

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Bearnese, Bouma, Leiter

Date: Tuesday, October 15, 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 at 2:35 p.m.

2.0 EVC Ankerson

2.1 The Chancellor reported that he gave a directive to your office to reimagine diversity and inclusion efforts for faculty. What is your office doing to meet this directive and how do you see your role in providing support for faculty?

EVC Ankerson noted that faculty affairs in the EVC Office provide leadership that supports faculty careers, enhances faculty productivity, promotes community and belonging, and defines faculty rights and responsibilities. She stated that the Office also assesses culture and identifies areas of focus, growth improvement or reimagination; collaboratively build strategies that strengthen faculty success, community and belonging throughout the faculty career cycle; and support a wide range of efforts aimed to advance the AAU goals with regard to attracting and retaining the highest caliber of faculty from diverse backgrounds. She stated that we are in the beginning phases of the work the Chancellor has charged us with, and she is happy to report back to this group periodically with progress.

Eklund noted that other universities have also eliminated their diversity and inclusion offices and asked if there are any models in how those universities have dealt with the decision. EVC Ankerson stated that regardless of the motivation for the change, she wanted to emphasize that the EVC office is there to support faculty in every phase of their mission and has a responsibility to all our faculty members. She pointed out that there are many good activities happening across campus and she wants to make sure that our faculty feel cared for and that they feel they are part of the community.

Shrader asked what is being done to attract diverse faculty members and has the closure of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion had any impact on our efforts to recruit and retain faculty members. EVC Ankerson reported that she would need to look at the data that the Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee received noting that the data contains information on salaries, comparison of salaries, and outliers. She pointed out that we have had a loss of some very prominent faculty members already, but the departures are

not necessarily related to the closure of ODI. Shrader asked if the closure has made it more difficult to recruit. EVC Ankerson noted that we are currently in a recruiting phase so current data is not available yet.

Vakilzadian reported that he does not see a problem in recruiting and retention in his college with the closure of ODI and asked if the impacts could be more college specific. EVC Ankerson reported that it varies by colleges pointing out that some colleges already have activities and plans in place and noted that the size and scale of the college may be a factor in how ready a college is to take on these tasks. She stated that part of her role as the EVC is to coordinate these activities where possible. Baesu noted that she is on the College of Engineering's diversity committee, and she served on the ODI's Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and suggested that each college's diversity committee could give a report to the Faculty Senate's Diversity and Inclusion Committee which could then share the information with the EVC office.

Dawes asked how the impact of the closure of the ODI will be assessed, not just the quantitative data, but the reasons why a faculty member is leaving pointing out that we do not have exit interviews. She asked what variables would be used to monitor the impact the closure is having. EVC Ankerson noted that Dawes raised a really good point and stated that these are things we need to do. VanderPlas asked if there are any plans to create an exit interview process or to ask why a candidate chooses not to come to UNL. EVC Ankerson reported that when she began as EVC there was a joint effort between the EVC office and the ODI to have exit interviews, but she does not think it was fully in place. Lott suggested that when exit interviews are conducted, if a pattern or consistent reason why diverse faculty members are leaving UNL is identified, it might lead us to look at an intervention. EVC Ankerson stated that she appreciates the suggestions and took notes on the questions and recommendations.

Shrader asked what the Executive Committee members should convey to their colleagues about what is being done in the EVC's office. EVC Ankerson pointed out that we are early in the process, and she thinks the Chancellor's charge is well positioned. She noted that it is important to this campus to have a diverse pool of thought, approach, and background and for us to make sure that we maintain a diverse community. She pointed out that when people have an environment where they can thrive, we are successful.

2.2 The Senate has heard concerns from faculty members regarding the micro-credential courses being offered through Ziplines and Coursera. What efforts are being made to see if these courses compete with existing UNL courses? There needs to be a clearer distinction between UNL and these micro-credentials, some faculty members feel that not having this distinction is tarnishing UNL's reputation. Who approves these micro-credential courses?

EVC Ankerson stated that the partnership with Ziplines Education is part of an overall strategy to deliver non-credit industry credentials (certifications) to our work-force population. Ziplines was chosen specifically because of their marketing model: typically, enrolling individuals with less than a bachelor's degree, over 35 years old, and employed.

These participants may be part of the 40 million individuals with some college and with no credential, which is an untapped market for UNL. By delivering these industry certifications, taught by industry experts and vetted by Ziplines, we can broaden our reach across the U.S. and build a pipeline of individuals to market our other programs. All the programs are available completely online and we have an exclusive agreement with Ziplines that UNL will be the only institution in Nebraska offering these courses. She stated that there is no intention of competing with our current degree programs. The intention is to compete with Coursera, Google, and our Big Ten peers who are also offering similar certification courses.

Shrader asked if these courses are similar to our graduate certificates that are offered. EVC Ankerson stated that the certificates UNL offers are more robust and are credit bearing while the Zipline courses are not. She pointed out that we can use the Ziplines course interest data to market our online programs. Shrader asked if there were any expectations that the people taking the Ziplines courses would be looking to get a degree. EVC Ankerson stated that this is a possibility to recruit students for a degree program.

Boudreau asked if other universities offer Ziplines courses and whether the courses are the same as the ones we offer. EVC Ankerson responded that other universities do offer Ziplines courses, and if they coincide with the courses we have selected, they are the same wherever they are offered.

Eklund reported that an email message he received from a faculty member was concerned that students would not understand the difference between a UNL degree and these Zipline certificates. VanderPlas asked if the revenue from these Zipline certificates would be used to market the Ziplines courses. EVC Ankerson stated that the revenue will be used to market our online programs, not Ziplines courses. VanderPlas stated that colleagues have stated that the only courses they hear being advertised are the Ziplines courses and she asked how the advertising for these courses is balanced with our actual programs. EVC Ankerson noted that marketing for our online programs is already being done but it will be increasing. She pointed out that we want our online programs to be widely accepted and to grow because online programs are a very important modality for us.

2.3 The Faculty Senate is being asked to endorse a policy requiring criminal background checks on faculty and staff candidates. What is the impetus for this policy being applied to academic faculty? The departments are expected to cover the cost of a criminal background check. What are the costs for these checks, particularly if the candidate is from out-of-state or from another country.

EVC Ankerson reported that there is a working group who has been developing this effort, and there has been Faculty Senate involvement – in fact, President Pete Eklund has been a part of that group and is probably able to answer some of the questions himself. As part of her Mellon Fellowship, Cory Armstrong, Journalism and Mass Communications College Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs and Professor of Journalism, is helping us lead this effort.

The impetus for doing background checks is that we're very exposed by not doing them and we are out of step with pretty much every other university, especially across the Big Ten, where we are an outlier. The working group has looked at background check policies from other universities as a part of their work. The cost is going to vary depending on the candidate, and there's no other realistic way to bear the cost than to make it part of the cost of doing a search already, which the department bears. The EVC office often conducts a pilot with one or two colleges, on new processes like this, to work out any kinks before the entire campus adopts it.

Vakilzadian asked if there was a particular case that prompted this discussion. EVC Ankerson stated that it is good risk management practice. Vakilzadian asked how background checks would be done for international faculty members. He also asked if a current faculty of a department becomes an administrator, does that faculty member need to go through the process again. EVC Ankerson pointed out that we do not have as many international hires as other universities and the pilot study should uncover issues that we need to address. Baesu asked if this would apply to post docs as well. EVC Ankerson noted that post docs are considered faculty so a background check would be needed.

Eklund asked how long a background check takes, especially if it is an international check. EVC Ankerson pointed out that if a person lived in several different places, it would take a little longer. She noted that we will contract with a company to conduct the background checks.

Lott asked if there was a statute of limitations noting that some people may have been involved in protests years prior. EVC Ankerson stated that she would take these questions back to the working group.

Kopocis stated that her initial reaction was against having background checks but upon further consideration she stated that it would be good to make sure that we are protecting our students, faculty, and staff and that we need to keep our campuses as safe as possible. However, there does need to be some parameters in place on how hiring decisions are made after a background check is conducted. Shrader questioned what the guidelines will be to protect faculty members who may have had an incident a long time ago but who have a long record in good standing as a faculty member.

EVC Ankerson stated that she appreciates the feedback and will share these questions with the working group.

3.0 Vice Chancellor Anderson

3.1 How is the Office of Student Life meeting the directive from Chancellor Bennett to reimagine diversity and inclusion efforts for students.

VC Anderson reported that the Office of Student Life (OSL) took over the student facing portion of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) during the first round of budget reductions last fall. She stated that the staff of OASIS and programming for the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center were transferred to OSL, noting that her office was able to

do this after receiving some limited financial resources and auxiliary funds generated by Housing and Dining. She stated that she worked with AVC Goodburn to assess OASIS and CAST and found that there was duplication with the two services and as a result the staff of the Gaughan Center were moved over to CAST where the program is continuing and doing better because more support is provided. She stated that the social piece of OASIS remained in the Gaughan Center.

VC Anderson noted that OASIS has a new director, Dr. Kenji Madison, and she charged him to walk through the path of a student to assess what their needs are. After this effort some things that changed was creating a culturally-based steering committee which looked at the N2025 plan's Aim 5, which is to "create a climate at Nebraska that emphasizes, prioritizes, and expands inclusive excellence and diversity", and resulted in the creation of marquee events being developed and the creation of a comprehensive calendar which allows the different departments in OSL to promote all the different things occurring on campus. She stated that our culturally diverse sororities and fraternities have been promoted and office space has been located for them. She reported that the Brother-to-Brother Program for African-American males has been re-energized to do some programming for our students and our campus religious groups have been pulled together and have been transferred to the Gaughan Center so that Director Madison can work with them. She stated that the presidents of culturally diverse student groups have been brought together so the OSL can learn what their challenges are and what they need. She noted that these things will continue to be done throughout the year. Eklund stated that he would like the Executive Committee to meet with Dr. Madison to learn what is being done in the Gaughan Center.

VC Anderson reported that the Associate Vice Chancellor of Dean of Students position was just recently approved. She stated that the position was created after students pointed out that they no longer knew who they should go to when the ODI was closed. She stated that she hopes to have the position filled in the spring.

Eklund noted that there are many offices that report to the VC of Student Life, and he asked what those offices are. VC Anderson stated that offices such as Housing, Dining, Campus Recreation, Student Activities report to her and the full list of all of the offices is available on line at <https://studentlife.unl.edu/office-student-life>. She stated that a full list of campus resources for students can be found at: <https://success.unl.edu/resources/navigating-campus-resources/>. She pointed out that OSL has approximately 600 employees and 1100 student workers and a \$150 million budget.

Shrader asked what kind of directive the Chancellor gave you to lead the efforts in diversity, inclusion, and equity for the students. VC Anderson pointed out that the Chancellor is a student affairs professional and he is very much about creating student experiences and noted that the OSL's mission is to foster powerful experiences and communities so students can be successful. She stated that this is accomplished through some of the different programs that are offered. She noted that the Chancellor does not dictate how she does her work, rather he gives her a goal and then allows her to figure out

how to achieve it. She stated that she honestly believes that the students will get more support with this model than with the previous model because now there are 20 different offices working on it whereas the ODI only had four employees in the office. She pointed out that she is responsible for these offices and stated that it is her job to make sure that our students come in and have the opportunities to be successful and to have a great experience, so they leave here feeling proud of the university and being a Husker.

Baesu stated that the final exams are scheduled according to what time a course is offered during the semester, but students with disabilities or chronic health issues often require an environment that is conducive for them to take the exam. However, the Office of Student Services with Disabilities is only open until 5:00. She asked if the hours of the Office can be expanded so the needs of these students can be met. VC Anderson stated that it is probably a resource issue noting that the office has a limited number of staff, and she will need to make inquiries about this issue. She stated that the SSD office is the only area in OSL that is funded by state dollars. Baesu pointed out that the extended hours would only be needed during finals week. Tschetter stated that the issue is getting to be more problematic, and the Testing Center does not work for many of these students. Baesu stated that another problem is that the SSD office frequently states that the classrooms are full, so it is difficult to find a suitable location for the student to take the exam. Kopocis pointed out that the various requests from so many students is becoming more difficult and noted that faculty need more help to accommodate these students. VC Anderson noted that we are legally bound to provide accommodation for students with disabilities and stated that there are a lot of opportunities to help faculty meet the designs that would enable these students to take their exams.

Dawes pointed out that it would be interesting for faculty to know what the Office of Student Life is doing and that there be some mechanism to inform the faculty about all the services being offered. She noted that research has shown that students of marginalized backgrounds often don't feel comfortable going to where the resources are located. Instead, she suggested taking the support to where these marginalized students congregate. She asked how OSL will gauge whether the students who need to get the resources are actually going to the Gaughan Center or to other locations to get the help they need. VC Anderson reported that the students must sign up in advance to participate in the OASIS program and when they are accepted there are requirements for participation in the program. She noted that her office will be able to look to see if the number of students participating is decreasing and whether those who are participating are fulfilling their obligations. She pointed out that the best data are the anecdotal comments from students and an advisory board is being created that will communicate with the students and will allow us to track this information.

VC Anderson stated that a couple of programs are being started this year to connect better with faculty members and some workshops may be held for faculty on managing student behavior, another on students with disability, and a newsletter called [The Vibe](#) has been started to better communicate with campus leaders about what is happening in the Office of Student Life. She noted that the newsletter was sent out to the deans and executive offices and hopes that it gets distributed to the faculty. Baesu pointed out that

faculty members are also advisors and providing them with a list of all the resources available could help students. VC Anderson stated that magnets were developed that list the resources and some are still available.

3.3 What plans are there to replace Pat Tetrealt, Director of the Gender and Sexuality Center?

VC Anderson noted that Director Tetrealt is retiring in January and stated that we will need to see what the next phase is and what the model is like going forward with the Center. She pointed out that it needs to be determined what skills the successor must have, and we need to take a look at the work the Center is doing to see if it is the right model for the students. She noted that an outside assessment team came in a few years ago and made some recommendations which need to be reviewed.

Tschetter asked what is going to happen to the Center during the spring semester pointing out that it is a critical resource for students. EVC Anderson stated that there are two other people working in the Center and she is going to see if they can take on some additional work, but she may also get people from the event team to possibly help. Tschetter pointed out that the Center is such an important office, and many students are very dependent on it. She stated that she has had some students in the past who probably would have committed suicide if they didn't have the support from that office and she vehemently stated that the Center cannot be eliminated. VC Anderson stated that she typically likes to make decisions quickly and she hopes to have things resolved in the spring, unless she is told otherwise. She noted that Director Tetrealt took on so much of the work herself, but she believes there are ways we can provide the support the students need and to provide more help. She stated that the Chancellor is very supportive of the Office of Student Life.

Eklund thanked VC Anderson for meeting with the Executive Committee and suggested speaking with the full Faculty Senate during the spring semester.

4.0 Announcements

4.1 Fall Break

Griffin noted that next week is fall break and asked the Executive Committee if it wanted to meet. The members of the Committee were all in agreement that they could use the time off.

5.0 Approval of October 8, 2024 Minutes

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

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Faculty Budget Committee

Shrader reported that he met with Professors Zuckerman and McElravy to discuss how the Faculty Budget Committee (FBC) would function and be managed. He noted that Zuckerman and McElravy believe that the FBC could be an education tool for our faculty

and that the most important thing is to have transparency with the budget at the local department and units. He pointed out that many, if not most, department chairs and heads do not share the full department budget with the faculty in their unit. He stated that the idea is to have the committee go to all the units to obtain budget information and hold accountable those units that do not provide the information.

Dawes asked how units would be held accountable and noted that it would need to be written in the committee syllabus what would happen if units did not provide the requested budget information. She asked what the advantage is in providing the information and wondered if there would be any repercussions with the information being made public. She stated that the responsibilities of the committee need to be flushed out further so that this is a viable committee. Tschetter questioned what relationship the FBC would have with the Academic Planning Committee. Shrader reported that Zuckerman and McElravy were flexible on the number and kinds of faculty members that would be needed on the committee.

7.0 New Business

No new business was discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, October 29, 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.