

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Billesbach

Date: Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Location: Nebraska Union, North Platte Room North

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 2:33 p.m.

2.0 ACE 10 (Professor Sollars, Director of Undergraduate Education)

Kolbe stated that he has received numerous emails from faculty members concerned about revisions to ACE 10 and asked Sollars to come to provide context and clarification.

Sollars reported that there was a year long review of ACE 8 and 9, noting that there were particular concerns with ACE 9 which houses two distinct outcomes: human diversity and global awareness. She stated that the subcommittee that reviewed ACE 9 worked to figure out how the two distinct outcomes could be reconfigured so they could both remain in ACE 9, but the subcommittee concluded that there was no way this could be done. She noted that with the ACE program we want engaged interaction with coursework that impacts human diversity and also global issues rather than just awareness and the only way to do this is to split the ACE 9 outcomes. She pointed out that the diversity and inclusion report from Halualani & Associates in 2016-17 highly criticized ACE 9, indicating that the outcomes needed to be separated. She pointed out that the vast majority of our Big Ten peers have diversity and global issues as separate outcomes. She noted that none of the peer universities have a discipline capstone course as a general education outcome. She stated that the subcommittee recognized the constraints we have due to the 30-credit hour limitation and pointed out that we do not have the liberty, nor do we want to add more credit hours. She noted that the College of Engineering is already hitting the 120-credit hour limit with their courses, and although she believes it does have an exemption to allow more credit hours, we do not want to add credit hours unnecessarily.

Sollars reported that she recently surveyed faculty members who teach ACE 8-10 and asked them to provide feedback on the language of ACE outcome 8, to provide feedback on the language for the diversity outcome and the global issues outcome, and whether ACE 10 should be a capstone course. She noted that she also asked if the department would keep a capstone course as a graduation requirement if it was no longer an ACE 10 course.

Sollars stated that she has been having conversations at various levels about any proposed revisions and noted that the point was raised that any additional courses could create more costs for students, but she pointed out that there is a cost to society if students do not understand global and human constraints. She reported that some feedback has been received and some units believe that creative solutions are possible if ACE 9 is split into two separate outcomes and the capstone course is no longer an ACE course, but the department wants to retain it. One way would be to replace an elective course which most programs have, with the new ACE 10 (human diversity) course.

She stated that currently the subcommittee is trying to think through everything and said that if people have worries or constraints, they should please contact her directly (patricia.sollars@unl.edu). She noted that she is very willing to meet with people at any college level and to meet with the college and department curriculum committees.

Gay asked what kind of discussions the subcommittee had about academic freedom and ACE courses. He suggested that when ACE courses are required to have a component regarding diversity or global issues it infringes on academic freedom. Sollars pointed out that there are no mandates that a course needs to be an ACE course and departments are not required to have ACE courses. She stated that the Higher Learning Commission, which awards us accreditation, simply states that students must have a general education program of at least 30-credit hours.

Sollars reported that any changes to the ACE program would first go to the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and if approved, then they would go to the college curriculum committees for consideration and approval. Kolbe pointed out that the faculty would need to vote on any revisions. Sollars stated that she hopes proposed revisions could go to the college curriculum committees by the end of this semester to get feedback and the goal is to have the final proposed revisions ready for the faculty to vote on in December 2022. Minter asked when the change to the ACE program could go into effect if we adhere to this timeline. Sollars stated that fall of 2023 would be the soonest it would be implemented.

Eklund asked if the goal is to have more ACE courses and asked if the program would help increase our enrollment. Sollars stated that she hopes it would help increase enrollment but that is not the goal of the program. She pointed out that we currently have enough ACE courses, but what we need to do a better job of is communicating with students why they need to take these courses. She stated that we need to put together language of what students are expected to learn from these courses.

Sollars reported that rubrics have been generated to help faculty make sure that they are incorporating the appropriate outcome for their ACE course and noted that the rubrics can help faculty identify how they can improve their course. She noted that students are asked if they feel that the course helped them to improve, what they considered to be the most challenging thing in the course, and whether the course provided them with knowledge that would help them in their college career or later in life. She stated that

some of the current bureaucratic burden of ACE courses would be removed which would be beneficial to both the faculty and the students.

Eklund asked if three-credit hour courses are the norm for ACE courses. He noted that some courses in the arts and humanities could be ACE courses, but their credit hours are higher. Sollars stated that having courses with different credit hours would be difficult for the Registrar's Office to monitor. She stated that overall, every interaction a student has with ACE courses should matter and enable them to be a better citizen.

Herstein asked if students would be asked to assess the course and pointed out that if an ACE course is in their major students are more likely to give a positive review, but if they really don't want to take a course, say in human diversity, the assessment could be problematical and used against a faculty member. Sollars pointed out that the self-assessment by the students is not about the subject matter, but whether the course has impacted them. Zuckerman noted that most young adults do not get the value of a course until much later in life. Sollars stated that the self-assessment is meant to be a moment of reflection of the course. She pointed out that if the self-assessment shows that many of the students in the ACE course did not see the value of it the instructor could use the information to make improvements in the course.

Gay stated that he can envision the ACE program being coercive in a way that would violate academic freedom. An example would be an ACE 10 course being required to teach human diversity when the professor really wants to teach the department's subject matter. Students might be dissuaded from taking that subject capstone course in order to take an ACE-approved course in a different department. Sollars pointed out that most departments do not have many ACE courses, and there is an application process for a course to be designated as an ACE course. She stated that if a new course is being proposed that does not meet an ACE outcome, it would not be considered an ACE course. Zuckerman pointed out that students have a choice of courses they can take under each ACE outcome, and they are not required to take a course in their major. Sollars reported that students are limited to the number of ACE courses they can take from one department.

Woodman stated that he has overheard students registering for fall classes discussing which of the ACE courses are the easiest to take. Sollars noted that many students try to take the easiest courses, whether they are ACE courses or other courses, but the goal of the ACE courses is to make sure they are impactful. Woodman suggested that consideration be given to whether ACE courses have equivalent requirements. Minter stated that in Arts & Sciences the curriculum committee reviews proposals for a course to be designated as an ACE course and the committee has looked at workload issues and she assumes that this occurs in other colleges as well. Sollars stated that the UUCC also tries to look at the workload of the courses.

Kolbe stated that he is concerned that the number of credit hours a student can take in their major becomes limited due to the ACE requirement, and he asked if there is movement to try and increase the number of ACE credit hours required for students.

Sollars stated that an accredited university must have a minimum of 30 credit hours in the general education program. She stated that she does not know of any plans to try and increase the number of required credit hours for students.

Eklund noted that he believes his department may be interested in trying to develop some new ACE courses. Sollars stated that she would be very happy to speak and provide advice to his department, or any other department, with developing new courses for the ACE program.

3.0 New Budget Model (Professor Bloom)

Minter stated that the Executive Committee wanted to have a brief update on where we are in the process of preparing for the new budget model, and whether the challenges of the Covid pandemic have impacted the budget numbers.

Bloom reported that the new budget model will go into effect on July 1. He noted that each unit will be held harmless in the first year and pointed out that we need to take things very slowly and that any changes would be gradual. He stated that the budget model provides an agreed upon set of rules for how revenues like tuition and indirect expenses such as utilities are to be allocated, giving a much clearer picture of the revenue and expenses in each unit, and thus a better understanding how we pay for costs using state-appropriated funds. He pointed out that the budget model is meant to encourage activity within units.

4.0 Announcements

4.1 Names for Dean of Architecture Search Committee

Kolbe stated that the EVC is requesting that the Senate Executive Committee provide names of several faculty members to possibly serve on the search committee for Dean of Architecture. The Executive Committee worked on identifying faculty members.

5.0 Approval of March 22, 2022 Minutes

Kolbe asked if there were any further revisions to the minutes. Hearing none, he asked for approval of the minutes. Zuckerman moved for approval followed by a second from Gay and approved by the Committee.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Professional Code of Conduct (Minter)

Minter reported that she would have the latest draft of the Code available for the Executive Committee through OneDrive before the next meeting.

6.2 Executive Committee Elections Update

Griffin reported that a non-tenure track Senator has volunteered to run for election for the non-tenure track seat on the Executive Committee. However, Senators were still needed for Secretary (a one-year term) and another Executive Committee member (three-year term).

7.0 New Business

7.1 April 5 Senate Meeting

The Executive Committee discussed the agenda for the upcoming April 5 Senate meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, April 5, 2022, immediately following the Faculty Senate meeting. The meeting will be conducted by Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Kelli Herstein, Secretary.