EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Absent: **Dawes, Fech**

Date: **Tuesday, February 13, 2018**

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 2:31 p.m.

2.0 EVC Plowman

2.1 Campus Safety and First Amendment Rights

Purcell noted that she, Adenwalla, and Dawes attended the listening session on Friday, February 9th, that was held to address campus safety concerns and first amendment rights. She reported that the Executive Committee created a statement, which was sent to faculty and local newspapers earlier today, condemning the recent racist hate speech and behavior by a self-described white nationalist UNL student and calling for the promotion of diversity and inclusiveness to be integrated into all aspects of our institution. EVC Plowman stated that she appreciated the well-written statement and thanked the Executive Committee for distributing it.

EVC Plowman noted that the main goal of the sessions on campus safety and first amendment rights was to hear the concerns of the faculty, staff, and students and many different opinions were expressed. She stated that one of the major issues is in regards to safety, and she wanted to assure everyone that our campus is safe and that the Campus Police and Threat Assessment team are working diligently to ensure everyone's safety. She pointed out that there is a deeper level of concern in that there are members of our campus community that haven't felt safe for a long time, and we need to begin efforts to solve the problems that inhibit diversity and inclusion. She stated that she wants to formulate working groups and hope that some of our vocal faculty members will start mapping out what the next steps are so we can address the problems. She noted that previously it was reported that we would not conduct a search for a Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion/Chief Diversity Officer until after the budget situation is known, but due to the recent event a search committee is now being formed to conduct the search to fill this position. She noted that she will ask the Executive Committee for names of faculty members to serve on the search committee. EVC Plowman stated that there was a clear and loud message that people of color do not feel that this is a welcoming campus and she is determined to improve things on campus and she will need the help of the Senate to do so.

EVC Plowman reported that Associate Vice Chancellor Walker is organizing the next training session about academic freedom and free speech and Professor Berger, Law College, will be discussing in detail the first amendment and what constitutes free speech.

Rudy noted that creating a hostile environment is against the student code of conduct and asked what constitutes a hostile environment. EVC Plowman stated that a hostile environment is where there is physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, coercion, and/or other conduct that threatens or unreasonably endangers the mental or physical health, safety or reputation of any person or oneself. She pointed out that if any of these things occur, students need to report it so action can be taken. Latta Konecky stated that students need to understand that they need to go immediately to their instructor or department chair if another student creates a hostile environment for them.

Hanrahan asked what the criteria will be to measure how successful some of the plans are to make the campus a more welcoming place. EVC Plowman stated that we have to move away from just talking about the issue to actually doing things. She noted that a Chief Diversity Officer can help determine the action steps that need to be taken. Lee suggested that the campus host guest speakers who are renowned for speaking on diversity issues.

Woodman pointed out that the Regents have been silent about the white supremacist student, which creates a narrative for those outside the university that it supports white nationalists. EVC Plowman stated that the Regents are making a formal statement.

Belli asked how much the state is supportive of the University. He pointed out that there needs to be a clear understanding by the state of the importance of diversity at the University.

Adenwalla suggested that efforts should be made talk to some of the student groups because she believes that there are students who are afraid to walk on campus. EVC Plowman stated that Student Affairs is working with Assistant to the Vice Chancellor Charlie Foster and the Multi-Cultural Center to work on addressing some of these issues for students and her office is working with faculty and staff. Leiter pointed out that we should bring more attention to the good things that are occurring on campus. Adenwalla reported that at the faculty/staff listening session you could hear how much some people are scared and that the campus is not as welcoming as some people may think.

Purcell noted that she also attended the student listening session and stated that she thinks the students were more upset than the faculty/staff were. EVC Plowman noted that there were two different meetings with two different sets of circumstances. She stated that African American students feel that aside from the Gaughan Center, there are not many places on campus where they feel physically and emotionally safe. She pointed out that we have to step up and start doing something to make students and our colleagues feel safer.

Lee pointed out that the problem of not feeling safe goes beyond campus and that many people of color do not feel that Lincoln is a welcoming environment. EVC Plowman stated that she would like to work with the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce to help improve the climate of Lincoln. She noted that many businesses want a multi-cultural workforce and need the university's help in attaining the workforce.

Woodman asked if there are any people of color in administrative positions in Student Affairs, particularly because the students have pointed out this lack of diversity. EVC Plowman stated that positions still need to be filled and the hope is to have more diversification in that and other campus offices.

Vakilzadian thanked EVC Plowman for all of the positive steps that are being made and noted that it will take some time to make changes, but he thinks we are at a good starting point. EVC Plowman stated that she is proud of ASUN and the Basketball Team for getting their statements out supporting diversity as quickly as they did.

2.2 Academic Freedom/Free Speech Training Presentation

EVC Plowman stated that the training presentation focuses heavily on the AAUP's 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure and the three principles stated in the document: 1) teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results; 2) teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject; 3) college and university teachers are citizens and when they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. Belli pointed out that the AAUP also states that introducing controversial topics that are related to the discipline should not be discouraged and he believes that this should be emphasized in the training.

Rudy asked EVC Plowman if enough people have volunteered to be part of the Faculty Fellows program to help deliver the training presentations. EVC Plowman stated that faculty are still needed. She reported that her office wants to distribute one-page tip sheets for instructors on how to manage difficult conversations, and eventually there may be workshops on this issue. She asked what would be the best way to disseminate information to the faculty. Woodman suggested having a teaching newsletter. Adenwalla suggested that there also be tips on how to deal with racist situations. Peterson noted that CASNR has teaching workshops for the fall and spring semesters. He pointed out that because this is a decentralized campus, the individual colleges might have their own workshops. EVC Plowman noted that Associate VC Goodburn is doing many things in regards to teaching, but we need a good mechanism to get the information out to the faculty.

2.3 RCM Budget

Hanrahan asked for an update on the RCM budget model. EVC Plowman pointed out that the campus is far from implementing an RCM budget, and many things need to be

considered before it could even begin to be implemented. She stated that conversations have not even occurred and we do not even have a permanent Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance in place.

2.4 Honors Director

EVC Plowman reported that an offer has been made and she is waiting for the candidate to accept the appointment.

2.5 Update on the Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development

EVC Plowman stated that two candidates were invited back to campus for further interviews.

3.0 ASUN's Proposed Changes to Class Attendance Policy - Round 3 (Sam Brower and Camille Sippel)

Brower reported that the students made further revisions based on the feedback they received from the Executive Committee. He stated that the students' goal is multi-faceted in that they want a policy that will work for everyone and will be approved by the Faculty Senate while staying true to the students' goal to specify more clearly the excused absences, including mental health issues.

Woodman asked if the policy ensures that the faculty member has the right to set up the class attendance policy for their course. Brower stated that this is correct, that it is under the faculty member's jurisdiction. Woodman noted that the student has to work within the instructor's policy. Brower stated that the policy would provide some guidelines that would help instructors in accommodating students who have legitimate absences. Leiter stated the document would be a backup if a faculty member does not establish their own policy.

Adenwalla pointed out that students need to understand that faculty actually have very little time in class with students and when students miss a class they are missing coursework that they need in order to be successful in the class. Hanrahan stated that if students feel that they are being unfairly treated by an instructor because of an absence they should go and speak to the department chair who should work to resolve the situation. The other things students can do is to reflect the unfairness of an instructor through the course evaluation process. Sippel asked what language could be included in the document to redirect students if they want to make an appeal. Hanrahan suggested including language directing them to the department chair.

Brower stated that the ASUN will consider further revisions. Woodman stated that the document should be presented at the March 6 meeting.

4.0 Announcements

4.1 Walk-throughs to Look at Desktop Printers

Purcell reported that she contacted Maggie Witt, Director of Procurement Services, about having Senators participate in the walking-tour that will be conducted to assess the use of desktop printers. Purcell noted that Witt would also like to have further discussions with the Executive Committee.

5.0 Approval of February 6, 2018 Meeting

Lee moved for approval of the revised minutes. Purcell asked that her sentence about contacting Maggie Witt be included. Motion seconded by Peterson and approved by the Executive Committee. There were three abstentions.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Presentation of Pound-Howard Award at April or September Meeting?

Lee moved that the presentation of the Pound-Howard Award be presented at the September 4th Senate meeting to coincide with "The Laurels" faculty recognition ceremony that is scheduled for September 13. Motion seconded by Peterson and approved by the Executive Committee.

7.0 New Business

7.1 The Statement

Purcell reported that she sent the statement written by the Executive Committee condemning the hate speech and actions of a white nationalist student to Chancellor Green and EVC Plowman. She noted that the statement has been sent to the newspapers and also to the faculty.

Further discussion regarding campus climate postponed until the February 20th meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:41 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, February 20, 2018 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.