

## MINUTES

### University of Nebraska – Lincoln Academic Planning Committee

February 1, 2017

**Members Present:** Bloom, Boehm, Busch, Delserone, Farrell, Franke-Schubert, Goddard, Hartman, Hinchman, Plowman, Simpson, Sollars, Trainin, Wagner, White

**Members Absent:** Correias, Marron, Nunez

**Others Attending:**

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

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#### **1.0 Call**

Wagner called the meeting to order at 3:00. He introduced and welcomed Boehm and Plowman.

#### **2.0 Approval of December 7, 2016 Minutes**

Simpson moved to approve the minutes. Motion seconded by Bloom and approved by the APC with one abstention.

#### **3.0 Draft Letter to Faculty in Departments Undergoing an APR**

Wagner reported that he drafted a simple email message that the APC representative on an APR can use to inform faculty members in the department being reviewed that individual faculty members have the option of meeting separately with the review team if they wish. Delserone suggested that the template email should include contact information. Bloom asked who would be responsible for sending out the email. Delserone noted that on the recent Plant Pathology APR she asked the administrative assistant in the department to inform faculty members that they should contact the APC representative directly to have an individual meeting with the external review team. She pointed out that the department staff should have an email list for the department faculty members. She suggested that the email template should be included in the Appendix section of the APR Guidelines.

#### **4.0 APC Representatives for Upcoming APRs**

Wagner reported that three APRs in the fall semester need an APC representative. The following APC members volunteered to serve on the listed APR reviews:

Franke-Schubert - Psychology

Sollars - Agronomy/Horticulture

Bloom - Child, Youth, and Family Studies

Plowman noted that APRs come through Academic Affairs and she is open to feedback if the APC feels that improvements with APRs need to be made.

## **5.0 Proposal to Eliminate Great Plains Studies Major in the College of Arts & Sciences**

Wagner reported that there are very few majors in Great Plains Studies and it was suggested by the APR external review team that the major be eliminated. He stated that the Curriculum Committee in Arts & Sciences voted to eliminate the major and the proposal is supported by Dean Francisco and Plowman.

Hinchman asked if there are alternative subjects that students interested in Great Plains Studies can pursue. Wagner reported that the minor in Great Plains Studies is being retained, but there is not enough interest in the subject to maintain it as a major. Goddard noted that there are only about four students total in the program and the Coordinating Commission for Secondary Education requires more majors than four to maintain a program.

Delserone moved to accept the elimination of the major. Motion seconded by Bloom and approved by the APC.

## **6.0 Procedures to Be Invoked for Significant Budget Reductions and Reallocations**

Wagner reported that he and Simpson recently met with the Chancellor to discuss the budget cuts. He pointed out that this year's budget shortfall is being taken care of through the hiring freeze and some cash reserves, but the APC will be involved in the budget cuts for the next biennium. He stated that we would not know the final budget situation until after the Board of Regents meet in June. He noted that factors that would influence the final budget include whether there will be salary increases, increases in tuition, and efficiency savings, but regardless we will more than likely have a budget deficit. He stated that the Chancellor would probably trigger the budget reduction in August. He pointed out that the APC will be very busy in the fall semester and there will probably be additional special committee meetings to deal with the budget cuts. As a result he thought it would be good to start looking at the Procedures to Be Invoked for Significant Budget Reduction and Reallocations.

Bloom pointed out that the next fiscal biennium begins on July 1 and the APC will not be reacting to the budget cuts until the start of the fall semester. Wagner noted that the campus community needs to be involved in the budget cutting process and since many faculty members are gone during the summer the process cannot begin until the start of the fall semester. Goddard pointed out that it is possible that the process might not need to be triggered if the budget cuts turn out not to be as severe so it wouldn't be prudent to begin the process now. He stated that the established process would need to be followed. He noted that if vertical cuts are made it would be several years before we would see any savings.

Franke-Schubert asked about the President's efficiency task forces that are being developed. Wagner stated that President Bounds has set up a number of task forces to look at efficiencies in business systems. Plowman reported that there are ten task forces focusing on things such as procurement, human resources, accounting, information technology, and payroll. She stated that making these services more efficient, through either mergers or centralization, could result in savings. She pointed out that looking into these services now could result in less budget cuts on the academic side of the university. Boehm noted that President Bounds shared who will be on the task forces at yesterday's forums that were held to discuss the budget situation. Plowman stated that most of the task forces are made up with people from the business component of the

university. Farrell suggested that the APC members should review President Bound's Powerpoint presentation regarding the budget cuts ([https://nebraska.edu/docs/president/Presidents\\_Campus\\_Forum\\_Budget\\_Presentation.pdf](https://nebraska.edu/docs/president/Presidents_Campus_Forum_Budget_Presentation.pdf)).

Boehm pointed out that it is still too early to know for sure what will be happening with the budget and the situation changes almost weekly. He stated that the words we use to convey what is happening is very important and if we really buy into the budget cutting language we are predisposing the community to cuts. He pointed out that until the Chancellor invokes the budget cutting procedures nothing is definite.

Wagner stated that he at least wants the APC to look at the Procedures to be Invoked for Significant Budget Reductions and Reallocations in order to be ready for Phase 1, should the process be invoked. He noted that there would need to be consultation with administrators, faculty, and students. He reported that data about programs being cut will be shared and confidentiality will be important. He stated that the Procedures outlines the three stages of the budget reductions and what would happen during each stage. There will also be detailed criteria that will need to be examined when consideration is being given to eliminating programs.

Bloom asked if there is a strategic plan currently in place. Plowman reported that the campus is starting to redo the strategic plan. Goddard pointed out that it is time for an updated strategic plan. Bloom stated that there needs to be a determination of what is considered a quality program and he thinks this needs to be established before the APC has to begin working on the budget cuts. Plowman pointed out that the faculty would need to decide what is considered a quality program. Boehm stated that he has been busy reviewing APR documents and visiting with the faculty and deans to understand the common vision of the campus and where strategic investments have been made. As a result he is counting on the fact that we will have a faculty driven collaborative process.

Wagner reported that in Phase 1 of the budget cutting process the Chancellor would invoke the Procedures after consulting with the senior administrative team and the Faculty Senate. He stated that a budget framework is then established. He pointed out that at many stages of the budget cutting process the Chancellor will consult with the APC, senior Administrative team, and the Faculty Senate President. He noted that the APC could suggest recommendations regarding the proposed budget cuts. Boehm suggested that the Procedures document should be updated to reflect the recent change with the EVC position.

Plowman noted that the Procedures to be invoked for Significant Budget Reductions and Reallocations have not been used for some time and suggested having a communication strategy with the faculty if the Procedures are invoked. Boehm suggested that there could be a proactive piece of communication that is distributed before people leave for the summer. He noted that some communication would go a long way to let them know that the process is in the hands of the faculty.

Wagner asked when the President would be hearing from the ten task forces he created to gather information. Boehm stated that the President wants the task forces to make recommendations to

the Steering Committee by March 27 and the Steering Committee is to give him the final recommendations by April 10.

Wagner stated that Phase 2 of the budget cutting process is primarily the formulation of the budget recommendations made by the VCs and the Chancellor. In Phase 3 the APC considers the recommendations and holds hearings. He pointed out that the APC has the opportunity to disapprove some of the proposals, but the Chancellor does not have to accept the APC's recommendation. He noted that if the APC disapproves of particular budget cuts it must provide alternative suggestions. He stated that the Chancellor will likely work with the APC to find alternatives if the APC doesn't agree with some of his recommendations.

Bloom pointed out that if the APC will be working on a short time frame it would be helpful to have data collection done ahead of time. Wagner stated that the administration would probably be working on it as soon as they find out what the final budget will be. Boehm pointed out that the Chancellor is already in the mode of driving things forward because some of the information is already being gathered to develop the strategic plan. He liked the idea of the APC contributing input about what a quality program is and suggested that reviewing APRs could be useful in establishing the definition of a quality program. Wagner noted that quality measures could be a real component of the budget model depending on which budget model is adopted.

Farrell reported that during the 2003 budget cuts he had to let 15 people go. He pointed out that it is important for supervisors to have evaluations on their employees so they can make an informed decision should people need to be terminated. Boehm reported that he has spoken with faculty members about the difficulties they went through during the 2003 cuts and it is important to remember that the same principles about where we are going applies to both the good and bad times. He pointed out that these are important conversations to have. Simpson noted that she was a new tenure-track faculty member in 2002, but she was assured early on during the budget cuts that she was not going to be impacted and this allowed her to stay largely oblivious to the cuts allowing her to do her work. She stated that it would be helpful for deans and chairs to give their faculty assurances during the budget cutting process.

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

Plowman stated that while the budget situation has been the focus lately, she is very eager for the campus to get serious about each college and unit to see how it compares to our peers in the Big Ten and identify where the gaps are and what we need to do to close those gaps in order for us to raise our stature and reputation. She noted that she just read the English APR that was so positive and we need to use information like this to increase our stature.

Plowman stated that we are getting some indication that the trips that she, the Chancellor, and VC have made to other parts of the state are having positive impacts. She noted that doing these trips allows people in the state to see how the university impacts their lives and how the university wants to improve things for them.

Plowman reported that the office of the EVC is now very different and she is still determining what we need to do in Research, reviewing Student Affairs, and looking at the relationships

between her office and these units. She stated that hiring new faculty members that need startup money should not be a separate component of Academic Affairs and she is working on getting these areas more acclimated. She noted that student mental health is an increasing issue on campus and faculty members are typically the first people to notice any problems, yet they are not trained to deal with these issues. She stated that she is deliberately taking her time to get to know and understand the issues facing the different offices before any changes are made. She stated that she and Boehm are very interested in working together and there are a lot of things that can be worked on jointly. She pointed out that there are some policies that could be more compatible, but she needs to learn more about the whole campus and make changes in a smart way. She reported that she wants to get a group of research faculty members together to find out what are upcoming issues in research and what kind of Vice Chancellor we should have for Research. She noted that she wants to hear from the faculty.

Boehm stated that he wants to know what happens with new faculty orientation, is it a unified university campus effort individually done by the East and City campuses. He noted that there are a whole series of things that the East and City campuses can work together on and he really wants the campuses to think purposely about the issues and the challenges and be thoughtful about the pros and cons. He pointed out that the he and Plowman share a strong commitment to working together.

Plowman stated that a longer termed issue that she would like to consider is our budget allocation model. She pointed out that there needs to be a budget model that gives departments an incentive to grow, but at the same time protects programs that allow us to be a comprehensive university. She noted that we do not have a formal or informal spousal hire program. We also do not have an opportunity hire program, and we should have the ability to hire someone quickly if an opportunity becomes available that will help our departments and colleges more forward.

Boehm stated that a tangible example of working collaboratively is the hiring freeze that began in December. He reported that the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors met in early January, made critical arguments for positions, and developed a list that enabled the campus to fast track 83 positions to President Bound. The President just recently approved 76 of these positions. Plowman reported that the Chancellor is very open to suggestions on how we could do things differently in order to move the campus forward. Bloom pointed out that spousal hire is a big issue that needs to be considered. Boehm stated that even the language may need to change and that we should consider partner hire rather than just spousal hire.

Hartman stated that he has concerns as the university moves to the next level that tuition for students doesn't also move to the next level, especially if we are comparing ourselves to other Big Ten universities. He stated that he sees tuition creep as a real looming problem. Plowman pointed out that the Board of Regents and the President will make decisions regarding tuition, but good, strong analysis is needed before making any kind of decision on raising tuition. She noted that we have be making great gains with increasing our student enrollment because we are a great value and the administration is aware of this fact.

Boehm stated that there are many different models to explore with higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and questions such as how we fund graduate education and provide students with a meaningful experience if their funding practices are tied to NSF grants. Another question is how

we partner with industry while keeping our academic integrity in place. He stated that the cultures and values of Nebraska are integral and while the U.S. World and News Report lists us as number 14 in the Big Ten, we are ready to hit the middle of the pack because we are flexible, nimble and a big small state. He pointed out that technical and STEM solutions are required in many ways to solve our problems, but this will not happen unless we understand how humans connect and share with each other. He noted that diversity is important, and looking at the 22 administrative leaders in IANR, who are all white males except for one person, does not make us diversified and this needs to change.

Goddard reported that he has been assessing research on campus and the budget and politics in DC will certainly have an effect, but he believes we will weather the storm. He stated that the campus is doing well in research, but we need to find another metric to capture the quality of the research that is done, not just use the amount of research dollars that are awarded to the campus. He reported that we are ahead on research proposals that have been submitted and federal awards have been higher. He stated that research expenditures are up 3% and he thinks it will be 5% above last year's expenditures when the year is completed. He reported that faculty members are anxious, especially those working with agencies that are now being threatened by the new federal administration. He stated that there will be some decreases from federal funding agencies, but other agencies may receive increases. He noted that the important thing is to keep our progress moving forward. He pointed out that we have areas of strength that are not submitting as many proposals to federal agencies that will have increases in their spending, and we need to increase our opportunities with these agencies.

Goddard reported that the UNL Police now have a canine team and the IACUC has approved the use of these animals. He noted that the dogs will be used for major events and have the ability to look for explosives.

Goddard noted that many faculty members and students have concerns regarding a travel ban and we are doing what we can to help any of these members of the campus community.

Simpson moved for adjournment. Motion seconded by Farrell and approved. Meeting adjourned at 4:14 p.m. The next meeting of the APC will be on Wednesday, February 15, 2017 at 3:00 in the City Campus Union, Colonial Room B. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator.