

**UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES**  
**February 1, 2022**  
**Presidents Steve Kolbe, Deb Minter and Nicole Buan, Presiding**  
**Zoom Meeting**

**1.0 Call to Order**

President Kolbe called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m.

**2.0 Announcements**

No announcements were made.

**3.0 Chancellor Green**

Chancellor Green reported that last fall the plan was to begin the spring semester with random mitigation testing, but these plans changed when it became clear that the Omicron variant would become prevalent requiring the campus to pivot to requiring re-entry tests for all students, faculty, and staff. He noted that Sandoz Hall was reopened to increase isolation capacity for those who contracted the Covid-19 virus. He pointed out, that while our case numbers have been the highest number that we have seen since the pandemic began, the majority of the cases have been less severe probably due to the relatively high number of people who have been vaccinated and boosted. He noted that the second week of the semester testing for students in congregate housing was required and this week we began our random mitigation testing. He wanted to give a big thanks to Housing, Dining, and Custodial staff members for their very successful efforts to keep the campus safe and to deliver safe isolation experiences for those students who have tested positive or have been exposed.

Chancellor Green stated that he is aware there have been questions raised by the Executive Committee about moving courses to online temporarily similar to what UNMC has done. He pointed out that there is an important distinction between UNMC and UNL, with UNMC having nearly all of its courses available regularly online. He reported that there is a process in place which allows faculty members to request a temporary change in the delivery format of their class, from in-person to online. The policy can be found at <https://registrar.unl.edu/faculty-staff/CLSS/course-delivery/>. He noted that UNL made a commitment to our students that we would deliver our courses in-person unless the situation with Covid required us to move to remote teaching. He stated that safety is our number one concern and the Covid task force determined that in general, it is safe to offer courses in-person. He stated that a contributing factor that would impact whether courses would be taught in-person was whether enough employees were available to deliver the services to the campus.

Chancellor Green provided an enrollment update noting that in the fall our enrollment numbers for fall 2022 looked positive but since then enrollment has flattened. He stated that our next major checkpoint is in April when registration deposits for freshmen students will be submitted. He reported that international undergraduate enrollment figures are still the weak area. He stated that we are testing a new tuition model, similar to a one-tuition model in four other states: Colorado, California, Texas, and New Jersey and he is anxious to see if this will positively impact our enrollment of students from these states.

Chancellor Green reported that the Legislature is currently in session and the University has various proposals for the ARPA funding, two of which include UNL. The first one is the relocation and expansion of the Holland Computer Center which would move to NIC. He noted that the Center would focus on intelligence and cybersecurity. He stated that the second proposal would construct a technology transfer center on NIC that would be associated with the proposed new USDA-ARS national Center for Resilient and Regenerative Agriculture facility.

Chancellor Green stated that he is very pleased to welcome Katherine Ankerson as our new

Executive Vice Chancellor and reported that she is well underway in her new role and that she will be meeting with the Faculty Senate in April. He noted that Professor Sharon Kuska has stepped in as the Interim Dean of the College of Architecture and a national search for a new dean will be started this semester. He reported that Mary LaGrange is serving as Interim Vice Chancellor of Business and Finance and a national search to fill the VC position is being launched this month. He stated that the national search for the Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Equity and Compliance has just been launched and noted that Professor Marc Pearce from the Law College has been serving as Interim since August 2021.

Chancellor Green wanted to commend Associate Vice Chancellor Judy Walker and Professor Julia McQuillan for being named as American Association for the Advancement of Science fellows. He stated that he is very pleased and proud for both of them noting that nationally, only 550 fellows are appointed each year from across all fields. Only 1% of AAAs members nationally are named Fellows and it is a huge honor.

Chancellor Green reported that was very saddened to learn of the passing of Professor Anna Shavers of the Law College. He noted that she was actively involved in shared governance, served as Interim Dean, and recently served as Associate Dean of Law. He stated that he continues to think of her and her family during this difficult time. He also noted the passing of former Regent Bob Whitehouse who served for two terms on the Board of Regents. He stated that he found Regent Whitehouse to be one of the best Regents on the Board because of his deep understanding of the needs of the University and the importance of the Bylaws.

Chancellor Green announced that he was establishing a Future of Work taskforce that will look at the recent changes in the workforce and consider what the university should be thinking about for the future. He stated that it will be a small group of people from across the campus representing staff, administrators, and others and he looks forward to hearing the taskforce's recommendations.

Chancellor Green reported that this spring, beginning on Charter Day (February 15<sup>th</sup>) a series of video conversations regarding our progress on the N2025 plan will be communicated and shared across all of the UNL community. He noted that this will start with a conversation with the four faculty co-chairs who led the task force that developed the N2025 plan, and with him and EVC Ankeron. This will be followed in March and April with additional 30-minute conversation videos of the executive leadership team and academic deans on each of the N2025 aims. He pointed out that the States of Our University address will be presented in September rather than in February, in part due to the conversations that will be held during the spring semester on N2025, and also due to the Covid pandemic.

Chancellor Green stated that he has plans to have some open forum conversations on campus during March to be able to discuss the budget model implementation which will occur on July 1 and to discuss some of the big things that will soon be happening on campus.

Secretary Herstein noted that the reason behind the Executive Committee's letter about faculty being able to teach online without needing the chair's approval was because some departments never received the memo that there is a policy which allows an instructor to make a request to temporarily move a class to remote teaching. Chancellor Green reported that the administrative leadership team was looking very closely at the first week of classes and with the level of positivity rates the team anticipated that we might have to move a number of courses to remote teaching even though it was known that the campus would receive negative comments and pressure from parents and those students expecting to meet in person. He pointed out that the administration found out that not many courses were being moved to remote teaching and he met with a group of students after the first week of classes and their general response confirmed that this was the case. He stated that he took this as a positive sign and there was no documentation available that instructors were not able to move a course to remote teaching. President Kolbe noted that the Faculty Senate heard that a number of faculty, particularly non-tenure track faculty, did not feel empowered to be able to

ask to teach their course remotely. He wished that the Course Delivery Modification Request Process policy had been distributed directly to the faculty.

Professor Weissling, Special Education and Communication Disorders, stated that the issue of communication to the faculty has been a consistent problem and information is not getting down to the faculty. She stated that she hoped we would come up with a better communication system because many faculty members did not know they could request to teach their courses remotely. Chancellor Green stated that he did hear this concern from the Executive Committee and stated that the Committee should work with EVC Ankerson about how communications can be improved. He pointed out that what the administration did hear was from parents that said their student or family member had encountered relative inflexibility from an instructor when the student tested positive for Covid, but he realizes that there are times when this can be very challenging. Professor Weissling noted that we need to improve the technology in order to make some of these accommodations for students.

Professor Woodman, School of Biological Sciences, asked what the academic consequences would be of student athletes being compensated for their name and likeness. Chancellor Green noted that because of the recent state law put into place, student athletes can now receive compensation for the use of their name and likeness. He reported that the NCAA's ruling on NIL, which stands for name, image, and likeness, allows college athletes to get paid for things such as their autograph, developing their own merchandise, promoting products or services, and event appearances. However, it cannot be used as a recruiting inducement and these contracts for payments must be outside of the university. He noted that there are three different court cases that are proceeding through the courts regarding student athletes being paid to play. He reported that this won't happen for a few years, but it would create a large dilemma for universities.

Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny reported that an announcement would soon be made that N95 masks will be available for all faculty, staff, and students. He noted that students can pick them up in the Student Union and faculty and staff in their departmental offices. Professor Weissling asked if the masks would be available to Extension personnel. Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny stated that the masks will be distributed across the state and IANR is currently working on this.

#### **4.0 Approval of December 7, 2022 Minutes**

Professor Billesbach, Biological Systems Engineering, moved for approval of the minutes. Motion seconded by Professor Vakilzadian, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and then approved by the Faculty Senate.

#### **5.0 Committee Reports**

##### **5.1 Academic Planning Committee (Professor Hachtmann)**

Professor Hachtmann noted that some of the APC's responsibilities include approving or disapproving proposed new academic programs and changes in existing programs, has a representative participating in academic program reviews, engages in university-wide planning of facilities, reviews and makes recommendations to the Chancellor on proposed significant budget reductions.

Professor Hachtmann stated that the APC was busy approving new programs during the past year, participated in three academic program reviews which occurred virtually, and made recommendations to the Chancellor on his proposed budget cuts. She noted that the recommendations were to not eliminate the department of Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design and to retain the IANR tenured faculty member in Hospitality, Restaurant, and Tourism Management and she stated that the APC was happy that the Chancellor accepted these recommendations.

Professor Hachtmann reported that the APC approved the creation of the School of Computing, approved a new graduate program in Biomedical Engineering, approved eight graduate certificates,

four undergraduate certificates, approved the change of name for a department and the deletion of three programs. She stated that the APC also approved two project initiation requests: the replacement of the Westbrook Music Building and the renovation of Louise Pound Hall to accommodate the Global Education Center.

Professor Hachtmann reported that the APC's long-range planning committee is working on developing guidelines for review of program proposals and Memorandums of Understanding for use with interdisciplinary programs.

Professor Yang, Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design, stated that the department is very grateful to the APC and the Senate Executive Committee for their recommendations to retain the department. Professor Ourada, Dance Program, noted that the program was on the docket for removal and throughout the process the APC and the Senate Executive Committee were very supportive, and the program is very thankful to both committees.

### **5.2 Teaching Council (Professor Bauer)**

Professor Bauer reported that the Teaching Council mainly reviewed and recommended numerous applications for teaching awards including the Annis Chaikin Sorensen Award, ORTICA, UDTA, and ADT awards. She noted that the recommendations have been given to the EVC who will make the final decision on the awards.

Professor Bauer stated that last March the Teaching Council co-sponsored the UNL Parent Certificates Award ceremony with the UNL Parent's Association. She stated that additional activities included considering and eventually endorsing a syllabus template hosted by the Center for Transformative Teaching, considered and eventually endorsed the proposal for a major assignment holiday in the spring 2021 semester, considered and endorsed the reframing of the UNL Parent's Association Recognition Award to the Family & Friends Recognition Award, and partnered with the Center for Transformative Teaching to reformat the Century Club and other teaching activities.

### **5.3 Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (Professor Graham)**

Professor Graham reported that the IAC meets monthly to make recommendations and present reports to the Athletics Department and the Faculty Senate. He noted that there are seven faculty members on the committee, as well as the Director of Athletics and Senior Women's Administrator of Athletics, and two students. He noted that most of the work of the Committee is done by subcommittees: Assessing Academic Support Services Subcommittee, which annually conducts a review of the academic programs supported by the Athletics department; Scheduling Oversight Subcommittee reviews all varsity competition schedules for the academic year to ensure that teams are in compliance with the IAC's missed class days policy; Transfer Appeals Committee is convened at the request of a student-athlete looking to transfer; the Athletics Scholarship Appeal Committee hears student-athlete appeals related to scholarships.

Professor Graham stated that the Assessing Academic Support Services subcommittee submitted its annual report and last year a historical look at the academic success of our student-athletes was reviewed. He pointed out that the Big Ten conference is a leader in academic success for student athletes and we are one of the leaders within the Big Ten. He stated that next year the subcommittee will be assessing the academic support advisors. He stated that upcoming work of the IAC will be to select the student athletes for the year.

Professor Woodman asked if the IAC has looked at the academic impact of transfers and what kind of progress the student-athlete is making towards getting a degree. Also, will the IAC look into the impacts of the NIL contracts. Professor Graham pointed out that the graduation success rate for student-athletes is above that for the general student body at UNL. He noted that Athletics has an intense interest in student success, and we follow the progress of our students who have transferred to a different university to see how they are doing with their academics. He reported that UNL

Athletics also educates our student-athletes in life skills teaching them how social media can affect their value and worth and develops their negotiation skills. He pointed out that Nebraska leads in All American graduates and the average GPA for student-athletes is 3.3.

Professor Billesbach noted that there are stories about some student-athletes receiving six or seven-figure NIL contracts and asked how this impacts scholarships. Professor Graham stated that the IAC has not discussed this issue yet, but he would bring it to the Committee and report back to the Senate about it. He stated that Athletics covers the final year of expenses for a student if their scholarship runs out, but they are still eligible to play.

Professor Graham noted that the football game being held in Ireland will take place during the first week of school and approximately 100 students will be participating either through sports or the band and asked faculty members to be flexible with attendance.

## **6.0 Unfinished Business**

### **6.1 Revisions to Syllabus Policy**

President Kolbe noted that the Senate voted on revisions to the policy, but the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee felt that there were some things that were incongruous with the policy pertaining to the website link of resources, so revisions are being presented to clarify the requirements. He stated that the motion will be voted on at the March meeting. Professor Sollars, School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences, pointed out that the website will be live and ready for the summer courses. Professor Nixon, Extension Engagement Zone 1, asked who will keep the information on the website current. Professor Sollars stated that the Office of Undergraduate Education would be responsible for maintaining the website.

## **7.0 New Business**

### **7.1 Motion to Approve the Ballot for Elections to the Academic Planning Committee, Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee, and Academic Rights and Responsibilities Panel**

President Kolbe reported that the ballot for elections to the committees was being presented to the Faculty Senate from the Committee on Committees. He stated that the Senate will vote on the motion at the March 1 meeting and once approved the ballot will be sent out to all academic faculty.

### **7.2 Open Mic**

Professor Pierobon, School of Computing, wanted to thank the Academic Planning Committee and the Chancellor for making the dream of having a School of Computing come true. He noted that with the transition to the school the faculty are revising the department faculty evaluation process and is reforming its promotion and tenure committee. He noted that Academic Affairs' Guidelines for the Evaluation of Faculty indicates that there needs to be a written synopsis of the promotion and tenure committee's discussion but asked if the document needs to go to the faculty member who is being considered for promotion and/or tenure and if it is separate from the chair/director's letter. Professor Buan pointed out that the committee members might provide input, but it is the chair/director who provides the evaluation in written form to a faculty member. Professor Pierobon asked what would happen if one of the committee members disagrees with the rest of the committee. Professor Weissling stated that it would just be listed as a dissenting vote in the synopsis.

Professor Pierobon noted that the role of the department administrator is unclear with the promotion and tenure committee and asked if the administrator participates in the discussion. President Kolbe stated that the administrator ensures that the committee stays on tract with the review and answers any questions that might be raised but is not a voting member. Professor Buan stated that the department administrator in her unit is not present during discussions. President Kolbe pointed out that a committee has been formed to review, and possibly suggest revisions to Academic Affairs' Guidelines for the Evaluation of Faculty.

Professor Xia, Child, Youth and Family Studies, asked if the Faculty Senate will make a formal response to the proposed bill LB 1077, which seeks to restrict discussing certain race and gender issues in public education classrooms. President Kolbe stated that this is a serious issue and noted that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee made comments when a resolution was presented to the Board of Regents last August calling for restrictions on teaching critical race theory. He stated that the administration is aware of the concerns about the proposed bill and is carefully watching to see if the bill is advanced to the Legislature. He pointed out that if it should be advanced, there would need to be a concerted effort, both by individuals and organizations such as the Faculty Senates of each of the campuses, to voice concerns against the bill. Professor Gailey, English, stated that she believed the Faculty Senate should respond now and Professor Weissling asked President Kolbe to obtain more information about the proposed bill.

Professor Stevenson, English, reported that last year improvements in salaries were made for some non-tenure track faculty members but a breakdown of how much funding was allocated to the different colleges for these improvements was never provided to the Senate. She asked if this information can be made available. President Kolbe noted that we have a new Executive Vice Chancellor and that he would discuss this with her to see if the information could be provided.

Professor Vakilzadian asked what the process is for ensuring that each building on campus has lactation rooms available. Past President Buan stated that the Chancellor's Commission on the Status of Women worked with Business and Finance to create a map of the location of lactation rooms on campus, but she pointed out that there are not enough of them and there is no correlation with how many of these rooms are needed and the density of a building. She suggested that this issue be raised with EVC Ankerson. Professor Billesbach reported that not all of the buildings are ADA compliant. Professor Griffiths, College of Architecture, suggested that his college could look into this along with Facilities to make sure that the buildings are up to code.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:26 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, March 1, 2022, at 2:30 p.m. via Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Kelli Herstein, Secretary.