

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

**Absent:** Lott, Paul

**Date:** Tuesday, September 12, 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.

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### 1.0 Call (*Kopocis*)

The meeting was called to order at 2:36 p.m.

### 2.0 Announcements

#### 2.1 Presentation on Safeguarding Academic Freedom: Exploring the Potential and Limitations of Faculty Unions

Kopocis announced that the presentation by Professor Niehaus will be held on September 26 from noon until 1:00 p.m. in the Nebraska Union.

### 3.0 Approval of August 29, 2023 Minutes

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

### 4.0 Unfinished Business

#### 4.1 Executive Committee Goals for 2023-2024

The Executive Committee continued working on revising the draft of the Executive Committee Goals for 2023-2024.

#### 4.2 Update on Legislative Engagement Language

Kopocis stated that Heath Mello, former Vice President for External Relations, asked the UNL Faculty Senate to create a set of guidelines like what UNMC has when an employee speaks to the Legislature. She noted that in the past some university employees did not recognize themselves as a citizen and occasionally comments were made that would have a negative impact on the university.

Bearnese reported that there are three documents that have been created that provide guidelines for any university employee speaking to the Nebraska Legislature: [Executive Memorandum 2](#) names the NU Vice President for External Relations as the official representative for the entire university system to the Governor's office, the Nebraska Legislature, agencies of the State, Congress, and federal agencies; the Guiding Principles for the 2023 Nebraska Legislative Session, and the Rules of Engagement for State

Relations in 2023 Legislative Session. She noted that Nebraska Extension has taken great stride to follow the protocols as stated in these guidelines since Extension Educators often speak to Legislators and other government agencies. She pointed out that the documents were not easily found, and she needed the assistance of Jessie Brophy, Director of External Engagement in IANR, to obtain copies of them.

Zuckerman noted that she is working on developing a document, with the help of some colleagues, on guidance for faculty engagement with the legislature and other governmental bodies. She noted that the document explains the difference between speaking on behalf of the University, speaking as an expert in a particular area, and speaking as a private citizen. She stated that the document also provides information on academic freedom and the free speech rights of faculty members.

The Executive Committee discussed whether guidelines similar to UNMC's were needed, and if so, whether the Senate should create its own guidelines or use ones similar to UNMC's. Minter stated that she is glad that the issue has been brought to the attention of the Executive Committee, but she does not want a document that perpetuates a level of fear. Zuckerman pointed out that the Faculty Senate advocates for academic freedom and a set of guidelines is needed that helps to protect it. She stated that she would share the draft document that she is working on about faculty rights and speaking to the Legislature with the Executive Committee.

#### **5.0 New Business**

No new business was discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, September 19, 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.