

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Baesu, Bearnese, Boudreau, Eklund, Kolbe, Kopocis, Krehbiel, Latta Konecky, Lott, Minter, Weissling

Absent: Paul, Zuckerman

Date: Tuesday, April 25, 2023

Location: 203 Alexander Building

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 2:42 (after the committee had to relocate its meeting due to a power outage in the Nebraska Union)

2.0 Director Sollars, Undergraduate Education

Sollars reported that the University-Wide Assessment Committee members voted to rename themselves the University Assessment Committee.

Sollars stated that the term “probation” has been removed from academic standing, and now is applied only to disciplinary repercussions of prohibited behavior. She noted that what is new are the terms “Initial Academic Warning” and “Academic Warning Before Dismissal”. She stated that the changes have been updated for the 2023-24 catalog.

Sollars reported that the Academic Solutions Council has voted to approve the following proposal:

UNL will utilize 0-credit courses to document student experiences that contain an academic component and that are self-evident about the student’s experience or accomplishment in pursuit of their academic goal. 0-credit courses should not be utilized merely to accomplish a unit’s goal (e.g. enforce student participation in assessment of a program).

Sollars stated that this information will be included in the Registrar’s section of the UUCB handbook. She noted that existing 0-credit “senior assessment” courses are not directly affected, though units with such courses are encouraged to include elements of clear educational value to the students.

Eklund pointed out that with the 120-credit hour limit on programs his department was pressed to adjust some of their offerings and developed a 0-credit hour course that students attend weekly. Sollars stated that if they have an academic component that is fine and noted that Associate Dean Marks is aware of the proposal, and he will let the department know if they need to adjust these courses. She stated that the proposal seeks to eliminate 0-credit hour courses that departments were using to simply assess their own

programmatic learning outcomes, but if there is an academic component that benefits the students then it is fine. Baesu stated that she has voted against 0-credit hour courses because they can open the door for instructors to take advantage of the students. Minter stated that in her department the vice chair must approve the course schedule for the department for students to register. She questioned whether this occurs in all departments and stated that having courses in the academic catalog without faculty oversight is concerning.

Sollars reported that the UUCC has noted an inconsistency with respect to course learning outcomes in the Faculty Senate policy for syllabi and the fillable template. She pointed out that in the policy for syllabi lists learning outcomes among things that must be included on a course syllabus, but the fillable template indicates that this is optional. She noted that making students aware of the educational goals of their programs and their courses is an expected practice for accreditation, so the template should be updated to align with the existing syllabus policy.

Sollars stated that ACE certification of courses is currently unavailable. She noted that the ACE subcommittee is modifying the certification questions to better reflect aspects of general education, and of our institutional objectives. She stated that the subcommittee anticipates that ACE certification will once again be available in fall of 2023, although the timing may depend upon the re-programming of CIM by our vendor. Sollars pointed out that the institutional objective for ACE 4 through 7 includes helping students to understand human diversity more fully. She stated that instructors are being asked to think about the bigger purpose of the general education program and how the disciplines fit within the larger purpose and the intention is that instructors will keep this in mind when submitting a course for ACE certification.

Eklund asked about assessment and whether the faculty who teach ACE courses were being assessed. Sollars explained that the assessment was on the course and noted that instructors often fail to distinguish assessment of knowledge of course content from assessment specifically of the ACE outcomes of the course. Weissling asked if the ACE outcomes would be linked to something that was actually done in that course. Sollars stated that this is correct and that a graded assignment needs to be used to assess the course. She reported that faculty are encouraged to focus their ACE assessment on an assignment, or two, in the class that best allows students to demonstrate their achievement of the ACE outcome.

Minter asked when the ongoing assessment of the courses within the ACE program will once again be reported at the university level. Sollars stated that the ACE assessment reporting cycle will begin again in 2024-25 and at that point the new certification questions that need to be answered. She pointed out that many of these courses were certified in 2008-09, so an update of the course practices is due.

Sollars reported that two proposals were presented by the ACE subcommittee following the 10-year review of ACE that occurred in 2021-22: one was to change ACE 9 and 10; and the other was to generate language that explains to students why the faculty believe

that these 10 outcomes are crucial for all undergraduates. She stated that as students have a better sense of the goal of each ACE outcome, it is hoped that instructors will provide opportunities for students to do a self-reflection on their progress toward that goal, which might then be used by the instructor to improve the impact their course has on students' overall educational experience.

Sollars stated that one concern raised by the recent attempt to modify the ACE outcomes is that faculty who did not engage early in the process voted against the proposal for reasons that might have been able to be addressed. She stated that attempts had been made in advance to consider the constraints specific to individual programs or colleges, but only a very small number of faculty provided feedback with concerns when the draft proposals were first sent out to all ACE faculty, and even fewer participated in the Q&A sessions once the formal proposal was approved by the ACE subcommittee. She suggested that the Faculty Senate could help future efforts to improve the ACE program by establishing a university-wide structure for voting on changes to ACE. Minter suggested having the colleges articulate what their differences are, such as the Engineering College, that could then be shared, and a dialogue could develop that could formulate a better structure for voting on ACE. Kolbe suggested the college curriculum committees could send out information to the departments about what is being considered for a vote in order to generate questions that could be addressed before any voting occurs.

Eklund pointed out that the current budget model sets up competition between the colleges because generating more credit hours creates more resources for the college. Minter stated that the incentive-based budget model doomed the ACE program because of everyone vying for having their courses designated as an ACE course in order to generate more credit hours. Sollars agreed noting that every student must take one course out of each of the ACE outcomes. Minter noted that the ACE program inherited a hastily developed idea of governance and the program had to be developed quickly. She pointed out that it will be difficult to make changes to the ACE governance documents to change how the voting should occur. Sollars stated that one potential area of improvement might be the ability to have one-credit hour courses taken successively to meet the three-hour requirement of the program. She reported that she has data on ACE courses and their usage and hopefully this information will be used by departments to decertify some courses that are not being used by students to meet their ACE requirement.

Minter stated that she is not sure whether the assessment around the ACE courses has helped address trust issues with the program. She stated that she knows that there were many faculty members who were frustrated with the assessment process and requirements. She noted that there needs to be an assessment of the courses, but it took a long time to get the message out that there were multiple ways to assess the courses.

Sollars reported that she is working with the CTT to put an ACE Canvas course together and this will provide all of the elements and information on ACE and assessment.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Recognition of Outgoing Executive Committee Members

Griffin noted that this was Minter's last Executive Committee meeting as President, Kolbe's last meeting as Past President, and that terms were ending for Bearnes, Boudreau, Eklund, Krehbiel, Latta Konecky, and Weissling although she pointed out that Eklund is running for election as President-Elect, Boudreau is running for election again as Secretary, and Bearnes will be running again as the Extension Educator representative. Minter thanked everyone for their hard work and dedication to shared governance.

4.0 Approval of April 21, 2023 Minutes

Minter asked if there were any revisions to the minutes. Hearing none she asked for approval of the minutes. Kolbe moved to approve, motion seconded by Latta Konecky and approved by the Executive Committee.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Proposed Revisions to Guidelines for Faculty Evaluations Update

Minter reported that she is still working on a crosswalk document that clarifies each of the proposed changes to the current version of the Guidelines. She noted that initially there was a faculty committee commissioned in the fall of 2021 that first worked on revising the Guidelines and later a smaller committee which included AVC Walker and AVC Bischoff who worked on refining the proposed revisions. She stated that the faculty committee recently reviewed the most recent proposed revisions and has accepted all of them but did notice a few things that needed to be corrected.

Baesu noted that she is on the Faculty Senate Diversity and Inclusion Committee which has been looking at the proposed revisions to the Guidelines and the Committee has some feedback, but it would like to take more time to review the document. Minter stated that she has spoken with the Committee chair and suggested to him that the Committee's concerns about evaluators being trained about biases should go into a separate document because the Guidelines provide information on the steps of the evaluation process which need to be clear and transparent.

Minter noted that the proposed document rectifies serious absences in the current document by articulating, for example, promotion processes for Professors of Practice. She also noted that the proposed language pertaining to evaluating lecturers is an important addition because they get merit and performance evaluations. She stated that the goal is to provide the proposed revisions to General Counsel for their review over the summer and hopefully the proposed revisions would go to the Faculty Senate for approval sometime during the fall semester.

Eklund reported on an incident that occurred on one of our sister campuses where a student has made negative comments in his/her course evaluation of a faculty member and the comment was raised by the department chair during the faculty member's evaluation which has resulted in negative action being taken against the faculty member. Kolbe noted that the course evaluation process can be done anonymously by the students. Minter stated that student evaluations can be used as documentation for the evaluation process, but the Guidelines do not get into detail about the use of them. However, the Guidelines do layout some of the protections that faculty members can pursue during the

evaluation process. She noted that the proposed revisions do not provide information on how such documents should be used in the evaluation process, recognizing that colleges and units typically have discipline-specific approaches to performance evaluation.

Minter reported that the proposed revisions do state that tenure-track faculty members can be promoted early if they are doing exceptionally well. Kopocis asked if there is an early promotion provision for Professors of Practice. Kolbe stated that the Board of Regents' Bylaws might need to be checked to see if this is allowable for Professors of Practice. Kopocis stated that if there are provisions for early promotion for tenure track faculty members, there should be provisions for Professors of Practice. Minter stated that she will raise this issue with AVC Walker and AVC Bischoff.

5.2 Update on EM 16 Ad Hoc Committee

Minter reported that the Ad Hoc Committee is now formed, and it will be co-chaired by Can Vuran, School of Computing, and John Shrader, College of Journalism and Mass Communications. She stated that other members are: Rich Leiter, Law College; Clint Rowe, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences; Susan VanderPlas, Statistics; Steve Ramsay, English; and she has reached out to Max Pierobon, School of Computing who volunteered to serve on the committee, to see if he is still willing to serve. She stated that she has contacted Leslie Harms, Assistant to the Director of the Glenn Korff School of Music, to see if she would represent the staff. She stated that the committee is going to try and meet a couple of times to get their work underway despite the rapidly approaching end of semester.

5.3 Chancellor's Search Update

Minter reported that the search advisory committee has developed a list of semi-finalists and will be conducting Zoom interviews next week.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Update on Correspondence

Minter stated that she was contacted by a faculty member over concerns that student organizations can no longer sell items on UNL marketplace and that there is no good alternative available. She noted that the decision to no longer allow student organizations to sell their fare on the marketplace was made because of the cost for tech support that is needed to maintain the website, but this has implications for student organization efforts to fund some of their initiatives.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, May 2, 2023, immediately following the Faculty Senate meeting. The meeting will be held in the East Campus Union, Great Plains Room A. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Signe Boudreau, Secretary.