted that CASNR is working on the appointments through IANR's established process. She stated that the full committed amount of \$540,000 will be expended over the three-year interval period. She noted that some requests have been sent back to the colleges to be considered more carefully in the interest of ensuring that best practices are fully in place within units, but she is confident that approved salary increases will be in place for 12-month appointments to receive the raises on July 1 and the 9-month appointments to receive the raises beginning September 1.

EVC Spiller pointed out that this process is an opportunity to allow more discernment from her office on ensuring the ways that these contract appointments are being used correctly. She stated that it is important to standardize certain things in how Lecturer appointments are made and noted that it will take a bit of work to make the cultural shift to make sure the standards are in place and followed.

Woodman asked if there were any recommendations to move people from a Lecturer to a Professor of Practice position. EVC Spiller stated that recommendations have been made and are being reviewed. She noted that, beyond this process, there are two components to these appointments: first, on the governance side, it is important that there is consultation

with department faculty, and second, a search waiver is required for any position for which a search is not being conducted. She reported that the recommendations were very solid, and she supports the ones that have been received.

2.4 Is there any potential for salary increases to bring IANR non-tenured track faculty members closer to the mid-point of our peer institutions?

VC Boehm reported that IANR has worked internally to ensure that it is doing the best it can with equity and efforts to address inequities started in 2017 with the Extension Educators. He stated that some of the complexities comparing salaries of nontenure track faculty within IANR with those at other universities. He noted, for example, that at Ohio State, Extension Educators have a choice of whether they want to remain in a non-tenure track position or to pursue obtaining tenure, and at some universities, Extension Educators are considered staff and not faculty. He stated that it is important to know which universities we are being compared with.

VC Boehm reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring IANR's salaries are equitable and competitive and expressed appreciation for Chancellor Green's and President Carter's leadership in this space. He asked if there is additional information or more that could be shared. Dam noted that she was asked this question by another Extension Educator, and she will convey the information that VC Boehm shared. She stated that if the individual has more specific comparative information, she will share it with VC Boehm.

Dam noted that the Focus Area to which an Extension Educator is assigned is also an important nuance worthy of consideration when it comes to comparing salaries. VC Boehm concurred and shared that, at the present time, Extension Educators working in agriculture economics are the only group being hired at a higher base pay.

Woodman stated that President Carter spoke to the Faculty Senate in April and stated that his goal was to raise tenure-track faculty member salaries, and he asked President Carter whether non-tenure track faculty members would also be considered, but he felt that President Carter did not adequately address the question. He noted that he has heard quite often that it is too difficult to compare non-tenure track faculty salaries with other institutions, but he believes there is a way to make comparisons. He stated that prior to his term as chair of the Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee, non-tenure track faculty salaries were not even considered.

VC Boehm noted that we have a big gap when it comes to the market competitiveness of UNL's tenure-track faculty salaries, and he is pleased that President Carter and the Chancellors have prioritized this and is taking action to address it. He reminded the group that the budget cuts recommended by Chancellor Green and which the Academic Planning Committee endorsed were made in part to take this bold action. He stated that we really need to make salary comparisons with universities that we compete with for the best people and these universities may not be in our peer group. Buan agreed and noted that there are some units that are at a high level of competitiveness, and they want to be competitive with units at universities that also have high competitiveness. She stated that

the salaries should be compensated in comparison with these universities, not just because they are in our peer group.

VC Boehm reported that we have a number of units that are hitting at that high-competitive base and we need to continue this. He noted that IANR leadership has been looking at comparisons relative to unit-identified aspirant peer departments/schools for solutions to with improve IANR's recruitment and retention rates. He stated it will come down to individual deans understanding the competitiveness and working with their units to make improvements. However, until we get new resources, we need to find a way to fill the gap for providing higher salaries and start-up packages. Buan noted that a culture shift is needed too because some people have a toxic view of what it means to be highly competitive.

2.5 What is the rationale for requiring only a master's degree for a dean's position? Is this a trend for all Dean's positions, or just for Extension?

VC Boehm reported that on May 17th the search for the Dean/Director of Nebraska Extension was launched and noted that the minimum requirement was a master's degree, but a Ph.D. worthy of appointment as a tenured full professor in an IANR academic unit was listed as being preferred. He highlighted that neither the leadership profiles for both the NU president and or the UNO chancellor required a Ph.D. He stated that casting a broader net increases the breadth and diversity of the pool of candidates while ensuring a larger and inclusively excellent pool capable of attracting and landing great leaders such as President Carter and Dr. Li.

VC Boehm also shared that when you think about Nebraska Extension, that the minimum requirement for being an Extension Educator is a master's degree. He noted that what is most important is attracting candidates that can deliver the responsibilities listed in the position advertisement. He stated that he thinks we have some amazing and seasoned Extension Educators at UNL – and beyond – that could likely be excellent candidates to lead to lead Extension and that requiring a Ph.D. would restrict these leaders from being considered. In short, the approach used is consistent with other senior leadership searches in NU, was a nod to these excellence in our Extension Educator corps, and a way for us to increase the odds of attracting a large and inclusively excellent candidate pool.

EVC Spiller agreed with what VC Boehm stated noting that we have a number of disciplines where the terminal degree is not a Ph.D. She noted that the requirements for the Dean of Graduate Studies position were to be a full professor and a member of the graduate faculty, but it did not require a Ph.D., because we would not want to exclude people from the Arts or other disciplines where the terminal degree is not a Ph.D. She stated that some of the criteria that is being considered for administrative positions are the achievements and the level of excellence of the candidates.

2.6 What is being actively done in Academic Affairs and IANR to attract minorities, including Asians, into upper administrative ranks?

EVC Spiller noted that there are not many administrative searches currently being conducted and UNL has made a commitment to increase diversity and inclusion in faculty and administrative recruitment efforts. She stated that she is not aware of any search firm that is not mindful of having a diverse pool of candidates and reported that AVC Walker is working with the colleges to think about diversity at the very beginning for internal appointments.

VC Boehm pointed out that a good example of the University's commitment to diversity is the recent hiring of Dr. Joanne Li as Chancellor at UNO. He noted that when we write position descriptions and advertise for them, we are thinking of how we can get a diverse pool of candidates and we are engaging our colleagues to help in removing barriers for hiring.

EVC Spiller reported that Senior Vice Chancellor Davies of UNMC is spearheading a leadership development series which is a two-year program intended for aspiring and up and coming campus leaders. She stated that she is excited to see what he is putting together with the program and noted that participants would have a great opportunity to meet people across the University system. She stated that the first class will probably be in January and her office will be recruiting for participants.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 IChange Committee Update

Buan reported that she serves on the IChange leadership committee, and the main goal is to increase the diversity in our STEM faculty. She stated that four subcommittees have been formed to work on: 1) increase recruiting diverse faculty; 2) faculty evaluations; 3) retaining diverse faculty; and 4) data collecting and conducting surveys. She noted that the subcommittees will be chaired by Deans and Associate Deans but most of the members will be faculty. She noted that subcommittees will be meeting over the summer, and she will be co-chairing the retaining diverse faculty subcommittee with Dean Button. She reported that the subcommittees will develop its goals and metric plans over the summer.

3.2 Nicholas Departure from UNL

Nicholas announced that she will be leaving UNL in August to take a position at the University of Oklahoma, noting that her departure is due in part to having family in the state. She stated that she does plan to continue serving on the Executive Committee until the end of July. Kolbe and the rest of the Executive Committee thanked Nicholas and wished her well and Kolbe noted that a new Executive Committee member will need to be voted on at the September Faculty Senate meeting.

4.0 Approval of May 18, 2021 Minutes

Eklund moved for approval of the minutes. Dam seconded the motion. Motion approved by the Executive Committee.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Incentives for Faculty Senate Service

Gay stated that he would check to see whether the universities in our peer group provide incentives for faculty members to serve on the Faculty Senate, and he will report back to the Committee once he has the information. Buan pointed out that Gay could send a question to the Big Ten Academic Alliance group to get feedback. Gay suggested that there needs to be an equitable incentive break such as a reduced workload for serving on the Senate, especially if serving on the Executive Committee. Billesbach pointed out that research faculty members don't usually teach and reducing their workload could impact their research funding. Gay suggested that funds could be provided. Krehbiel questioned whether the funds would be for the individual or the program that the faculty member is in. Gay stated that there should be a standard policy for the person serving as Faculty Senate President to have less of a teaching load, or some equivalent support if the faculty member is involved in research. Buan suggested that funds could go into a cost object number that the faculty member could use for travel, research, or other expenses.

6.0 New Business

6.1 University Staff Senate

Kolbe reported that there is a group of staff members from across the University exploring the idea of creating a University Staff Senate and he thought it might be a good idea for the Executive Committee to support the effort. He noted that staff often feel they are left out of consideration and pointed out that one of the aims of the N2025 Plan is to “prioritize participation and professional development for all Nebraska students, staff, and faculty”. Buan pointed out that the staff typically have different concerns than the faculty, although there are occasionally some issues affecting both groups.

Dam pointed out that Extension presents an issue with the staff because there are Extension Assistants that are paid by the county, but they are required to function under the governance of the university. She noted that it is important that these people do not get left out of any Staff Senate. Billesbach stated that it is a great idea but noted that members of the Council need to include not just office staff, but also custodial, grounds, and other staff.

Woodman suggested that Kolbe send an informal statement encouraging the group to continue their effort to create a Staff Senate. He stated that staff should have the ability to advocate their issues. He pointed out that some of the Big Ten universities have a Senate that includes faculty, staff, and students. Zuckerman stated that the staff should have their own Senate, but it should be kept separate from the Faculty Senate. Billesbach suggested that the letter should also state that the Executive Committee would be happy to provide them with helpful information.

6.2 Policy Changes in Graduate Studies

Nicholas reported that there are policy changes in Graduate Studies that are impacting non-traditional graduate students by making the policies more rigid. Zuckerman pointed out that masters' students in Educational Administration have a much shorter time frame to complete their program and non-traditional students often have limited time in which to take classes due to their employment teaching responsibilities. Nicholas stated that the timelines are shorter, although she understands that departments can petition to allow

longer timeframes. She noted that there is also the policy about gaps in enrollment and if students do not enroll periodically, they must reapply to get into a program. Weissling agreed and questioned who is making these changes because it does not seem like faculty have had much input. Minter stated that it is probably the Graduate Council that is making the decision, not the Graduate Faculty.

Buan asked if the Graduate Council is not communicating with the faculty about these changes. Weissling stated that the Graduate Council may not know how these changes will affect different programs. She reported that she has been told that the five-year completion rate makes us more competitive with our peers, but she questioned whether this affects enrollment in some programs. Zuckerman agreed and pointed out that the University is asking people to pay more money and to work harder in a shorter timeframe.

Herstein noted that her college is hiring a lot of Professors of Practice who only have a bachelor's degree, and this excludes them from being considered Graduate Faculty. She asked how we can teach all of the students that are being enrolled for graduate certificates or graduate programs if there are not enough Graduate Faculty.

The Executive Committee agreed to put this issue on the agenda for the next meeting with EVC Spiller.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:49 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be conducted via Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Kelli Herstein, Secretary.