

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Bearnes, Gruverman, Pierobon

Date: Tuesday, October 14, 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 at 2:30 p.m.

2.0 EVC Button

2.1 What's the next step, viz a viz the budget, after this process is complete?

EVC Button reported that it is going to take years for the budget process to be complete because we have a commitment to current students and a teach-out plan needs to be developed that will allow the current students to complete their degree. He noted that each program will have a transition coordinator dedicated to the students and another transition coordinator dedicated to the faculty and staff and stated that various notifications of termination will need to be given, depending on the employee's position (faculty, managerial/professional, office staff). He stated that we will also need to reach out to prospective students interested in impacted programs to provide guidance on alternative options. Additionally, administrative and structural changes, such as the integration of departments into new schools, will need to be implemented throughout the spring semester.

EVC Button stated that throughout the spring semester the realignment of four departments will need to begin, and these will require a whole series of structural changes relating to the creation of new schools. He reported that different colleges will have administrative structural changes and some of these will be implemented quickly at the end of the spring semester.

Shrader asked if faculty would be notified in spring 2026 that their position would be terminated in the spring of 2027. EVC Button stated that faculty would have a one-year minimum notification, but you also have to take into account what the teach-out plan would be. VanderPlas stated that Statistics faculty were told that the department would be terminated in December 2026. EVC Button pointed out that nothing can happen until the Board of Regents gives its final approval and there will be coordination throughout the campus when the budget reduction plan is enacted. He noted that we want to make sure our students are treated fairly and that employees are treated with dignity. He also stated that he believes it is important for us to be coordinated with the academic calendar

and that units should not be terminated mid-year. VanderPlas asked how it will be coordinated if some faculty in an eliminated program will be retained. EVC Button stated that some short-term teaching needs might require additional hiring and course substitutions could be needed. VanderPlas asked who would make these decisions. EVC Button stated that deans and DEOs, and also the transition coordinators would be involved in determining what the needs are in specific areas.

Reimer asked about the VSIP applications and whether the faculty who are approved for it will be done at the end of the fiscal year in June 2026. EVC Button stated that this is correct. Vakilzadian asked if there is a large approval of VSIPs resulting in additional available funds, if the VSIP funds could be used to save programs. EVC Button stated the plan right now is to use the VSIP resources to create a strategic hiring plan to leverage and meet core area needs. He stated that there could be some new interdisciplinary cluster hiring as well. Leiter pointed out that in the last few years there has been a 12% decline in tenure line positions. EVC Button noted that much of this decline has been due to budget reductions because these lines were given up when they became vacant, and the current budget reduction proposal augments the problem. He stated that these kinds of losses occur when we don't have investments in the campus.

Eklund noted that about 70 of the VSIPs are from UNL. He asked if the funds from the VSIPs will come back to the campus or will they be used across the system. EVC Button stated that the VSIPs are campus based and 30% of the funds will go back to the college to meet the needs of course coverage. He pointed out that the university is going to be strategic about how we allocate the VSIP funds. VanderPlas asked how 30% of VSIP funding would work in the colleges. EVC Button provided an example of a department that had four or five VSIPs and then could hire visiting faculty, a multi-year lecturer, or provide some overload compensation for faculty members in order to cover the teaching needs for the program. He stated that it is important to recognize that there some units will need to do some hiring after losing faculty to VSIP and the administration will work closely with deans and department chairs to address the gaps created by the VSIP.

Vakilzadian asked how long the VSIP money that is returned to the college would be available. EVC Button said it would be available for one year. Reimer asked if after the year is over or if the teach-out plan is completed, will there be a plan for future coverage for required courses in units. EVC Button stated that the VSIP funds that return to a unit would help them manage their program during that one-year gap, but for future hiring the deans and Vice Chancellors will want to see that new positions are strategically aligned with the campus goals. He pointed out that the teach-out plans for many units are going to take several years, possibly up to three years. Reimer asked how the funds for the teach-out plans are going to be supported. EVC Button replied this will be done through staggered use of faculty and staff to be able to maintain those programs. For example, say in the first year 75% of the people will be needed to be able to meet the needs of the teach-out plan but over time, as more and more students graduate, less faculty will be needed so there will be a phase down. He pointed out that we will still need to continue to manage the budgets to ensure that we have the resources to support the programs.

Shrader asked if there is any information on attrition rates in departments. EVC Button reported that there is some information about this. He noted that the APC has been working constantly on the budget reduction proposal and will meet again tomorrow and will continue its work until the Committee finalizes its recommendations to the Chancellor.

Vakilzadian asked if there is a chance that there could be another tuition increase. Lewis asked if this year's 5% tuition increase is spread out over two years. EVC Button stated that the increase is for AY 25-26. He noted that another request for a tuition increase is possible and will need to be weighed alongside our strong commitment to access and affordability.

2.2 As we go forward beyond this crisis in the evaluation process of colleges, programs, units and individual faculty, what advice are you offering to the entire community about how to prepare for future evaluations and academic reviews?

EVC Button reported that the advice would be the same even if we were not facing these budget challenges. He stated that units need to be thoughtfully aligned with the campus and system's strategic plans. He pointed out that every unit needs to consider increasing enrollment, improving retention rates and student success, and continues to focus on research excellence.

2.2.A. How will you ensure that individual faculty data is correct and give faculty the opportunity to correct the record?

EVC Button reported that every unit will be able to see their metrics and track how they are doing. He noted that DEOs have had a lot of access to the data, and it is their responsibility, in coordination with their deans, to make sure that the data is accurate. He noted that additional trainings may need to be provided to the DEOs to make sure they understand the data.

VanderPlas asked if individual faculty members will be able to see what their metrics are because currently it is very difficult to do that. She noted that faculty members not being able to view their data makes it difficult for a person to see their performance to respond to the incentives that they are given. EVC Button stated that the DEOs have access to the data in NuRamp and are responsible for making sure the data is correct. He stated that we need to ensure that DEO's know how to use it and that they have access to Academic Analytics data.

VanderPlas questioned that her department chair was supposed to be able to determine whether her research data is correct. EVC Button pointed out that the first thing is to make sure that academic citations are being captured correctly by Academic Analytics. He reported that Academic Analytics meets with them frequently and questions about the metrics can be elevated to them.

Shrader asked how faculty members are to know that they have to be proactive in checking to make sure that the data on them is accurate. EVC Button stated that regular updates should be provided to the departments. Reimer stated that the idea of being able to use Academic Analytics or Tableau should become normalized and perhaps used in the annual evaluation process. She pointed out that it feels like there are opportunities for faculty to see the data, but this has not been normalized across the campus. EVC Button stated that a lot of training is involved and DEOs need to understand that it is part of their responsibility to stay on top of the metrics. He noted that if Academic Analytics is not accurately reporting for your unit you need to check it out because this could be happening at other universities as well. He stated that while data is an important aspect of evaluating a department's performance, strategy is also a critical component.

VanderPlas asked if the EVC felt that the APC procedures were followed for the release of the data to the departments. EVC Button stated that the procedures were followed and that the information to the departments proposed for elimination or realignment was released back in July.

2.3 What are some of the strategies in the chancellor's office to help heal this community of faculty, staff and students?

EVC Button discussed strategies to address the challenges facing the university community, emphasizing the need for listening, shared advocacy, and investment. He highlighted the importance of changing system allocations and resource distribution to improve the university's financial situation.

Eklund stated that as a member of the Academic Planning Committee, he knows the EVC has put in an enormous amount of work on the budget reduction proposal, and he was happy to see that the ELT listened to the APC members and made some changes to the original proposal. EVC Button reported that the ELT is continuing to study the alternatives that have been put forward by some of the impacted units, and he wants to embrace the visions that we are all working towards change.

Executive Committee members expressed frustration with the lack of visible leadership and aggressive advocacy from the administration, as well as the perception that the university is being treated like a business rather than an institution of higher education. They called for more vocal support and visibility from leadership to address these issues.

VanderPlas asked if the EVC thinks there will be additional investment in the university. EVC Button stated he definitely believes this and noted that Shrader's speaking out to the press on the university's budget situation is helping to bring the case forward to the public and the legislature.

Reimer stated that at the faculty and student level there feels like there is a tremendous distance between UNL's administration and Varner Hall. She pointed out that there seems to be a lot of advocacy coming from the EVC's office, but the messages being sent from the Chancellor and the President do not convey advocacy for UNL.

Leiter noted that the University is getting hammered in the media, departments are being eliminated, there was no salary increase for UNL this year, and resources are shrinking. He stated that he would love it if the Chancellor or EVC would take a more aggressive response to make people aware of the negative impacts that are occurring due to the lack of support from the state. Lewis noted that we are in unprecedented times and universities and students need to be fighting, but instead she sees the administration acting like we are a business rather than an institution of higher education. She questioned where the administration is in defense of the faculty. Tschetter noted that the Chancellor has not been visible and would probably not even be recognized by most people on campus.

EVC Button stated that he continues to push hard for the campus, leading with data and continually stating that UNL's impact to the state is over \$3 billion. He stated that we must continually point this out to people. He noted that the state cannot be successful and competitive with other states without the support of the university. He noted that he is willing to listen to the faculty and wants them to be a willing partner in advocating for the university. Leiter suggested that there be a podcast highlighting some of the great work being done at UNL.

2.4 How do the administrators of this campus feel about being a 'branch campus'? And, how would you advise deans, faculty and staff to respond to such a notion?

EVC Button stated that the joint HLC accreditation effort is being done by Varner Hall and suggested that the Executive Committee should contact Interim Provost Jackson.

Shrader stated that there will be many people outside the campus that will be very unhappy to learn that UNL, the flagship campus that was chartered in 1859 and is the land-grant university, is going to be considered a branch campus.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Increase in Medical Insurance

Shrader noted that a message was sent out to the campus community about increases coming to our medical insurance coverage. He reported that a webinar about the increases is being planned sometime during the week of October 27, to explain the reason and changes to our health care coverage.

3.2 Public Rally to Support Departments Proposed for Elimination

Shrader reported that the local AAUP chapter will be holding a "Cut the Cuts" public rally by the Broyhill fountain in front of the Nebraska Union, before the Northwestern football game on October 25th. He noted that they have received permission to have the rally, and they can hold it up to four hours before kickoff, although currently, we do not know when the kickoff time will begin.

3.3 Appreciation of Executive Committee Members in APC Budget Hearings

Tschetter wanted to thank Reimer, Lewis, and VanderPlas for their work in helping the Glenn Korff School of Music, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, and Statistics prepare and present support for these departments at the Academic Planning Committee public

hearings on the proposed budget reduction plan. She noted that the information they provided and their answers to questions that the APC members had were very helpful to the APC.

4.0 Approval of September 23, 2025 and September 30, 2025 Minutes

Shrader asked if there were any further revisions to the September 23, 2025 minutes. Hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Leiter moved and Tschetter seconded, approving the minutes. Motion approved by the Executive Committee.

Shrader asked if there were any revisions to the September 30, 2025 minutes. Hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Eklund moved and VanderPlas 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 Agenda Items for Interim VC Heng-Moss

The Executive Committee identified the following agenda items for Interim VC Heng-Moss who will be meeting with the committee next week.

Can you provide clarification on what the last day of employment would be for faculty members in IANR if their department is slated for elimination?

How is Extension being impacted by the proposed budget reductions?

How much did community engagement factor into the decisions for the proposed budget reductions?

How will the budget reductions to Extension impact the state?

What are some of the strategies your office will use to help heal the community of faculty, staff, and students after the budget reductions?

Are there any short- and long-term plans for strategic hiring? If so, what areas will be targeted?

6.2 Conflict of Interest on the Graduate Council?

Gorman reported that since he serves as Parliamentarian for the Faculty Senate, he was contacted by a faculty member who said she was being moved off the Executive Graduate Council by Interim Provost Jackson because he felt there would be a conflict of interest since the Council will be discussing the budget reductions and the faculty member is in a program that is proposed to be eliminated. Gorman pointed out that he did some research looking at the Regents Bylaws and Robert's Rules of Order and noted that the Interim Provost has absolutely no authority to remove a faculty member from the

Executive Graduate Council. Shrader stated that he would contact Interim Provost Jackson about the situation.

6.3 Executive Session

Tschetter made the motion to move into an Executive Session. Motion seconded by VanderPlas and approved by the Executive Committee. The Committee then went into Executive Session.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, October 21, 2025, at 2:30 pm. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Ann Tschetter, Secretary.