

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Baesu, Bearnese, Eklund, Gorman, Gruverman, Leiter, Lewis, Pierobon, Reimer, Shrader, Tschetter, Vakilzadian, VanderPlas

Absent:

Date: Tuesday, November 11, 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.

1.0 Call (*Shrader*)

Shrader called the meeting to order 2:31 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

No announcements were made.

3.0 Approval of October 28, 2025 Minutes

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

4.0 Meeting with President Gold

The Executive Committee met with President Gold in 201 Canfield Administration for 50 minutes. Following are some notes from that meeting.

Shrader asked what the result of the vote was from the HLC to combine the reporting of UNL and UNMC. President Gold stated that we have met all of the qualifications required by the HLC and the process will move forward. Shrader asked if East Campus will go considered as the main campus. President Gold noted that the HLC requires geographical proximity so East Campus will be considered by HLC as the main campus and UNL and UNMC will be considered branch campuses. He pointed out that this is a starting point and that it may change in the future. Shrader asked what structurally needs to be changed at East Campus to adhere to this change. Interim Provost Jackson pointed out that in terms of fundamental operation, there is no change. This is purely bureaucratic. President Gold stated that there will be no change to student, staff, and faculty government noting that there will be complete academic autonomy. Interim Provost Jackson stated that operationally and academically, UNL will look like UNL currently does. Shrader asked what the leadership structure of UNL and UNMC will be. President Gold stated that he does not see UNL or UNMNC terminology going away. He pointed out that the Board of Regents is contemplating all this change and has been asking the question of why we do not look like Michigan, Ohio State, and some of the other Big Ten universities. He reported that there will be a chief administrative officer of the combined entity which will be him, and chief academic officers of each unit.

President Gold stated that the joint accreditation will assist us in being able to rejoin the AAU. He stated that being in the AAU will allow us to be recognized as a top-flight institution. He noted that one of the calls he makes tonight will be to the head of the AAU, as they have been watching the HLC vote. He reported that the AAU is aware of how much work we have been doing to be able to rejoin them.

Shrader stated that the investment to create the Big Ten Enterprises is \$2.4 billion from an investment arm of the UC pension fund, 1/18th of the fund would be \$135 million. He noted that distribution of those funds is not finalized and 16 of 18 schools in the Conference support this move (USC and Michigan do not support it). He asked where Nebraska fits into the distribution of funds? President Gold reported that there are two top tiers of two each, then a group of thirteen or fourteen. He pointed out that the difference in distribution is tenths of a percent. Shrader asked what the reason is for doing this. President Gold stated that it creates Big Ten Enterprises and supports cash flow. Money will flow through athletics, but where it will end remains to be seen. He noted that Nebraska is very unique in that our athletics program is completely self-sufficient and pays full non-resident tuition for their students.

VanderPlas noted that President Gold mentioned wanting to be like Johns Hopkins and The Ohio State University. She asked if he meant structurally or academically. She pointed out that the elimination of the Statistics department makes it appear that we don't want to be academically like them. She stated that the budget reduction proposals speak to a "Statistics collective" and asked what that would look like. EVC Button stated that collective does imply plural in that some faculty members will be retained. He noted that we are in a difficult budget situation requiring closures, but we recognize the need to provide courses in Statistics and services in statistics, and we are trying to preserve those things. VanderPlas asked how eliminating the Statistics department would be considered a bona fide program reduction? She stated that the AAU is watching, and this budget reduction is doing reputational damage to the university. President Gold stated that he understands the importance of statistics and pointed out that the Board of Regents will consider all these things when it reviews the budget reduction proposal.

Vakilzadian stated that the faculty doesn't understand the percentage allocation of state dollars to the different campuses. President Gold noted that the allocation percentage distribution has not changed in years. He pointed out that the majority of the dollars being cut from UNL are due to recurring structural deficits noting that it's a \$20 million budget deficit that continues to appear each year. He stated that he has been instructed by the Board of Regents, the Governor, and the Legislature that if we want to ever ask for any more money, the deficit had to be eliminated. He reported that UNO and UNK didn't go into this year with a huge budget gap although they did have some budget deficit.

Vakilzadian stated that faculty are concerned about Nebraska Promise, Regents Scholarships, etc., bleeding tuition dollars. President Gold reported that across the university system, Nebraska Promise costs us \$3.2 million, Regents Scholarships cost us

\$80.4 million and the State mandates for free tuition for first responders and their families members have gone up between 25-60% year after year. He stated that the State allocations and tuition have not matched inflation rates for many years. He stated that if it did, we would have another \$958 million in our budget. He stated that if the State and tuition rates had kept pace with inflation, we would not be talking about budget reductions. Shrader stated that the Executive Committee understands what the Chancellor is saying but with these budget reductions it is the faculty who are losing jobs. President Gold stated that if the campuses had addressed these issues proactively, we wouldn't have to be in this mode. He stated that he has told the Chancellors and the Vice Presidents that he will not do their jobs for them, and they are empowered to make decisions as long as they align with the Regents Bylaws.

Leiter noted that when President Gold was talking about the budget, it translates to what our legislators think about us. He stated that more and more, he is convinced that we have a serious PR problem. We know we are a good university, and we need to figure out a way to make the citizens of the state who vote for representatives really get behind that and support us. President Gold stated that the state is facing a budget shortfall next year due to the price of corn and soybeans and other factors and the federal changes to research funding have impacted the university. He pointed out that NU is a critical piece of the economy of the State – there is not a single ag producer in the state that doesn't rely on our Extension services. He noted that we must determine what we can do to make sure we reach every legislator and encourage every student to come to school here. He stated that we have to be future-oriented, but our first major ask is to fix the unfunded state mandates. Doing so would add \$15 million to the university's budget.

President Gold stated that the advent of AI-generated tech is the future of NU. He noted that we can use that as a magnet to attract students and companies to Nebraska. He pointed out that one thing that hurts us in attracting companies to come to Nebraska is that our workforce projections are low and we have had a brain drain in the 25–40-year-old range with college degrees. The number of people in that category that left the state in 2024 was 4,700. VanderPlas asked if generative AI is the savior of the Nebraska economy, and workforce development is the goal, why are we cutting a program like Statistics that is developing and growing? She noted that the Statistics department had tried to discuss this with the leadership of the campus but have gotten nowhere. President Gold noted that the Council of Academic Officers looks at duplication and triplication of programming across campuses. Baesu stated that nothing has been done to address the duplication of the Engineering program between UNL and UNO.

Vakilzadian asked what would happen if the Regents don't accept the proposed cuts? President Gold stated that the Regents would send it back to the campuses and say you have to reduce your budget by a certain amount. He stated that we need a careful overall assessment of the university administration in looking for duplication and siloed processes. He stated for example, there are four different sets of HR policies across the campuses.

Shrader suggested that maybe next time we meet you can share your ideas for reimagining the university. President Gold stated that he would much rather hear from the Executive Committee members if you had thoughts on these matters.

Pierobon noted that the College of Engineering is involved in a pilot program with the community to do co-creation. He, and several other faculty members, traveled around Nebraska to ask how we can use their research to solve community problems and those faculty involved are writing a paper about the experience. President Gold stated that he would like to hear more about this project. He asked what we can do to commercialize intellectual property? He pointed out that we need to have academic promotion processes in place that recognize both research activity and commercialized intellectual property.

5.0 Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was discussed.

6.0 New Business

6.1 November 18 Special Session Faculty Senate Meeting

The Executive Committee discussed how to manage the Faculty Senate November 18 meeting when a vote of no confidence in the Chancellor will be considered. The Committee discussed how amendments need to be handled, ensuring that all Senators have the opportunity to speak and possibly limiting speaking time to two minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, December 2, after the Faculty Senate meeting. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Ann Tschetter, Secretary.