

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent:

Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023

Location: 201 Canfield Administration 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 2:32 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Green

2.1 Introduction of Chief of Staff and Associate the Chancellor Josh Davis

Chancellor Green stated that he is very pleased to have Chief of Staff Josh Davis on board and felt that he was a natural fit for the position. He noted that he has known Chief of Staff Davis for a long time pointing out that Josh first worked in Central Administration before being hired to work in IANR and then moving into the EVC's office. Chief of Staff Davis stated that he was happy to be here and looks forward to working with the Executive Committee.

2.2 Spring Budget Planning

Chancellor Green noted that he asked to have this item on the agenda. He reported that budget planning, both for the ongoing budget and for the next biennium, is well underway but we will not know what the final budget will look like for a few months. He stated that Governor Pillen will be giving his State of the State address tomorrow in which he will roll out his budget for the state for the next biennium. He reported that his understanding is that Governor Pillen has marked a 2% increase per year during the biennium for the University, however, this is a point lower than what the University was hoping for. He stated that there will be efforts to try to get the amount raised to 3% but it is uncertain whether this will be successful. He pointed out that there are a number of new members in the State Legislature, and it is unclear at this time how supportive they will be of the university.

Chancellor Green reported that a bigger concern is what the budget will look like two years from now because the number of proposals being made by the new administration to reduce taxes without adding additional revenue sources could significantly impact the state's budget. He noted that the plan is to shift long-term funding for K-12 and community colleges from the county tax rolls onto the state tax rolls which is nearly equivalent to what the University receives from the state.

Chancellor Green noted that additionally, due to our decrease in enrollment, UNL has a budget deficit and work has already begun to see what adjustments can be made to address the deficit in a way that would not invoke the procedures to address significant budget reductions. He pointed out that the current idea is to make significant budget reductions on the administrative side rather than the academic side. He stated that hopefully some of the budget deficit can be addressed through increased enrollment and pointed out that recruiting efforts have stepped up considerably.

Weissling asked if there is a sense of how a 15% reduction in administration would impact the faculty. Chancellor Green stated that this has not yet been examined and the leadership team is looking to see if there were a way that would have minimal impact. He thinks there could be a lot of streamlining but he does not know what the final impacts could be and that this evaluation is a part of the planning process.

2.3 Will there be an Alternative Worksite Arrangement Policy for Faculty?

Chancellor Green stated that while there has been some discussion about remote site faculty work for non-teaching faculty members, it is unknown whether there would be a policy similar to the policy for staff. He pointed out that such a policy for the faculty would be outside of UNL's normal policy. He stated that there are some faculty, such as research faculty, who have moved to remote work, and these are being evaluated on a one-to-one basis to determine if these faculty members are required to work on campus. He stated that he does not foresee an alternative working policy for teaching faculty members.

Minter stated she recalled hearing a suggestion in a meeting that there could be another Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP). Chancellor Green noted that this may have been raised at a Townhall meeting, but it has since been evaluated and the net gain financially would not be worth offering it again at this time. He stated that the financial gain would be minimal and there was a concern that it could actually harm a few departments if several of their faculty members retired at the same time.

Paul stated that she understands the spirit of UNL's Faculty Residency Policy, but she asked about faculty who do not have teaching roles and whose physical presence on campus is not required in order for them to do their work. Chancellor Green noted an argument could be made that the classification of some non-teaching faculty members was such that they could work remotely. Krehbiel pointed out that many Extension Educators are asking about a policy because there are many times when they could be doing the work from their home. Chancellor Green pointed out that there aren't any restrictions in place for non-teaching faculty members and if a dean feels that there can be an alternative worksite arrangement it could be done. Paul noted that the Faculty Residency Policy already states an exception for Extension Educators. Baesu stated that she thinks an exception can be made if approved by the chair and the dean.

2.4 Online Teaching

Eklund noted that President Carter said he wanted to see more large online classes being taught and he asked if there is any support for doing this. Chancellor Green stated that he

is currently unaware of any initiatives but noted that we recently just hired Dr. Kevin Shriner as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Digital and Online Learning who will begin working on campus in February and EVC Ankerson has stated that investments are being made to increase the presence of online teaching at UNL.

Chancellor Green reported that traditionally at UNL the approach and philosophy of online education has been for graduate level courses with the idea that UNL would be focused on graduate online courses while UNK and UNO would predominantly provide undergraduate courses, but this has shifted in recent years. He pointed out that UNL still predominantly offers graduate level online courses, but the number of undergraduate online courses is increasing at UNL.

Kolbe asked whether University of Nebraska High School is still handled by UNL. Chancellor Green stated that Henzlik Hall housed the original University High School many years ago and even after it became an online offering it was administered by UNL until six years ago when it was taken over by Central Administration. He noted that it is a self-supporting program.

Kolbe asked what is happening with tuition rates given the outlook of the University budget. Chancellor Green stated that President Carter is hopeful that there will be a tuition increase but noted that this will be set by the Board of Regents in June for the next fiscal year. He noted that the Board has had significant change in membership with the election of a new regent (Kathy Wilmot) and the vacant seat held by now Governor Jim Pillen. He stated that Governor Pillen will soon be announcing his appointment of the new board member to fill that seat. Kolbe asked how many years it has been since there has been an increase in tuition. Chancellor Green reported that in the past six years there have been just a few very small tuition rate increases. He stated that having a 4-6% tuition increase would certainly help the University but that isn't likely to happen. He pointed out that while our tuition rates are very competitive in the market (the lowest in the BIG10), our room and board and student fees in combination result in total cost of attendance being in the middle quartile of our peers.

Eklund asked which would be more helpful to decreasing our deficit, increased enrollment rates or increased tuition rates. Chancellor Green stated that having a 1% increase in enrollment coupled with a 3% increase in tuition would significantly help with our deficit. He pointed out that we were down last year by almost 3% in enrollment and the year before by 1.5%, on top of which we had several of the largest graduating classes. He stated that we seem to be getting back to more normal graduation numbers and we are seeing some movement in graduate student enrollment and incoming undergraduate freshman class, both of which will help with our budget situation.

Eklund asked if we are seeing any interest from the states that were added to the enrollment incentive program. Chancellor Green noted that some colleges, such as the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, are seeing increased numbers of applications but the increases are not across the board for all colleges.

Chancellor Green stated that something else to keep in mind with the budget is the operating costs for the new buildings that are being constructed pointing out that state funds do not cover these costs. In addition, he stated that we have \$200 million in planned construction and renovation projects occurring on campus under LB384, where there is a requirement that we must pay 2% in depreciation each year to cover the cost of future deferred maintenance on those facilities. Another concern for the budget is that we really need to increase the minimum of our graduate student stipends.

Eklund asked if the difference in regular tuition from a Ruth Leverton or Beadle scholarship must come from other funding sources. Chancellor Green stated that these scholarships are a foregone revenue for us, and they are booked as an expense to us. He noted that the remissions model is based on the assumption that students who have a scholarship will spend some money here at the University, but we are at the point that we cannot provide more remissions.

2.5 Passing of Dave Fitzgibbon

Chancellor Green wanted to acknowledge the tragic loss of Dave Fitzgibbon who for so many years was the guy behind the camera for almost all filming done for the University. He noted that Dave was a phenomenally creative person and a great human being and will be greatly missed. He noted that the celebration of Dave's life will be held on Sunday, January 29th.

3.0 Announcements

No announcements were made.

4.0 Approval of December 13, 2022 Minutes

Minter asked if there were any further revisions to the minutes. Hearing none she asked for approval of the minutes. Weissling moved for approval, motion seconded by Lott and then approved by the Executive Committee.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Resolution to Provide Representation on the Faculty Senate to the Staff Senate, Postdoctoral Association, ASUN, and Graduate Student Assembly

Minter reported that she is drafting the resolution that will be presented to the Faculty Senate in February and voted on in March, providing the Staff Senate, Postdoctoral Association, ASUN, and the Graduate Student Assembly with a representative on the Faculty Senate. She pointed out that these representatives would not be voting members, but they could ask the President of the Senate to place matters on the Senate agenda and to participate in the discussion.

Zuckerman asked if the Faculty Senate has a representative on each of these groups. Griffin reported that the Senate does not and noted that ASUN, UNOPA and UAAD have had representation on the Senate for decades, but these positions are not always filled. Minter pointed out that there is some value in recognizing the relationship of the Faculty Senate with these groups even if they are non-voting. She stated that the Executive

Committee has also discussed meeting with the officers from each of the groups once a year.

5.2 Resolution Supporting the University's Budget Request to the State Legislature

Minter noted that at the December 6 Faculty Senate meeting she informed the Senate that a resolution may be presented to the Senate to support the University's budget request. She pointed out that similar resolutions have been supported by the Senate in the past. She asked the Executive Committee members to suggest highlights of the work the University has done that helps support the state. She stated that she would send a draft of the resolution to the Executive Committee for their feedback.

5.3 Continued Concerns About EM 16

Minter reported that she has been corresponding with a Senator who has further concerns about EM 16 and Cortex and she is aware that members of the UNL AAUP are also raising concerns. She noted that there will more than likely be discussion during the open mic session about the issue at the February 7 Senate meeting.

5.4 Calendar Committee

Minter reported that the UNL Calendar Subcommittee was charged to do some research on the spring pre-session. She stated that the colleges were contacted to gather information about their course offerings and opinions on how they felt the pre-session worked and that the NU system is surveying the students and the faculty who participated in the interim session to get their views. She stated that the Subcommittee spoke with ASUN and asked if they prefer the regular 15-week session, the spring pre-session followed by a 15-week semester, or the spring pre-session followed by a 14-week session. She noted that there was a split between those wanting the regular 15-week semester with no pre-session and those that wanted the pre-session and a 14-week session, but no one wanted the pre-session followed by a 15-week semester. She stated that the Subcommittee would soon be finishing its report.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Meeting About Use of GPT Artificial Intelligence Program

Minter stated that she recently attended a meeting with VC Bellows, Associate Dean Griffin, and others to discuss students using the GPT artificial intelligence program or similar programs. She noted that there is concern that students will use the program to write papers or to do other assignments rather than the student writing it themselves. She stated that VC Bellows would like the Faculty Senate to write a policy stating when the program could be used, but she stated that she would need to discuss it first with the Executive Committee because there may be some courses that would want to explore the program. She suggested that a charge should be given to the Senate's Academic Integrity Committee to explore the GPT program and to make a recommendation to the Senate about its use. The Executive Committee agreed that a charge be given to the Academic Integrity Committee. Kopocis noted that the Turn It In program is beginning to recognize if GPT is being used. She pointed out that using it could be beneficial at times, but it should be up to the instructor to determine its use.

6.2 Correspondence

Minter reported that she received an email from a student from the NU Divest group encouraging the Faculty Senate to pass a resolution asking the Board of Regents to have the University divest from fossil fuel investments. She stated that she would reach out to the Senate to see if there is interest in supporting this idea.

Minter stated that she was contacted by the Faculty Senate at Purdue University which passed a resolution to oppose any ban on abortions in the state. She noted that the resolution was then sent to Purdue's Board of Regents. She stated that she wanted the Executive Committee to be aware of what another Big Ten faculty senate was doing.

6.3 Agenda Items for EVC Ankerson

The Executive Committee identified the following agenda items for the meeting with EVC Ankerson next week:

- Status of Guidelines for Evaluation of Faculty
- When will the academic calendar be confirmed for upcoming years? Faculty often need to plan at least a year in advance for some events. Who is responsible for updating the academic calendar on the Registrar's website?
- If the University decides to go with a 14-week semester, how soon would it likely go into place?
- Spring pre-session. Is there information on the students' opinion of the pre-session and whether they thought it was useful? How many departments offered classes during the pre-session, what was the total number of classes that were offered, and what was the total number of students who took classes during the session? Can mini sessions be better utilized?

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, January 31, 2023, at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in the Nebraska Union, Big Ten Conference Room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Signe Boudreau, Secretary.