

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Vakilzadian

Date: Tuesday, October 31, 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 (*Kopocis*)

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

2.0 EVC Ankerson

2.1 The Executive Committee met last week with GSA President Mowat and Vice President Jemkur to discuss problems graduate students are encountering, one of which is that many graduate students are expected to work more than the 19.6 hours they are contracted to do. Can you comment on this? Some cultural differences inhibit international students, and some domestic students, from speaking to their advisor. Is there a possibility of having an ombuds person for graduate students?

EVC Ankerson reported that Dean Hope, Graduate Studies, reported that the office is working on a process to provide better support for graduate and professional students and part of this effort might include an ombuds person for these students. She noted that we now have an Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, Jen Wood, and she, along with her team, are having conversations with other support services to see what services can be offered to graduate and professional students and the idea is to build a comprehensive approach to providing better services for these students. She pointed out that they are working closely with Vice Chancellor Anderson to ensure that there is no duplication of services.

EVC Ankerson recommended that any graduate student who is having difficulty can talk to their graduate chair or their college's associate dean for graduate education. She noted that some issues were resolved when this was done but clarifying expectations of graduate students needs improvement. She pointed out that graduate students cannot work more than 19.6 hours, although students can sign up for thesis or dissertation credits which might require additional hours which could be related to their research. She stated that graduate students in challenging situations are welcome to contact Graduate Studies and noted that there are several staff members who provide consulting services to the students. She stated that if any graduate student is asked to sign a contract saying they must work more than 19.6 hours they should forward a copy of that contract to the graduate chair's Associate Dean and then to Dean Hope in Graduate Studies.

EVC Ankerson stated that her team is very aware of the power differentials and especially the cultural differences that can arise between a faculty member and a graduate student and Dean Hope has stated that she will prioritize these concerns and will have some meetings with relevant people including the GSA before the end of this semester.

2.2 The incident reporting program categorizes comments according to whether it relates to academics, safety, or other issues. Who gets these reports and how are they dealt with?

EVC Ankerson stated that for academic issues that fall under the purview of the EVC office, AVC Walker receives these reports, and she believes that someone in Student Affairs may also receive them. She noted that AVC Walker shares the report with the appropriate person in the relevant college, typically it is the Dean or Associate Dean for faculty, and they discuss the appropriate resolution. She stated that if there is an institutional equity and compliance issue, IEC works on the report first and then it would go to the academic site. Shrader asked who is in charge of distributing the reports to the appropriate units. EVC Ankerson stated that it might be AVC Walker or possibly it goes to another unit.

2.3 What is the strategy for online programs? Faculty are informing the Senate that their department approves an online course, particularly those needed for program completion, but then it is being stopped in the EVC office.

EVC Ankerson stated that there is a distinction between an online course and an online program. She pointed out that online courses go through the regular curricular approval process and these courses might be created to provide on-campus students with an option to take a particular class, particularly a class that has high enrollment and can be difficult to get into. She noted that online programs are for students who take their courses entirely online and the programs have a stricter path of courses. She said these programs are being developed and advertised for a different audience who have a different motivation from on-campus students.

EVC Ankerson reported that AVC Shriner was hired in February to lead the effort to develop our online strategy that incorporates both graduate and undergraduate online programs and he is working in collaboration with the colleges. She noted that he is currently working with nine online graduate programs and is developing best practices for marketing and recruiting for these programs. She reported that he also has meetings scheduled with individual faculty members to discuss potential online master's degrees programs. She pointed out that AVC Shriner's work has been to improve our online infrastructure because there hasn't been an infrastructure in place for online programs to be scalable and to be successful and these programs need an advising structure for the students in online programs.

EVC Ankerson stated that AVC Shriner is initially focusing on graduate online programs because they are more developed and there is a better market for these kinds of programs. She encourages faculty to work with AVC Shriner to develop these programs. She noted

that one of the things to consider when developing an online program is whether it is market-driven, and if there is a large enough audience for it so that it can be successful.

Tschetter noted that this helps to explain things because there was a lot of confusion about offering online courses and her department worked hard to develop online courses but then they were turned down for these courses. She noted that this is putting them in a tough position because they moved a lot of courses to online that they wouldn't have done if they knew that they had to be in a specific online program.

Schrader asked if there is a fee differential for online programs. EVC Ankerson pointed out that there are a few programs, such as the MBA online program, that have their own particular tuition. She reported that a proposal will be developed for the Board of Regents to consider addressing tuition differently for online programs. She noted that we need to look at the market and competition structure of the online program market.

Tschetter asked if we are a brick-and-mortar institution that has some online courses available to provide on-campus students with an option of how they can take some courses. EVC Ankerson stated that we are developing more online programs in order to expand our market. Tschetter asked if departments should be focusing on creating more online programs. EVC Ankerson stated that online programs are being elevated where it makes sense to offer them and so we can be competitive with other institutions. Tschetter asked if online programs are more graduate student oriented. EVC Ankerson stated that they do not have to be, and we are opening them up to undergraduate programs as well. She noted that the student wanting an online program typically has a different mindset than a student who comes to campus.

Eklund asked if any trends in the online program market have been identified in the last six months and noted that President Carter had mentioned that people want online programs to get a degree, but they want it from a reputable university. EVC Ankerson stated that she believes this is still true and pointed out that there is competition for recruiting online students even amongst reputational universities. She stated that we want the quality of our online programs to be very high. Schrader asked if a program that began as an in-person program could be moved to an online program. EVC Ankerson stated that this could happen. Tschetter asked if guidelines and best practices will be developed to assist units in developing an online program. EVC Ankerson stated that this has been worked on and is in the final draft stage.

2.4 The Executive Committee used to meet separately to interview candidates for Dean and higher administrative positions but now they are being put into interviews with reps from ASUN and the Staff Senate. The faculty often have different issues than the students and staff and the Senate reps can maybe, if lucky, ask two questions. The limited time with the candidates makes it difficult for the Senate reps to give a fair assessment of the candidate.

EVC Ankerson noted that the change was made for the interview with the priority candidate for the VC for Student Affairs, in part because there needed to be broader

representation from students and staff in the interview. She noted that in the past there were times when it was difficult to get Senate Executive Committee members to attend the interviews and she pointed out that trying to arrange the interview schedule for so many different groups that need to be involved is very difficult and her office tries to avoid a Tuesday afternoon interview with the Senate Executive Committee because that is when the Committee meets. She suggested that it might be possible to lengthen the interview from 30 minutes to 45 minutes to allow the faculty to ask more questions and there is also the public presentation by the candidates that the Executive Committee members could attend.

Griffin noted that the problem of not getting enough Executive Committee members to attend an interview started occurring more frequently when the interview time was set by the EVC office. She pointed out that 10:00-11:00 on Tuesdays or Thursdays is prime teaching times for many faculty members but that is when the interviews are often scheduled. She reported that the Executive Committee has met to interview candidates during the Committee's meeting time on Tuesday afternoon which ensures that there will be multiple Committee members in attendance. EVC Ankerson stated that this was good to know that the Committee would be open to using part of its meeting time to interview a candidate and said hopefully we can align interviews with the Executive Committee in the future.

2.5 If a faculty member retires next year will the department get the line back or will it be taken by the administration.

EVC Ankerson reported that years ago the EVC office did sweep positions and then would allocate them back to the college but now the college is making the decision what happens with the open line. She noted that each college has a different process, and the Dean reflects on what the college can afford and what the college is focusing on before distributing the vacant faculty line.

Eklund asked what the difference is in cost between a tenure-track faculty member and a Professor of Practice. EVC Ankerson pointed out that it really varies across departments and colleges. She noted that usually the leadership team in the college looks at these positions to see if it fits into the college plans. She stated that there are many different reasons why you might select the different types of faculties for a position. She reported that a Lecturer is 100% teaching, Professors of Practice are 80% teaching and 20% might be either research or service.

2.6 Can you provide an update on ASEM efforts after consulting with Ruffalo Noel Levitz.

EVC Ankerson reported that a considerable amount of work has occurred during the last two months and there has been a whole leadership team that had working groups, one working on recruitment and the other on marketing communications, reviewing and considering the assessment from Ruffalo Noel Levitz. She noted that numerous changes have been made to the recruitment process, one of which is that we suspended the application fee deadline from August 15 to November 1. Another change is that students who have submitted their application fee by November 1 will now know on February 1

what their complete scholarship package will be, and this is important because it allows us to focus our messages to students about campus life and academics and then shift to messages about the value of getting a degree in higher education and the cost. She stated that strategically and tactically we can now employ clear calls for action relating to particular dates which can be put into a cycle of messages.

EVC Ankerson reported that there have been a lot of changes to recruitment and marketing, and we now have digital marketing in the Omaha airport as well as some digital marketing in Indianapolis. She noted that we are also doing more digital signage in high schools around the state, and we are looking at more data analytics to make improvements.

2.7 Where is our social media presence? Hear and see things advertising UNO and UNK but nothing about UNL.

EVC Ankerson noted that there are many social media platforms, and the UN system does not seem skewed to any particular campus. She stated that the main platforms we use are X, Instagram, and Facebook and we have a fair amount of social media presence but if there is a particular platform where we are lacking, she will forward this information to University Communications.

2.0 Announcements

No announcements were made.

3.0 Approval of October 24, 2023 Minutes

Kopocis asked if there were any further revisions to the minutes. Hearing none she asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Tschetter moved and Schrader seconded approving the minutes. Motion approved by the Executive Committee.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 Guidance for Faculty for Public Advocacy Document

Kopocis noted that both AVC Walker and Director of Government Relations Herrmann agreed that the document was well-written and appreciated the Executive Committee's work. She noted that Director Herrmann asked if her name and contact information could be added at the bottom of the document. The Executive Committee agreed this was fine. The document will be given to the Senators at the November 7th meeting and will be available on the Faculty Senate website.

5.0 New Business

No new business was discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:26 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, November 7, 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.