

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Baesu, Bearnese, Boudreau, Dawes, Eklund, Kopocis, Lott, Minter, Shrader, Tschetter, Zuckerman

Absent: Paul, Vakilzadian

Date: Tuesday, August 8, 2023

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 (*Kopocis*)

Kopocis called the meeting to order at 2:34 p.m.

2.0 Vice Chancellor Boehm

2.1 What concerns does he have and/or what role(s) would he like to see the Faculty Senate play as Varner Hall and the campus approach the new academic year?

VC Boehm stated that in looking forward to this academic year the word that keeps going through his mind is opportunity. He pointed out that IANR is in a really good spot coming off of the 150th celebration of CASNR. He then gave a brief history of how CASNR and IANR were created and noted that only the University of Florida has a similar structure with the Dean of CASNR, Dean Tiffany Heng-Moss, focusing on curriculum while there is a Dean of Agricultural Research, Derek McClean, a Dean of Extension, Charlie Stoltenow, and Dean Sherri Jones who is dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences which was created with the merger of Teachers College and the College of Human Ecology. He pointed out that some positions and research in CEHS are still funded through IANR while other positions are funded through the Executive Vice Chancellor's office. He reported that he and Dean Heng-Moss decided to have a celebration for the 150th year birthday of CASNR and he noted that 350 people came to East Campus to celebrate the event.

VC Boehm reported that 46% of UNL's research expenditures come from IANR. He pointed out with the investments being made in the College of Engineering he is eager to see what research opportunities there could be between IANR and Engineering pointing out that robotics could be applied to agricultural and natural resources and conservation and the need for deep expertise in computer science in agriculture. He stated that there are opportunities in food and beverage manufacturing, which is the largest sector of manufacturing in Nebraska, that we could partner with through combined research between Engineering and IANR.

VC Boehm stated that if you stacked up extension platforms across the country, he would easily put us in the top three because of our effectiveness with connecting with the people

of Nebraska through our people in Nebraska Extension. He pointed out that Dean Stoltenow has only been at UNL for 18 months and is just starting to hit his stride with Nebraska Extension.

VC Boehm reported that Dean Heng-Moss has worked to establish pathway programs with the first one being launched in 2019. He stated that the Northeast Education Compact partners with twenty-two public school districts, two tribal community colleges, Wayne State, Northeast Community College, and Nebraska College and Technical Agriculture. He stated that the impacts of this program are now coming to fruition. He stated that in Lincoln there is a partnership with Northeast High School called FEWS, which prepares Northeast students for college pathways through hands-on, immersive experiences in the areas of food, energy, water, and societal systems and which is now in its fourth year.

VC Boehm stated that at the Board of Regents meeting on June 22 the budget situation for the University system was discussed. He encouraged the Faculty Senate to be a part of the complex dialog in the taskforces that President Carter will be creating. He reported that President Carter stated that we need a strong flagship campus and called out UNL as that campus. He noted that President Carter stated that the system needs to look at duplication of programs and pointed out that there are 20 programs that are offered on three of the campuses and another 20 that are offered on two of the campuses. He stated that the faculty need to pay attention to reducing the number of duplicate programs.

VC Boehm reported that the University system has a \$58 million shortfall and UNL is typically responsible for half of this amount. He pointed out that this is in addition to UNL's structural deficit that Chancellor Green had brought forward this spring. He noted that Chancellor Green created a taskforce consisting of the Deans and Vice Chancellors which provided a report on proposed budget reductions. He noted that this report was given to Chancellor Bennett for his consideration. VC Boehm pointed out that the next six months will be a really important time for UNL, and the faculty need to be engaged.

VC Boehm stated that he looked forward to Chancellor Bennett and his wife Temple joining him for the road trip across Nebraska which enabled them to see and understand agriculture and rural life in Nebraska. He stated that he is excited about the recharge of key positions such as the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and some of the positions around enrollment management.

Eklund asked if a little more clarification could be provided on the research expenditures. VC Boehm stated that of the \$340 million in UNL research expenditures, \$160 million was connected to faculty within IANR. Eklund then asked for clarification in the differences between East and City Campus. VC Boehm stated that he reports directly to the Chancellor and 100% of CASNR reports to UNL. However, he stated that he also holds the title of Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources of the University of Nebraska system. He noted that as Vice President he has three main responsibilities: he is the President's chief advisor on all things in agriculture, the Daughtery Water for

Food Institute reports to him, and the Dean of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture reports to him.

3.0 Assistant VP Schlichting, Assistant VC Beck

3.1 Changes to Health Insurance Plans

AVC Beck reported that he served on the committee that reviewed the RFP for health insurance plans. AVP Schlichting reported that in early 2023 an RFP was issued to look at options for health, dental, and pharmacy insurance plans since our current contract with health insurers was set to expire on December 31, 2023. Previous RFP processes were done in 1997 and 2018. He pointed out that the University manages the plan designs and the insurance companies just process the claims and maintain the provider network for us. He stated that the committee that reviewed the RFPs was a 12-person committee and included faculty members, managerial/professional, and office service employees from each of the four campuses. He reported that the process was started about a year ago and a consultant was hired to help us evaluate the bids that were received.

AVP Schlichting reported that after the committee reviewed the proposals, it recommended that we go with Blue Cross/Blue Shield for health insurance, change to EmpirRx Health for our pharmacy insurance, and Delta Dental of Nebraska for dental insurance, although he noted that after reevaluating the bids for the dental insurance it was determined that Blue Cross/Blue Shield dental won the bid based on the scoring criteria established by the committee. He noted that the Board of Regents will need to approve the dental plan at its August 17th meeting. He stated that the plans will be offered through the annual NU Flex benefits enrollment this fall and will take effect January 1.

Kopocis asked whether our insurance premiums will be changing. AVP Schlichting stated that premiums are currently being evaluated and hopefully they will be determined by late September or early October. He pointed out that we have been experiencing increased utilization and a lot of high-cost claims so our premiums could increase. Kopocis asked if the three different tiers of plan coverage will still be offered. AVP Schlichting reported that they will still be available.

Zuckerman asked if the deductibles would increase. AVP Schlichting stated that the plans are still being evaluated. He noted that Central Administration is very aware of how important the benefits are and take the evaluation of the plans very seriously. He pointed out that 80% of the coverage comes from the University while the deductibles need to be met by the employees, so they always try to balance these costs.

Zuckerman asked if there will be restrictions on which pharmacy can be used with the EmpirRx plan. AVP Schlichting reported that every pharmacy that is in the network now will be in the new plan with the exception of Kroeger pharmacy and one of the improvements with the EmpirRx plan is that specialty drugs can be processed from any of the in-network pharmacies. Shrader asked who owns the EmpirRx plan. AVP Schlichting stated that it is a privately held company based out of South Carolina. He

noted that the Dean of the College of Pharmacy at UNMC was involved in the RFP process and was a strong advocate from the EmpirRx model and the benefits consultant gave a positive review of it. He reported that the co-pay level will be the same, but EmpirRx provides a lower cost on the front end while Caremark had a rebate model where they would steer you to a higher drug but then the manufacturer would provide a rebate. He pointed out that there will still be no cost for generic drugs purchased through the mail. The provider of the \$0 copay mail order generics will change, and an outreach will be made to employees with this information. Zuckerman asked if there was a change in the vision health care. AVP Schlichting stated that EyeMed would remain as the health care plan.

AVP Schlichting stated that it is not expected that there will be any real significant savings with the new plans, although there will be some small savings. He noted that the bids were comparative and Blue Cross/Blue Shield came in with a really good bid this year. He pointed out that Blue Cross/Blue Shield is also going to provide 24 paid internships to students.

Kopocis asked if the review committee considered the list of providers that were currently accepted by UMR. AVP Schlichting reported that there will not be much disruption with the providers.

Kopocis noted that the enhanced tier allows those living in the Omaha area to take advantage of the enhanced tier because Nebraska Medicine is so prevalent there. AVP Schlichting stated that this issue was raised last year when he met with the Executive Committee to discuss the changes with the retirement plans and now that we know who our health insurers will be, they are reaching out to Lincoln area providers to see if they would be willing to participate in the enhanced tier. He stated that currently how the enhanced tier works is that certain providers give us a reduction in the claim cost that we pay if we build this steerage into the health plan.

Shrader stated that he had the Delta Dental plan previously and asked why the Blue Cross/Blue Shield plan is better. AVP Schlichting noted that he did hear good things about the Delta plan but there were several evaluation criteria factors that elevated Blue Cross/Blue Shield over the Delta plan.

Shrader asked if we will be going through the RFP process again in four or five years. AVP Schlichting stated that we need to do due diligence for our employees so the process should be done periodically. He pointed out that there were far fewer emails with concerns with this transition than with the UMR transition.

Kopocis asked if there are any changes with the life insurance plans. AVP Schlichting stated that there are no immediate changes with the insurance plans. He noted that the benefits are always being evaluated for the employees.

4.0 Announcements

4.1 Executive Committee Retreat

Kopocis noted that next week the Executive Committee will hold its annual retreat to develop the Committee's goals for the 2023-2024 academic year. She suggested that the focus should be on items that can be accomplished rather than just broad overarching goals.

5.0 Approval of July 25, 2023 Minutes

Kopocis asked if there were any further revisions to the minutes. Hearing none she asked for approval of the minutes. Tschetter moved to approve the minutes, motion was then seconded by Dawes and approved by the Executive Committee.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Update on Guidelines for Faculty Evaluation

Minter reported that AVC Walker shared the proposed revisions to the Guidelines for Faculty Evaluation with the Deans at a recent Deans' retreat and noted that the Deans had some feedback which was like those that the Executive Committee raised. Kopocis stated that AVC Walker sent an email saying that she was incorporating the suggestions made by the Deans into the document and would send it to the Executive Committee for review when completed.

7.0 New Business

No new business was discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:39 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, August 22, 2023, at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in 203 Alexander Building. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Signe Boudreau, Secretary.