

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Gorman, Kopocis, Leiter, Lewis, Reimer, Robison, Shrader, Timmerman, Tschetter

Absent: Baesu, Gruverman, Pierobon, VanderPlas

Date: Tuesday, June 30, 2026

Location: 201 Canfield Administration Building

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 (*Leiter*)

Leiter called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

2.0 Interim Chancellor Ankerson/EVC Button

Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that she met twice in May with the Faculty Senate Executive Officers where there were candid, productive conversations which reminded her of why she believes shared governance matters and noted that this is a spirited partnership which is shared across the ELT. She pointed out that EVC Button has an ongoing process of meeting with faculty and last week met with Leiter. She reported that EVC Button and Chief of Staff Gonzales met with Professor McElravy to discuss the motion that McElravy wrote, and which was approved by the Faculty Senate at the April 28th Senate meeting.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that the June 19th retreat was a milestone for Our Bold Path Forward strategic plan noting that over 100 people attended, most of whom were faculty, but members of the ELT, Staff Senate, and ASUN were also present. She reported that the full day session allowed everyone to contribute to developing the strategic plan and noted that the strategy we are building belongs to those who help shape it. She pointed out that faculty and administrators are far more alike than different and we share common similarities in what we want for our strategic plan. She pointed out that a strong shared governance framework is vital and we need to work together to have a strategic plan that will allow us to move forward.

Gorman noted that McElravy is not a member of the Senate Executive Committee and does not represent that faculty at large, so he questioned why EVC Button and Chief of Staff Gonzales met with him to discuss the April 28th motion rather than the Executive Committee. He stated that he has concerns when a random group of faculty members are consulted rather than the Senate Executive Committee. EVC Button stated that the reason for meeting with McElravy was to understand his point of view about what was expected from the joint report between the Senate Executive Committee and the ELT. Gorman noted that he is trying to educate the Senators that once a motion is approved by the Senate, it no longer belongs to the presenter of the motion.

2.1 We know that 62 faculty members have taken the VSIP but how many other faculty members are leaving UNL? Are exit interviews being conducted with these faculty members to determine why they are leaving?

EVC Button noted that in 2010-2011 when the VSIP was first offered, 84 faculty members took part in VSIP which was 31.7% of eligible faculty. He pointed out that this year, 28.7% of eligible faculty members are taking the VSIP which is in alignment with previous VSIP offers.

EVC Button stated that we will not know the precise number of faculty members who have left the university until the total FTE snapshot is conducted in October. He pointed out that one of the consequences of the budget reduction was the elimination of some positions in the EVC office which has resulted in the loss of being able to conduct exit interviews. He stated that there may be discussions at the unit levels about which faculty members are leaving, but there is no formal collecting of this data at the campus level. Interim Chancellor Ankerson noted that we have strong and excellent faculty members that are being heavily recruited and some choose to leave, regardless of the retention efforts that we make to retain them.

2.2 At the retreat on Friday, it was mentioned about working closely with the Senate Executive Committee on refining the metrics. How do you envision this process working?

Interim Chancellor Ankerson reported that there has been a partnership to build out the program indicators noting that the indicators will be in Tableau and will be available to DEOs in September. She noted that the DEOs will be able to share the information openly with faculty members which will allow the faculty and the administrators to refine the indicators jointly.

EVC Button stated that there have been discussions with many people across the campus, particularly the deans to bolster the indicators and he noted that the indicators will provide more data rather than focusing on the Z scores. He noted that the plan is to have more faculty engagement about the indicators and suggested that a standing committee, composed of faculty members and some administrators, be created to continually assess and refine the process over time. He stated that he has heard that the faculty wants more transparency about the data and reported that the APC will get a full presentation of the data and asked if the Faculty Senate would want a full presentation. He stated that he is thinking of the shared governance structure and ideally, he hopes that we will get to a place where we will have defined a broad group of indicators that would be important for all programs. These indicators would be used to assess performance overtime, but units would be allowed to suggest changes to the indicators.

Leiter said that he thinks the Faculty Senators would like to know what is going on with the performance indicators, but he is unsure whether the Senate wants a full, detailed presentation. He stated that the idea of a standing committee to assess and refine the indicators is a good one. Reimer concurred with Leiter but noted that it would be incredibly valuable for the Executive Committee to better understand the data and

suggested that the Committee could meet with the Academic Planning Committee when the full presentation is given. She pointed out that there should be broad representation on the standing committee, and noted that by doing this, greater trust in the process could occur.

Gorman asked if Tableau is being used, can people compare themselves with other units. EVC Button pointed out that Tableau is available to the DEOs and Deans and part of their responsibility is to make sure their faculty understand what the indicators look like and to see if there are any inaccuracies that need to be corrected.

2.3 How can you change the priorities for faculty apportionments to encourage better participation in shared governance?

Interim Chancellor Ankerson noted that this is about citizenship and people's desire to participate in shared governance. She stated that apportionment is guided by a faculty member's responsibilities of teaching, extension, service, research, outreach, clinical, and administrative responsibilities. The FTE is negotiated with a faculty leader but either the faculty member or the DEO can start the conversation about readjusting apportionments.

EVC Button stated that associated with the issue is how we address the lack of people participating in shared governance. He noted that shared governance is a domain of academic freedom. He questioned how we can get the committees to work with departments to see about getting people to serve on the committees and suggested that the conversation about apportionment should be expanded to address related issues. Reimer noted that we teach students how they can become good citizens and wondered if there could be a university-wide charge to instill good citizenship in faculty. Shrader pointed out that the majority of faculty members are overworked and underpaid and it is difficult to ask people to do more. He noted that the percentage of the faculty that do service work is low and there needs to be a better approach as to how faculty members can change their job description. Leiter pointed out that he has spoken with faculty members who have been told by their deans not to get involved with the Faculty Senate. He stated that there needs to be some kind of incentive beyond what people get now and there needs to be more acknowledgement of faculty participation in the Faculty Senate or service on committees. Kopocis agreed that there is an issue of getting faculty involved in shared governance. She stated that when the middle leadership is evaluated consideration should be given to how they developed a culture of service and how they have developed faculty members to be good leaders. Gorman pointed out that we call all kinds of things teaching and we need to make sure that different kinds of service is counted and the deans need to make sure this gets done at the unit level. He stated that we need to keep working on shared governance and having the administration being willing partners is important.

EVC Button suggested that when the call goes out to faculty to serve on committees his office can coordinate by asking deans to encourage faculty to participate in shared governance.

2.4 With departments requested to submit high priority positions at the beginning of the month, what will be the decision process to determine priority of positions across the system?

EVC Button stated that the Strategic Faculty Investment Program aims to leverage available resources from some of the VSIP savings to enhance university excellence through interdisciplinary collaboration and research capacity building, with proposals currently under review by a collaborative team including EVC, Office of Research, and IANR. He noted that the process began with a request for proposals and a series of guidelines and principles were conveyed to the deans. Gorman asked if the guidelines are published on the website. EVC Button stated that he does not think so, but he is happy to share them with the Executive Committee. He pointed out that the guidance is that we want departments to recruit faculty, possibly doing cluster hires, who will have a noticeable impact on our research and reputation. These people are at a higher level in their career and have an established record of achievement.

EVC Button reported that the standard process of hiring is going on concurrently with the Strategic Investment Program. He noted that the standard process allows colleges to meet their specific needs. Reimer pointed out that there is a lack of clarity that the standard hiring process is still ongoing. She stated that many faculty members thought the standard process was being replaced by strategic hiring and she appreciated hearing that the standard process is still occurring. Tschetter agreed that clarification is needed as many faculty members in her college think the same as those in the College of Fine and Performing Arts. EVC Button stated that clarification about the standard hiring process can definitely be provided.

Timmerman asked if the departments being merged in IANR were provided guidance to work through the process as they transition and how strategic hiring will work for these departments. EVC Button pointed out that the APC has guidelines for mergers which were provided and followed by the departments. He noted that all programs were able to submit proposals and colleges were not limited in the number of proposals that could be submitted but they would need to be ranked by the college. He stated that the ranking may be based on the need to fill gaps in certain areas and noted that this is just phase one of multiple phases of hiring and there are ways the process can continue to support more programs.

2.5 Fall Enrollment Update

EVC Button provided an enrollment update, reporting that first-time freshman deposits are up 2.3% and net deposits are up nearly 5%, though international student numbers are down 32% due to visa challenges. The overall enrollment is expected to be up across undergraduate, graduate, and professional categories compared to the previous year. He noted that a lot of partnering work is happening with the community colleges and as a result our transfer enrollment number is up by almost 6% for non-resident students and 5% for resident students.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson asked what the overall enrollment is looking like. EVC Button stated that we are expecting overall enrollment to be higher than last year. He

stated that the total number of credit hours students are taking continues to increase, but students are graduating faster because they are entering with so many credit hours. Interim Chancellor Ankerson pointed out that we won't know the final enrollment data until census day.

Gorman asked if we are losing tuition because of remission programs. EVC Button stated that institutionally, we expect to reduce remissions thanks to some significant philanthropy. He pointed out that at the same time the university is working to reduce the remission programs from the state. Shrader asked what the ratio is of resident/non-resident students. EVC Button stated that it is approximately 70/30.

2.6 In terms of real numbers, how will the increase in tuition offset budget deficits?

Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that the Regents, including the Student Regents, approved a tuition increase which results in resident undergraduate students facing a \$12 per credit hour increase and non-resident students seeing a \$40 increase; graduate resident students will see a \$16 per credit hour increase and \$48 for graduate non-resident tuition. She reported that the Board agreed to a plan to base increases on a four-year average that is adjusted for inflation, and if we could get this to be an ongoing practice it could help us to mitigate for future cuts. She noted that the increase in tuition did allow us to provide salary increases this year. She pointed out that the price index model is important and affordability is still one of our top priorities noting that we are still very low in tuition amongst our Big Ten peers. She stated that we also have mechanisms to help students with less income. She reported that even with the tuition increase the system still has an \$8 million deficit, but this is associated with the VSIP because the system won't realize all of the budget reductions until after the first year of the program.

Gorman asked if our budget situation will allow us to pay our bills in the future. Interim Chancellor Ankerson noted that there are variables with the budget pointing out that there is still uncertainty with federal grants and state appropriations. She reported that the inflation rate is 3.5-4.0% but the university will only receive a .625% increase. She stated that while there are other variables, there is no anticipation of a budget reduction this year.

Shrader noted that we are continuing to rely on enrollment to support our budget and asked if the pool of students is growing or if it is getting smaller. Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that the more non-resident students we can get the better and there is a model to recruit students from certain states. She noted that many private universities are having major enrollment problems. EVC Button reported that Admissions has been partnering with Extension, and we are seeing significant success with recruiting resident students. He pointed out that the number of Nebraska high school graduates choosing not to go to college is decreasing. He stated that a major change that is occurring in higher education is providing scholarships with actual money rather than waiving tuition. Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that the joint accreditation of UNL and UNMC will allow for seamless pathways for students interested in the health sciences which may be attractive to students.

Timmerman stated that she appreciated hearing about Extension's involvement with Admissions in recruiting transfer students from across Nebraska. She noted that she knows of a number of transfer students who have an associate's degree and asked how many of them are transferring to UNL. EVC Button stated that currently there are 687 deposits from transfer students and the anticipation is that the number will increase to 1,000. He noted that many students are entering with more credit hours and programs are being offered to enable some of these students to add an accelerated Master's degree program. Shrader pointed out that some faculty members are concerned how well prepared these students are who come in with many credit hours. Kopocis stated that she thinks there is real opportunity to create accelerated master's degrees and we could work with some companies so that there could be pathways for employment afterwards.

2.7 Next steps in the Senate Exec Committee and the ELT collaborating to develop the joint report that was defined in the Senate approved resolution on April 28th.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that she is open to having discussions on how the Executive Committee and ELT can work together to develop the joint report. (See comments in 2.0 for information on a joint committee.)

2.8 Open Discussion

Updates:

Interim Chancellor Ankerson reported that we have now been formally recognized by the HLC for joint accreditation with UNMC. She pointed out that this allows us to combine our reporting on enrollment, degrees awarded, faculty honors and recognitions and it brings us in alignment with many of the schools in the AAU. It will also strengthen our collaboration with UNMC, and an actual, immediate effect has occurred in that our rankings for research expenditures now put us at 55th and our federal research expenditures improved from 122nd ranking to 62nd. She noted that we have improved with the HERD Survey rankings as well.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson pointed out that some things will not change with joint accreditation such as our missions and academic programs, leadership and shared governance, and each campus will continue operating as separate entities within the system. She reported that a joint task force has been organized to plan for a summit for September 5th for UNL and UNMC and the summit will focus on education and research, to look for opportunities for collaboration that have not been explored yet, and to see if there are existing barriers that could be removed to better enable collaboration.

EVC Button noted that in addition, we have our regularly scheduled accreditation which will be conducted in October. He pointed out that there is a very short timeframe to get the work done for the accreditation and the HLC team will be coming to campus October 5 and 6 and people will have opportunities to engage with the visiting team.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson reported that over 100 faculty, staff, and students participated in the Our Bold Path Forward June 19th retreat where there were three round

table sessions during which robust discussions occurred and the ELT will review the feedback obtained during these discussions. She noted that some of the discussions focused on investment in infrastructure, work culture, workload equity, and the need for people to feel valued. She reported that the draft Our Bold Path Forward strategic plan will be available to campus leaders on August 3rd and will be launched on August 17th and there will be a fall leadership gathering.

EVC Button reported that searches for a Dean of Journalism and Mass Communication and a Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences have been approved and a search committee for each of the searches will be assembled at the start of the academic year. He noted that there are many people interested in serving on the CAS search committee. He pointed out that he is in the process of identifying an interim dean because Dean Reese of CEHS is leaving to go into private business.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson reported that the ELT was in unanimous alignment with the salary plan approved by the Board of Regents for a salary increase pool of 3%. She stated that final decisions are made at the college and department levels with administrators taking into account inflation impacts on lower paid employees as well as performance. She noted that the salary increases will keep excellence for students, allows us to expand opportunities, and to provide student support. Timmerman stated that she appreciates this unique opportunity to provide salary increases but pointed out that it can be difficult for those who have already submitted their budget plans to now have to factor in a cost-of-living increase into their budget. She asked if there is going to be an equity adjustment in the future, that there be earlier communication about it so people can plan accordingly. Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that she had hoped to be able to convey the information earlier and she thinks there will be advanced planning in the future that will allow for earlier communication.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson reported that there will be a President's Council Retreat next week and there will be discussion about the upcoming strategic progress indicators (SPIs) associated with the Odyssey to the Extraordinary plan. She pointed out that President Gold stated that there needs to be greater clarity on what our goals are for enrollment or graduation rates, and other measures. She announced that this fall there will be educational sessions to help units to have a shared understanding of our strategic priorities and our expectations.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that the CCPE produced a report with recommendations for increasing college enrollment rates and supporting student transfers. This would include improving students' knowledge about what courses will transfer and reaching out to students who have not completed their degrees. She pointed out that some of the recommendations will take resources.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson reported that consideration is being given to purchase the enterprise model for ChatGPT. She stated that the advantage to this is that any data would be kept would be kept at the university level and the program would be available for people to use.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that she has heard concerns about her edits to the April 21st Executive Committee minutes and pointed out that her edits are based on comments and sometimes without more information things can be taken out of context. She stated that she wants to provide fuller context in a way that makes her comments transparent while showing her commitment to shared governance. She noted that she appreciates the Executive Committee and the partnership she has with the committee.

Leiter pointed out that the minutes provide a record of what is said during the meeting, but he understands the Chancellor wanting to make sure that accurate information is provided. He suggested that a compromise is to provide a supplemental document to the minutes from the Chancellor that would provide more detail.

3.0 Approval of June 2, 2026 and April 21, 2026 Minutes

Leiter asked if there were any revisions for the June 2nd minutes. Hearing none, he asked for approval of the minutes. Gorman moved for approval, Shrader seconded the motion. Motion approved.

The Executive Committee discussed the suggestion to add the Interim Chancellor's edits to the minutes when she meets with the Executive Committee. Griffin noted that she can attach the comments as an addendum. The Executive Committee agreed to review the April 21st minutes with the addendum at the next meeting.

4.0 Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was discussed.

5.0 New Business

No new business was discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:16 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 2:30 pm. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Ann Tschetter, Secretary.