

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Bouma,

Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025

Location: 203 Alexander 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 at 2:30.

2.0 Vice Chancellor Zeleny – President’s Executive Order on Stopping Funding from the Office of Management and Budget

VC Zeleny reported that on January 27, 2025, the Federal Office of Management and Budget issued a memo to federal agencies instructing them to pause funding for research and other activities. He stated that the situation is being carefully monitored by the University because of its significant impacts on our federally sponsored activity, including research and other areas. He pointed out that at this time, if a principal investigator has not received a stop work order, they should continue to work on their projects. He noted that some of the federally sponsored research programs are congressionally funded, and the Executive branch of the government might not have authority over the congressional funds. He stated that it’s likely that various groups will filing lawsuits to prevent the order from being carried out. He pointed out that the U.S. Department of Education has confirmed that Pell Grants and federally sponsored direct student loans will not be affected by the pause.

VC Zeleny stated that the order seems to be focused on federally funded programs that support diversity, equity and inclusion, the green new deal, and funding non-governmental organizations that the new administration opposes. He stated that the Order is unprecedented and could be a concern for anyone involved with funding from the federal government. He noted that members of the university have been working around the clock looking at the implications of the Order and the Office of Research and Innovation has a resource webpage that provides more information (<https://research.unl.edu/federal-research-updates-2025/>). He reported that if anyone at the university receives a stop work order or other policy directive, they should contact

unlosp@unl.edu immediately. The Office of Sponsored Programs and Human Resources will work with principal investigators to interpret any orders received and will provide guidance regarding how to comply.

Shrader asked what faculty should tell their students. VC Zeleny stated that the faculty should inform their students that their grants are still funded (until a stop order is received), and no stop notices have been received yet for those working on a federally funded research project. He pointed out that the university will get guidance on submission dates for grants, and he suggested that people continue to look at the Office of Research and Innovation FAQ website for the latest updates.

VC Zeleny stated that he will check with Interim VC Nelson of the Office of Research and Innovation to see if she can speak about the Executive Order and its implications to the Faculty Senate on February 4th.

Vakilzadian reported that it can take months for a company to get paid by the university for items purchased through procurement. VC Zeleny noted that when Procurement was centralized at the system level there were operational challenges and that some of those challenges continue to exist with payments, particularly with respect to notifying campuses when those approved payments haven't been completed and remain pending. He offered to help any faculty or departments that need assistance in getting payments finalized.

VC Zeleny reported that the Business Simplified Initiative (BSI) has been looking at streamlining business processes at UNL. He noted that the hiring process is a prime example where there can be multiple processes involved, and the effort is to streamline the hiring process into a simpler and more efficient process. He stated that more consistent processes are needed and the goal is to deliver business in a more efficient way. Better financial reporting for faculty and staff is also envisioned. He stated that there has been very good feedback from the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, the colleges and faculty members and a report will be forthcoming from the BSI on its findings. He noted that this is not a one-time effort and there will continue to be a focus on making improvements to the business processes in the years ahead.

VC Zeleny stated that after careful consideration, the administration decided, for various reasons, that it is possible that VSIP might not be offered this Spring, as previously discussed.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 March 4 Faculty Senate Meeting

Griffin reported that Interim EVC Button will be speaking to the Faculty Senate at the March 4th meeting.

3.2 Meeting with President Gold

Griffin reported that the Executive Committee would be meeting with President Gold on February 11th rather than on February 25th when the meeting was first scheduled.

3.3 Grammarly

Eklund noted that he received an email message from ASUN External Vice President Luke McDermott requesting a meeting to discuss ASUN's plan to sponsor a pilot program for Grammarly. The Executive Committee agreed to having a meeting with McDermott to discuss the program.

4.0 Approval of January 21, 2025 Minutes

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

4.0 Unfinished Business

Parental Leave/Family Leave Policy

Eklund reported that in 2018 the Chancellor's Commission on the Status of Women formed a subcommittee to review the existing parental and family medical leave policy and the review was later submitted to the Chancellor. The review included recommendations for a new policy that would focus on equity and consistency creating a more inclusive family medical leave policy for all students, staff, and faculty. The suggested recommendations would make UNL more competitive with our Big Ten peers.

Eklund stated that on October 5, 2023, the idea of modernizing the Regents Bylaws regarding parental leave was presented to the Board but as an information only item with a note stating the item would be brought back to the Board for consideration at its next meeting, but this has never occurred. He pointed out that the information only item did not include many of the recommendations made by the CCSW subcommittee.

Eklund reported that the Faculty Senates of UNK, UNO, and UNMC and the UNL Staff Senate, ASUN, and GSA all approved the proposed recommendations to improve the university's existing policy and this has been conveyed to Central Administration, but an email message from Interim Provost Jackson in November stated that to reengage

proposed revisions to the Parental Leave policy it would need to be discussed again at the President's Council by the Chancellors. He noted that Chancellor Bennett stated during December 10, 2024, Executive Committee meeting that he would ask for this issue to be put on the President's Council agenda.

Eklund stated that there is concern that our current parental leave policy does not line up with the state's policy. He pointed out that comparison information on the parental leave/family policies from UCLA, USC, Oregon, and Washington need to be included in the information provided in order to show that we are not competitive with our peers.

Eklund stated that the Executive Committee needs to hear from Chancellor Bennett whether the issue was discussed at the President's Council, and if so, what was the result of the discussion. He suggested that the Executive Committee might want to consider crafting a draft policy that would be more in line with state policy but would also make us competitive with our peers. Leiter suggested there could be some re-wording to make the proposal more acceptable. The Executive Committee agreed to reach out to Professor Powers and Professor Dauer to see if they would consult with the Committee about drafting an updated policy.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Faculty Senate Attendance Policy

Kopocis noted that the Attendance Policy was last updated in 2018 and she proposed that the Executive Committee review and revise the policy because she has learned from Joe Brownell, Executive Director Military & Veteran Success Center, that often students who are members of the National Guard are encountering faculty members who will not honor the students' military orders which will make them absent from class. She noted that Brownell is willing to come to speak to the Executive Committee. Kopocis, Tschetter, and VanderPlas agreed to work on writing proposed changes to the Attendance Policy. Griffin stated that she would invite Brownell to an Executive Committee meeting.

5.1 Agenda Items for President Gold

The Executive Committee identified the following agenda items for President Gold:

- How do you envision the restructuring of the university, both how it will look and how do you envision this happening? What role can the faculty play in the restructuring and what is the timeline?
- What is occurring with the budget? There is talk around campus that budget reductions must be done by June 30th yet nothing definitive has been conveyed to the faculty/staff.
- What are the plans for removing the interim positions in Varner Hall?
- What is the engagement strategy of the university with the legislature and what pieces of legislation are most concerning?
- As President you oversee Athletics. Can we anticipate any caps on the amount of money that can be gained from NIL and payments for student athletes? What is the approach to revenue sharing and Title IX protection of women's sports?

The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 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.