

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Baesu, Bearnese, Boudreau, Bouma, Eklund, Leiter, Lott, Reimer, Shrader, Tschetter, Vakilzadian, VanderPlas

**Absent:** Kopocis

**Date:** Tuesday, April 29, 2025

**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.

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### 1.0 Call (*Eklund*)

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

### 2.0 Barbara Woodhead, Director, Services for Students with Disabilities

Baesu stated that most complaints in the engineering college from her colleagues are that the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office is closed after 5:00 which leaves a faculty member needing to find another way to accommodate a student who needs additional time for taking exams. She pointed out that this puts an undue burden on the faculty members. Woodhead reported that last fall the SSD extended the hours of their testing center during finals week to 8:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. She noted that students with accommodation are eligible for time and a half to take exams, so if an exam is for 2 hours, the student is entitled to a 3-hour exam period. However, this can create a problem because it can decrease the number of available seats in the testing center which is one of the reasons why the office is now open until 8:00 during finals week.

Woodhead noted that the university policy is that all final exams must be completed by noon on Friday of final exam week. Baesu pointed out that her final exam is not scheduled until 11:00 on Friday and asked what could be done to accommodate a student in her class who needs extra accommodation. Tschetter asked if the student could begin the exam earlier. Woodhead pointed out that the SSD office would proctor the exam if it was given earlier. She noted that the room where students take exams has a fish-eye camera as well as other cameras in the room and someone is watching the cameras whenever a student is taking an exam. She pointed out that they must put away their phones, watches, and any other electronic devices, and no notes can be present unless the instructors allow notes. Baesu stated that she tried this once and a student had a second phone that he took pictures of the exam with which he then shared to other students in the class. Woodhead asked when this incident happened and Baesu reported that it was in 2019. Woodhead pointed out that the incident occurred before the current testing facility was built which is a much more secure environment. She noted that any student who is caught cheating would face repercussions, and the SSD staff will take the exam away from the student and contact the instructor to explain what happened. Tschetter stated

that she has used the testing center in SSD and suggested that Baesu check out the testing facility.

Shrader stated that the policy to have exams completed by noon should be flexible in situations where a student needs accommodation. Woodhead stated that SSD is consistent with university policy which states that final exams end by noon on Friday and faculty whose class exams are scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Friday could allow the student who needs accommodation to start the exam earlier. He questioned what happens if a student needs accommodation to take an exam but the additional time, they are entitled to conflicts with another class they are taking. Woodhead reported that the accommodation cannot require them to miss another class, and a work schedule is not a consideration. She stated that faculty are providing alternative times for when an exam can be taken.

Baesu asked why these accommodations result in undue burdens on the faculty members, especially if they have to write a different exam for the student. She said that there are students who are now saying that they can't take quizzes in class because they have anxiety. Woodhead stated that the SSD office does not give students excuses for not being able to take a quiz. She stated that faculty should contact SSD if a student is requesting an accommodation that is different than their plan.

Boudreau pointed out that students are supposed to have an accommodation plan that they get from the SSD office which they are supposed to share with the instructor. VanderPlas asked if the instructor received the plan in an e-mail from the SSD office. Woodhead stated that the students are required to share the plan and noted that the students can get the plan anytime during the semester, but they must show it to the instructor and their plans are not in effect until they meet and share it with their instructors. She pointed out that faculty need the SSD plans to see what barriers the students have.

Baesu asked if a student has an accommodation for taking an exam but has a class afterwards if the instructor is expected to make up another exam for the student. Woodhead stated that it is the instructor's prerogative, but the SSD does not let students take an exam to be late for their next class. Instructors must designate an alternate time.

Vakilzadian stated that it seems like more students are seeking accommodation and asked if there's any reason for the increase. Woodhead reported that currently 1500+ students are registered with SSD office and each student must provide medical information indicating what their disability is. She noted that disability specialists are responsible for reviewing medical documentation and determining eligibility for accommodations consistent with disability law. She pointed out that a lot of these students wouldn't even be considered coming to the university because of the barriers that they may face, but having accommodation allows them to be successful UNL students.

Eklund pointed out that the university has a different set of rules than the public schools where some students with disabilities were able to get away with a lot more things. Woodhead said that K-12 schools function under a different law (focused on success)

than higher education (focused on access). If a student mentions they have a disability and they need accommodation, that student must contact the SSD office to get the accommodation. She pointed out that the faculty should let the SSD office be part of the process of accommodating students and noted that the office may have some suggestions for the instructor on how to handle a particular disability.

Baesu asked if there is a period when students are required to give the plan to their instructor. Woodhead stated that students are told that they need to share the plan as soon as possible with an instructor if they want to have the accommodation. She pointed out that there are some students who may feel that in some classes they don't need accommodation so they may not share the plan with a particular instructor. She stated that students are told that they should make an appointment with their instructor to tell them which accommodation they need for the instructor's class and noted that the instructors have the right to see the student's schedule to see if a different exam time would work for the student. She stated that if a student says they can't take an exam at that time because they must go to work, that is not a consideration that is accepted by the SSD office. She pointed out the faculty needs to see the plan to know what barriers are being removed appropriately for the student. She stated that students who have an accommodation are not entitled to get as much time as they want when taking an exam. She pointed out that we remove the barriers in order to get the students to the starting line, but afterwards their success is up to them. She noted that having accommodation gives a student with a disability an equal opportunity to succeed.

Woodhead noted that the SSD office spends as much time talking with faculty members as it does with students. She reported that she and her staff have gone to departments and colleges to speak with them, and they are happy to meet and talk with other departments.

VanderPlas asked about Title II guidelines and ADA accessibility requirements pointing out that she has posed numerous questions to the Center for Transformative Teaching (CTT) about making digital course materials accessible but noting they did not have an answer to her questions. Woodhead reported that this is really under the ADA offices, Compliance Officer in the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance but she does know that work is going on to get the information rolled out sometime in May to the faculty and to students. VanderPlas noted that it was indicated by Interim EVC Button that faculty members should have all of their digital course materials converted to meet the accessibility requirements by this fall semester. Woodhead reported that Interim EVC Button suggested that it would be good to have the course materials converted, but the hard deadline is April 24, 2026. Griffin pointed out that Deb Huryta, Compliance Officer and Ash Mitchell, Instructional Designer, are speaking to the Faculty Senate on May 6 about the Title II guidelines.

Woodhead reported that there will be a new software program that students will use to share their plan with faculty. She noted that faculty will receive an email from SSD, but the student is initiating the process in the new software. She pointed out that the software will allow the SSD office to see if the student has sent the plan to their instructor(s). She noted that SSD will provide guidance/tutorials on the new software which they believe

will simplify processes for students and faculty who have students with disabilities in their courses. She noted that a disability is considered protected information on a student, and a faculty member cannot discuss a student's disability with someone else, such as another instructor. She stated that if anyone has any concerns about the new software program when it comes out, they should feel free to contact the SSD office.

Woodhead stated that also coming this fall is that a faculty advisory committee is being formed by the SSD office. She reported that each college will have an opportunity to have a representative on the committee and the committee will meet once a semester and perhaps in the summer to discuss issues relating to students with disabilities. She noted that the college representative would provide feedback to their college. She pointed out that she is on a Digital Collaboration with CTT and they are discussing the possibility of Accessibility Ambassadors in various colleges who will have extra training on disability issues.

Baesu asked if there is a resource on campus where students can get help to identify strategies that could help them with testing anxiety. Woodhead stated that CAPS is a free service that can help students.

Baesu noted that she had a student bring a pet iguana to class a couple of times and asked about whether this was acceptable. Woodhead stated that students who have emotional support animals must keep the animal in their residence room. She pointed out that federal law states that the only service animals that are permitted in a classroom are service dogs or a miniature horse.

Griffin suggested that Woodhead speak to the Faculty Senate this fall and Woodhead said she would be happy to do this.

### **3.0 Announcements**

Griffin noted that this was Eklund's last meeting chairing the Executive Committee as his term as President will end during the May 6<sup>th</sup> Senate meeting. She stated that it is also the last meeting for Secretary Boudreau, Past President Kopocis, and for Bouma and Lott.

### **4.0 Approval of April 22, 2025 Minutes**

Eklund asked if there were any further revisions to the minutes. Hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Tschetter moved and Vakilzadian 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 UNO Resolution**

Eklund reported that UNO Faculty Senate President Bick sent a resolution being considered by the UNO Faculty Senate regarding proposed revisions to the Board of Regents Bylaws. The resolution calls for "any proposal to create, consolidate, or

eliminate administrative units, academic units, departments, or institutes include formal, substantive consultation with campus-based faculty governance bodies prior to final decisions.” The Executive Committee discussed the resolution but agreed that it would like to produce its own resolution so that it would include language about the Academic Planning Committee which is a committee that does not exist at UNO.

#### **6.1 Faculty Committee Report**

The Executive Committee reviewed the draft Executive Committee annual report that will be presented to the Faculty Senate at the May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, 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.