

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: Gruverman, VanderPlas

Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2026

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 2:29 p.m.

2.0 EVC Button/VC Heng-Moss

2.1 Our Bold Path Forward Strategic Framework

Shrader stated that he appreciates including faculty, staff, and students in developing the framework. EVC Button reported that there have already been engagement sessions not only with the campus communities, but with stakeholders across Nebraska as well. He pointed out that the strategic framework is still in the drafting stage. VC Heng-Moss noted that the meeting with the Executive Committee is a listening and learning session to get input from the Committee as we co-create the strategic framework.

Gorman pointed out that AVC Goodburn spoke to the Faculty Senate in March about student success and how we continue to make improvements in this area, yet the strategic framework is suggesting a reimagining of our curriculum. EVC Button stated that the question is what the campus wants. He pointed out that a significant impact that could influence a change in the curriculum is AI. He asked how UNL can be nimble to allow change in the curriculum when needed. Gorman asked if the curriculum change refers to general education. EVC Button pointed out that it might be time to have a conversation about ACE. Shrader asked if ACE no longer fits the needs of our students. EVC Button reported that there is a wide variety of thoughts on the ACE program which has generated many questions. One consideration is what the university should be prioritizing in the next three years and what initiatives we should have.

Reimer stated that she understands the need for students to be versatile and fluent in technology, but we need to provide students with a broad understanding of the world. She stated that broad decisions need to be made on both technological issues, but also on human issues. She noted that she is concerned that we are going to sacrifice historical learning and teaching courses that have been working well to be replaced with new technology. Gorman pointed out that the best predictor of future success is the past when things have worked well. Leiter recalled hearing the founder of Tandem Computers saying that they were ceasing recruiting students from technology fields and

were instead recruiting students from the humanities and social sciences because they can teach anyone to use technology, but not everyone has the ability to interact well with other people.

Shrader pointed out that AI will do some things for us but asked if it could make critical and ethical decisions. He stated that we need to consider what programs we do have now that help us to keep the doors open while also preparing the students to go out in the world. He noted that in the past we have prepared students to become thinkers and pointed out that liberal arts are still important. Eklund stated that we must find the balance between technology and interpersonal skills. Leiter stated that when people see the reimagining to the curriculum they jump to the conclusion that things are going to be removed. He pointed out that we don't want to sacrifice the basics. Vakilzadian pointed out that students need to know the basics, but we need to make sure that they will be useful in their chosen field.

Baesu stated that the problem today is that students don't actually do their homework. Instead, they do a Google search and find the information they need instead of using their own brains to figure out the answer. She pointed out that this lack of critical thinking shows when students are taking exams. Students need to be removed from the media when they are thinking. She stated that we want to reward scholarship, not tech transfer of information.

Lewis pointed out that the faculty are hired for their expertise, and we assume that they have academic freedom. She stated that we do not want people from outside a field telling the experts what they should teach. She reported that the faculty in her college always discuss programs with their students to see what courses the student needs. VC Heng-Moss agreed that the faculty are the experts, and ownership of the curriculum belongs to the faculty.

Lewis noted that formative assessments are what is used in the classroom, but we need to be able to pivot to attend to the learning needs of the students. She pointed out that we are still seeing the impact of the pandemic on students because their earlier education was damaged during shutdowns. She stated until we get past that, extra work to attend to our students' learning needs will be needed.

EVC Button asked if there are other specific things under Pillar 1 Extraordinary Teaching and Learning that the Executive Committee members would like to see in the strategic framework. Leiter stated that enhancing out of the classroom programs and experiential learning should be a goal. He noted that classroom teaching enhanced with real world experience is very valuable.

Reimer stated that while the student success initiatives have been successful, there is concern about removing any barriers to that success. She noted that there is a squishy definition about student success and reported that she overheard a student success coordinator saying they could waive a grade for a student so they could graduate. She stated that more clarity is needed about what the student success coordinator can do.

Shrader questioned whether we have the same definition of success as the students. He pointed out that the search for grades seems to be more important for many students than the knowledge they gain. Tschetter stated that we need to consider why experiential learning and getting students engaged is much more critical now than in the past. Leiter pointed out that grade inflation weakens our educational mission.

Pierobon stated that the pillars need to include mentorship, particularly for new faculty members. He noted that once he received tenure, mentorship became almost non-existent. He suggested that upper administration should push for a mentoring structure for the units and that there needs to be some accountability of who is mentoring who. He stated that mentoring can help foster greater research and creativity.

Lewis reported that she was a member of a campus-wide committee that developed a mentoring handbook which she believes is available on the website, but she is not sure whether it is being put into practice. She noted that diminishing professional development resources that had been given to the faculty is one of the first things to go when budget reductions are being considered. Gorman stated that this has been discussed quite a bit by his colleagues, and he said he and others would like five years of not having to worry about the budget being cut. He noted that this would allow faculty members to really do some great research or creative things without having to worry whether their program was going to be eliminated.

Pierobon stated that mental health and morale need to be taken care of. He said that having more interpersonal relationships and incentivizing faculty members could allow for greater recruitment and retention. He stated that bringing faculty back to campus so they are in their office would help contribute to interpersonal relationships and mentoring. Leiter noted that in the Law College there is a faculty lounge and in the past, everybody went there and there were many discussions but now there is more emphasis on writing and conducting research and less value is placed on having local communities. He pointed out that experiences are better when the faculty spend time together. Pierobon suggested getting some budgets to the units for them to have some luncheons as free food is a way to get people together. Tschetter stated that the students are really feeling adrift right now and having the administrators being more engaged would be helpful to the students. She suggested having a luncheon for the students to meet the administrators.

Eklund suggested creating an academy at UNL that students from the other campuses could apply to. He noted that UNL would claim the metrics which might help us in our effort to regain admission to the AAU. He noted that it could be attractive to students because there could be some flexibility with the curriculum.

Gorman stated that there is mention of shared governance in the pillars but no mention of service. He stated that there needs to be better assessment of service work and that it needs to be included in the evaluation of faculty members. Griffin pointed out that she has been told by faculty members that they will not do service work on campus

committees because their chair or department head does not give them any credit for the service work in their annual evaluation.

Lewis stated that chairs are overwhelmed with work and do not get all the onboarding that they need and a more systematic onboarding process is needed for them. She pointed out that the DEOs are responsible for evaluations and service apportionment needs to be accounted in the evaluations. She noted that apportionments are really out of whack for the faculty and that there needs to be some kind of standards so there are equitable workloads. Shrader agreed and stated that some faculty have 10% service apportionment but don't do anything while others have a small percentage and do a lot of work. Leiter stated that it can be hard to quantify all the service work people do. He stated that the apportionment gives a false way of reading how much service work is done. He pointed out that service work goes along with mentoring and being engaged with shared governance. He stated that it is a way of meeting people from other departments. Tschetter stated that there is a generational issue associated with service work. She stated that the younger faculty come in with tremendous pressure to do research, and many don't feel they have the time to do service work.

EVC Button and VC Heng-Moss thanked the Executive Committee and noted that additional comments can be submitted online through the Our Bold Path Forward website. EVC Button stated that all of the feedback that is being received will be summarized and shared with the campus.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Interview of Candidates for Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation

Griffin announced that the Executive Committee would be interviewing the first candidate on Tuesday, April 21 and the second candidate on Wednesday, April 22. She stated that a link to the candidates' CVs will be sent to them soon.

4.0 Approval of March 24 and April 7, 2026 Minutes

Shrader asked if there were any revisions to the March 24 minutes. Gorman questioned some of the edits that Interim Chancellor Ankerson made noting that he does not remember her saying some things that she now wants included in the minutes. Griffin stated that she would check the recording to see what was said. Gorman moved to table approval of the minutes until the notes can be reviewed. Reimer seconded the motion. Motion carried by the Executive Committee.

Shrader asked if there were any revisions to the April 7th minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Tschetter moved and Baesu seconded the motion. The motion was approved by the Executive Committee.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Work to Revise Rule Changes for the Executive Committee and Faculty Senate

Gorman suggested that the Executive Committee should work over the summer to see about making some revisions to the rules governing the Executive Committee and Faculty Senate.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Agenda Items for Interim Chancellor Ankerson

The Executive Committee suggested the following agenda items for the Interim Chancellor:

- Would you like to clarify the process that was used to determine the appointment of VC Heng-Moss.
- Are there any initiatives or issues on the horizon that the faculty should be aware of?
- What will happen to some of the buildings that will be emptied when the four departments are eliminated due to the budget reductions?
- There is talk with the strategic framework about possible changes that could happen with ACE. Are there any ideas of how it could be changed?
- UNK and UNO have directives telling their faculty that they must use Canvas. Can UNL have such a directive. Students need to be able to see their grades during the semester.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 2:30 pm. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Ann Tschetter, Secretary.