

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bearnes, Boudreau, Bouma, Dawes, Eklund, Kopocis, Lott, Minter, Shrader, Vakilzadian

Absent: Baesu, Tschetter, Zuckerman

Date: Tuesday, March 26, 2024

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 2:30.

2.0 EVC Ankerson

2.1 **There is a requirement in the EVC's office that promotion files contain at least three external letters from R1 institutions, yet this is not stated in the Guidelines for Faculty Evaluation. How can this be enforced when it is not policy?**

EVC Ankerson stated that it *is* policy and is posted on the EVC website and communicated annually to academic leaders. The Guidelines provide general principles and processes. There are a number of more specific policies on details of how the process is implemented, determined by the [EVC Office](#) and [IANR VC](#) and included on their websites. Just because these are not in the guidelines does not mean they are not published campus policy to be applied consistently across colleges.

Information about these policies is sent annually in a memo to deans, associate deans, and DEOs, including the requirement for at least three R1 reviewers. It is made clear in this memo that it is the responsibility of the administrator overseeing the review (usually a department chair or other DEO) to ensure that at least three R1 reviewers can be obtained OR that exceptions can be approved in advance of solicitation by the appropriate VC office.

Shrader asked why the memo is only sent out to the administrators and not the faculty. Kopocis asked if language can be added to let the faculty member know that they need to check to ensure that their files contain letters from an R1 university. EVC Ankerson stated that if the faculty member doesn't waive their rights to access outside reviews, they would have the right to know the identify of the outside reviewers. She reported that she has been discussing with AVC Marks what the promotion and tenure documentation needs to include and discussed expanding the footnote to provide more information about signing a waiver. Kopocis suggested including language reminding the candidate that if they sign the waiver, they will not be able to see the letters from outside reviewers.

EVC Ankerson noted that there are promotion and tenure workshops to help those faculty members preparing their P & T files.

Kopocis asked if every college is different in how they choose the reviewers. She pointed out that in Engineering she turned in eight names of possible reviewers. EVC Ankerson pointed out that typically the candidate gets to object to anyone on the list of reviewers, but it varies by college as to how many potential reviewers' names need to be submitted.

Vakilzadian asked what happens if the candidate is not made aware of who the reviewers are. EVC Ankerson stated that it is the administrator's responsibility to inform the candidate. Vakilzadian pointed out that there have been cases when the administrator has not informed the candidate and that a file didn't include three letters from R1 institutions. EVC Ankerson reported that the P & T files go through several reviews, from the department, college, and the dean before it reaches the EVC's office. She pointed out that there is usually time to collect the necessary information. She noted that some colleges have additional requirements for promotion and tenure.

2.2 Why are the same requirements for promotion applied to professors of practice when they are not involved in getting publications?

EVC Ankerson reported that the intent behind the R1 reviewer policy is to ensure that the reviewers are best positioned to comment on the candidate's work within a research-intensive university. Even Professors of Practice who do not have research apportionments (and some do) are teaching within that research-intensive environment and therefore the impact of their teaching is best understood as part of that context. A professor in a different type of university, for example, might be able to offer some commentary on a Professor of Practice's teaching, but will generally not have an understanding of how that teaching fits in with the R1 environment and will therefore not be able to make as discerning an evaluation as someone who does teach in an R1 environment.

The goal is to make sure that external reviews, no matter for which college, discipline, or faculty appointment type, are addressing the same high standard for excellence.

Vakilzadian asked if Professors of Practice with a 80% teaching apportionment are being evaluated by someone who only has a 10% teaching apportionment. EVC Ankerson stated that people are reviewed based on their apportionment so the reviewer should be demonstrating excellence in teaching. She pointed out that it would be unusual for a research professor to be critiquing a teaching professor or vice versa. She noted that the goal is to get the most accurate and discerning view of the candidate.

2.3 How many programs fall short of meeting the CCPE threshold? How many of these programs would impact students getting a degree and is this a factor that is considered before a program is eliminated?

[For reference, UNL offers approximately 50 doctoral and professional, 75 masters, and 150 baccalaureate degree programs.] EVC Ankerson stated that CCPE thresholds

consist of a 5-year average of 3 degrees awarded for doctoral, 5 degrees for masters, and 7 degrees for baccalaureate. Based upon the 2022 data, there were approximately 14 doctoral, 30 masters, and 21 baccalaureate degree programs with the number of awarded degrees below the CCPE threshold.

Of the doctoral programs, 3 were less than 5 years old, one has gone through APC for elimination in February.

Of the masters' programs, 2 were less than 5 years old, 3 have gone through the APC process for elimination (February and March), and 3 are non-admitting masters.

Of the bachelors' degree programs, 3 were less than 5 years old, and 2 have been through the APC process for elimination (February).

Just because a program doesn't meet the threshold requirements does not mean it isn't an important subject area, or that it cannot be an option, specialization or minor.

Students have the opportunity to finish their degree, we "teach-out" the programs. Vakilzadian asked if it is possible to combine programs from the other campuses. EVC Ankerson stated that the CAOs have had some initial discussions about this.

2.4 The Senate has received word that some faculty members are being told by their dean that their program is going to be eliminated yet no proposals for deletion of the programs have been proposed to the APC. How are you going to ensure that any academic program cuts are given to the APC for consideration?

EVC Ankerson stated that there are a variety of normal processes that occur in units and colleges well before a program action is brought to the APC. These include actions at the program and department level, curriculum committees, deans, and EVC support; all prior to a proposal going to the APC for new, modified, or eliminated programs. It is the responsibility of the colleges to monitor programs and propose actions accordingly – this is a part of administrative oversight.

There are also program actions the APC addresses that are acted upon as the result of the Chancellor invoking a process of significant budget reallocations and reductions. Vakilzadian asked when reductions would occur. EVC Ankerson reported that they are typically enacted during a fiscal year. She noted that there are different requirements for eliminating a position depending on the type of appointment. For instance, a Lecturer T has a one-year contract and there are rules about when the faculty member needs to be informed if their appointment is to be terminated.

2.6 Enrollment Update and Trends in the Colleges

EVC Ankerson reported that we are still trending ahead of the last 3 years point-in-time for undergraduate first-time freshmen. Enrollment data thus far for Fall 2024: at this point in time, nearly all colleges are showing an increase in students – remember – this is a

day-by-day situation. Due to FAFSA delays, it will be a bit later than usual before we have a full picture of incoming undergraduate students.

For graduate students, we are still up around 11% in applications and running ahead of last year for admitted and accepted at this point in time. Half of the students who have accepted offers are domestic and thus will not get caught in any immigration delays. Incoming master's students are up at this point in time, admitted doctoral students show slightly weaker numbers. Both accepted masters and doctoral student numbers are up from last year point in time.

Percentages can be misleading as the size of our colleges varies greatly (from approximately 460 to approximately 4,090). As of Fall 2023,

- 6 of the 9 colleges up or flat in 1-year comparison (0% to 8.2%)
- 3 of the 9 are down in the 1-year comparison (-2.9% to -6.3%)

When looking at a 5-year trend,

- 4 of the 9 colleges are up from (8.1% to 27.3%)
- 5 of the 9 colleges are down from (-6.7% to -19.3%)

Vakilzadian asked if our enrollment is picking up now. EVC Ankerson stated that it is and noted that FSAS is impacting our out of state students, so we are seeing increased interest from non-resident students. Eklund noted that we have been targeting students from ten states for instate tuition and asked if we are seeing any uptick in these students. EVC Ankerson reported that we are seeing an uptick, especially from the Minneapolis and Minnesota area. She stated graduate student applications are still up and about half of them are domestic students.

2.7 Are DFW rates being addressed by colleges, deans, and directors of schools?

EVC Ankerson stated that the focus on DFW rates is important for multiple reasons – to identify areas to examine prerequisites and if they are still appropriate in preparing students to enter the course; and, to identify areas where additional assistance may be needed for students in learning difficult material. Also critical is to examine not only the overall DFW rates, but the equity gap in DFW rates for course.

Amy Goodburn is scheduled to provide an update to you on April 9th and will be happy to talk in detail then about new reports regarding learning equity and analytics data and how they are enabling academic leaders and instructors to review and reflect upon DFW rates in their courses and programs. She is currently working with the Center for Transformative Teaching to develop case studies of instructors who are using these reports to engage in reflection for improved course outcomes.

You may also be interested in specific examples from colleges – they are conducting data analysis and taking follow-up action steps. For CAS, June Griffin and Christina Fielder are leading the college-wide challenge for achieving success in undergraduate programs (CAS UP!) – they also incorporate a review of progress toward unit level CAS UP! Plans within the annual performance reviews of all relevant chairs and directors in the college.

In JMC, they discuss and publish DFW rates in their faculty and staff newsletter at least once a semester and discuss the Performance Reporting and Analytics Dashboards available to faculty in Canvas to review for their courses. They have also opted into the Course Outliers reports which are regularly reviewed by the Academic Navigators, who routinely use this report to conduct early intervention outreach to students struggling in the course. They have also piloted mid-term grades to initiate intervention by the academic advising team for students at risk of failure.

In FPA, the school of music is engaging in discussion about how to revise a sequence of theory and skills courses to ensure greater student success – as a result of assessing high DFW courses.

The COB is piloting some new programs such as Learning Assistants to better support students in classes that historically have high DFW rates. They have completed two case studies of traditionally high DFW courses that began using learning assistants to do things like:

- increase communication with students;
- offer before and after class tutoring (plus normal appointments);
- lead review sessions (mandatory for ACCT 200);
- provide feedback on assignments;
- Engage with students during class activities.

Faculty who effectively weave learning assistants into their courses will have a much better chance at identifying and supporting students who are struggling.

An example of the impact is shown for ACCT 200, the accounting course in the Business Minor that is only available to non-business students.

ACCT 200

Spring 2022 (with no learning assistants) to Spring 2023 (with learning assistants)

- DFW rate decreased 2.2 percentage points
- Students earning a D or F in the course decreased by 4 percentage points
- The percentage of students earning an A or B in the course increased 9 percentage points
- The average exam score increased 2%, with the final exam average increasing 5 percentage points.

2.8 With the Athletic Department oversight further away from campus and the impacts of NIL, how are we going to keep the student in the student-athlete and support players' academic success as well as athletic success?

EVC Ankerson reported that she spoke with Dennis LaBlanc, Executive Associate Athletic Director – Academics, to learn firsthand about our student athletes' success. During the Fall semester, our 543 student-athletes posted the highest cumulative GPA in school history by achieving an outstanding mark of 3.415. A total of 426 student-athletes

had a semester GPA at or above 3.000 for Fall 2023, and our Nebraska's nation-leading total of Academic All-Americans is now 354.

The following teams had the highest cumulative GPA in school history:

Baseball
Football
Men's Track & Field
Women's Basketball
Women's Cross Country
Women's Golf
Softball
Women's Track & Field

The challenge student athletes are running into – not just Nebraska – is transferring and then transferring again – and making decisions that affect their time to degree.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 VC Zeleny to Speak at May 7th Meeting

Griffin reported that VC Zeleny will speak to the Faculty Senate at the May 7th meeting explaining UNL's budget and how we came to have a deficit.

4.0 Approval of March 19, 2024 Minutes

Kopocis asked if there were any revisions to the minutes. Minter requested a few minor changes to the minutes. Kopocis then asked for a motion to approve the revised minutes. Minter moved and Shrader seconded approving the minutes. Motion approved by the Executive Committee.

5.0 Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was discussed.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Undeclared Students Not Having Access to Some University Resources

Kopocis reported that she spoke with several ASUN students who raised concerns that undecided students do not have access to resources such as Start Smart and other university resources. The Committee agreed to ask AVC Goodburn about this when it meets with her on April 9th.

6.2 Additional Course Costs for Students

Kopocis stated that some courses require additional costs for students which are not advertised but are necessary to purchase items for the course. She stated that a plug-in program to Canvas is an example and has a cost over \$100. She noted that she asked EVC Ankerson whether the university could negotiate a lower cost of these items for the students. Minter asked if there should be a review of non-book related expenses, especially unexpected expenses that are out-of-pocket costs for students. She stated that there needs to be justification for these additional expenses. The Executive Committee agreed to include this as an agenda item for AVC Goodburn.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, April 2, 2024, 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.