

MINUTES

University of Nebraska – Lincoln Academic Planning Committee

October 19, 2016

Members Present: Bloom, Farrell, Franke-Schubert, Hartman, Hinchman, Nunez, Simpson, Sollars, Trainin, Wagner, White

Members Absent: Busch, Correas, Delserone, Goddard, Kostelnik, Marron, Yoder

Others Attending: Interim Associate VC Judy Walker (for Kostelnik), Interim Associate VC Mark Balschweid (for Yoder)

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

1.0 Call

Wagner called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

2.0 Approval of September 21, 2016 Minutes

Farrell moved for approval of the minutes. Motion seconded by Bloom and approved by the Committee.

3.0 Revisions to Academic Program Review Guidelines

Wagner reported that he made the changes to the APR Guidelines as recommended by the APC at the last meeting. He noted that he suggested an additional revision which he consulted with Academic Affairs and IANR about. He stated that the first revision pertained to Section IV, H.5., which now says that the APC representative will be invited to all review team meetings, except for working meetings and meetings with individual faculty and staff members.

Sollars stated that her experience as an APR representative has shown that it is important for the representative to not be excluded from the working meetings and suggested that the revision to change this should be removed. She noted that it is important for the APC representative to have meals with the external team because a lot of discussion takes place. She stated that the language prohibiting the APC representative from attending meetings between an individual faculty member or staff member should remain. There was general agreement with this position and the wording was amended. Walker agreed to these suggestions, but pointed out that the APC representative should not help draft the external review team report.

Wagner stated that the second revision pertained to Section IV, H.5, which will now say that the APC representative will not participate in the writing of the external review team report, but will be able to review the draft report if requested by the external review team. Farrell asked if it is assumed that the internal representatives can make comments. Wagner said yes.

Wagner pointed out that revisions made in April to the APR Guidelines stated that administrators should not attend meetings with the faculty and staff (Section VII.2). He reported that after consulting with Walker he proposed that affiliated faculty members, which can include administrators, can attend the programmatically affiliated faculty meeting. Bloom asked what the definition is for an affiliated program. Walker explained that the departments decide if they want to be affiliated with another department or have affiliated faculty members. Sollars stated that based on recent experiences, she is wondering if it is possible to allow some flexibility for administrators to participate in some meetings. She noted that for particularly small units, or subunits, an administrator is an active participant in the unit and the faculty would like the administrator to be at the meeting. She stated that she doesn't want administrators to quell any discussion, but there are times when it would be helpful to have the chair at the meeting. Wagner pointed out that there have been complaints on both sides of the issue. Walker stated that she would like to see some clarification about this issue. She noted that not only are chairs active in a program, but there are others who might have part-time administrative appointments but who are members of the unit or affiliated with it, who want to participate in the meetings. Bloom pointed out that there is concern with line management because the administrator would have direct impact over an individual who may raise concerns about the unit being reviewed. Sollars stated that discretion should be given to the unit or subunit as to whether they want the administrator in the meeting. Walker suggested including a statement on the schedule template saying that there could be a separate meeting if there are faculty members in the unit that did not want administrators in attendance.

Wagner suggested that the members of the unit could make a decision to allow a faculty member with an administrative appointment to attend a meeting. Trainin pointed out that this goes back to the initial problem. If there is a strong administrator who wants to attend the meeting with the external review team, faculty members in the unit may not feel comfortable enough to object. He suggested allowing the APC representative to make the decision whether to allow the administrator into the meeting. Walker asked if a strong administrator would be intimidating to the APC representative. Trainin pointed out that the APC representative is not a member of the department and sometimes not even a member of the same college as the unit being reviewed. Walker asked if the APC representative was in the same college as the unit, would the APC rep feel comfortable in telling the Dean that they could not attend a meeting. Wagner noted that there could be the perception that there would be retaliation in these cases. Sollars pointed out that it is simple enough to say that there is a freer flow of conversation when administrators are not present. Farrell suggested that if the norm is to not to include the administrators then they shouldn't feel slighted, but if there are some instances when it would be helpful to have them at the meeting it could be helpful. Walker suggested language in the guidelines that state that a person holding an administrative position may be invited by the APC representative in certain cases. Bloom stated that this would put the burden on the APC representative. Trainin pointed out that the APC rep can usually get a good read of whether the faculty would have any objections to having an administrator present at the meeting. Walker noted that the APR schedule comes out six weeks in advance of the external team visit and the APC rep could skim the schedule and flag those people who have administrative appointments. Sollars suggested that an administrator be allowed to send in questions if the default is not to include them in the meetings.

Wagner stated that he will draft language to address the concerns discussed. He asked for a vote on the first two revisions as amended. Simpson moved to accept the first two revisions. Motion seconded by Trainin and approved by the Committee. Wagner stated that the third revision will be discussed at the next meeting.

4.0 Discussion of the Chancellor's Goals as Outlined in State of the University Address

Wagner noted that Chancellor Green outlined ambitious goals at the State of the University Address including increasing enrollment to 35,000 students by 2025, developing distinctive programs, increasing retention rates, increasing the total number of degrees awarded, and doubling our research expenditures all of which will required increasing the number of faculty and staff members.

Schubert noted that our graduation rate is only 67% and the goal is to increase this to 80%. She pointed out that many students work 20 hours a week to pay for school making it a tough balancing act between work and school. Nunez stated that one of the things we need to do is to build support services to help our students. He stated that there are a multitude of factors that play a part in retention rates and we are not the only institution grappling with this problem. He noted that schools with very tight admissions standards have better retention rates. Bloom believes that our tuition model is not the best for retaining students and that a flat tuition rate would work better because students would more than likely sign up for as many credit hours as they can under the flat rate tuition model.

Bloom stated that he would like to have the Chancellor articulate why being bigger is useful to attaining the goals he set forward. He pointed out that Harvard University is a world leader in education, but is a smaller university than us. He believes that strengthening programs would be better. He noted that the proposed enrollment growth rate has not been seen since the 1960s and we are already running behind schedule if we are to try and have 35,000 students. He stated that the research goal is hard to understand.

Nunez pointed out that these are not necessarily goals, the Chancellor wants to start a conversation about these ideas to see if these are our goals. He stated that there are no penalties for not hitting these goals, but there will be penalties if we don't at least try. Wagner pointed out that many of our graduate programs are underfunded and providing resources into the programs would help increase our research goals. Nunez stated that graduate students and research go hand-in-hand. The more faculty members we attract, the greater increase in the number of graduate students.

Trainin stated that if you look at some other institutions, such as Iowa or Colorado, our numbers are about the same in regards to graduation rates. He noted that we are fairly new to the Big Ten and while the goals are aspirational, we haven't made many advances in attaining these goals. He asked how we have made ourselves more competitive. Bloom pointed out that there needs to be good articulation as to why these are the right goals.

Nunez reported that there will be a town hall meeting on October 31 with department chairs/heads, directors of centers, elected officers of the Faculty Senate, and others to begin

discussions on the goals. He pointed out that it will take the campus to discern what the goals should be and we need to be honest about what are achievable goals.

Walker stated that she was surprised that there is no mention of the slide about increasing faculty and staff members. She urged the APC to push strongly that the increased number of faculty will be in tenure track positions.

Schubert pointed out that in order to have more faculty members and more students we need more space. She asked how we are going to be able to afford more buildings. Nunez stated that a plan will need to be formulated and the administrative team is waiting for some details to begin planning.

Farrell reported that the ad hoc committee working on developing guidelines pertaining to non-tenure track faculty members just recently met, and there was discussion concerning the Chancellor's goal to increase faculty members. He pointed out that there are no campus-wide policies on non-tenure track faculty members and how they are treated across the campus varies greatly. Walker reported that the College of Arts & Sciences has formulated a new policy on Professors of Practice. The policy is currently being reviewed by Academic Affairs and there will be a meeting of associate deans to discuss Professor of Practice positions and to begin establishing some campus-wide goals to address the concerns of Professors of Practice. Farrell pointed out that a question concerning non-tenure track faculty members is academic freedom and how it pertains to these faculty members.

5.0 Matters from the Vice Chancellors - Academic Affairs, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Research and Economic Development

Nunez stated that the Chancellor's office is keeping an eye on the state appropriations which has not yet been formulated. He noted that budget cuts may have to be dealt with depending on the state's economy.

Nunez moved for adjournment. Motion seconded by Walker and approved. Meeting adjourned at 3:59 p.m. The next meeting of the APC will be on Wednesday, November 2, 2016 at 3:00 in the City Campus Union, Ubuntu Room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator.