

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Baesu, Bearnese, Boudreau, Dawes, Eklund, Kopocis, Lott, Shrader, Tschetter, Vakilzadian, VanderPlas

Absent: Bouma, Leiter

Date: Tuesday, November 12, 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 (*Eklund*)

Eklund called the meeting to order precisely at 2:30 p.m.

2.0 EVC Ankerson/VC Zeleny

2.1 **Can exit interviews for faculty be conducted again and can the aggregate date from these interviews be shared with the Seante Executive Committee?**

EVC Ankerson stated that exit interviews are a priority, and more information will be coming out about this in the next few months. She stated that she saw no problem in sharing the aggregated data with the Executive Committee. Eklund stated that he heard that we lost female faculty members because they wanted to be in closer proximity to their partner/spouse. EVC Ankerson stated that this is the kind of information that will come from the exit interviews, and good to know because it allows us to take first steps towards making corrections to address any issues.

2.2 **How will the proportions of budget reductions for the colleges be determined?**

EVC Ankerson noted that Chancellor Bennett indicated two priorities in his August message to the campus that we must increase our enrollment and ensure students graduate on time and well-prepared to contribute to Nebraska's future on day one. In addition, we must lean into our status as the research campus and increase our research reputation, all while living within our means. She stated that she anticipates any budgetary reductions would capitalize on an investment strategy to achieve our priorities. She stated that we need to minimize things that are keeping us from our priorities.

2.3 **What is happening with the system levels' look at duplicating programs?**

EVC Ankerson reported that about a year ago, the CAOs were directed by the Provost to see what programs across the NU campuses may be duplicates. The first review was based on CIP codes which is a Department of Education classification system of instructional programs. She stated that the CAOs were able to review what was being offered on the different campuses and expanded the view from CIP classification to

degree names and types. She noted that President Gold is working to determine what the structure and priorities of the university system will be,

Shrader asked at what point in the restructuring process will faculty members be asked to contribute to the examination of the duplicate programs. EVC Ankerson reported that no specific action is being taken on any perceived duplicate programs at this time. She pointed out that there is nothing to prevent the deans and department heads from reaching out to the other campuses to have discussions about duplicate programs and potential ways to collaborate in some fashion. She pointed out that we need to think creatively and boldly about what our future is and noted that the Faculty Senate and the APC have influence as we envision our future. Tschetter stated that we need to think differently about how we teach because we are not reaching the students with where they are at these days. EVC Ankerson stated that we need to put the students at the center of our thinking and reach them in ways that enhance their learning and experience, preparing them for the future.

Shrader asked if there is a formula for teaching large classes. EVC Ankerson stated that it depends on the discipline but there are some masterful people who teach large classes very well and the feedback from the students is quite positive. Shrader pointed out that it is much easier to connect with 20 students rather than 400 students. EVC Ankerson stated that this is true in many cases, but it is not always feasible to have all small classes.

2.4 What are we going to do about programs or departments that do not meet the CCPE requirements but teach many service courses for students in other majors?

EVC Ankerson reported that the Nebraska Coordinating Commission of Postsecondary Education (CCPE) has the purview to set requirements for higher education institutions in Nebraska. She noted that one of these is the minimum threshold for degree awards. She noted the average annual number of degrees awarded over a five-year period is three for Doctoral, five for Master's, and seven for Baccalaureate programs. She noted this is not an unreasonable expectation. She stated that for programs that do not meet the thresholds, we must act on them, determine if there is a more successful approach (such as a minor or certificate option for undergraduate education) if a transcriptable designation is desired; or eliminate the degree and determine if particular courses provide knowledge important to other degree programs. She stated that having a degree program below the required minimum threshold does not mean the knowledge is not important, it means students are not pursuing the degree and we need to make change. She pointed out that this goes back to our investment strategy. She stated that we need to consider how we can position ourselves so the students can gain the knowledge offered through one of these programs but perhaps through a different option than the degree.

Tschetter asked if departments would get a warning that there is a program that is not meeting the CCPE thresholds. EVC Ankerson stated that the departments should be aware of their programs, and which are succeeding and those that are not. She pointed out that the APC is involved in acting on degree actions, and while there are a number of degree modifications or transitions that have occurred over recent years, there are also a

number of degree and graduate certificate programs that have been approved. VanderPlas asked how newer programs are handled with the CCPE thresholds. EVC Ankerson stated that the CCPE has an exception for programs that are less than five years old. Shrader asked when the clock would start on these new programs. EVC Ankerson stated that it would start in the sixth year. She also noted that there are other exceptions to the minimum thresholds, for instance where a student is seeking a Ph.D. but due to unforeseen circumstances cannot complete it, the student may be awarded a master's degree. She pointed out that this is referred to as a non-admitting master's program.

Kopocis noted that there are courses within a program that are service courses that teach many students. She asked if these courses would be protected. EVC Ankerson stated that we are just talking about degree programs for CCPE thresholds, not individual courses. She stated that we need to think about our investment strategies, and we want to invest in to make sure our students are successful and that we are teaching the courses that students need for graduation. She stated that the first step is always for conversations among unit leaders regarding courses required from other units for graduation, to ensure the student graduation needs are met.

2.5 The Faculty Senate approved the creation of a Faculty Budget Committee. Would you be willing to partner with the Committee?

EVC Ankerson noted that the Academic Planning Committee has broad representation and addresses a variety of academic issues and is identified in the UNL Bylaws. She stated that the APC is the body that is involved with budget reductions when the Chancellor Invokes the Procedures for Budget Reallocation and Reductions. She noted that if academic units are identified to be eliminated, the APC holds hearings and investigates the impacts of the closure before it makes its recommendations to the Chancellor. She pointed out that the FBC seems to be a duplication of the APCs effort. VC Zeleny stated that the APC is an important part of our shared governance process.

VC Zeleny stated that it is not clear how the FBC would organizationally fit within UNL. He pointed out that other universities that have a budget committee have a more RCM based budget and make reallocations based on metrics. However, our system is different as we have an incremental budget whereby a unit's budget was the same as last year with some increase. He pointed out that if we had a more dynamic budget model the FBC might work.

Shrader reported that some of the concerns raised by Senators is that they are frustrated by the lack of information and input from faculty members in a department/college and there is no ability for them to respond to the budget decisions that are made within a unit. He stated that the proposers of the FBC are seeking more transparency and input. VC Zeleny suggested that more education for the faculty in how the budget operates might be helpful. Shrader pointed out that there are some deans and academic leaders that do not want to share this kind of information with their faculty, and it causes considerable frustration. Tschetter noted that during the last budget reductions some of the APC members did not feel there was enough transparency and the message that was sent out to

the campus from the Chancellor about his decisions on the budget reductions led some members of the campus to feel that the APC did not do its job.

VC Zeleny asked what the APC thinks of the FBC. Tschetter stated that the APC sees the FBC as a duplication of the work the APC does. Kopocis noted that the FBC wants a very granular look at budget information and wants to analyze the information. She pointed out that this would be a huge amount of work to get all that information and to analyze it. VC Zeleny pointed out that the budget data is publicly available at <https://nebraska.edu/transparency/budget-fiscal-reports>. Kopocis stated that she thinks the FBC proposers want more specific budget information. VanderPlas stated that the alternative for not providing the information could be numerous FOIA requests being made. She stated that there is the perception that faculty should be able to see and understand the budget, instead there is a perceived lack of transparency and availability.

VC Zeleny suggested that he meet with the proposers of the FBC to discuss what they are looking for and their concerns. He noted that he has good records that might be able to provide them with some of the information they are seeking.

Eklund stated that while at the recent BTAA Senate leadership conference he asked members from our peer institutions what they thought of their incentive-based budget models and noted that it was not a popular model.

2.6 Does the student health insurance cover ob/gyn care?

VC Zeleny reported that the Health Center does provide ob/gyn care, but he stated that it would be best for students to call to see what is covered because some requests are not listed in the student health insurance policy. He pointed out that the Affordable Care Act requires wellness services to be provided including ob/gyn.

VanderPlas stated that she previously had a graduate student that was told that she had to drop her university health insurance and go on Medicaid to receive maternity care, and she is wondering if things have changed since then. VC Zeleny noted that our coverage does include pre-natal and neonatal maternity services.

2.7 There are concerns about the political ads that appeared to be associated with the university but were paid for by members of the Board of Regents.

Tschetter noted that before the elections there was a political ad that involved six student athletes and while they were not in Husker uniforms, it was clear who they were and the ad could lead people to think that the university was supporting a specific viewpoint. She pointed out that the students certainly have a right to their opinions, but the ads were misleading, and the ads stated that they were paid by some members of the Board of Regents. VC Zeleny stated that this issue has been raised by others but noted that none of the athletes were compensated and some Regents have sponsored other ads as well.

Shrader asked if the land the Greek houses sit on are managed by our campus and noted that some of the houses had political ads throughout the election process. VC Zeleny stated that most of the Greek houses are owned by a corporation. He reported that his

office did have some inquiries about political ads and there were cases where signs were removed from campus and city parkways where it is not legal to post signs. He pointed out that we follow the letter of the law to allow people to have free speech.

Griffin noted that UNL is working hard to recruit international students and asked if the results of the election could impact our recruiting efforts. EVC Ankerson stated that we are trying to be as aggressive as possible with recruiting international students as part of our diversified approach to enrollment management.

Eklund noted that we are not paying for an outside consulting firm to help with our recruitment but has heard comments that if we offered certain courses, it would improve our enrollment. EVC Ankerson stated we do not always need to hire external consultants, that Interim Associate Vice Chancellor Snowden for ASEM has been appointed for an 18-month term and she has nearly three decades of experience in enrollment management. Furthermore, we have AVC Shriner for Digital and Online Learning who was senior director of enrollment strategy for EAB, an education company, and noted that he looks at market capabilities and projections, these two are examples of the many internal people who are excellent at what they do and are well-respected in their field.

3.8 Clarification on the budget and where it currently stands

VC Zeleny noted that in the last five years the university has made a lot of budget reductions, pointing out that last year UNL took care of our structural deficit up to FY 2024. However, we are still carrying over a structural deficit from last year which amounted to \$14 million. He reported that the Legislature provided some funding and the Board increased tuition starting with the fall semester, but our net tuition is a little lower due to a less than predicted out-of-state student enrollment. He stated that a hiring freeze is in place, and we are growing our research expenditures, but we will still have a deficit.

VC Zeleny noted that the loss of \$10 million from Athletics has also impacted our budget. He reported that in 2017 Athletics Director Eichorst signed a contract with Chancellor Green stating that Athletics would provide UNL with \$10 million. He pointed out that our normal assessment rate for auxiliaries is 5%. He stated that auxiliaries use a lot of system services such as police, accounting, ITS, Institutional Equity and Compliance, to name a few. He noted that we were exemplar across the country in how Athletics helped to support the campus and this was a point of pride for Nebraska. He noted that Athletics' budget has grown with a gross revenue last year that was over \$200 million. He reported that an analysis has been conducted to show Athletics' cost to UNL pointing out that we oversee many of the Athletics functions. Dawes asked how much our peers require from their auxiliary units. VC Zeleny stated that overall, it is about 3.9%. He noted that he meets monthly with the Athletics CFO, and he works closely with him.

Shrader asked how many of our Big Ten peers have a reporting system like ours where Athletics reports to the President of the system rather than to the Chancellor. VC Zeleny stated that only those universities where the President is also the Chancellor for the

flagship campus have a reporting system similar to ours. The rest have the Athletics director reporting to the campus Chancellor.

VC Zeleny stated that most universities across the country are in similar positions with their budgets as we are.

2.9 Business Simplified Initiative

VC Zeleny noted that in the Chancellor's message in August he stated that there would be a review of our business and human resources processes to see if the processes could be simplified and streamlined. In accordance with this message a Business Simplified Initiative has been created and several conversations have occurred across campus about the BS Initiative. He noted that the goal of the Initiative is to ensure delivery of UNL's business and administrative services in an effective, efficient, timely and value-added manner and pointed out that we do not want to centralize everything, but we want to make sure that there are strong service levels.

VC Zeleny stated that three primary areas were being looked at: people management, operational management, financial and budget management. He stated that with people management recruitment, hiring and onboarding processes are being reviewed to see if the hiring process for UNL employees can be streamlined. He reported that financial management is being reviewed to optimize business processes, structures, financial reporting and staff training. He noted that grant administration is being reviewed because the level of assistance varies in departments/colleges with some units having little assistance with grant writing. He stated that operational management is reviewing general administrative support functions in areas such as administrative support positions and services including events management; student services including recruitment and advising; communications, public relations and marketing opportunities.

VC Zeleny reported that working teams have been created and faculty members from most of the colleges are included in the teams. He stated that there is also a steering committee which is being led by chief business officers and the four teams report to the steering committee. He pointed out that the idea is to be nimble and to move quickly on this initiative and to think very broadly but noted that the focus is only on UNL services. He reported that he believes we will be able to start implementing things soon and he hopes this will be a successful initiative that could be done again next year.

Eklund asked how the Initiative interfaces with the university system's centralized services. VC Zeleny stated that the initiative cannot fix procurement services, but we can communicate with better training, and we can suggest that we as a campus can deal with our procurement process better. He noted that he had a good conversation with central administration about this issue.

VC Zeleny stated that he hopes that the campus finds the Initiative worthy of our time and if anyone has a list of the top ten things they see that can be streamlined, to please contact him.

3.0 Announcements

No announcements were made.

4.0 Approval of October 29, 2024 and November 5, 2024 Minutes

Eklund asked if there were any further revisions to the October 29th minutes. Hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Shrader made the motion to approve, which was then seconded by Boudreau and approved by the Executive Committee.

Eklund asked if there were any further revisions to the November 5th minutes. Hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Baesu made the motion to approve, which was then seconded by Vakilzadian and approved by the Executive Committee.

5.0 Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was discussed.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Proposed Changes to Faculty Senate Syllabus Policy

Eklund noted that the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee is requesting additional language be added to the Senate's syllabus policy. He noted that the revisions call for "a course letter grading scale" be required on all course syllabi. Kopocis stated that the proposed language provides more information for students, so they know what they need in order to get a particular letter grade in the class.

VanderPlas stated that the language does preclude spec and contract grading, which is a way of grading that specifies what assignments must be done to achieve a certain grade. Kopocis pointed out that the proposed language is based not just on one assignment, but the percent of the total letter grade.

Vakilzadian questioned whether the language referring to diversity and inclusion needed to be changed. It was pointed out that the Course Policies and Research website does not refer to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The language states that the university values diversity in the broadest sense.

Griffin noted that the proposed revisions will be presented at the December 3 Faculty Senate meeting.

6.2 Report on Big Ten Academic Alliance Faculty Leadership Conference

Eklund reported that he attended the annual BTAA conference which was held at the University of Maryland this year. He noted that it was a fascinating meeting hearing what the other Big Ten schools are dealing with. He pointed out that the University of Indiana has 1400 IT people to assist them!

Eklund stated that there was a session on legalities, particularly that a public employee is not protected from punishment if they publicly criticize their employer. He reported that there was also discussion about faculty unionizing and noted that both Rutgers and

Oregon University are heavily unionized, and Michigan State is using the Auto Workers Union to partner with graduate students. He noted that it was pointed out that when a university's faculty are unionizing it is very important for the university's Faculty Senate to be included in the contract so that it does not become minimized.

6.3 Agenda Items for Chancellor Bennett and VC Boehm

The Executive Committee identified the following agenda items for the Chancellor and VC Boehm for next week's meeting:

- Has President Gold had a forensic audit conducted of the University system's financial records?
- What are the thoughts on where the May undergraduate ceremony will be held?
- Can you expound on the idea of strategic investments for the campus?
- What is the Chancellor's office doing about the climate on campus after the elections. A number of students have gone to their mentors saying they are having discriminatory comments made to them.
- What is UNL's policy on allowing ICE to operate on campus? How do we protect our students?

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in 201 Canfield Administration Building. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Signe Boudreau, Secretary.