

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Baesu, Bearnese, Gorman, Leiter, Lewis, Pierobon, Reimer, Tschetter, Vakilzadian, VanderPlas

**Absent:** Eklund, Gruverman

**Date:** Tuesday, March 24, 2026

**Location:** 201 Canfield Administration

**Note:** These are not verbatim minutes. They are a summary of the discussions at the Executive Committee meeting as corrected by those participating.

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### 1.0 Call (*Shrader*)

Shrader called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

### 2.0 Interim Chancellor Ankerson

#### 2.1 **You were going to look into the Academic Analytics license to see if faculty can get access to their own data. Were you able to find out any information about this?**

Interim Chancellor Ankerson reported that the current Academic Analytics license agreement is paid by the NU system office and the following UNL positions have access to the portals per the current license. She noted that the Vice Chancellors, research staff of the Office of Research and Innovation, Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics staff, deans or their designees, and all DEOs have access to the data. She asked whether faculty had asked their chair to see their entries to make sure they're accurate or if they were denied access. She stated that she is curious about the need for additional licenses, and wants to be sure we are using our resources wisely. If there is adequate interest from the faculty in wanting to have direct access to their data, funding would need to be identified to cover the approximately \$60,000 additional cost. She noted that since we have subscriptions for every DE to have access, we should understand if faculty are accessing their information through that avenue rather than putting additional resources toward it and asked for the group's thoughts on this.

Lewis thanked Interim Chancellor Ankerson for sharing the information. She stated that it appears that faculty members have variable experiences with being able to get access to their data through the department chair. She noted that in her college it is not a problem, but she has heard from some faculty members in CAS that they were not allowed and some faculty members have been told they couldn't access the data. She pointed out that in reviewing her data, which was provided by her chair, she found a 29% error with her scholarly publications, and she was told that publications could not be added unless there is a DOI. She questioned how the creative work of faculty in the arts and humanities are factored into the metrics. Reimer stated that in the Glenn Korff School of Music they have different ways to capture creative activity, but if Academic Analytics is going to be

used in faculty evaluations, the faculty should know about it, and it is important that the data is very correct.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson asked if a faculty member has the chance to identify the areas that are missing, would they need to view the data more than once or twice a year. Lewis stated that she would not, but others might. Interim Chancellor Ankerson posed the question if training for DEOs might be the answer rather than purchasing additional subscriptions?

Shrader asked how much time it takes for a DEO to provide the data for the faculty member. Lewis stated that it was done quickly during her annual review. She pointed out that Academic Analytics only updates their records periodically. She stated that if using the Academic Analytics data is going to be part of the annual review process, careful training needs to be provided to the DEOs. VanderPlas reported that neither the current nor previous chair of her department knew how to get into Academic Analytics or thought it was important enough to bother sharing with faculty. She noted that faculty in her department didn't even know they could get access until the budget reduction plan was made public. Baesu asked if chairs can be mandated to use the Academic Analytics data as part of their job. Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that while we wouldn't necessarily mandate it, it could be an expectation and would provide additional training for those requiring it.

Shrader stated that what also needs to be considered is the value of Academic Analytics, especially if it is used for evaluation purposes. He pointed out that faculty will need to have access to their data to see if the information from Academic Analytics is correct and \$60,000 seems like a reasonable investment if the faculty needs access to the data. He stated that he supports the idea that anyone who oversees a faculty member's work should be fully trained for how to get access to Academic Analytics data. He noted that with large units it would consume a lot of the chair's time if that person had to provide each of the faculty members in the unit with Analytics Academics data.

Pierobon stated that he viewed a demo of Academic Analytics and how it could find potential collaborators, not only in his own field, but in other fields as well. Lewis stated that it can help identify interdisciplinary fields and conducting collaborative research could help pay for the additional cost through the use of F&A funds. Interim Chancellor Ankerson agreed that finding collaborators is quite a valuable feature.

## **2.2 Is the UNL considered a flagship university anymore when the decisions are made at the president's level with little or no consultation with UNL faculty and/or administrators?**

Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that the traditional definition of a flagship campus is more structural in nature, that it is the initial campus created, the largest campus and the most research-intensive campus in a state system. She stated that by any of these qualifiers, UNL is absolutely the flagship campus. She reported that another definition is that it sets the intellectual and ethical standard for others, where knowledge is created and not just transmitted, and faculty aren't merely employees, but really the living embodiment of the institution's mission. Interim Chancellor Ankerson also said that

flagship status isn't one that can be granted or revoked by any leader. It's earned and it's stewarded by people in rooms like this and beyond.

In response to the second part of the question, Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that shared governance is a structural feature of what makes a research university function. She pointed out that when people feel excluded from decisions that affect them, they don't just feel frustrated, they disengage, and when they disengage, trust erodes, and it becomes very costly to everyone including those making the decisions. She stated that she is committed to a stronger process of shared governance, and she genuinely believes we are better when more voices are heard and engagement exists.

Reimer stated that she believes some of the concern comes from when faculty are invited into the room to contribute ideas but there are no indications that their opinions are being considered and heard. She stated that an acknowledgement by the decision makers to say that we heard these points and note the ideas that are good and will work and that an explanation for those ideas that won't work if provided. She noted that the communication gap that exists is causing a lot of trust issues in both directions.

### **2.3 What structural changes in the academic, administrative, or business model of the UNL need to be made to meet the Odyssey to Extraordinary proposed by Dr. Gold, and what is the expected timeline?**

Interim Chancellor Ankerson pointed out that Our Bold Path Forward is not a restructuring process, it is a forward-looking direction setting process for UNL. She stated that any academic structural decisions that emerge from the development of the strategic framework will go through the shared governance process. She noted that the intentional process is to get a great deal of input from the faculty, staff, and students that will help inform our future, and this is why each of the members of the Executive Committee received the invitation to provide input and to help lead others to contribute to the strategic framework development.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that there is a website for [Our Bold Path Forward](#) and input is being collected through engagement with the colleges, the Academic Planning Committee, Senate Executive Committee, Staff Senate and other groups. She noted that there will be round tables occurring to gather input and there will be a feedback loop to ensure that the information is correct. She reported that input will be gathered over the next couple of months, then there is a period of coalescing with DEOs and other leaders including shared governance leaders, who will be pulled together in the summer, and the framework will launch in the summer and in time for fall semester.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson further explained where structural implications may occur, including places in the university where we may have duplicative administrative processes, not because they were designed this way but because institutions accumulate processes over time. She noted that streamlining the processes does not have to be a threat to our academic mission. She questioned whether there are likely administrative or business model structures that could be made more efficient and work is being done to explore this. She noted as an example that the APC is conducting a self-evaluation of

some of its procedures and documents to see if they accurately reflect the work of the committee and where improvements might be beneficial.

Shrader noted that many times over the past few years the campuses have been hearing about structural changes across the system and the number of duplicate programs that exist on the campuses. He asked whether UNL was being considered as the main campus for offering programs that are duplicated on the other campuses. Interim Chancellor Ankerson pointed out that there are always conversations about how the university might work better and over the past years, services such as ITS, business processes, and others have been centralized. She stated that this is an opportunity for us to help guide our opportunities. Interim Chancellor Ankerson also said she was not going to give the group a timeline for outcomes that create any kind of artificial urgency or implies that decisions have been made that haven't. She added that none of us want to learn about structural changes or other news that directly affect our work from a press release. If we're doing this right, and she intends for us to do it right, the conversation would happen here first.

Baesu pointed out that there is still a lot of duplication of courses in Engineering with the Omaha campus and they have the same name and course offerings. Interim Chancellor Ankerson suggested the need to be careful of how you define academic duplication is defined. Shrader noted that the university is not that large and we need to consider how we could save money by being more efficient with the programs we offer, and it would be a more efficient process if the people driving the mission of the campus were involved in the process of looking for duplications.

Vakilzadian stated that increasing efficiencies is good but while it is good to have created an AI Institute, there was little consultation with the faculty on campus that are actively involved in the creation and development of AI. Interim Chancellor Ankerson reported that an AI initiative began shortly after President Gold began on July 1, 2024, and messages were sent out to the faculty asking for people to work on an AI task force. She stated that there were six representatives from UNL who were on that AI task force that stated in 2023, and the task force sent out a survey as part of their work, and developed a summary of the comments that were received. She noted that the [report from the task force is on the President's website](#) and from the work of the task force, the AI Institute was developed. She stated that there has been some communication about it and two UNL faculty members, Professor Pitla of Biological Systems Engineering and Professor Adrian Wisnicki of English are leading the Institute. She pointed out that there were opportunities for people to be involved with the task force. Vakilzadian asked what the AI Institute is, how it will be implemented, and how it will move us to the extraordinary. Gorman questioned whether the cost of AI has been considered because prices for it are scheduled to go up dramatically in the next few years.

**2.4 The public mistakes a university professor's life with that of a K-12 teacher's life, but there are differences in a university professor's life. What PR is needed to change this perception and how?**

Interim Chancellor Ankerson noted that a K-12 teacher's work is highly visible: a building, a bell schedule, a classroom full of kids. That's the image most people carry from their own lives. A faculty or professor's work is largely invisible by design, the reading at 10 pm, the grant proposal over spring break, the data set being analyzed on a Tuesday afternoon that will eventually inform a policy or help create a cure or be published in a book. The public often only sees a professor's work as the time in the classroom. She pointed out that the faculty are the best translators of what they do and this could be amplified so citizens of the state have a better understanding of the work of the faculty.

Reimer noted that her work as a Professor of Voice is very visible. She suggested that using platforms like Instagram to create short clips of a professor working would allow visual learners to see what professors do and how much time they invest in a 24-hour period to their profession. Leiter stated that the difficult part about this is that there are a lot of intangible things that faculty do that the public is not aware of, things like mentoring students, taking them to various parts of the country or even overseas to participate in conferences for experiential learning opportunities.

Shrader stated that there are people who say that the faculty are "woke" and live in ivory towers, but the reality is that the faculty and administration want to work together to do what they were hired to do, teach our students, conduct research, and make improvements for the state. He noted that the narrative that is being driven by some people in the public is that faculty members are indoctrinating the students when in reality faculty are teaching students how to think, not what to think, and the administration needs to stand up and support the faculty and explain what they do. Tschetter noted that faculty members used to get recognized at sporting events, but she does not believe that happens anymore.

Reimer stated that a public statement from the administration specifically supporting the work of the faculty would certainly help with faculty and staff morale. Interim Chancellor Ankerson asked what the statement should include. She pointed out that she often meets with legislators, and they want to know what we at the university do. She noted that she usually shares stories with specificity, what the faculty are working on such as the difference a UNL soil science professor is making to a farmer, or how the university is helping farmers and ranchers deal with the impacts of wildfires. She additionally stated that abstract arguments can seem self-serving, while concrete examples of the work across the university is relatable. Lewis noted that we have a great vehicle for addressing the public through Nebraska Extension. Baesu suggested that the university should be more involved in the community and faculty members could go to the schools to discuss STEM fields and to have students come and visit campus. Tschetter reported that the faculty used to go into the high schools a lot more to talk to the students, but this effort was shut down. Reimer pointed out that there are things occurring in every college, they just need to be highlighted. She noted that her college brings students to see their very first opera which many of the students really enjoy and they learn about what the college is doing. Pierobon stated that another example is the College of Engineering's Prairie Initiative which is organizing workshops and seminars

relating to AI. Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that she really appreciated the great suggestions and said that if anyone has any more examples of what can be done, please contact Chief of Staff Gonzales to let him know.

**2.5 Last semester’s budget-cutting process angered and frustrated many faculty. Without discussing specific actions or procedures, do you agree that there was a problem with how budget cuts were handled last semester? What can be done to avoid such angst in the future?**

Leiter noted that the Executive Committee continues to hear about the angst the faculty are feeling and that they don’t think their concerns are being heard. Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that her belief is in the cycle of continuous improvement and to see how together we can make improvements for the future.

Interim Chancellor Ankerson noted that she thoroughly appreciated and enjoy the conversation today with the Executive Committee.

**3.0 Announcements**

No announcements were made.

**4.0 Approval of March 10, 2026 Minutes**

Shrader asked if there were any further revisions to the minutes. Hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Leiter moved and Baesu seconded, approving the minutes. Motion approved by the Executive Committee.

**5.0 Unfinished Business**

**5.1 No Confidence Motion**

The Executive Committee discussed how the Faculty Senate should proceed should the motion of no confidence in EVC Button, VC Heng-Moss, and Interim VC Nelson be withdrawn. Gorman, parliamentarian of the Senate, pointed out that the motion now belonged to the Senate body and it would have to vote on withdrawing the motion.

**5.2 Budget Committee**

Shrader reported that Interim Chancellor Ankerson stated that she would be willing to meet the Senate budget committee. The Executive Committee agreed to review the Committee’s responsibilities to see if they should be revised so they could be more achievable.

**6.0 New Business**

Shrader stated that recruiting students is a problem for UNL and Bearnese noted that even though Extension Educators bring students down to UNL, many of them go to Iowa, Minnesota, or South Dakota instead of UNL. She pointed out that UNL does not advertise on the TV, radio or elsewhere while the schools in the surrounding states do. She stated that a lack of recruiters is also a problem. Tschetter noted that recruiting in CAS seems to have decreased and advising does not seem as robust as it used to be.

Lewis reported that the Senate's subcommittee to review the system's draft metrics met with Interim Provost Jackson recently. She noted that the subcommittee drafted a couple sets of questions for him and he has responded to them and discussed his responses with the subcommittee. She stated that she would give an update to the Faculty Senate on the work of the subcommittee, but the report would not be ready for the April 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at 2:30 pm. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Ann Tschetter, Secretary.