

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Baesu, Billesbach, Boudreau, Eklund, Kolbe, Kopocis, Krehbiel, Minter, Weissling

Absent: Bearnes, Lott, Zuckerman

Date: Tuesday, August 30, 2022

Location: Nebraska Union, Big Ten Conference Room

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 (*Minter*)

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

2.0 Chancellor Green/EVC Ankeron

2.1 There are some specific questions about the budget model which leads us to ask about convening the Budget Model Advisory Committee (BMAC) and its chairship. Do you foresee making any changes to the committee or its charge? [Green]

Chancellor Green reported that the BMAC will be charged again to continue its work on the budget model and to define criteria for how state appropriations will be distributed. He noted that Professor Bloom will no longer be on the Committee as he has assumed the role of chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, but Interim VC LaGrange will still co-chair the Committee as will her successor.

2.2 Some faculty have raised concerns about public statements made by Coach Frost re: strenuous workouts. Can we get some reassurance that student athletes are not coerced into workout practices that undermine their health and ability to attend also to their studies? [Green]

Chancellor Green stated that we are in compliance with the NCAA's requirement that athletic practices be monitored, and Executive Associate Athletics Director Vaughn is responsible for the monitoring. Billesbach asked if the coaches receive any training in how to speak with the media. Chancellor Green stated that since Athletics Director Alberts was hired last summer, he has made sure each of the coaches receive some training on how to deal with media settings. He noted that Coach Frost was very professional, and business like with his comments during press coverage in Ireland and he represented the university well.

2.3 We're curious about your sense of the college loan forgiveness program that has been announced. Do you see that having positive or negative impacts? [Green]

Chancellor Green noted that the leaders of APLU institutions were aware that a forgiveness program was a possibility and they have been following it closely. He reported that recently an analysis was published locally in the newspaper which indicated

that approximately 245,000 Nebraskans hold some student debt. He stated that the \$10,000 forgiveness program would wipe out considerable debt across the state for roughly half of these debt holders. He pointed out that University of Nebraska-Lincoln graduates who graduate with any debt (which is less than 50% of our graduates), both undergraduates and graduate students, have an average debt of \$21,000 which is \$17,000 lower than national and \$11,000 lower than Nebraska state averages. He noted that a significant part of the student debt issue is with graduates and professional degree seekers. He stated that there has been considerable debate on whether the forgiveness program would have a net positive effect on the economy, but it certainly helps those students with educational debt. He noted that the bigger issue is whether anything will be done to address the cost of education, particularly in more elite private institutions, coupled with more of the public good of public education having passed directly to the student over the past couple of decades.

2.4 How should we (Faculty Senate) handle situations when a faculty member reports concerns about staffing practices for particular courses (ex. naming a senior faculty member as instructor of record, but having the course taught instead by a TA)? [Ankerson]

Weissling noted that she was informed by a staff member that they were asked to teach several courses, but they did not know whether this was allowable. EVC Ankerson pointed out that this is a complicated situation if staff are asked to teach, and suggested that Director of Employee Relations Layton Brooks be contacted because it could depend on the employee's position.

Minter stated that she knows of academic advisors who have taught zero-credit hour courses and suggested that the key issue is whether they are considered full-time in their staff role and whether teaching would be an overload. EVC Ankerson acknowledged that there are some cases where academic advisors might teach a zero-credit hour course which is helpful to the students, and it is part of their duties.

2.5 Are EVC and IANR administration supportive of the most recent proposal for the graduate faculty status of PoPs that is going to UNL's Graduate Council for a vote this week? [Ankerson]

EVC Ankerson stated that she is very supportive of the proposed changes and pointed out that if it does not pass there are a number of Graduate Faculty Associates who will no longer be with us. She noted that some of the revisions provide an avenue for professional and graduate programs to enable faculty members to teach graduate courses and stated that this is the current practice and, if approved, the revisions would codify it.

Weissling asked if the proposal has been changed since the spring semester. EVC Ankerson reported that there have been negotiations between Graduate Studies Dean Hope, System Provost Gold, and System Vice Provost Jackson through most of the summer, and noted that some agreements were made, one of them being that some Graduate Faculty Associates would be able to retain that status indefinitely. She reported that the agreed upon revisions address many of the concerns that UNL had but not all.

She stated that if the Graduate Council approves the changes the new policy will be implemented in 2023.

2.6 One goal that the faculty senate executive committee decided on for the upcoming year is working to improve the work environment for faculty. Because one repeated concern is the increasing number of non-faculty related tasks falling to faculty such as: emptying wastebaskets and recycling; convoluted purchasing processes; etc. we'd like your advice for addressing this. [Green, Ankerson]

Minter noted that faculty members are now being required to do tasks that were traditionally handled by staff members (travel reimbursement forms, emptying trash cans and vacuuming their office) and pointed out that this is not the best use of the expertise that faculty were hired for. She asked how the Faculty Senate could help improve the work environment for faculty. EVC Ankerson stated that the faculty should bring the issue up in their colleges. She noted that because of limited resources, it is a zero-sum game as deans and leadership decide what is sacrificed in order to maintain other things. Krehbiel pointed out that the problem is that over time the additional tasks that faculty now need to do add up and take a considerable amount of time away from the work they were hired to do.

Weissling stated that having to empty the trash is a hot issue for many faculty members, although she understands that it is related to recycling. Chancellor Green stated that recycling is the driver behind everyone emptying their trash baskets because it is the best way to get recyclable materials to the proper location in a building and pointed out that he does it too. He noted that there appears to have been a break down in communicating this information to the campus community. Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny stated that the effort is about sustainability and trying to get more people to recycle.

Kolbe stated that he liked the idea of asking the colleges to explain where the savings are, and how they are used, if custodial services are limited. He pointed out that the colleges need a budget advisory committee that can discuss these kinds of issues. EVC Ankerson noted that each college will have a different means of talking about the budget. She suggested that the Executive Committee could perhaps identify what additional work faculty find the most troubling and then we could possibly identify what is at the core of the problem.

Minter stated that the orientation towards sustainability might need some slight improvements, but another issue is the centralizing of services, particularly information technology services. She questioned whether we have enough staffing. Billesbach stated that the business centers in IANR is an example of a pain point for faculty. He noted that departments used to have a support staff that included a grants specialist and administration assistants who did a lot of work for the faculty. He pointed out that now faculty don't even know who to talk to if they have questions and the business centers appear to be understaffed. Chancellor Green acknowledged that we are in a difficult time, not only are we dealing with centralization of services, but there is a shortage of staff in many areas of the university due to the very low levels of unemployment in the

local and Nebraska economy, and the current job market is more competitive than we have seen in a very long time for staff positions across many areas.

2.7 As a broader discussion topic (of the kind Mike called for in our last meeting together) we're interested in returning to the theme of "Every person and every interaction matters." Could each of you address what the phrase, "every person and every interaction matters," means to you in terms of our faculty? As faculty leaders, how can we work tangibly to make faculty feel that they matter and that their voices are heard even when things don't go in the direction that they felt was right? What suggestions do you have for campus leaders to help us help others feel like they matter? [Green, Ankerson]

Minter noted that previously VC Boehm suggested having wider and forward-thinking discussions and the Executive Committee is interested in your thoughts in how we can make faculty feel that they matter and that their voices are heard. EVC Ankerson noted that she addressed new faculty members at the recent new faculty orientation with the following message: "Every person and every interaction matters defines a wholistic respectful environment, one where we listen, and learn. When faculty are teaching, they are not merely imparting knowledge. They are shaping the future of our society – developing learners who understand how to approach knowledge and issues, how to gain a broader perspective and understanding, and how to form and articulate a position. All the while, demonstrating how to enact "every person and every interaction matters" through the way they treat each student and the way they refer to colleagues and others – even if, and especially if, those people don't agree. Our faculty, in any of the mission areas, hopefully understand that they are affecting and transforming lives – not just the lives of our students, but the lives of each other and society through engagement in our teaching, research, and service missions and as guided by our N2025 strategic plan." She stated that active listening and acknowledging that each person has been heard is imperative, and she pointed out that there needs to be avenues for those who communicate in a quieter way, so they know that they have also been heard.

Minter stated that part of the general level of frustration for people has been the economic ups and downs pointing out that university employees have gone a long time with minimal raises. Weissling reported that she has seen a cultural shift with younger faculty in terms of what they expect to get out of the workplace and what they are willing to invest. She noted that sometimes she feels we are working under an old model and that we don't have an eye towards the future stating that we need to think of how we are going to sustain ourselves when we don't have the same investment from people, but we have the same amount of work that needs to be done. She pointed out that she respects the younger faculty members who make sure to have a balance between work and their personal life. Chancellor Green noted that the modern higher education system was built around achieving tenure but noted that now not all faculty positions are tenure track. He stated that the system is built around reward evaluations, assessment, and peer assessment, but the expectation of work fulfillment is changing dramatically for younger workers and the problem is that academia can be very slow to respond to change. He pointed out that the concept of tenure and what it will become is a conversation that is

occurring worldwide, and he expects that the conversations will only increase in the future.

2.8 Observations on Engagement Level of Students

Chancellor Green asked what the level of engagement is of the students, particularly the incoming freshmen students. Kolbe noted that he explained his long-standing attendance policy to the class and how they have to come to class now that the exposure level to Covid is different. He estimated that 20% of the students were freaked out by the requirement but 80% seem to be very engaged. Weissling stated that previously she never required class attendance but now she is requiring it because otherwise half of the class would be missing, and she is seeing that having an attendance policy is making a difference. Minter reported that she and her graduate teaching assistants are saying they have to work hard to get their students to do the required reading for class. Eklund noted that he conducted many auditions last week and he observed that the students were glad to be back and having some normalcy with their classes. Chancellor Green noted that he could not remember a higher level of engagement observed at the Freshman Convocation activities prior to the state of classes, which was wonderful to see.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Meeting with President Carter

Minter reported that the Executive Committee will be meeting with President Carter on October 18th. She stated that the Committee will develop questions to raise with the President during the month of September.

4.0 Approval of August 23, 2022 Minutes

Minter asked if there were any further revisions to the minutes. Griffin noted that Professor Baugh was traveling and did not have access to email so was unable to review the draft minutes. The Executive Committee approved the minutes pending revisions from Professor Baugh.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Executive Committee Goals 2022-2023

The Executive Committee reviewed and made minor revisions to the draft document. Minter noted that the goals will be shared with the Faculty Senate.

5.2 Professor Code of Conduct

The Executive Committee agreed to table further discussion on the Professional Code of Conduct until the feedback is received from several of the Senators who are also members of the AAUP.

5.3 Executive Committee Incentive Proposal

Minter reported that she met with EVC Ankerson to discuss the incentive proposal drafted by the Executive Committee earlier in the year and noted that EVC Ankerson would like to see the proposal developed further. She stated that EVC Ankerson stated that it would be unlikely to pay a faculty member during the academic year because they should be able to negotiate with their chair/head to adjust their apportionment to reflect

the amount of service they do for the Executive Committee, but EVC Ankerson was open to the idea of paying 9-month faculty members for working during the summer months.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Correspondence Update

Minter reported that she received an email message from a faculty member who raised concerns about the experiential learning requirement for all students in the N2025 plan. The faculty member questioned whether the Faculty Senate, which according to the Regents Bylaws, is to act on academic matters that affect more than one college, voted on this requirement. Minter stated that she contacted Undergraduate Education Director Sollars to discuss the matter who explained to her that the idea was to allow each college to decide whether to make this a requirement. Minter noted that the College of Arts & Sciences obtained a lot of faculty feedback about this before voting was conducted. She reported each college did approve the requirement, however, she noted that it does raise the issue of having the Senate vote on university-wide curriculum changes. The Executive Committee then discussed what is considered experiential learning and Kolbe noted that the way it is defined in the N2025 plan it is fairly broad and open-ended, allowing colleges and disciplines to define it for how their curriculum works. Minter stated that the colleges are working to define what would be accepted as experiential learning.

6.2 Three Faculty Members needed for Course and Lab Fees Committee

Griffin reported that three faculty members are needed for the course and lab fees committee. She noted that the committee reviews proposals for these fees in November and will have one meeting in early December to decide on the proposals. The Executive Committee recommended some faculty members to possibly serve on the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, September 13, 2022, at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in the Nebraska Union, Big Ten Conference Room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Signe Boudreau, Secretary.