

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Bearnese, Eklund, Pierobon

Date: Tuesday, October 21, 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

2.0 Interim VC Heng-Moss

Interim VC Heng-Moss first wanted to thank the members of the Executive Committee for all of their hard work, noting the importance of it and that serving on the Committee is a major commitment since it meets every week during the academic year.

2.1 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?

Interim VC Heng-Moss stated that at this stage, the APC process is still underway, and the Board of Regents will consider the Chancellor's proposal at their December meeting, so it is important to remember that there are additional steps before we know the final outcome. She noted that if academic unit eliminations are approved by the Board of Regents, Executive Vice Chancellor Button has shared that notifications for faculty affected would occur during the spring semester. She pointed out that all notifications will follow Board policies and procedures and will be guided by the Office of the General Counsel. She stated that because this is not a budget reduction plan specific to IANR, all notifications will be coordinated by the university.

VanderPlas pointed out that this information is different from what her department was told at a meeting on September 11th. Interim VC Heng-Moss stated that this is correct, and it is due to the fact that more information is now known about the budget reduction plan and the process.

2.2 How is Extension being impacted by the proposed budget reductions?

Interim VC Heng-Moss stated that because most faculty hold joint appointments, any terminations and reductions to IANR units will have an impact on Extension, as well as research and teaching. She pointed out that the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP) will also have implications for Extension if eligible faculty with Extension appointments choose to participate—just as it will for research and teaching.

Vakilzadian noted that IANR has faculty members that are on 9-month appointments and on 12-month appointments. He asked how the VSIP will work for the different appointments. Interim VC Heng-Moss stated that those on 9-month appointments who take the VSIP will align with the academic year calendar while those on the 12-month appointments will align with the calendar year. Shrader pointed out that no matter what the appointment is, everyone will get the amount that they are due.

Interim VC Heng-Moss reported that the proposed budget plan does not include specific reductions to Extension Educators, Extension Assistant positions, nor any reductions in county presence. She noted that any reduction, on top of past reductions, will impact our ability to deliver on IANR's mission of teaching, research, and Extension in service to Nebraska and beyond.

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

Interim VC Heng-Moss stated that our Extension and engagement mission is critically important to IANR, UNL, the NU system and the state. She noted that many of our IANR academic units are deeply engaged in Extension—on average 25% of their budgets and faculty apportionments are aligned with this part of our mission.

Interim VC Heng-Moss pointed out the importance and impact of Extension, as well as IANR's statewide programming in supporting Nebraska's number one industry and contributing to the economic growth and vitality of communities across the state—were important considerations as part of the budget review process.

Shrader asked how Interim VC Heng-Moss would characterize how well Extension is funded. Interim VC Heng-Moss noted that the University would love to have more resources to drive greater impact. She reported that Extension has offices in 83 of the 93 counties in the state and has a partnership with the counties which contribute on the operating side of Extension by providing office space and other operating needs. She noted that funding challenges at the county level are a concern. Nebraska Extension appreciates the ongoing partnership with the counties across Nebraska.

2.4 How will the budget reductions to Extension impact the state?

Interim VC Heng-Moss reported that previous budget reductions to IANR, including Nebraska Extension, have impacted the Institute's ability to deliver on IANR's mission of teaching, research, and Extension in service to Nebraska and beyond. She stated that it remains essential to maintain the trusted presence that defines Nebraska Extension and to sustain IANR's broader impact on the people, places, and partnerships that strengthen Nebraska.

Shrader asked what Interim VC Heng-Moss' narrative is to the people in western Nebraska which she talks about the university and what the faculty does. Interim VC Heng-Moss noted that this is an important and timely question and pointed out that UNL is critically important to the people in the state. She stated that one of the things she does is to lift up the important partnerships that the university has throughout the state. She reported that she travels across the state, and she would welcome having someone from the Executive Committee join her. She pointed out that our alumni that have become K-12 teachers and ag educators in the state are great between Nebraska communities and UNL and they share the value that we bring from the university.

Leiter stated that in thinking about the impact of the university throughout the state, there is an intangible in that the university is the only place that Nebraskans come to grow and think and become better community participants. He stated that one of the tangible benefits, which is a part of our mission, is to develop smart, intelligent people. Interim VC Heng-Moss pointed out that while there are other higher education institutions in the state, one of the things UNL does is offer our students more experiential learning since we are an R1, land-grant university. She stated that Extension can connect on this front. She reported that she has more talking points about our research and creative activity and the economic impact we have on the state. She noted that IANR has completed an economic impact study in the state to see how we are contributing to growing the state's number one industry which is agriculture and natural resources.

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

Interim Heng-Moss stated that the effects of the budget reductions are far-reaching and will have lasting impacts on our faculty, staff, and students; the future of our university; the people of Nebraska; and the economic growth and vitality of our state.

Interim Heng-Moss stated that we recognize and acknowledge the frustration, disappointment, anger, uncertainty, stress and fatigue that many across our community are feeling by the financial realities that UNL continues to face. She noted that our top priority continues to be supporting our university community. Each member is affected in different ways. She reported that in the immediate term, our efforts have focused on providing individualized support to faculty, staff, and students aligned with programs included in the Chancellor's proposal to the APC.

Interim Heng-Moss reported that following the Board's decision, we will adapt our strategies to meet the evolving needs of our community: for faculty and staff, it will include guidance on transit planning, exploring career mobility opportunities across the institution, and providing support from EAP and other resources if their program is eliminated. For students, academic advising and student support teams will work closely with students to develop a plan to degree completion if their program is eliminated or integrated within an existing degree program. She noted that for programs approved for integration – support and partnership with administration as we undertake the important work of creating a new school or platform. She stated that ultimately, our collective

focus for our faculty, staff and students must be on care for one another, supporting those directly impacted by the budget reductions, rebuilding morale, fostering collaboration and trust, and defining a path forward for the institution.

Interim VC Heng-Moss stated that as the state's land-grant institution, we need to be relentlessly relevant to the people of Nebraska through our research, teaching and extension programming; prepare the next generation of professionals, leaders, and change-makers; and drive the economic growth and vitality of our communities across the state.

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

Interim VC Heng-Moss reported that a limited number of searches were underway prior to the announcement of the budget proposal. She stated that current hiring has focused on addressing gaps resulting from natural attrition, including Extension Educator positions, talent aligned with our research platforms across the state -supporting animal and cropping systems, and critical roles within the IANR Business Centers.

Interim VC Heng-Moss stated that as we look to the future, we will need to carefully evaluate hiring needs in the context of gaps in expertise, institutional priorities, land-grant mission, and fiscal capacity. She noted that for IANR, this process will be guided by our hiring framework, which was adopted last February to ensure transparency and alignment with strategic priorities.

Vakilzadian asked how the Interim VC plans to motivate faculty to come here after we have dealt with the budget deficit. Interim VC Heng-Moss noted that many other universities are navigating budget challenges as well as other challenges. She stated that we must be very strategic in our hiring, leverage competitive strengths and at the same time, address important gaps.

Shrader asked how many students are in IANR. Interim VC Heng-Moss stated that there are just over 2100 undergraduate students, however, when you include students from units that are aligned with IANR programs, there are about 3300 including graduate and professional students. She pointed out that this does not include the three units in the College of Education and Human Sciences that have faculty with research and Extension appointments aligned with IANR.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Updating Chapter 4 of the Regents Bylaws

Shrader reported that he was contacted by Interim Provost Jackson about identifying faculty members who would be willing to work on making proposed revisions to Chapter 4 of the Regents Bylaws. Leiter and Gorman agreed, and two other faculty members were suggested.

3.2 AAUP Rally on Saturday, October 25

VanderPlas reported that there will be an AAUP rally “Cut the Cuts” beginning at 9:00, Saturday, October 25th in front of the Nebraska Union. She encouraged people to come out in support of the departments being proposed for elimination.

4.0 Approval of October 14, 2025, Minutes

Griffin noted that she has not received EVC Button’s revisions on the minutes. The Executive Committee agreed to table approval of the minutes until next week.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Faculty Budget Committee

Shrader noted that the Faculty Senate approved the formation of the Faculty Budget Committee, but it has been difficult to see how it would work with the Academic Planning Committee, and feedback from some of the administrative leaders has been that they think, in many ways, it is a duplication of the APC.

Gorman pointed out that when the motion to create the FBC was presented to the Faculty Senate, it was incomplete in that it did not identify the number of the members, how they would be chosen, or what the responsibilities are. He stated that Robert’s Rules of Order state that the motion to approve the committee would take a 2/3 majority vote. Griffin noted that the vote was based on a simple majority. Gorman stated that he will look into the rules further and will report back to the Executive Committee.

Lewis then moved for the Executive Committee to go into Executive Session. Motion was seconded by VanderPlas and approved unanimously by the Executive Committee.

6.0 New Business

The Executive Committee voted unanimously to move out of the Executive Session.

6.1 Agenda Items for Chancellor Bennett

Shrader noted that the Committee is scheduled to meet with Chancellor Bennett next week and asked for agenda items.

The following agenda items were suggested:

- You have received the APC’s recommendations on the budget reduction proposal. When do you plan on making your recommendations and when will they be forwarded to President Gold?
- Once the budget process is over, how do you plan on building morale for faculty, staff, and students?
- What are the administrative reductions coming out of your office and when will the administrative reductions be made public? How many total people (not FTE) may lose their jobs?

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 2:30 pm. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Ann Tschetter, Secretary.