

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Billesbach, Buan, Dam, Eklund, Gay, Herstein, Kolbe, Krehbiel, Minter, Nicholas, Weissling, Woodman, Zuckerman

Absent:

Date: Tuesday, May 4, 2021

Location: Zoom meeting

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 (*Kolbe*)

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

2.0 Chancellor Green/EVC Spiller/VC Boehm

2.1 How is the \$500,000 to improve Lecturer salaries being dispersed amongst the colleges and how is the effort progressing? What is the anticipated increase in salary going to be and will Lecturers get credit for time spent on service work?

EVC Spiller reported that the deadline date for submitting requests from the Deans to improve Lecturer salaries was last week and her staff has been working with individual colleges on these requests. She stated that she and her staff will be reviewing these requests during the coming month. She noted that changes in salaries for Lecturers would go into effect July 1 for those on 12-month appointments, and September 1 for those on 9-month appointments.

In response to the question about service, EVC Spiller noted that the Lecturer apportionment is for 100% teaching, although teaching could include any contributions or work in support of the University teaching mission. Weissling pointed out that she was initially a Lecturer, and she had a service apportionment and asked if it is now a hard and fast rule that Lecturers must be 100% teaching because she knows some Lecturers who still have some service apportionment. EVC Spiller responded that it was her understanding that Lecturers have a 100% teaching apportionment. She pointed out that we need to continue to make sure that the distinction between the Lecturer and Professor of Practices positions is clearly understood.

Woodman asked if there was any data on the numbers of recommendations that have been made to transition Lecturers to a Professor of Practice position. EVC Spiller reported that the data is not available yet as the deadline was just last week.

Minter suggested that if the notion of teaching is going to be conceptualized in an expanded way that this need to be articulated explicitly so people know and understand what teaching can entail. EVC Spiller agreed and reported that she is having a

conversation with AVC Walker about how we would need a level of clarity that provides guidance and shared understanding about this concept.

Billesbach noted that there have been discussions about working to include Lecturers and Professors of Practice in department governance by including them on department committees and asked if this would be considered service. EVC Spiller stated that the distinction would be serving on a committee, such as the department curriculum committee, which supports the university teaching mission. Billesbach asked if there are certain committees Lecturers could not serve on. EVC Spiller stated that it would be worth thinking about this at the unit level. She noted that there are some committees which require the members to hold certain ranks and suggested that there should be continued discussion on this topic.

Herstein asked if those Lecturers who will be promoted to a Professor of Practice position will be given credit for the time they have taught as a Lecturer. She asked if Professors of Practice are eligible to move into administrative roles. EVC Spiller stated that in principle, Professors of Practice can serve in an administrative position, but it really depends on the requirements for that position. She noted that some administrative positions require that the person be a full professor. Herstein asked if it could be in writing stating that Professor of Practices could serve in some administrative position because she has been told that this is an avenue that is not available for these faculty members. EVC Spiller stated that being a Professor of Practice should not be an impediment if the faculty member meets all of the requirements of an administrative position. Minter stated that some colleges might have different constraints on the kinds of roles they assign and having two different appointments might be easier in some colleges than others. Woodman noted that when the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education position was available in the College of Arts and Sciences, the position description stated that Professors of Practice could apply. He asked Herstein if she knows of people who were Lecturers that were promoted to Professor of Practice. Herstein stated that she does know of people who have been promoted to the Professor of Practice position.

Kolbe stated that it would be helpful if there were general guidelines across the university about the different faculty positions and the apportionment of responsibilities that should be applied to the positions. EVC Spiller stated that she reviews requests for faculty hires and noted that the appointment letters include apportionment, but the percentage of the apportionments can vary from unit to unit. She reported that there have been some conversations about this, one being what is the appropriate level of apportionment for service given that we are a tier 1 research university. She stated that she is supportive of having a level of autonomy for units in deciding apportionments but thinks it would be helpful if we had some guidelines about what the different apportionments mean.

2.2 When will travel policies be changed, especially for in-state travel and travel within the United States so people can conduct research?

Chancellor Green reported that in-state travel has already been authorized. He stated that out-of-state travel requires two levels of authorization, but he anticipates before the end

of June that we will be moving to the next stage of travel in the U.S. He noted that international travel at this time is still restricted.

2.3 Update on Hiring Freeze

Chancellor Green noted that in 2018-2019 there was a hiring freeze across the university system which was lifted for a brief period of time before the pandemic hit. He stated that an official word regarding the hiring freeze will be made by the end of this fiscal year (June 30) and he is expecting the that freeze will be removed. He pointed out that although the freeze may be ended, the university will continue to track hiring.

Chancellor Green reminded the Executive Committee that the \$38 million reduction in our budget will continue to be implemented over the next two years which could impact hiring. He noted that all hiring will be done strategically.

2.4 Clarifications about hiring decisions for faculty members. Are these decisions being made on a strategic level?

EVC Spiller stated that our budget reductions scheduled for the next two years will slow down the pace of hiring, but she thinks there may be many opportunities that the Deans would like to pursue, and she hopes that we can move out of the hiring freeze in a positive, but slower way. She reported that the Deans are required to submit justification for hires and the justification will be based on metrics such as academic program demands, enrollment demands and growth and that requests are also reviewed with respect to how positions align with the strategic priority of the department and college, if it supports the academic mission, and how it interfaces with the N2025 strategic plan. She stated that in the larger analysis, the goal of hiring is to look across the campus landscape and to consider how we are meeting our core needs.

VC Boehm pointed out that in IANR hiring is absolutely being done strategically, and regardless of whether the hire is for any faculty member, tenure-track or not, or for Extension, our three mission areas are front and center in the decision process. He agreed with EVC Spiller that our rate of refill has been impacted by the budget reductions, and any critical faculty lines hired this year were based on mission critical decisions.

Chancellor Green noted that pre-COVID the campus went through the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program which over 60 faculty members participated in and the funds from many of these open faculty lines were used to offset the budget reductions this year. He pointed out that this will also impact our hiring ability.

2.5 Now that the University budget has been approved by the Governor, what are some plans as we move forward?

Chancellor Green noted that the Governor signed the state's budget, including the state funding for the University. He reported that the budget included a 2% increase for the University's operating budget for each of the next two years and \$2 million is being given each year to the Nebraska Career Scholarships program which provides scholarships for students majoring in STEM and health care fields. In addition, LB 588,

the Capital Renewal Plan, extends funding for capital renewal projects through 2062 and increases funding for the projects incrementally during this timeframe.

Chancellor Green stated that the first piece of the University budget will be to start the salary exercises for this year. He stated that the budget allows for a 1.5% salary increase for faculty and staff this year based on the annual evaluation process. He noted that promotion and tenure increases will need to be funded so units will receive 1.2% in funding for salary increases. He stated that additionally, President Carter mentioned at the recent Faculty Senate meeting the desire to address faculty competitiveness, principally at UNL and UNMC. He pointed out that our faculty salaries lag by about 8.3% behind our peers and President Carter has authorized that UNL will be allocated \$5 million this year and next year to address the faculty competitiveness issue. He reported that the process for increasing faculty salaries using these allocated funds will unfold through the Deans over the next few months and recommendations will be made to the EVC and VCIANR in the fall. He pointed out that if approved, the increases from this set of funds will be retroactive to the beginning of the fiscal year which begins on July 1.

Nicholas asked how the metrics for determining faculty competitiveness were determined. She asked if comparisons were being made according to disciplines. EVC Spiller noted that the Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee has been looking at how competitive our salaries are in comparison to our peers (as defined by the Board of Regents). She stated that benchmarking data by department and rank are captured to allow us to make well-informed assessments and to see how our faculty salaries lag behind our peers. She stated that the FCAC looked at both negative variance by rank at the unit and in a more granular way which would allow Deans to make a more persuasive case for salary increases. She noted that we see lags across the campus and for some units the lag is more severe. She pointed out that these funds are a significant commitment on the part of the system which allows us to make some significant progress in faculty competitiveness.

Chancellor Green reported that last year UNL received approximately \$1.3 million of the Nebraska Career Scholarships fund to support approximately 420 students majoring in high demand fields. He stated that we will receive an equal amount for the coming year and the following year. Weissling asked if these scholarships are targeted. Chancellor Green noted that the Nebraska Career Scholarships was started by the Governor in 2020 to support students in high demand fields such as STEM and in health care at the university and in the community colleges. Weissling asked if teaching was included in these fields. Chancellor Green stated that he does not think teaching is supported by these scholarships.

Chancellor Green stated that the first set of facilities at UNL that will be either renovated or replaced with the help of the Capital Renewal Funds has been identified. He noted that the largest of these projects is the replacement of the Westbrook music building and he reported that a public announcement will be made in the fall regarding the full list of buildings identified in this first set of capital improvements.

Chancellor Green stated that tuition is being kept flat with no increase for our students for this coming year or the next year. He noted that an affordable tuition rate is an important issue for continued focus on our mission of access to highest quality education. He stated that tuition will be a point of discussion in the future, and we need to plan our budget around it. He noted that there is some discussion about having a one-tuition model, but we need to consider whether this would be a possibility for the University. Eklund asked if the concept with tuition rates in the future for undergraduates to have a block tuition rate model was possible. Chancellor Green stated that this idea was evaluated during Professor Perlman's term as Chancellor and it showed to be a revenue loss for UNL, but President Carter has a priority for the University to look at the feasibility of implementing a block tuition model. He noted that the base for the number of credit hours students could take in a semester would be 15 which would be the equivalent of a full-time student, with any hours beyond 15 not charged.

Gay stated that he does not recall the Legislature being so supportive and friendly to the University. Chancellor Green stated that he thinks it is a combination of several things. He noted that the revenue picture of the state is much better than was anticipated and in addition there is the stimulus funding. He pointed out that another factor is the excellent relationship President Carter has developed with Governor Ricketts and the Legislature which allows the University to work strongly together as a partner with the State. He noted that there is still the same level of discussion about providing property tax relief which has not been resolved in the Legislature.

2.6 Mileage reimbursement rate – is there any movement to improve the rate? Our per diem rate is below the federal rate. Will improvements be made in the per diem rate?

Chancellor Green noted that the budget response teams a few years ago enacted a system policy to reduce the per diem rate for mileage which resulted in a savings of approximately \$1 million to the University. He stated that he is aware that this was a contentious issue, particularly with Extension, but if we were to return to the previous rates, we would need to take funds from other areas. He pointed out that departments and units could subsidize mileage reimbursement, but this has not occurred. He noted that there was a recent increase to 29 cents per mile. VC Boehm reported that he has asked Interim Dean Varner and Assistant Vice Chancellor Bassford to put together a data package to look at subsidizing mileage reimbursement and he will engage the Chancellor in a dialogue about it when the data becomes available.

Buan stated that one of the problems is the reimbursement rate is less than if faculty members borrowed a fleet vehicle. Krehbiel pointed out that if she rents a car she gets charged the rental for the vehicle and also gets charged for gas, plus if she goes over the allowable miles she gets charged for it. Chancellor Green stated that when the reimbursement policy was set in 2018 it was on the basis that the cost of a fleet vehicle would include gas, but if the fleet rentals are not working this way the administration needs to know this. Associate to the Chancellor Zeleny reported that the current rate is 29 cents, and the average amount of miles is 200 per driver, but if the number of miles

driven is greater than 200 the cost object number used for renting the vehicle will be charged.

Billesbach reported that the fleet vehicles do not have a truck that he can use out in the field when he is conducting research. He stated that every penny of his research trips is paid by a federal grant from the Department of Energy and they question why he does not submit mileage and per diem at the federal rates and asked if he could use the federal rates instead of the University's rates when he seeks reimbursement. Chancellor Green stated that there needs to be one policy for the university system and the administration would need to check whether the federal rate can be used when the funding is coming from federal grants.

2.7 Issues on the Horizon

Chancellor Green wanted to commend EVC Spiller, AVC Walker, and Events and Outreach Coordinator Bullington for their work on creating a successful drive-through celebration for those faculty members who received promotion and tenure. He pointed out that the event was for faculty members who received promotion and tenure last year as well as this year. He reported that many people attended with their families.

Chancellor Green reported that there will be announcements over some large grants that UNL will soon receive. He stated that he is pleased that a number of new initiatives will soon be started including the creation of a bias procedures team to manage the process when incidents occur, the establishment of the Chancellor's Collaborative to Prevent Sexual Misconduct, and the establishment of a Native American and Indigenous Advisory Board.

Chancellor Green stated that he will be working with VC Wilhelm to look at strategic investments to invest in the grand challenges identified in the N2025 plan beginning with the new fiscal year.

3.0 AVC Goodburn

3.1 Creating a Canvas Module for Students on University Policies and Resources

Kolbe noted that the Executive Committee has discussed trying to contain the rapid growth of required information on course syllabi that do not relate to the course itself and has suggested having a Canvas module that would contain links to this other information.

AVC Goodburn noted that the Center for Transformative Teaching (CTT) developed a standard template for what a course syllabus should contain and noted that there has been some discussion between the Executive Committee and CTT Director Monk about creating a Canvas module. She asked what the goals and intentions are of the Executive Committee and she and Director Monk would be happy to help out in whatever way they can to help the Executive Committee achieve its goal. She asked what the timeline is for doing this and asked whether the Committee wants to be involved in developing the resources or just give general directions.

Kolbe stated that the Executive Committee has not discussed an actual date of completion, but the idea is to create a subcommittee to work on developing the module over the summer. Buan pointed out that some of the language in the Senate syllabus policy was proposed by ASUN and suggested that the subcommittee should work with them. She noted that the Faculty Senate would also need to approve revising the existing policy.

AVC Goodburn stated that she can see moving the resource section of the syllabus policy to a Start Smart module that many of the colleges have for their students. She noted that there could be a set of modules for the whole campus which would include a common set of expectations for courses.

Kolbe stated that he would like a subcommittee, with input from AVC Goodburn or a designee and an ASUN member, to begin working on a module soon. AVC Goodburn noted that she will be meeting with the Academic Solution Council tomorrow and can share the idea with the Council. She stated that one concern is that students and instructors would not review the resources. Kolbe suggested that the syllabus policy could still require that a link be provided to the Canvas course or a website which contains all of the information.

Weissling stated that she did not think a Canvas module would work unless the colleges are involved because many of the college curriculum committees have their own requirements for the syllabus. She suggested that each college might need its own specific Canvas module. AVC Goodburn pointed out that we do not want eight different Canvas modules for students to have to look at and there will need to be a concerted effort to pare down the syllabus requirements. Billesbach stated that we need to simplify things for the students by providing a single master document that all students receive that lists the student resources and common expectations. He noted that the intent is to reduce students being overwhelmed with getting the same information in every syllabus. AVC Goodburn noted that a larger question is how we encourage instructors to make the students aware of the list of resources. She noted that having instructors make referrals to resources makes a significant difference for the students.

Herstein suggested speaking to faculty at UNMC who have a module that provides information on these universal policies and faculty and students are required to update their training every fall on the policies. She noted that this ensures compliance and students who fail to complete the training have a hold put on their registration for courses.

Zuckerman stated that she broke her syllabus into pages that she has in Canvas. For instance, she noted that there is a page that provides a link to University resources, and a page that helps them to be successful in the course. She suggested that these information pages could be included if instructors are using Canvas for their courses.

Minter suggested that we do not necessarily think in terms of modules and pointed out that the University Libraries has a resource guide which can easily be linked. She stated

that if colleges wanted to create their own resource guide they could do so. Buan suggested that the subcommittee should create a model first to show how things could be streamlined. She advocated for having a few college representatives on the subcommittee.

AVC Goodburn stated that she is supportive of the idea and would be happy to help with the effort.

4.0 Announcements

4.1 Recipients of the Louise Pound-George Howard Distinguished Career Award and the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award

Kolbe announced that Professor Carole Levin, History, and Professor Al Steckelberg, Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education are the recipients of this year's Louise Pound-George Howard Distinguished Career Award.

Kolbe announced that Professor Christina Falci, Sociology, and Professor Kevin Hanrahan, Glenn Korff School of Music, are the recipients of this year's James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award.

4.2 Upcoming Meeting with Chief of Police Ramzah

Kolbe reported that the Executive Committee will be meeting with UNL's Chief of Police Ramzah on June 15.

5.0 Approval of April 27, 2021 Minutes

Kolbe asked if there were any revisions to the minutes. Hearing none he declared the minutes approved.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Attendance Policy for Fall

Kolbe noted that the current attendance policy covers the spring and summer semester, and the question is whether the current policy that was adapted to for teaching during the pandemic should be continued through the fall. He noted that email conversations with faculty members indicate they want to return to the [Faculty Senate's Class Attendance Policy](#) which was the policy in place before the pandemic.

Buan pointed out that students have had opportunities to get the vaccine and there will be vaccine available at the Health Center so more than likely all classes will be held in person. Weissling stated that faculty in her department are not thinking of have asynchronous teaching so students who are ill would not be able to Zoom into a class. Kolbe noted that faculty members in his department are still planning to record their classes. Woodman stated that the administration should make a statement that students should not expect asynchronous accommodations for missed classes in the fall and students would need certification of having a positive COVID test result to be out of class. Buan pointed out that the Health Center will not provide students with a doctor's note if they are out sick, but if the students have ADA documentation that can be provided.

Herstein stated that it would be helpful for the faculty and students to know what the policy would be for fall. Minter stated that an announcement about the Senate policy should be sent out and she is willing to work with AVC Goodburn on this.

6.2 Mileage Reimbursement Rate

Kolbe reported that he received an email message from Professor Purcell regarding the need for the University to increase the mileage reimbursement rate. He noted that the rate is only 29 cents per mile which is considerably below the federal rate.

Krehbiel noted that when she rents a car it costs her \$24 a day and if she goes over the allowable miles she is charged for the additional miles and in addition has to pay for gas. She stated that she has never heard until today that providing an increased rate of reimbursement is at the discretion of a Dean. Buan stated that she believes there is some movement to put more pressure on Central Administration to make improvements on the mileage reimbursement rate. Minter stated that having departments or colleges provide funding seems like a strategy to reduce costs at the University-wide level. She pointed out that some smaller units barely have an operating budget, and they could not afford to pay for mileage reimbursement. Buan noted that the per diem is below the federal rates as well.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Proposal to Compensate Faculty Senators

Gay stated that he would like the Executive Committee to discuss the idea of rewarding Faculty Senate Executive Committee members and Faculty Senators to compensate for the extra time they spend in doing service work. Buan pointed out that getting the funding to do this would be difficult and it would more than likely come out of state appropriations, but a monetary reward could encourage people to put an effort into serving. Weissling suggested that there could be changes in the workload for people who serve on the Senate. Buan noted that most of our peers in the Big Ten do not incentivize people to serve.

The Executive Committee agreed to discuss the issue further.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be conducted via Zoom. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Kelli Herstein, Secretary.