

**UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES**  
**September 2, 2025**  
**Presidents John Shrader, Rich Leiter, and Pete Eklund, Presiding**

**1.0 Call to Order**

President Shrader called the meeting to order at 2:34 p.m.

**2.0 Announcements**

President Shrader welcomed everyone back to campus noting that many faculty members were here working during the summer and others were working at places around the country and the globe furthering their research and creative activity, teaching and engagement as the job never ends. He stated that he fears there are many people in the public who don't quite understand that. Certainly not as well as the faculty do.

President Shrader stated that following our meeting today – heads up to the members – we will not have an executive committee meeting because we are celebrating the incredible career and contributions of Dr. Jerry Hudgins – with the presentation of the Louise Pound – George Howard Distinguished Career Award, and a reception to follow.

Budget

President Shrader reported that the budget process will be made public next week – we have members of the APC in this room who are working diligently and indefatigably in this process, and we thank them for that.

President Shrader stated that he has several concerns about the process. Cutting \$27.5 dollars from a budget – any budget, anywhere, anytime – in a matter of weeks is an impossible task. In this case, the people who are managing it and have crafted the recommendations for the massive cuts are working on a timeline imposed by the Board of Regents. It is not, in his opinion, a timeline that under ordinary circumstances works, let alone during extraordinary circumstances.

President Shrader noted that the damage will be done, and he is sure it will be broad, and it will be deep. He stated that he is quite concerned that so many of the metrics that are being used to evaluate the performance of faculty, units, departments, schools – whatever – are based on what we want to be (a return to the AAU) and not based on what we are. He pointed out that if we received the metrics in early summer of 2020, it would be fair to evaluate the performance of these units in 2025. If we get the metrics in the summer of 2025, it is not fair to evaluate the performance of these units in the fall of 2025.

President Shrader stated that he is officially asking the Chancellor and the Interim Executive Vice-Chancellor to publicly release the metrics that were used to make these decisions. All the metrics. He noted that these metrics have been used to reach that \$27.5 million-dollar mark – and will alter the work and lives of what will certainly be dozens of our colleagues, and quite possibly some people in this room. He pointed out that every student in Journalism and Broadcasting, and Sports Media – his areas of expertise – and every student he has ever taught heard these words, “you must always be prepared to defend every single decision you make, and to prove them with evidence of how you reached those decisions.”

Faculty Senate Future

President Shrader reported that people may have read in the Chronicle the big story the other day about legislatures all over the country reining in Faculty Senates, and in some places outlawing them. He pointed out that we are in an existential fight. We are about to find out how many people on this campus want us to be part of the solution, a part of the process. Or, if it's just fine that we are victims of the climate, of the moves by legislators. He stated that this is guaranteed: There are

forces in this state, outside of this room and outside of this campus, who would be just fine if we stood on the sidelines, kept our mouths shut and moved on.

### HLC

President Shrader reported that in the coming weeks and months our university system will continue its efforts to re-organize into a joint reporting entity, UNL and UNMC. It is time now for all of you to ask questions of the people who are making these proposals to the HLC. He stated that we hear the word transparency, but it's been difficult to see it in practice.

President Shrader stated that finally, "Cornhusker Clink" For most of us it seems pretty absurd that this is a 'thing'. While "Cornhusker" is not a trademark of this campus or this university – it should not be considered lightly that it could so easily be marginalized. Cornhusker – Husker are threads that runs through the social fabric of this state. I - as one – feel that the term should be retired for good.

### **3.0 Approval of May 6, 2025 Minutes**

President Shrader asked if there were any revisions to the minutes. Hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics, moved for approval. Motion was seconded by Professor Kopocis, Durham School of Architectural Engineering and Construction and then approved by the Faculty Senate.

### **4.0 Committees**

#### **4.1 Academic Rights & Responsibilities Committee (Professor Lewis)**

Professor Lewis reported that she is the past chair of the ARRC noting that it is a great team of faculty members serving on the Committee. She stated that Professor Kubick, School of Accountancy, is the current chair and the team is ready to assist you and encouraged people to contact them if they have any concerns.

Professor Lewis stated that the Committee did not receive any formal written complaints this past year but was contacted a number of times. She noted that these issues were related to problems with interdepartmental communications, teaching assignments, non-renewal of contract, and a student complaint about scheduling conflict with the student being in the ROTC. She stated that she was contacted by a faculty member who was pressured to either retire or to go through a post-tenure review process and pointed out that faculty members should be able to freely decide about retiring or leaving the university without being pressured. She stated that those who receive notice that their contract is not renewable should consider reaching out to a contract lawyer.

Professor Lewis noted that the Ombuds Office is doing a great job and can provide faculty members with a list of resources that can help faculty members.

Professor Lewis pointed out that since UNL does not have a collective bargaining agreement, the ARRC acts as a check and balance. She reported that there is good communication with the student-athlete structure but there is not the same level of communication from ROTC and the ARRC would like to see these students have the same level of communication that would provide an academic reporting system for ROTC students.

Professor Lewis reported that the Faculty Senate approved some light revisions to the ARRC procedures such as reducing the number of faculty needed for the special hearing committees and clarifying some language. She noted that the proposed procedures, which require Board of Regents approval, have been delivered to the Vice Chancellor of Institutional Strategy and External Relations and Chief of Staff, Josh Davis, but the proposed revisions still need to be sent to the President's office.

Professor Lewis stated that the ARRC chair is a non-voting member of the Conflict-of-Interest Committee which is coordinated by the Office of Research and Innovation. She reported that she

attended regular monthly meetings of the Committee and weighed in on a few discussions of cases that could potentially become issues that the ARRC might need to be involved with in the future.

Professor Lewis reported that as part of an education outreach, the ARRC wants faculty members to understand what their rights are and noted that if a faculty member has a violation of academic freedom, they can file a complaint with the ARRC. She stated that a termination of a contract could trigger an academic freedom-b procedure, and a violation of policy would trigger the grievance procedure. She pointed out that allegations of research misconduct are handled by the Office of Research and Innovation, and criminal matters should be reported to the UNL Police and/or the Lincoln Police Department.

(See attached PowerPoint presentation on ARRC Activities report)

#### **4.2 Executive Committee Summer Report (President Shrader)**

President Shrader noted that the Executive Committee minutes are made public through the Faculty Senate website, and the minutes are a summary of the meeting. He reported that the Executive Committee met every two weeks during the summer, and we had a good quorum, even from members who were traveling this summer from as far away as China. He stated that the Executive Committee met with the Chancellor, Interim EVC Button, and Interim VC Heng-Moss and there was discussion about the Chancellor's email message about looking at websites that still referred to DEI. There was also discussion about the budget process and the impacts of the Snap-ED program elimination. He noted that the Committee met with Interim CIO Haugerud and discussed Title II regulations, pointing out that this is an ongoing conversation and he has reached out to other people on campus to speak about the issue. He stated that the Committee met with the HLC team that came to campus to discuss the application for joint reporting of UNL and UNMC.

Professor Rumann, Educational Administration, asked if there are any updates about the second phase of removing websites referring to DEI. President Shrader reported that forces outside of the university raised concerns to the Board of Regents about University websites still existing that refer to DEI. He pointed out that we have not broken any laws in that we do not discriminate against anyone. Professor VanderPlas, Statistics, stated that the recommendation by the administrators is to put the website or webpage behind the UNL login if there is anything questionable.

Professor PeekMease, Sociology, asked if there was any update on a new Director for the Gender and Sexuality Center. Secretary Tschetter stated that the Executive Committee was promised last winter that there would be search this spring to find a director but that has not occurred.

#### **5.0 Unfinished Business**

No unfinished business was discussed.

#### **6.0 New Business**

##### **6.1 Changes to Research Council (Interim VC Nelson and Associate VC Meier)**

President Shrader reported that he and Griffin met with Interim VC Nelson and Associate VC and discussed possible changes to the Research Council. Interim VC Nelson and Associate VC Meier presented a comprehensive restructuring of their internal funding programs, streamlining 12-13 existing opportunities into 7 new categories including biomedical research, book fellowships, invited scholar grants, and collaboration grants. AVC Meier explained that the restructuring, which will be implemented this fall, was based on feedback from faculty focus groups and will include a new peer review process modeled after major funding agencies, with opportunities for faculty to volunteer as reviewers. AVC Meier emphasized that while the number of programs has been reduced, the total funding opportunities have actually increased, with larger award amounts and clearer pathways for support, and the office will be providing communication materials to help faculty understand the changes. More information on internal funding is attached and a webpage has been created about internal research funding opportunities

<https://research.unl.edu/internalfunding/>.

## **6.2 Resolution to Release Metrics Used in Determining Budget Reductions**

President-Elect Leiter stepped in as President to allow President Shrader to present the following motion:

“We the Faculty Senate of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln asks the Chancellor and the Interim Executive Vice Chancellor to publicly release all the metrics that were used to make proposals and recommendations to reach the \$27.5 million in budget cuts. These include the metrics used to determine any and all of the decisions to eliminate programs, to eliminate faculty positions, to merge programs, units, schools, colleges or any other academic units, or anything else related to the budget reduction process.”

Professor McElvray, Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications, seconded the motion.

Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics, asked if the motion was an emergency motion to be voted on today. Professor McElvray moved to declare the motion as an emergency motion. Professor Kopocis, Durham School of Architectural Engineering and Construction, seconded the motion.

Professor Gel, Supply Chain Management and Analytics, asked for clarification on why this would be considered an emergency motion. President Shrader noted that the budget proposals will be made public next week, and he believes that there should be full disclosure and transparency about how the budget proposal was determined. The motion to declare the resolution as an emergency was approved by the Faculty Senate.

Professor Gel, asked for clarification of the word metrics and what information is being targeted. She suggested that the word criteria may be a little more appropriate. President Shrader pointed out that the word metrics has been used throughout the entire budget reduction process by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). Professor Gel noted that metrics come with certain thresholds and questioned whether we are also expecting the administration to indicate the thresholds for elimination of programs. She stated that she would like the administrators to explain all the decision-making processes they have used. A friendly motion was made to include language to get details about the decision and criteria processes that were used to make the proposals and recommendations for the \$27.5 million budget cuts. Professor Peterson seconded the motion. Professor Gay, Physics and Astronomy, noted that he is a member of the Academic Planning Committee, and stated that while transparency is good, asking for the metrics is probably not going to be very helpful because they won't explain why the ELT made the decisions that they did. Professor de Guzman, Child, Youth and Family Studies, pointed out that she is concerned if just asking for the metrics that they administration will just refer people to the [budget reduction website](#). Professor Katz, School of Art, Art History, and Design, noted that seeing the metrics allows people to see whether the metrics match up with the criteria that was used for making the budget decisions. Professor Kellas, Communication Studies, pointed out that we want and need transparency in the decision-making process.

Professor Powers, Chemistry, stated that a timely response to the resolution is important because getting the information after the budget reduction plan has been made public would not be particularly useful. He suggested including language identifying a time when the requested information should be provided. He stated that the weighting of the metrics, or the priority of the metrics should also be released. Professor Peterson noted that the budget reduction proposal will go to the APC for the public hearings and questioned whether the concerns raised in the resolution could be raised at that time. President Shrader stated that the value of this is that the Senate has spoken and is asking questions about the budget reduction process. He noted that the resolution shows that the Faculty Senate is paying attention to the budget reduction process. Professor

McElvray stated that he believes that a date should be included in the resolution. With that he called the question. Professor Kolbe, Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film, seconded the motion. The Faculty Senate then voted to approve calling the question. The Senate then voted on the amendment. The motion to approve the amendment was approved.

The proposed final resolution was then read. “We, the Faculty Senate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln ask the Chancellor and the Interim Executive Vice Chancellor to publicly release by the week of September 8<sup>th</sup>, all the metrics and decision criteria and processes that were used to make proposals and recommendations for the \$27.5 million in budget cuts. These include the metrics used to determine any and all of the decisions to eliminate programs, to eliminate faculty positions, to merge programs, units, schools, colleges or any other academic units, or anything else related to the budget reduction process.” The Faculty Senate then voted and approved the resolution.

### **6.3 AAUP Advocacy Chapter Event**

Professor Marya, English, reported that the local AAUP Advocacy Chapter was hosting an event on November 6<sup>th</sup>, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. in the Nebraska Union, Ubuntu Room.

### **6.4 Presentation of the Louise Pound-George Howard Distinguished Career Award**

President Shrader reported that the Honorary Degrees Committee forwarded the nomination of Dr. Jerry L. Hudgins for the Pound-Howard award. The nomination was approved by the Faculty Senate following the May 6, 2025, meeting and is being presented today. President Shrader pointed out that Dr. Hudgins was being recognized for his exceptional contribution and long-standing commitment to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. President Shrader then presented the award to Dr. Hudgins.

Dr. Hudgins expressed thanks to the Faculty Senate and the Honorary Degrees Committee for conferring this award to him. He stated that he was very humbled to receive the award and wanted to thank Dean Perez for nominating him and the work that Associate Dean Li did in pulling the nomination material together. He also wanted to thank the support of the Office of Research and Innovation and colleagues Interim VC Nelson and Associate VC Meier.

Dr. Hudgins pointed out that working in an academic unit and in his unit’s research center is a team sport and noted that he has been blessed to have very good colleagues in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering on both the Lincoln and Omaha campuses. He noted that he has also worked with some great colleagues at the Energy Center, particularly people from Nebraska Public Power District, such as Alan Dostal, who he said was kind enough to come today to see the presentation of the award.

Dr. Hudgins also wanted to thank his wife Cheryl for putting up with his shenanigans with many weeknights and weekends that were filled with school events and all of the travel he has made to further his discipline and to recruit students and faculty and to visit alumni. He stated that as a long-time department chair he kept in mind something that a mentor of his once told him, which was “being a department chair requires two things. One is you have to be smart enough to do the job, and the second thing is you have to be dumb enough to think it’s important.” He stated that he believed he fulfilled both of these and then stated that he really appreciated receiving the award.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:44 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at 2:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Nebraska Union, Platte River Room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Ann Tschetter, Secretary.