EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: **Belli, Dawes, Hanrahan, Latta Konecky, Leiter, Peterson, Rudy, Vakilzadian**

Absent: **Adenwalla, Fech, Lee, Purcell, Woodman**

Date: **Tuesday, October 17, 2017**

Location: **203 Alexander 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 *(Rudy)*

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

2.0 Mark Robertson, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and Chief Owen Yardley

Robertson reported that he has spoken with many faculty members about safety issues on campus and asked if there were any particular incidents the Executive Committee members want to address. Rudy pointed out that he teaches in the basement of the old CBA building early in the morning and none of the lights are on when he gets there. He understands there is a transition with the building, but asked if the lights can be turned on. Robertson stated that this issue can certainly be addressed.

Peterson asked what has transpired with the recent gas leak in Manter Hall and the absence of alarms going off in the building when the incident occurred. Robertson noted that there was considerable discussion in his office after this incident. He stated that the Lincoln Fire and Rescue Department misunderstood that UNLAlert is not seen by everyone. He pointed out that UNLAlert is an opt-in program which provides the users with a text or email when a life safety issue arises on, or around the campus. He stated that the LFRD did not realize that UNLAlert is really a secondary notice on safety issues and is used primarily to tell people to stay away from a location. He stated that the one exception with UNLAlert is to notify people if the campus is closed for a snow day. Peterson asked if UNLAlert could be changed to an opt-out program. Yardley stated that it is actually an opt-out program now because anyone with a university email is automatically enrolled in the system.

Robertson reported that UNL received a grant to purchase a program called Alertus which has been implemented for the staff. He stated that with this system a message will pop up on computer screen on staff computers and this same program can be used on classroom computers. He reported that he consulted several years ago with the Information Technologies and Services Committee about installing it on classroom computers, but the Committee was not supportive of the idea because they felt that it would be disruptive to the class and professors would only be interested if the safety issue affects their building. He pointed out that the program is still available, but he believes the Faculty Senate would need to approve its use in the classrooms.

Rudy asked how many times a semester would Alertus typically be used. Robertson stated that during class periods it maybe happens three or four times a year. Dawes asked if the program could be on selective computers and suggested that it be placed on all of the public computers. Yardley stated that he is unsure whether the computer ports in the classrooms could be isolated from the program. Robertson stated that it would be more labor intensive to selectively choose classroom computers.

Robertson stated that faculty members previously indicated that they were concerned with a liability issue, but in reality inaction is more of a liability. He pointed out that having the alert on a classroom computer would provide more information on what people should do if there was a safety issue. He pointed out that a message pops up on the classroom computer screen, but it can easily and quickly be removed by clicking on a button. Rudy stated that he believes it is a good idea to have it on the classroom computers.

Hanrahan pointed out that the severe weather tests that happen on the first Wednesday of the month are really annoying. Robertson stated that there has been some discussion with Facilities about this. He noted that the alarm is only for one minute and occurs about seven times during the year. Vakilzadian asked if the time could be changed. Robertson pointed out that the alarm is timed with the Lancaster County weather service alarms that go off at the same time.

Robertson stated that the students are particularly interested in emergency preparedness and they expect a certain amount of involvement with their instructors about it. He pointed out that most of the students have grown up with the schools teaching them about emergency preparedness and they want the same at the college level. He noted that instructors only have to be in charge of a situation for a few minutes and then the first responders will be there.

Robertson stated that posters are available that could be placed in every classroom which provides tips on what actions should be taken. The poster includes faculty guidance for incident response including emergency procedures for smoke or fire alarms, tornado warnings, or shooting or violence incidents.

Hanrahan noted that students want a plan on how to respond during incidents, but probably most departments do not have a plan. Yardley stated that a lot of presentations regarding safety preparedness are conducted on campus and departments can request a presentation.

Leiter stated that during a tornado warning people in the Law College can easily go down to the basement, but he wishes there would be an all clear alarm because there is no phone reception in the basement. Robertson pointed out that the reason there is not an all clear signal is because frequently when a tornado passes through, there is another one coming behind it. He noted that the National Weather Service does not report an all clear, but instead will say that a warning period has expired. Yardley suggested going to

a weather site if a computer is available in the basement. Belli stated that many of the buildings do not have directions on where to go if there is a tornado warning and there should be something posted in each of the classrooms.

Dawes asked who would be responsible for putting the posters up in the classroom and ensuring that each building has them. Robertson stated that different departments and colleges have responded to doing this. He pointed out that the School of Natural Resources has an active safety committee and posters are in every classroom in Hardin Hall. Yardley noted that some classrooms are general purpose and are administered by the University Registrar's Office while other classrooms belong to a department or college. Dawes asked if there is a minimum amount of signage that is required. Yardley stated that minimally lighted signs are required above the exits and the posters are commonly at the stairway. He pointed out that one of the issues that has come up in discussions is having the instructor inform students on the first day of class of where they should go. Latta Konecky stated that some of the faculty members may not know where to go because they are not familiar with the building they teach in. Yardley stated that people should get into the habit of looking to identify where the exits are whenever they go into any unfamiliar building.

Robertson noted that the ASUN students would like to have emergency preparedness information included in a course syllabus, but he believes it is easier to inform the students at the beginning of the course. Rudy pointed out that ASUN has met with the Executive Committee in the past to discuss this issue, but the syllabus is really intended for the academic elements of a course.

Rudy asked if Robertson and Yardley can walk through the process of defining threat assessments and how they determine if they are credible threats versus someone not wanting to take an exam and calling in a bomb threat. Belli asked who best determines the credibility of a threat assessment against a faculty member. He noted that some threats are probably illegal and asked whether there is any kind of police action to deal with the threat. He also asked what the best way is to manage faculty and students in regards to potential terrorist attacks or violence.

Yardley stated that UNL started a threat assessment team in 2001, but universities across the country earnestly began creating threat assessment teams after the Virginia Tech shooting incident in 2007. He noted that the team is set up to prevent situations from escalating. He stated that he is in charge of the threat assessment program which has three components. The actual assessments are done in real time by members of the team include UNL police officers who have had extensive training in threat assessment, and Professor Mario Scalora from Psychology, and persons with knowledge of the situation are also included. The second group is the threat assessment review team which includes University Police, Keith Zaborowski, Associate Director of Housing Residence Life, a representative from CAPS, two representatives from Human Resources, EAP, Associate VC Amy Goodburn, Interim Dean Tim Carr, Interim Vice Chancellor Laurie Bellows, and Assistant to the Chancellor Tami Strickman of the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance. He stated that the review team goes over cases monthly.

Yardley stated that members of the university community can provide information if they know or see someone who could potentially cause a safety issue. Situations are different and the background of the situation needs to be reviewed. He said that if the person's name is known, a background check could be conducted, professors or other university employees with knowledge of the situation will be contacted and an examination of the person's behavior will be reviewed. He stated that the threat assessment team can advise supervisors on how to deal with an employee should the employee be exhibiting troubling behavior. He pointed out that the goal is to help these people as much as possible to deescalate the situation and use university resources that can provide assistance.

Yardley reported that about half of the people the threat assessment team is made aware of are not associated with the university. He pointed out that some of these people have mental health issues, may know someone from the university while others just gravitate to the university. He stated that the key is to get information ahead of any incident occurring so appropriate steps can be taken to keep a situation from escalating into targeted violence or significant disruptions to university operations.

Yardley stated that some cases might start as rumors, and incidents reported to the police, but most reports are not outward threats. He stated that any anonymous reports through UNL's TIPS program dealing with someone's personal safety go directly to him. He pointed out that anonymous reports are more difficult to deal with because there usually isn't enough information provided. The team does look at someone's motivation and behaviors to see if action is warranted.

Rudy asked how the threat assessment team sifts through reports that come through TIPS Prevention. Yardley stated that the team will try to match up reports with reported situations, then determine if preventative actions can be taken. He noted that in some instances more officers might be assigned to be in a particular location to prevent anything from occurring. He stated that sometimes the language or terminology that has been used will trigger concerns. As an example he pointed out that right now there are a lot of people venting on social media because they are frustrated with athletics, situations that are actively monitored. Belli asked if the team can usually identify if people making the threats are sincere or are just posing. Training into threat assessments is extremely important in making these determinations. This deals with human behavior, so nothing is absolute. Yardley stated that people who are serious about causing harm may not tip people off because they want to be successful with their threat.

Rudy asked if someone calls in a bomb threat if it is a real threat or someone posing. Yardley stated that if it is finals week this will be taken into consideration. He pointed out that some people love to see the fire engines roll. The overall situation and circumstances are considered when making assessments.

Hanrahan asked what would be done if he wrote an article on a controversial issue and then received threats. Yardley stated that the faculty member would be contacted and a

request would be made to review the threats to see if the author of them can be tracked down. He noted with the use of computers it is prevalent and easier to make threats or vent using threatening language. Hanrahan asked if he requested a security guard for a class would someone be provided. Yardley stated that possibly an officer would be provided. He pointed out that it would depend on what the threat is like and whether it is credible. Hanrahan asked if the threat assessment team would recommend the removal of the instructor from the classroom. Yardley pointed out that the threat assessment is intended to allow university decisions be made safely, and typically does not make university decisions.

An example was the situation of having a guest speaker in 2009 went from originally being a small, intimate meeting to one for safety considerations would have grown to a huge presentation with significant security required and everything changed making it more difficult to control the safety of the campus. Vakilzadian asked where the budget comes from to deal with these kinds of situations. Yardley stated that if it is a freedom of speech issue the Chancellor's office would cover the cost. If it is a threat assessment investigation it comes from the UNL Police budget. Vakilzadian asked how the budget cut will impact the University Police. Yardley stated that it may have some impact, but no one knows at this time what the budget cuts will entail.

Robertson reported that whenever he gives presentations on emergency preparedness someone always wants to discuss what to do if there is an active shooter. He pointed out that while this is a serious issue, it is more likely that the campus could be hit with a tornado. He stated that the best way to prevent an active shooter is for people to report what they see. He noted that a lot is involved with threat assessments, but anything that seems amiss is important to our campus.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Announcement about Vacation Accrual

Rudy noted that Senior Associate to the President Marjorie Kostelnik recently sent an email to faculty and staff regarding Central Administration's plan to temporarily postpone the proposed changes to the vacation accrual policy.

4.0 Unfinished Business

4.1 Academic Integrity and Office of Student Affairs

Hanrahan noted that with the establishment of the Academic Integrity Committee there were plans for the Office of Student Affairs to help handle issues with academic integrity. He questioned what has happened to the Academic Integrity report, as well as the report on student health, and the Dean of Students position, and whether the recommendations to change the staffing to assist with these efforts will be taken into consideration with the restructuring of the Office. The Executive Committee agreed that EVC Plowman should be asked for a review of the proposed changes to the Office.

4.2 Commencement

Rudy reported that the Commencement and Honors Convocations Committee is still trying to find a resolution to the graduation problem for 2019. He pointed out that adding

another ceremony would add additional costs, but using the stadium would be prohibitively expensive. He stated that a possible consideration is for graduate students to graduate with the college they are getting their degree in rather than having a separate ceremony for the Graduate College. He said another option would be to use Kimball Hall for the hooding ceremony. He noted that there could also be three ceremonies. He pointed out that all things are still being considered and are open for discussion. Hanrahan suggested that the graduate students could graduate with their college and be recognized at the ceremony and undergraduate students could be conferred as a group. He asked Rudy if the plan is to ask the students what they would prefer.

4.3 Ceremonial Mace for Faculty Senate

Rudy stated that he needed to bring a formal motion to the Chancellor's Office regarding whether the Senate Executive Committee approved a ceremonial mace to be used during commencement ceremonies. Hanrahan moved for approval of the Chancellor's Office purchasing a mace for the Faculty Senate. Motion seconded by Vakilzadian and approved by the Executive Committee.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Concerns with IRB Process

Peterson reported that there have been some faculty members in his department who have had some conflicts with IRB. He stated that he felt that the letter sent from the IRB to his department chair was somewhat harsh. Belli stated that he did not think the letter was inappropriate. Peterson stated that there is also concern with how long it takes to get IRB approval. Belli agreed and pointed out that sometimes it takes too much time, even when the IRB request has been exempted or flagged to move quickly through the process. He suggested having Rachel Wenzl, Research Compliance Services Specialist, meet with the Executive Committee to speak about the IRB process. Peterson noted that some faculty feel that better examples of the language used in IRB proposals would be helpful. Belli stated that the rules for IRB are complicated and it would be helpful if information could be provided that could better assist in the preparation of the proposals.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, October 24, 2017 at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in 203 Alexander Building. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Joan Latta Konecky, Secretary.