

UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
SPECIAL SESSION
November 18, 2025
Presidents John Shrader, Rich Leiter, and Pete Eklund, Presiding

1.0 Call to Order

President Shrader called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

2.0 Roll Call

Roll call attendance was then taken, and a quorum was met with 68 Senators in attendance.

3.0 Alternative Method of Voting

President Shrader noted that our Faculty Senate Rules do not permit the use of electronic ballots, but due to the urgent need for a secret voting process, accessible for all members, we are unable to use a paper ballot or the email voting procedure outlined in Standing Rule 10C, and we need to use an alternative electronic balloting system for today's votes. He asked if there was unanimous agreement to use the alternative method of voting. The Faculty Senate voted unanimously for approval.

4.0 Proposal to Table the No Confidence Resolution in Chancellor Rodney Bennett

President Shrader reported that actions are ongoing that may make the vote of no confidence in Chancellor Bennett moot. He stated that he would entertain a motion to table the resolution of no confidence in the Chancellor. Professor Reimer, Glenn Korff School of Music, moved to table the motion and Past President Eklund, Glenn Korff School of Music, seconded the motion. President Shrader pointed out that if a resolution is tabled, it needs to be dealt with before the end of the following meeting and once it is taken off the table, it cannot be tabled again. It would have to be postponed but could be resurrected again.

Professor Bourke, School of Computing, pointed out that tabling the motion would preclude any discussion and noted that the Faculty Senate approved holding a special meeting for today to discuss and vote on a motion of no confidence in the Chancellor. President Shrader stated that the motion to table was not debatable. Professor Rumann, Educational Administration, noted that it was very important for the Senate to debate whether to table the motion. Professor Meiklejohn, School of Biological Sciences, stated that the email that was sent to the Senators about the possibility of tabling the motion was cryptic and there needs to be a better explanation of why the suggestion is being made. President Shrader stated that it is his understanding that serious action is being discussed at this time to come to a resolution about the leadership of our campus. Professor Meiklejohn questioned how the Senate can trust that the information President Shrader has received is truthful.

The Faculty Senate voted on the motion to table the no confidence resolution. The motion failed with 41 votes against the motion, and 4 abstentions.

5.0 Resolution of a Vote of No Confidence in Chancellor Rodney D. Bennett

President Shrader asked if there was a motion to limit the length of time to two minutes for people to speak. Professor Reimer moved for the motion to limit speaking time to two minutes. Motion seconded by Professor Meiklejohn. Parliamentarian Gorman noted that a 2/3 vote would be needed. The Faculty Senate voted in favor of the motion with 63 votes in favor, 4 against, and 3 abstentions.

Professor Lewis, Teaching, Learning, and Teacher Education, noted that the motion attends to the many issues of concern with Chancellor Bennett and tends to our level of trust and his future capacity to serve authentically as our leader and the motion advocates for better stewardship at

UNL. She then read the motion of no confidence:

WHEREAS, the Chancellor has failed to uphold the duties of leadership, financial stewardship, and governance integrity as mandated by the Board of Regents Bylaws (Chapter II, §2.8.1), resulting in substantial loss of confidence among the faculty of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln; and

WHEREAS, administrative decisions under the current chancellorship have undermined shared governance processes, violated established consultation norms with faculty and staff, and caused measurable harm to institutional morale and trust; and

WHEREAS, the Chancellor’s fiscal management practices, including the use of external consulting entities and the implementation of non-transparent budgetary reductions, have eroded confidence in the University’s commitment to responsible public stewardship; and

WHEREAS, these failures collectively constitute a breach of the Chancellor’s fiduciary duty to the people of Nebraska and compromise the University’s mission to serve the public good through education, research, and extension.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Faculty Senate formally declares a *Vote of No Confidence in Chancellor Rodney Bennett*, citing documented failures in strategic leadership, fiscal stewardship, governance integrity, external relations, and personnel management.
2. That this declaration be transmitted to the University of Nebraska Board of Regents and the President of the University, with a formal request for immediate review of the Chancellor’s continued fitness to serve.
3. That the Faculty Senate urges the Board of Regents and the President to initiate proceedings under Board policy for removal or negotiated resignation, consistent with contractual obligations and system bylaws.
4. That all further academic program discontinuance proceedings be suspended until such time as an interim Chancellor is appointed and shared governance processes are demonstrably restored.

Professor Lindquist, Agronomy and Horticulture, reported that he prepared a Google form to survey his department and there was a faculty meeting to discuss the vote of no confidence. He noted that not all of the faculty in his department attended the meeting, but for those that did, they voted unanimously to support the motion of no confidence, and they considered the motion to be a vote of no confidence in all of the upper administration. He pointed out that the news of the vote of no confidence will be spread both locally and nationally, and that is where the influence is beneficial. He suggested that there might be some administrators who will think of how they can repair the damage that has occurred with the proposed budget proposal. Professor Duncan, Communication Studies, stated that all of the administrators need to be held accountable.

Professor Rumann stated that the purpose of the no confidence vote is not solely to influence whether or not Chancellor Bennet’s contract is renewed or if he should resign. For all intents and purposes the vote of no confidence is symbolic but it addresses much more than simply whether or not someone should remain employed. Instead, the vote of no confidence gives us as a faculty (finally!) a space to have our voices heard and to let people know we are not simply going to stand by and let the administration dictate the direction and future of this institution without our full participation and input. A vote of no confidence is not just about one person it is about systemic failures at the administrative level that have led to decisions being made that are not in the best interest of this institution or the State of Nebraska. Although the vote of no confidence does not

stem directly from the current budget cut process it does send a message to the affected departments that other faculty support us, that they understand the process was flawed and leaders have to be held accountable for their actions and ineptitude. It's not about whether or not someone votes yes or no but at least it gives us an opportunity to address the flaws in the system and discuss genuinely how much confidence we have not just in the Chancellor but in the Chancellor and his leadership team. Some of my greatest regrets during past budget cut decisions were not doing more to advocate for the department of TMFD and ODI beyond just signing petitions and voicing my concerns in a limited way. I now recognize how lonely it feels when you are the one who is on the chopping block and wondering if others are actually buying the misinformation they are being fed. And I now often wonder how more collective resistance back then might have influenced what is happening now.

Professor McElravy, Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications, reported that he put together an opportunity for his colleagues to vote on the motion of no confidence. He stated that the results were mixed and pointed out that there was some potential fear of what the outcome would be if the vote of no confidence was approved. He stated that in looking at the budget process, he does not have confidence in the Chancellor and pointed out that the proposed budget reductions were based on flawed metrics and data. In addition, the Academic Planning Committee's comments on the process and the compressed time the APC had to address the reductions make a compelling case to vote approval of the no confidence motion.

Professor Gardner, School of Biological Sciences, pointed out that he was originally in Museum Studies which was cut during the 2003 budget reductions. He noted that the most salient point is that we as faculty and staff have no input in the budget reduction process prior to the APC's involvement when the procedures are invoked. He reported that in 2003 then Chancellor Perlman had open forums at least once a week to discuss the budget reduction proposals. He stated that there needs to be changes so that faculty are involved earlier in the budget reduction process. He pointed out that with these budget reductions there will be a decrease in donations to the University, which occurred in 2003 when programs were eliminated.

The Faculty Senate voted in favor of the No Confidence Vote in Chancellor Rodney D. Bennett, 60 in favor, 14 against, and 3 abstentions.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at 2:30 p.m., in the Nebraska Union, Great Plains Room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Ann Tschetter, Secretary.