EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: **Adenwalla, Belli, Dawes, Hanrahan, Latta Konecky, Lee, Leiter, Peterson, Purcell, Rudy, Vakilzadian, Woodman**

Absent: **Fech**

Date: **Tuesday, September 26, 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 *(Purcell)*

Purcell called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

2.0 VC Boehm

2.1 Thoughts on Reorganization of the Academic Structure

Boehm reported that at a July 24th meeting of the deans and the senior leadership team there was discussion about distinction and whether our current structure allows us to maximize our impacts on the world. He noted that there are many different kinds of academic structures, but the campus will need to decide what kind of structure is the correct fit for us.

Belli asked Boehm to describe specifically what would be considered the life sciences. Boehm stated that we will need to have a conversation about what disciplines would make up the life sciences. He stated that traditionally the life sciences include all areas of biology in the broadest sense. Belli pointed out that he has not heard the human aspect of the life sciences discussed. Boehm noted that he has been clear that technical solutions to the problems the world is facing today will fail if we don't understand the human factor in addressing these problems. He believes that better connections need to be made between all of the life sciences. He pointed out that there are programs and departments housed in units on campus, for instance the Hospitality Management program, that we need to ask if it is located in the optimal college or unit given the nature of the program. He stated that the campus needs to have thoughtful discourse about the academic structure. He pointed out that we do not want to reorganize just for the sake of reorganizing. He noted that there are dual reporting lines and financial funding flows in existence that are unwieldly and these need to be part of the discussion as well.

Lee noted that the sweep of the life sciences is so broad that even a department the size of Agronomy and Horticulture could disappear under the umbrella of the life sciences. Boehm stated that previous attempts to have discussions regarding the life sciences raised concerns with some stakeholders who were concerned that the emphasis on agriculture would be diminished and he has spoken with these stakeholders to address their concerns.

He noted that agriculture today is much different and there are focuses on how we can produce enough food to feed the world with less water, sustainability, and other issues.

Lee asked if disciplines in the life sciences would be moved to East Campus if a college of life sciences was created. Boehm noted that the Beadle Center, Nebraska Innovation Campus, and East Campus form an arc in a sense that are all involved with the life sciences. He pointed out that within this triangulated area there are three public elementary schools that have a significant number of students who participate in getting free and reduced meal rates, and yet, we as a land grant university, are not being utilized to help this community. He stated that we have challenges in connecting to the people of the state and even our own faculty have difficulty connecting with one another. He pointed out that the department of Plant Pathology is suffering from its faculty and students being located in three different locations here in Lincoln as well as having people in different locations across the state. He stated that communities of practice and disciplinary homes need to be considered when academic restructuring is discussed.

Boehm noted that usually no salary or large financial savings are gained when reorganization takes place and it takes a special group of people to ensure that the people in reorganized units move forward as a unit rather than reverting to previous organizational structures. He stated that he believes in disciplinary cohorts of practice and we will need these to move forward so we can have positive impacts on humanity. He pointed out that IANR is just a fraction of UNL's faculty and staff and there are legacy issues, histories, and cultures across the campus that need to be considered before reorganization can occur. He noted that the current budget situation makes the conversation of restructuring difficult. He stated that hard questions will have to be considered.

Peterson pointed out that the College of Education and Human Sciences (CEHS) is a merged college, but some of the faculty lines go through IANR and some are through the Executive Vice Chancellor's office so the administrative infrastructure did not really change when the two colleges were merged. The question is did the previous colleges really merge and is this an issue that needs to be addressed if reorganization does occur. Boehm stated that CEHS is a blended college and when merging colleges or units some existing structure needs to remain. He noted that the Dean of CEHS has a dual reporting line and the college has been a successful merger.

Rudy asked how the humanities factor into reorganization when funding can be driven by enrollment numbers and grants. Boehm pointed out that funding does not just rely on enrollment and grants. He noted that many CEO's are sending their children, not to technical schools, but to liberal arts colleges. He stated that we need to maintain our balance between the technical colleges and departments and the humanities and social sciences. He stated that one question that might need to be considered is whether the College of Arts & Sciences, as currently structured, plays to our distinctive advantage. Would it be advantageous to have a College of Humanities? He stated that it is these kinds of questions that would need to be discussed thoroughly. He stated that everyone would have to agree with any restructuring if it is to be successful.

Woodman stated that traditionally biology is in the College of Arts & Sciences in the Big Ten schools. He noted that there are a significant number of faculty on East Campus in the life sciences who are on 12-month appointments and they get paid considerably more because of this. He asked if biological sciences was to move to East Campus whether the faculty would be paid the same as faculty in IANR. If not, this could create separate classes of faculty. Boehm pointed out that there is a blend of 9-month and 12-month appointments on East Campus and some disparities already exist. He noted that IANR is evolving and the discussion around the life sciences is letting it evolve further. He stated that another question that would need to be considered is the reporting line for a dean of a college of life sciences. Who would that dean report to? He stated that we do not want bureaucratic barriers created that would prohibit faculty and students from collaborating with each other regardless of what college they are in.

Woodman stated that the research perspectives and goals from some life sciences units are very different from others and absence of overlap in the areas of inquiry might not create the desired impact if a merger is completed. Boehm pointed out that this is okay. He noted that there are about 20-30 microbiologists across the campus and they strongly want a department for themselves.

2.2 Update on the Dean's Search for CEHS

Boehm reported that Interim Dean Beth Doll's appointment has been expanded to a two-year interim and a search will not begin until next year.

2.3 How do you feel about Extension Specialists, Educators, and Administrators going to China When Work Needs to be done in Nebraska?

Boehm reported that Extension personnel working in China is critical cultural brokering, not only for the university, but for the State of Nebraska. He noted that in China there are some larger farming facilities and production systems, but most of the farming is done locally and are family owned. He stated that in Yangling, China 170 acres of land has been assembled and they are trying to grow crops like we do here. The Extension personnel are demonstrating the American way of approaching agriculture so that the Chinese can grow their own food on a larger scale.

Purcell asked who is paying for the Extension personnel to go to China. Boehm stated that he does not know who is covering all of the costs, but the center pivot equipment that is being used in Yangling has been donated. He stated that when he went to China recently it was with the Governor.

Peterson stated that as this project progresses he hopes that economists will also be included. He noted that economists have analyzed the long history of trying to transfer US technology to developing countries. These efforts have frequently been unsuccessful because insufficient account is taken of the important differences between the US and the recipient country.

Boehm reported that while in China he also visited with Northwest Agriculture & Forestry University in Yangling, China to discuss the 3+1 dual degree program. He noted that with this program students study in China for the first there years and then come to UNL to complete their degree in Food, Science & Technology. He stated that the courses in China are taught in English and that the third year is taught in English by three UNL faculty members at Northwest A & F University. He noted that he wanted to visit with the students and faculty to make sure the students are English language proficient before they come to UNL. He pointed out that 175 students are enrolled in the program and over 55 students will come to UNL next year. He stated that the program has the potential to bring in 250 students over time to UNL. He pointed out that globally competent students are being sought after by international companies and we need to do better in helping our students obtain international training and experience.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Committee on Respectful Dialogues and Conversations

Purcell reported that she has been asked by EVC Plowman to serve on a committee about having respectful and meaningful conversations on campus. She noted that she received an email message from Professor Soliz, Communication Studies, who investigates processes and outcomes of intergroup contact and potential communication processes, and a suggestion was made to have Professor Soliz speak at an upcoming Senate meeting about respectful dialogue.

3.2 Commencement & Honors Convocations Committee

Rudy noted that he has been asked by University Registrar Morrell to attend the Commencement & Honors Convocations Committee as a non-voting member so the Executive Committee can be kept informed of any changes to the commencement ceremonies. He reported that Morrell stated that the schedule of classes for the spring semester was going to the printer on October 4 which means that changes to the final exam schedule cannot take place in the spring.

3.3 Grading & Examinations Committee

Purcell reported the charge to review the proposed changes to the final exam schedule was sent to the Grading & Examinations Committee yesterday. She noted that several new members needed to be identified and the first order of business for the Committee will be to select a chair.

3.4 ASUN Request to Discuss the 15th Week Policy

Purcell reported that she received a request from ASUN to speak to the Executive Committee regarding the 15th week policy. She has asked Peterson to make an initial contact with ASUN to discuss the issue. Peterson stated that he thinks the issue of the 15th week policy may be about the proposed changes to the final exam schedule.

3.5 Meeting with Associate VC Walker on Ad Hoc Committee Reports

Rudy stated that he discussed the Ad Hoc Academic Integrity Committee's recommendations, and he noted that Walker was very enthusiastic about conducting an academic integrity survey. The question will be whether the entire student body should

be surveyed. Peterson pointed out that the intent of the Committee was to get a feel of how the students view academic integrity and how the faculty view it. He pointed out that statisticians could help identify which groups should be surveyed so we get a representative sample.

Rudy stated that Walker was supportive of the Senate conducting another survey on non-tenure track faculty members. He noted that there might be changes to the demographics section of the survey and the distribution of the survey. Woodman pointed out that there is a diverse group of non-tenure track faculty members and the first question on the survey allows the respondent to identify their job title. Rudy stated that the previous survey did not distinguish Lecturers and Lecturer/T. Woodman pointed out that this is a subtle point and most Lecturers probably do not know if they are a Lecturer/T. Belli questioned whether additional questions should be included in the survey. Purcell stated that she would like Fech to review the evaluation as it pertains to Extension faculty.

Belli asked if Rudy and Walker discussed the recommendations from the Ad Hoc Committee on Best Practices for Non-tenure Track Faculty. Rudy stated that there was discussion about the lack of consistencies with documentation and procedures across the campus regarding non-tenure track faculty members. He noted that Walker stated that this issue was discussed with the deans and was not well received. Adenwalla asked what the objections were. Rudy stated that his understanding is that the deans seemed disinterested. He reported that Walker would like to take up a cause of defining what the difference is between tenure leading, Professors of Practice, Lecturers, and Research professors. He stated that Walker thinks that being more focused could get more traction.

4.0 Approval of September 12, 2017 and September 19, 2017 Minutes

Peterson moved for approval of the revised September 12th and September 19th minutes. Vakilzadian seconded the motion. Belli requested a change to the September 19th minutes. Motion was approved.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Free Speech

The Executive Committee discussed at length a proposed resolution to issue a statement supporting free speech and academic freedom. The Committee agreed that it is extremely concerned with the August 25 incident and the subsequent suspension of duties for the Lecturer involved and will be monitoring the situation pending further evidence. The Committee plans to have further discussions with the Chancellor about the issue.

6.0 New Business

No new business was discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, October 3, 2017 immediately following the Faculty Senate meeting. The meeting will be held the East Campus Union, Arbor Suite. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Joan Latta Konecky, Secretary.