

MINUTES
February 21, 2024

University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Academic Planning Committee

Members Present: Ankerson, Bloom, Boehm, Clarke, Cressler, Doll, Heng-Moss, Jones, Latta Konecky, Minter, Mowat, Ourada, Russo, Theiss-Morse, Tschetter, Vuran, Haake, Gonzales

Members Absent: Button, Davis

Guests: Associate Dean Miller, Professor Ryan, Professor Rebarber

Note: These are not verbatim minutes. This is a summary of the discussions at the Academic Planning Committee meeting as corrected by those participating.

1.0 Call

Vuran called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

2.0 Review of Business Analytics Program Proposal

Vuran recused himself from the discussion and asked Clarke to chair the discussion. Clarke moved to discuss the proposal. Motion seconded by Ankerson. Cressler then moved to table the proposal because there seems to be some things remaining that have not been resolved such as the possible duplication of courses. Ryan pointed out that letters were sent to the chair of Statistics to ask what he was still concerned about, but they have not received a response back. Clarke pointed out that a response was sent about the need to revise the proposal. Miller stated that the proposal was revised but Clarke pointed out that there is still a core course that needs to be approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUCC). Ryan stated that they were informed by the EVC's office that the approval of the course should not hold up the process of approving the proposed program. White stated that they were informed that the UUCC would need a letter from Statistics either supporting SCMA 453 or indicating the department's concern with the course being a duplication. She noted that the School of Computing did send a letter of support for the course immediately after the group meeting in December.

Cressler pointed out that there was also a question about sufficient resources because the proposal was having Ph.D. students teach courses in order to free up faculty time to allow the faculty to teach the new courses for the proposed program. Ryan noted that historically the College of Business requires Ph.D. students to do some teaching in order to get a job and the Ph.D. students would be teaching lower-level courses.

Clarke seconded the motion to table the proposal.

Cressler stated that he was not sure what the protocol is for approving a program when a core course of the program does not yet have approval. Clarke noted that the title of the

course that is pending has been changed and there still seems to be concern that there could be overlapping with additional courses. She pointed out that the APC is very conscious of overlapping courses, particularly now given our budget situation. She noted that the chair of Statistics was unable to attend today's meeting due to other commitments. She stated that she does believe that the Business Analytics program does have a place on campus, but the APC needs to do its best to ensure that we do not have overlapping programs or courses.

Ryan stated that in December when a meeting was held between the proposers and the other departments with similar courses, it was pointed out that the students for SCMA 453 would have very different prerequisites than a similar course in Statistics or the School of Computing. Russo asked if there was another course that could be substituted for SCMA 453. Ryan reported that there are different electives and there is an 800-level course, but 453 was developed from a pedagogical design specifically for this program. She noted that business students would not have the prerequisites to take other machine learning courses that are on campus in various departments.

Heng-Moss recommended that Statistics be notified that they have until March 1 to respond with a letter to the UUCC so it can act on SCMA 453. Minter questioned whether there could be conditional acceptance of the proposal. Tschetter noted that the UUCC meets once a month and is scheduled to meet again on March 8th. Clarke suggested that Statistics be allowed to respond by March 1 so the UUCC can vote on the course, and if the UUCC does not approve the course, the Business college can then revise the proposal accordingly.

The motion to table the proposal was approved: 11 in favor, 3 against, and 1 abstention.

Latta Konecky stated that she is very uncomfortable with one department holding up a program proposal. She pointed out that there needs to be some kind of timeframe for when departments must respond. Minter stated that she was concerned that there was the potential for a unit to hold up a proposal and she was confused about the timeline. She questioned where the Deans of the colleges stand on a proposal, and she questioned if a proposal should go to the APC if there is discourse. Tschetter noted that the UUCC has been charged with being very careful with possible duplication of course so each course proposal is being looked at carefully.

Theiss-Morse stated that she is concerned with the argument that a course is specifically needed for a program when there are similar existing courses. She questioned if we are going to see a proliferation of these kinds of courses. Minter noted that we are being told we need to be more interdisciplinary, yet this proposal was not. Vuran stated that a concern of the School of Computing is that some computing courses are moving into a niche for specific departments. He pointed out that many universities create a School of Computing to provide computing service courses, but this can be a challenge. He pointed out that one of the successful routes being done here is with the Emerging Media Arts program where faculty members of the School of Computing are co-teaching some courses, although this can be difficult to do but it is a topic that needs to be discussed.

Doll questioned how you resource that kind of teaching. She stated that her fundamental questions are can the APC consider a program proposal when a core course has not been approved and can a single department pause a proposal by not responding. She stated that timelines need to be established and that all parties must respond within a certain timeframe.

4.0 Program Proposal to Delete Mathematics M.A. Program

Vuran noted the APC received the proposal and asked if there was a motion to approve the deletion of the Mathematics M.A. program. Cressler moved and Heng-Moss seconded to approve the proposal. The APC approved the motion.

5.0 Approval of February 7, 2024 Minutes

Vuran asked for approval of the minutes. Tschetter moved to approve the minutes and Latta Konecky seconded the motion. Bloom asked for a revision on a statement he made regarding the reasons for eliminating a program. Motion approved after revisions were made.

6.0 Further Discussion on How to Move Forward with the Next Round of Reductions

Vuran reported that there has been no further news about Phase 2 budget reductions. Minter stated that she is worried about the timeline given that next week March begins and asked if we would be running out of time, particularly if programs are to be cut. Bloom noted that the APC operating procedures states that the Committee can still meet over the summer if needed.

Pechous asked if there is a real urgency to get the Phase 2 budget reductions done by May 18. He asked if the APC should be looking at where our strengths lie and conducting analysis now. Vuran noted that the APC did initial analysis work last semester. Bloom pointed out that there is limited confidence on campus about the veracity of the system budget numbers and how much would be passed down to UNL. He stated that a lot of work needs to be done that was missing in the fall.

Minter pointed out that it is really not the APC's charge to identify what should be cut. Theiss-Morse stated that the APC could propose some non-academic reductions and noted that there might be other ways to make reductions without eliminating academic programs and faculty members. She pointed out that there are no clear goals and no sense of where we are going with making budget reductions and agreed with Minter that the APC should not be making the decisions on what should be cut. Bloom pointed out that the campus is relying on the chancellor to provide some guidance.

Clarke stated that one of the things the APC identified was that there was no strategy for identifying what our strengths are and what we value, and she has concern that the Committee will not be given a strategy. She noted that last semester's discussions were very frustrating because the Committee was not provided with an overarching discussion about what the strategy is for the campus. Bloom suggested that there is the N2025 plan that the APC can consider looking for where it needs to be refreshed and improved.

7.0 Reports from EVC Ankerson, VC Boehm, Interim VC Jones

Ankerson

Ankerson reported that [HealthierU](#) is an employee wellness program that promotes healthy living at work and at home and it provides resources, events, and engagement opportunities for every employee.

Ankerson reminded the APC that the Husker Student Power Survey is still open for a few more days. She pointed out that the result of the survey allows advisors and academic navigators to identify students that may be struggling so they can reach out to help them. She noted that the Survey is an effective way to ensure student success.

Ankerson reported that enrollment is looking positive for the fall semester. She noted that the college recruiting staffs of the colleges are working hard and people may have noticed that many students are visiting campus. She stated that bearing unforeseen circumstances, she is feeling optimistic about the fall enrollment. She stated that there is some growth with international students, particularly from India, Vietnam, and Malaysia.

Ankerson announced that on March 5th the EN Thompson Forum will feature Lynsey Addario, an American photojournalist who has been covering humanitarian crises for The New York Times and National Geographic.

Ankerson reported that this is the time of year awards are being considered for faculty and staff and noted that it is gratifying to see all of the excellent work that people are doing across the campus.

Heng-Moss asked if there was any insight into the size of the graduating class this spring. Ankerson noted that we have had record-breaking graduation classes over the last few years. She said that some of this is due to the 120-credit hour requirement for graduation as well as students taking more courses during the pandemic. She thinks we will be looking at more typical graduation numbers this spring. Tschetter reported that Associate Registrar Meyer provided the University Commencement and Recognitions Committee with some figures on the graduation class, and while it is not record-breaking, it is still large.

Heng-Moss noted that in regard to the AAU metrics, we conduct our census six class days after the semester begins but some of our peers do it after the late withdrawal period. She asked if there are any discussions about whether our timing is right for conducting our census and whether the CCPE coordinates the consensus date. She pointed out that many of the Big Ten peers cap the number of students that they admit and track them for their retention and graduation rates. However, we are on a campus that does not have a cap and sometimes it seems that we are not comparing apples to apples when we do comparisons with our peers. Ankerson stated that Heng-Moss is correct and noted that many of our peers use admissions to campuses to elevate the quality of entering first-time freshmen students at the flagship, which has the effect of elevating retention and graduation rates.

Boehm

Boehm noted that UNL is a member of the APLU, the Association for Public and Land Grant Universities, and on Sunday a group from Nebraska including himself, Dean Heng-Moss, Dean Stoltenow, Dean McLean, and five advocates for agriculture are all headed to Washington, D.C. where they will spend time engaging with UNL's counterparts from all over the country. They will then have conversations with legislators as we look at the appropriations request for 2025. He noted that the agriculture bill is broken down into five parts: research programs, extension programs, infrastructure and global agriculture, and research and extension partnerships. He reported that all of the funding lines fall under the National Institute for Food and Agriculture which has about a \$2 billion budget. He stated that when looking at the Hatch Grant or the Hatch Act Funds you can see that the APLU is asking for a \$300 million increase in the budget. He noted that the funds are distributed to agricultural research experiment stations and the federal funds are matched with state dollars appropriated through the Unicameral which are then used for engagement in the local research.

Boehm reported that currently it is a very busy time in the state for ranchers as it is calving time which will continue through May. He stated that next Thursday the Governor will be holding a press conference that will focus on training veterinarians for the future. He pointed out that Heng-Moss has been leading the charge on this effort with a group of rural veterinarians and state agencies in order to increase attraction and support for students majoring in veterinary sciences. Heng-Moss stated that the hope is that this will be an example of how the university is working in partnership with the Governor as well as our stakeholders and that scholarship selection for veterinary students will occur by May.

The meeting adjourned at 4:28 p.m. The next meeting of the APC will be on Wednesday, March 6, 2024. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator.