

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Baesu, Bearnese, Billesbach, Eklund, Gay, Herstein, Kolbe, Krehbiel, Minter, Weissling, Woodman, Zuckerman

**Absent:** Buan,

**Date:** Tuesday, February 8, 2022

**Location:** Zoom

**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 (*Kolbe*)

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

### 2.0 Implications of Recent Cybersecurity Decisions the University is Making on Our Teaching Mission, especially as it Relates to Computing and Cybersecurity (Professor Vuran, School of Computing)

Vuran reported that the faculty of the School of Computing (SoC) were recently informed of decisions made by ITS at Central Administration regarding cybersecurity that have direct implications on the teaching and research mission, particularly for SoC. He stated that the plan, 802.1X Network Migration Unified Edge Network, will soon be entering Phase II which means that all computers in all academic buildings will have non-routable IP addresses and all public-facing systems will need to be housed in ITS secured locations. He noted that Phase II is scheduled to be completed by the end of June and on July 1 of this year, when the legacy network that is currently being used will be disabled.

Vuran stated that the move to the Unified Edge Network is motivated by the need for improved security, particularly due to the UNMC breach, and the fact that departments and colleges will be held liable for security breaches. He noted that these motivations appear to have spurred ITS to fast-track the plan without any shared governance and input from faculty members, particularly those who have expertise in the areas of computing and cybersecurity.

Vuran reported that for many years the Computer Science and Engineering department (now SoC) has maintained an administrative group of computing experts to develop, implement, and maintain computing services that are specific to the teaching and research needs of computer science and computer engineering disciplines. He pointed out that it is critical for students in computer science to be able to get “under the hood” to learn and understand computing and the changes implemented in Phase II will impede this ability. He noted that just about everyone uses computers and data science for research and teaching so there is good reason to believe that the changes will impact the teaching and research mission across the campus.

Vuran stated that one impact will be with the Linux operating system which has an open-source policy that is a critical component to SoC and other disciplines. He noted that while Linux will still be available, it will be at a reduced capacity which will have significant impacts for instructors and researchers. He pointed out that ironically, the cybersecurity measures being put in place will prevent professors from teaching cybersecurity to students because of the limitations of the new network, and he noted that if you use the Cloud, you have used Linux because the majority of the Cloud runs on Linux.

Vuran reported that another impact with the changes is restricted networking. He noted that SoC offers many courses related to networking such as cybersecurity, emerging technologies, crypto-currencies, and block chains and these courses require students to experiment with real-world testbeds and emerging networking protocols. He pointed out that SoC's robust research program in networking, IoT, and cybersecurity involves implementation of new networking protocols and paradigms and the faculty work with other researchers across the U.S. and the world. He stated that restricted networking will severely impact the faculty's ability to compete with other research institutions for funding and would affect the faculty's obligations to NSF and other agencies, both current and future funding agencies.

Vuran reported that currently SoC offers each of its students access to its laboratory facilities which provides students from all socioeconomic backgrounds to have equal access to tools, equipment, and ultimately learning opportunities. He stated that SoC has deployed its Authentication Domain which enables students to access their profiles and resources from any workstation in the labs, and there is full integration support between different operating systems such as Windows and Linux. He stated that with the new network, roaming profiles or Unix integration is no longer maintained.

Vuran pointed out that the move from Box to SharePoint for data storage greatly impacted research programs that rely on big data and data science. He noted that he had to move 80TB of research data which cost six months of a gap in data collection and required the help of many people from ITS, ORED, HCC, and students.

Vuran stated that the root of the problem lies in the fact that none of the faculty in SoC, some of whom are the top experts in understanding the severity of cybersecurity threats in Nebraska, were not asked for feedback on the impacts that changing the network would make. He pointed out that faculty in SoC have come up with potential solutions such as creating a dedicated research network that would be protected through ITS or hosted in SoC with the understanding that there would be clear guidelines. He wanted to stress that more shared governance in UNL's computer operations is needed, and we cannot follow a one size fits all model.

Kolbe noted that similar problems are occurring in the Johnny Carson School of Theater and Film. He pointed out that Linux is used considerably at the Holland Computer Center. He stated that the IT person for the Center for Emerging Digital Arts has been talking to ITS about these concerns but is not getting anywhere with resolving the problems. Vuran stated that SoC's computing administrators have experienced the same

problems with ITS. He noted that the Chair of SoC has set up a meeting with the Engineering College and ITS to discuss the problems. Billesbach noted that he had the same problem last year because he has remote data systems set up in other areas including the arctic tundra that provide data to his server needed for his research, but the change in routers disrupted the input of data. Kolbe pointed out that the needs of the faculty differ greatly across the campus and this needs to be considered before any changes are made.

Weissling asked if other schools in the Big Ten are experiencing the same problem. Vuran stated that he is not aware of any policies at the Big Ten schools, but he is aware that the emphasis at nearly all universities is with cybersecurity. He pointed out that MIT has in-house servers that are set up to provide flexibility while being secure. Billesbach pointed out that when Behlen Labs was renovated a very secure network was installed for work that is done with the Department of Defense so having separate secure systems is possible.

Kolbe questioned whether the plan was discussed with the Information Technologies and Services Committee. Woodman pointed out that the ITSC is exactly the place where ITS should be discussing the issue because it is a Senate committee and there are faculty members, staff, and even CIO Tuttle is on the committee. He stated that the committee needs to take an active role in demanding that this kind of information needs to be made available so it can provide input before decisions are made. Vuran stated that the faculty need to be a part of the decision process, especially those faculty members with expertise in computing.

Woodman suggested inviting Vice President of ITS Bret Blackman to speak to the Faculty Senate. Baesu reported that she is hearing from many people that they are having complaints with IT issues and asked if a questionnaire should be sent to the faculty to determine the extent of the issues. Billesbach suggested that the ITSC be asked to develop a survey to assess the computing needs of the faculty and how well ITS is meeting those needs. He noted that the Faculty Senate could then send out the survey. Bearnes point out that Extension is having similar issues and Extension Educators should be included in the survey. Kolbe stated that the Executive Committee would raise the concerns when it next meets with the Chancellor.

### **3.0 Announcements**

#### **3.1 Campus Covid Update**

Kolbe reported that last week 5,671 Covid tests were conducted with a positivity rate of 6.38% which is lower than the previous week. He noted that 2,000 of the tests were voluntary and with these tests there was a positivity rate of 10.4%. He reported that the rest were random tests which had a positivity rate of 4.1%. He stated that so far this week there have been 1,672 tests conducted for a positivity rate of 3.45%, for students living on campus the rate was 3.8%, residence halls had a positivity rate of 2.8%, and the Greek houses positivity rate is 6.4%.

Minter asked if faculty members could still ask for either an exemption from wearing a mask, or to require mask wearing in the classroom. Kolbe stated that these options are still available and noted that a number of people have submitted requests. He pointed out that even after the county lifts the mask mandate, the policy allowing faculty members to make a request requiring masks be worn in their classroom will still exist.

### **3.2 Search Committee for Assistant Vice Chancellor of Human Resources**

Kolbe reported that he will be serving on the search committee that will be seeking to replace AVC Bruce Currin who is retiring at the end of the semester.

## **3.0 Approval of February 1, 2022 Minutes**

Kolbe asked if there were any further revisions to the minutes. Hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Minter moved and Weissinger seconded approval of the minutes. The Executive Committee approved the minutes.

## **4.0 Unfinished Business**

### **4.1 Continue Reviewing Executive Committee Goals for 2021-2022**

The Executive Committee continued to review its goals noting that some goals have been accomplished while others, such as recommending 360° reviews on administrators analogous to how faculty are currently evaluated and allowing anonymous reviews for chairs and deans are still being worked on.

## **5.0 New Business**

### **5.1 Interview Questions for Dean of Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts**

The Executive Committee began to identify questions to ask the candidates who will be coming to campus in March.

### **5.2 Code of Professional Conduct Update (Minter)**

Minter reported that the effort to create a Professional Code of Conduct, which seeks to articulate the boundaries of what the faculty are responsible for and what administration cannot impose on the faculty, started before the Covid pandemic but was put on hold until the Regents Bylaws were revised. She stated that the committee that was formed to work on the Code now needs to look at the significant changes that have been made to the Bylaws and review a recent system-wide policy about a recent system-wide consensual relationship policy to see if these changes need to be included in the draft Code. She pointed out that the Code will hopefully provide readily available information for faculty members including information about the Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee and articulates the process of filing a complaint.

### **5.3 Names for Agricultural Research Division Dean Search Committee**

Kolbe asked the Executive Committee to consider names of faculty members who could serve on the search committee. He stated that he would like to have a few members of the Senate serve on the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:39 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, February 15, 2022, at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be conducted by Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Kelli Herstein, Secretary.