

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Bearnes, Leiter

Date: Tuesday, November 19, 2024

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 (*Eklund*)

Eklund called the meeting to order precisely at 2:29 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Bennett/VC Anderson

2.1 In November alone, there have been two alleged rapes in UNL-sanctioned fraternity houses. Beyond the UNLPD investigation, what is UNL doing to address these allegations? What is the University doing to prevent sexual incidents in campus-sanctioned housing?

VC Anderson stated that the University takes these allegations very seriously and the UNL police takes the lead and conducts an investigation. She pointed out that the response is investigated as an individual matter, not as a fraternity matter unless the Police determines that the fraternity was at some fault.

VC Anderson noted that the Office of Student Life has a robust set of services for students and in incidents like these, the alleged victims are referred to the CARE office for support. She reported that it is the alleged victim who determines whether to file a formal complaint with either the UNL Police or the Lincoln Police, depending on where the incident occurred.

VC Anderson pointed out that the University follows EM44 training for our students which educates students about sexual assault and violence. She stated that the training is provided through our CARE team and this fall 3,000 freshmen students were trained. She noted that the number of students who have taken the training has been increasing and in four years all the traditional classes of students will have had training. She reported that a change this year with the off-campus housing agreement has been that these houses must have training for their students in hazing, sexual assault and violence, and alcohol.

Chancellor Bennett asked how our statistics in alcohol abuse, drugs, and sexual misconduct compare with other Big Ten schools. VC Anderson stated statistically, we see fewer incidents than our Big Ten peers. She said that we do not see the same level and volume of issues that our peers see, and she believes this is a result of us doing a

better job with our training and they are typically partnering with us better in different areas.

Eklund asked who conducts the training in the Greek houses. VC Anderson stated that the CARE team handles the sexual assault training, and the alcohol and hazing training are handled through the Office of Student Life staff.

Chancellor Bennett stated that VC Anderson and her staff have done a good job with developing relationships with the Greek houses. He stated that it is important that we have a good partnership so we can resolve things that need to be resolved and so we can work together to move forward.

2.2 What is the status of the Chancellor's Commission to Prevent Sexual Misconduct?

VC Anderson reported that the two chairs of the Commission stepped down and she has had conversations with VC Davis about it as well as conversations with CARE to get their opinion on the Commission. She pointed out that she can see the Commission moving into a more advisory role for the CARE staff.

Chancellor Bennett noted that he hopes to lean into our Commissions more. He pointed out that the Chancellor's Commission on the Status of People of Color is an advisory board to the Chancellor and stated that the Commissions will play an important role in reimagining the diversity and inclusion work on campus.

2.3 Has President Gold had a forensic audit conducted of the University system's financial records?

Chancellor Bennett reported that he has recommended President Gold several times that he have a forensic audit of the University system's financial records, but he does not know if it has been done. He pointed out that Interim Chief Financial Officer and Vice President Barnes has been conducting a thorough look at the university's budget. He noted that he also recommended to the Athletics Director Dannen that they have a forensic audit of the Athletics budget as well. Shrader asked if AD Dannen would share the audit with the Chancellor. Chancellor Bennett stated that he believes it would be shared with him. Shrader asked if AD Dannen would go to speak to the Legislature to seek financial assistance to help with the cost of paying student athletes. Chancellor Bennett stated that Athletics will do what they need to do to comply with having to pay student athletes.

Chancellor Bennett reported that President Gold did intercede to give us \$5 million from Athletics and \$5 million from our rescission money which helps with our budget for this year, but we need to figure out what to do next year.

2.4 What are the thoughts on where the May undergraduate ceremony will be held?

Chancellor Bennett pointed out that we need 15 faculty members to serve on the Marshal Corps to help with graduation and noted that he has been in talks with the deans to see if

more faculty members would participate. Tschetter suggested that opening the Marshal Corps up to staff members, such as advisors, could help get more people to serve. Chancellor Bennett stated that the May undergraduate ceremony would more than likely be held in Pinnacle Bank Arena.

2.5 Can you expound on the idea of strategic investments for the campus?

Chancellor Bennett noted that we are laser-focused on the areas that are most productive, and these areas would get more investment and resources. However, he noted that there are a number of areas that are not performing as well but are critical for us for accreditation. He pointed out that these areas might produce a lot of books, get a lot of citations, or the faculty receive awards, and they do well in attaining some of the Phase 1 indicators for membership in the AAU, but they may not be hitting all the other matrixes that are needed.

2.6 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.

VC Anderson reported that the Office of Student Life has done a lot of pre-work before the election including several sessions on civil discourse and how to have appropriate conversations and noted that we want to be inclusive to all viewpoints. She stated we are using existing resources such as the Jackie Gaughan Multi-Cultural Center where they are having "Dish It Up" sessions where students can come and just talk. She stated that the Gender and Sexuality Center is a safe place for students, staff, and faculty to go and to discuss how they are feeling after the elections. She noted that CAPS is also providing some online resources, and counseling is available through the office. She reported that the OSL has a team that is meeting with Dean Button who has had students speak with him about their concerns and the team is going to see if anything else needs to be done to address the students' concerns.

VC Anderson stated that she is not aware of any reports being received about specific allegations. However, if the office heard of these allegations, they would go through the university policies and procedures to deal with any kind of discrimination or threats to students. She stated that she has not had any students coming forward saying they have experienced any problems here at UNL. She noted that we continue to have training to try and set the culture for our campus. Shrader stated that he is concerned that some students may not want to come forward and express their concerns because they don't trust the system. VC Davis pointed out that there is a resource listed on the bottom of every webpage where people can anonymously report an incident <https://unreport.unl.edu/>.

Shrader asked if VC Anderson has heard from any other universities of any problems or incidents. VC Anderson stated that nationally there have been some African American students who have received discriminatory text messages and she pointed out that colleges in the south have been especially targeted. She noted that we are keeping a close eye on whether things develop at other universities.

Chancellor Bennett reported that he recently met with a diverse group of young women representing sororities and the Afrikan People's Union and he asked them directly questions about their and their friends' experiences and whether they feel like they know where to go to find assistance. He stated that the students expressed that they have had good experiences but noted that this doesn't mean that we do not have more work to do.

Chancellor Bennett pointed out that he attended the faculty colloquium last week about the closure of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and during the hour-long session he heard many people share their experiences they have had here along with their concerns, but he did not hear any of the faculty saying that their students came to them saying they didn't feel safe here. He stated that he would have thought that anyone having negative experiences would have expressed their concerns at the session. He stated that he thinks we are on the right track with our culture here and where we need to go to further improve things.

Shrader reported that he attended the colloquium and the impression he had was that there were people sharing the negatives experiences they were having and their concerns about their safety. VC Anderson stated that she believes we have made some good progress with the Gaughan Multicultural Center in providing safe spaces where students can share their concerns. Chancellor Bennett pointed out that while some people may have expressed general comments, he did not hear of any specific incidents or comments that were made to others during the colloquium.

Bouma reported that she teaches classes with international students from different backgrounds and noted that they are concerned. VC Anderson noted that the sense of alarm is higher given what happened with the elections. Tschetter stated that she would elevate the concerns of some students to a level of fear. Chancellor Bennett stated that we need to make sure we have an exhaustive list for students to know where they can go if they are feeling threatened or discriminated against in any way. VC Anderson reported that the senior leadership team is meeting tomorrow, and the main topic of discussion is how students are doing.

2.7 What is UNL's policy on allowing ICE to operate on campus? How do we protect our students?

VC Davis stated that he spoke with the General Counsel office and noted that first, we are committed to supporting the members of our community who might be impacted through the enforcement of immigration laws. He pointed out that, at this time, there is a lot of speculation ahead of what could happen, but currently we cooperate with local, state, and federal law enforcement. Chancellor Bennett stated that he could add this concern to the President's Council agenda which would enable a system-wide discussion about this issue. Vakilzadian pointed out that the proposed deportation plan is a real concern for international students and DACA students.

Chancellor Bennett reported that he will be meeting with the Graduate Student Assembly executive committee and said that he might invite someone from General Counsel to

come to the meeting to address the issue. Eklund noted that the Board of Regents needs to be alerted to the concerns the faculty have for their students.

Chancellor Bennett noted that all these topics are really important to him and the university, and we cannot marginalize them, and we need to have discussions about them. He noted that we take these topics seriously and are working hard to make any needed corrections.

2.8 Staff turnover and staff reductions in the Office of Sponsored Programs

Chancellor Bennett stated that he is not aware of any large number of reductions of staff in the Office of Sponsored Programs and suggested having Interim VC Nelson attend the next Executive Committee meeting to provide some information on the situation.

Vakilzadian stated that the agenda item is a result of concerns being raised by faculty members in his department. He noted that the faculty feel that there is not much help being provided. VanderPlas reported that the level of help for grants from the Office of Sponsored Programs has become limited. Dawes stated that her experience has been that you cannot speak to the same person because of the turnover in the office, and you need to be very proactive to find out who is doing what in the office so you can find the correct person to help you.

3.0 Announcements

Griffin noted that the Executive Committee would not be meeting on November 26th.

4.0 Approval of November 12, 2024 Minutes

Eklund asked if there were any further revisions to the minutes. Hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Dawes moved and Boudreau seconded, approving the minutes. Motion approved by the Executive Committee.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Faculty Criminal Background Checks

Eklund reported that he met with AVC Clarke and Associate Dean Armstrong about the proposed policy for background checks on new faculty members. He pointed out that we are the only university within the Big Ten that does not conduct these checks.

Eklund noted that the background checks would be conducted on newly hired faculty members and only on faculty who are moving up into an administrative position. It would not happen for those faculty members who are being promoted. He reported that there is a background check policy for staff members.

Shrader asked what would happen if someone assumed a new position, but it was a lateral position. Eklund stated that the background check policy would be triggered in these cases. Vakilzadian questioned whether someone who was serving as an administrator but returned to the faculty would have a criminal background check conducted.

VanderPlas noted that the policy does not clearly identify what would disqualify someone from being hired or promoted. She suggested that there needs to be faculty input, perhaps having a panel that would then vote if any concerns were detected.

Eklund stated that work will continue on refining the policy.

6.0 New Business

6.1 December 3 Faculty Senate Meeting

Griffin reviewed the December 3 Faculty Senate agenda with the Executive Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, December 3, 2024, immediately following the Faculty Senate meeting. The meeting will be held in the Nebraska Union, Platte River Room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Signe Boudreau, Secretary.