

UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
April 7, 2026
Presidents John Shrader, Rich Leiter, and Pete Eklund, Presiding

1.0 Call to Order

President Shrader called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

2.0 Announcements

President Shrader stated that he wanted to recognize the letter the Senators received today from Interim Chancellor Ankerson and stated that we appreciate the outreach and the productive and encouraging message in the letter. He noted that in the last few weeks we have had productive and fruitful conversations with the leadership both at the campus and the system level. He reported that the Executive Committee recently met with President Gold, Interim Chancellor Ankerson, Interim Provost Jackson, Vice President Bren Chambers and Vice President Chris Kratochvil to discuss EM 40 and the Executive Committee will meet with them again later this week to discuss EM 46 and the AI Institute.

2.1 Recognition of Senators Whose Terms are Ending

President Shrader noted that the following Senators' terms are ending: Colin Meikeljohn, School of Biological Sciences; Rigoberto Guevara, Modern Languages & Literature; Joseph Mendola, Philosophy; Steve Hegemann, School of Accountancy; Tomasz Bednarski, Nutrition And Health Sciences; Michael Burton, Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design; Junke Guo, Civil and Environmental Engineering; Hasan Otu, Electrical and Computer Engineering; Wendy Katz, School of Art, Art History, & Design; Steve Kolbe, Johnny Carson School of Theatre & Film; Ismail Dweikat, Agronomy & Horticulture; Joseph Baumert, Food Science and Technology; Devin Rose, Food Science and Technology; Sarah Paisley, Extension Engagement Zone 1; Tasha Wulf, Extension Engagement Zone 4; Kim Bearnes, Extension Engagement Zone 5; Linda Reddish, Extension Engagement Zone 9; Dane Kiambi, College of Journalism.

President Shrader reported that the following Senators have been re-elected: Chelsea Witt, Psychology; Scott Barrett, Psychology; Becky Buller, School of Global Integrative Studies; Esma Gel, Supply Chain Management & Analytics; Maria De Guzman, Child, Youth, & Family Studies; Mackenzie Savaiano, Special Education And Communication Disorders; Michelle Krehbiel, 4-H Youth Development; Wes Peterson, Agricultural Economics; Chris Gustafson, Agricultural Economics; Tom Weissling, Entomology; Amy Timmerman, Extension Engagement Zone 2; Jordan Luxa, Extension Engagement Zone 8; Leslie Delserone, University Libraries.

President Shrader thanked the Senators for all of the work they have done for the faculty.

2.2 Non-tenure Track Faculty Member Needed for APC

President Shrader reported that a non-tenure track Senator was needed to run for election to the Academic Planning Committee. He said that if anyone is interested, to please contact Coordinator Griffin.

3.0 Interim Chancellor Ankerson

Interim Chancellor Ankerson said good afternoon and thanked John, for the opportunity to address the Faculty Senate today. She stated that before she moves into campus updates, she wanted to say that she is grateful for this body. She pointed out that faculty governance is not a formality at Nebraska, it is fundamental to how we make decisions, how we hold ourselves accountable, and how we ensure that the people doing the work of this university have a voice in its direction.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that she has six updates for you this afternoon. She noted that she wants to be efficient with your time, so she will move through them at a brisk pace but please

know that for each of these topics, her door and office are available for deeper conversation.

1. Our Bold Path Forward

Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that she wants to begin with the work that she believes has a significant impact on this institution: the development of Our Bold Path Forward, UNL's new three-year strategic framework. She pointed out that this framework is not something handed down from a committee or drafted by a small group of administrators. It is being built by this university — together. She reported that over the past several weeks, we have launched or scheduled over 43 roundtable discussions designed to hear directly from faculty, staff, students, and our broader university community, and on April 3rd, we hosted our first campus-wide forum at the Willa Cather Dining Complex, with more than 40 faculty and staff gathered for structured small-group conversation. She noted that a second campus-wide forum is scheduled for this Friday, April 10th at the East Campus Union, and a virtual session will follow on Monday, April 20th.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson reported that across our departments, colleges, units, and shared governance bodies, including the Academic Planning Committee and Staff Senate, dozens of additional sessions have been held or are underway. We have also reached our colleagues in western Nebraska, with IANR forums held at the West Central Research and Extension Center in North Platte and at the Panhandle Research and Extension Center in Scottsbluff. She stated that Our Bold Path Forward is meant to be exactly that — a path built by all of us, across all of Nebraska.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson pointed out that the framework is structured around five pillars that mirror the University of Nebraska system's Odyssey to Extraordinary strategic plan: teaching and learning, research and creative activity, partnerships and engagement, culture and environment, and stewardship and effectiveness. Strategies under each pillar will be tailored specifically to UNL's mission as a Big Ten flagship, land-grant, and research-comprehensive university.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson noted that at the April 3rd forum, she said this will be a living document that guides decisions at every level of the institution. Online feedback is open through May 9th at boldpathforward.unl.edu. A 'what we heard' report summarizing community input will be released in early June, and the framework finalized on July 1st.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson invites every member of this body to engage in submitting feedback, attend a session, and encourage your colleagues and students to do the same. Your voices will shape this framework. That is not a platitude; it is a design principle.

2. Admitted Student Day 2026

Interim Chancellor Ankerson noted that on Saturday, March 28th, we welcomed the next Husker class to campus for Admitted Student Day, and the results were outstanding. She stated that this year, 1,366 admitted students attended, an increase of 74 students over last year. Together with their guests, total participation reached nearly 3,600 people on our campus in a single day.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson reported that students and their guests participated in immersive campus experiences, including dining in UNL facilities and engaging in academic and student life programming. These activities reinforced exposure to daily student life and offered opportunities to experience life as a Husker. She stated that the event coincided with the Spring Game, which enriched the experience for many attendees. Importantly, the academic and student life programming stood on its own — the athletic events, including the Spring football scrimmage, provided opportunity to our guests, enriching their experience, but did not necessarily affect attendance. She pointed out that planning for this year's Admitted Student Day required coordination among many areas of campus, including athletics, and the amount of collaborative effort deserves acknowledgement as all kept foremost in mind how to create an exceptional experience for our admitted students.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that what excites her the most about this year's data are the enrollment outcomes. More than 1,200 students, 89% of everyone who attended Admitted Student Day, have already paid their enrollment deposit as of April 6. In addition, 587 students registered for their fall orientation session on-site, more than a month before general registration opens on May 4th. She noted that these are students choosing Nebraska, committing to Nebraska, and moving forward with their Husker future. She reported that among the attendees were four Presidential Scholars, 84 Regents Scholars, and 57 Chancellor's Scholars, the kind of academically exceptional students who will contribute to the research, creative, and scholarly excellence of this faculty.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson pointed out that more than 500 university personnel made this event possible, including over 150 Academic Services and Enrollment Management staff, 385 academic college volunteers, and dozens from Student Life and campus partners. The visible commitment of our faculty and staff to these students does not go unnoticed. Families tell us, consistently, that it is the people of this university who make the difference. Thank you to everyone in this room who has shown up for a prospective student during Admitted Student Day and throughout the year.

3. Western Nebraska Wildfires

Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that our university's land-grant mission is never more visible — or more vital — than in moments of community crisis.

4.0 Approval of March 3, 2026 Minutes

President Shrader asked if there were any revisions to the minutes. Hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Professor Barrett, Psychology, moved to approve. Motion was seconded by Professor Reimer, Glenn Korff School of Music and then approved by the Faculty Senate.

5.0 Committee Reports

5.1 Information Technologies and Services Committee (Professor Hempel)

Professor Hempel, Chair of the ITSC, wanted to thank everyone who served on the ITSC and pointed out that the Committee worked hard to make sure that any IT changes went as smoothly as possible. He noted that the big task this past year has been the Microsoft tenant migration, but the Committee also discussed emerging governance needs around AI use, compliance readiness for digital accessibility, and ongoing efforts to improve IT service and management and communications. He stated that Professor Wisnicki, who is one of the directors for the AI Institute, is a member of the ITSC.

Professor Hempel reported that there has been a lot of discussion about Title II and whether the university has enough resources to enable us to be compliant with federal regulations. He noted that there has been discussion of what would happen if we were not compliant, but no one seems to have an answer to this. He pointed out that we need to follow all of the regulations, but there is a great deal of frustration from the faculty about trying to make all of their documents compliant.

Professor Hempel stated that last year there were discussions about Adobe licenses. He noted that the university has moved from an across-the-board licensing model to allocations with instructional and operational demand. He stated that we have a bulk license of 3,000 and people can request a license for up to a year.

Professor Gel, Supply Chain Management and Analytics, asked if the Adobe licensing is under the purview of the ITSC. Professor Hempel stated that the Committee collaborates with ITS. Professor Gel noted that her area does a lot of work with intellectual property and asked what the process is to request an Adobe license to protect your intellectual property. Professor Hempel recommended that a support ticket should be submitted noting that there are site licenses but also institutional licenses. Assistant Vice President Brett Bieber, IT Client Services, stated that he would like to have a conversation to help procure additional licenses. He noted that funding is

always a concern, but we have software specialists who can check to see if we have the same licenses as other campuses in the NU system. Professor Hempel pointed out that it would be better if we could get a group together who need the kind of licenses that Professor Gel needs, rather than having individual licenses. Professor Gel suggested ITSC should conduct a survey so faculty members can communicate what licenses they purchase. Professor Hempel stated that ITS will provide some surveys to see what licenses are needed. He noted that ITS conducts a survey over the summer to see what software is in use and what is needed. He stated that he would take Professor Gel's concerns back to the ITSC.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Report from the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Draft System Metrics (Professor Lewis)

Professor Lewis, Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education, chaired the ad hoc committee and she wanted to thank Professors Delserone, McElravy, Madsen, de Guzman, and President Shrader for their work on the committee. She reported that there was a lot of good discussion about the metrics and the committee generated a lot of questions, some of which were sent to President Gold and others were sent to Interim Provost Jackson.

Professor Lewis reported that the ad hoc committee met with Interim Jackson who stated that the purpose of the metrics is to provide a real time view of the entire NU system as a whole, but the system metrics are not being used to perform direct evaluation of individual departments or direct comparisons across campuses, colleges nor units. She wanted to make a recommendation to the Faculty Senate and the Executive Committee to invite Interim Provost Jackson to report on the metrics each year and to have the Chancellor report on these metrics at the campus level.

Professor Lewis stated that there was a question about Academic Analytics that was discussed with Interim Chancellor Ankerson about individual faculty members having access to their data in Academic Analytics. She noted that Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that there would be an additional cost of \$60,000 for the UNL faculty to have access to Academic Analytics.

Professor Lindquist, Agronomy & Horticulture, asked if the system metrics are the same ones used in the budget reduction process last semester. Professor Lewis stated no, that the metrics the ad hoc committee reviewed were system metrics.

Professor Peckmease, Sociology, asked if these were the metrics that were accidentally found. Professor Lewis stated that they are not. Professor Peckmease wondered where the system metrics came from and noted that they seem undeveloped. Professor Lewis stated that Interim Provost Jackson reported that focus groups are continuing to work on refining the metrics and that there will be a formal release date.

President Shrader thanked Professor Lewis and the other members of the ad hoc committee for all of their work.

6.2 Motion for a Vote of No Confidence in EVC Button, VC Heng-Moss, and Interim VC Nelson

President Shrader reported that he has been informed by Professor VanderPlas, Statistics, that she wishes to bring a request to the Faculty Senate to withdraw the motion.

Professor VanderPlas stated that she brought this motion forward to ensure that the senate had an actual debate on how to move forward after the budget cuts and department eliminations. She noted that she still firmly believes that it is important to hold all involved accountable for the damage which has been done to foundational conditions of academic work: tenure, shared governance, and academic freedom. She stated that she remains concerned about the use of flawed metrics to make similar decisions in the future. However, she no longer feels that this motion is the best way to hold these individuals accountable.

The threat of a No Confidence vote brought UNL administrators into dialogue with faculty, and in that, it was effective. Over spring break, President Gold and Interim Chancellor Ankerson met with members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, the APC, and AAUP, and made promises to continue to meet. To date, this dialogue has included Interim Chancellor Ankerson's promise she would meet with a Faculty Senate Budget Committee.

Professor VanderPlas stated that while she planned to introduce a motion today on President Gold, she is similarly convinced that it would not serve the interests of the senate or the faculty at this time to do so – at this time, it is more important that we remain united in our conviction that the best path forward is to hold Interim Chancellor Ankerson and President Gold accountable for their statements made in the March meeting that they wish to work with us by continuing to request meetings with them, stand up the budget committee passed two years ago, and engage in dialogue about university priorities reflected in the budget, shared governance, and the way forward for UNL.

In that spirit, she requested permission to withdraw the motion.

President Shrader asked if there were any objections to the motion being withdrawn. Professor McElravy, Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication asked if President Shrader could articulate what the withdrawal of the motion means. Professor Gorman, Classics and Religious Studies, and Faculty Senate Parliamentarian, stated that the motion would be withdrawn without prejudice, meaning that such a motion could be brought up again, if there are no objections.

President Shrader asked if there were any objections, hearing none he stated that the motion was withdrawn.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Resolution to Strengthen Shared Governance and Institutional Trust

Professor McElravy stated that he was bringing forth the motion which focuses on how we can request from the Executive Leadership Team that they present a formal plan, within 30 days, or a timeline extended in collaboration with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, detailing the specific steps they will take to reaffirm the principles of shared governance, improve substantive communication with the faculty and ensure a collaborative, trusting work environment for all members of the university community, and that they provide a formal, written response to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee regarding their evaluation of these plans. Professor Vazansky, History, seconded the motion.

Professor PeeksMease stated that he brought both the No Confidence motion and this current motion to his colleagues and one of the primary concerns was that the new motion from Professor McElravy, while it is a motion to move forward, it does not hold the Executive Leadership Team accountable for what happened during the budget reduction process and it relieves them of any wrongdoing.

Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics, called for a point of order and asked if the motion was an emergency motion. President Shrader stated that no one declared this as an emergency motion so it will be voted on at the April 28th meeting.

Professor Gel asked how the resolution would work. Professor McElravy stated that he has had conversations with faculty members about what happened over this past year, and the motion seeks to clarify what the faculty needs to rebuild trust, to reaffirm the principles of shared governance, and to provide better communication. He pointed out that the administrators could absolutely say no, but the motion still communicates what the faculty think would be valuable and what would be helpful to rebuild trust.

President Shrader reminded the Faculty Senate of the Senate's two-meeting rule. He pointed out that a motion may not be voted on until the meeting following its introduction. He noted that a

number of the current Senators' terms are expiring before the next meeting, special measures must be taken to preserve this motion. He stated that in parliamentary terms, an assembly is a distinct body and when terms expire and new Senators are seated in the next session, a new assembly is formed. He noted that business from one assembly does not automatically carry over to the next without a formal referral, and any motion introduced today that is not resolved would expire or fall to the ground at the moment of adjournment. He stated that to ensure the faculty's work is preserved so that the incoming assembly can take a formal vote, he will now entertain a motion to refer the matter to the Executive Committee, with instructions to report the motion at the first meeting of the new session. He noted that it is important that the motion comes back to the Faculty Senate without recommendation. Professor McElravy moved to refer the matter to the Executive Committee with instructions to report the motion at the April 28th meeting. Motion seconded by Professor Vazansky. The Faculty Senate then voted on the referral motion. The motion passed with 50 in favor and 4 against.

7.2 Open Mic

Professor Gay stated that he is interested in hearing any thoughts the Faculty Senate might have on what President Gold can do to restore trust. Professor Krehbiel, 4-H Youth Program, stated that providing raises would help. Professor VanderPlas suggested hiring faculty back whose positions are being eliminated. President Shrader stated that President Gold and the rest of the administrators need to support the faculty and make it more public the value of the faculty and what they due for the state and the local communities.

Professor Peterson stated that there won't be any trust in the administration until they accept that mistakes were made with the budget reduction process. He pointed out that the faculty losing their jobs did not cause the budget problems, it is the poor management by the administration that caused the budget problems.

Professor Menon, Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education, asked why a motion is required rather than a letter sent from the Faculty Senate. She stated that it is important to ensure that actions such as this restoring trust motion are not perceived externally as a sign of inconsistency by the Faculty Senate. She pointed out that she does believe that restoration of trust is needed but wasn't quite sure whether the motion is the correct avenue for addressing it.

Professor Gel stated that we need a university administration that is interested in knowing what we need and faculty need to be informed of what they must achieve in order to meet performance expectations. She pointed out that there are structural deficiencies that need to be addressed. She noted that no one is asking the faculty about their goals and what they need in order to be successful. She stated that she would like to see that kind of engagement with the faculty.

Professor McElravy stated that centralization of operation and leadership at the NU system has been lacking over the last several years. He questioned what administrators do to get broader engagement before they implement processes or make decisions that impact teaching and research. He stated that we need a thoughtful approach to engaging with the different levels of our campus.

President Shrader noted that the Executive Committee recently met with President Gold and had a good discussion about the changes to EM 40 and the impacts and concerns that it has caused for faculty, staff, and students. He pointed out the Executive Committee will be meeting again with President Gold on Friday, April 10th to discuss EM 46 and the AI Institute. He noted that Interim Chancellor Ankerson reads the Senate and Executive Committee minutes and Associate to the Chancellor Gonzales is here in attendance.

Professor Vazansky stated that he heard that there was talk about the Senate's budget committee and asked for an update. President Shrader stated that Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that she would be willing to meet with such a committee and the Executive Committee is working to revive the Committee. He noted that there will be a meeting with the Interim Chancellor to discuss the

budget committee further.

Professor Houston, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, asked if the existing metric will be used again in the future. President Shrader that his understanding is that the metrics have been put in the closet. Professor Houston pointed out that the restoring trust motion does not have the teeth that are needed to ensure those metrics are not used again.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:54 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, at 2:30 p.m. via Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Ann Tschetter, Secretary.