

MINUTES

January 17, 2018 University of Nebraska – Lincoln Academic Planning Committee

Members Present: Aune, Bloom, Boehm, Clarke, Farrell, Goddard, Minter, O'Connor, Plowman, Purdum, Sollars, Woodman, Zeleny

Members Absent: Bender, DaSilva, Franke-Schubert, Trainin, Tschetter

Others Attending: Amy Lanham, UAAD President; Associate Dean Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, College of Arts & Sciences; Associate Dean June Griffin, College of Arts & Sciences

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

Bloom called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.

2.0 Public Hearings on Proposed Budget Cuts

Bloom noted that a notice was circulated to the campus through Nebraska Today inviting people to declare their notice to appear and speak to the APC regarding the Chancellor's proposed budget cuts (for a complete list go to <https://www.unl.edu/chancellor/fy2018-2019-budget-reduction-process-allocations-and-descriptions>) which the Chancellor presented to the APC on November 15, 2017. He pointed out that no one responded to the notice, and in addition, no one appeared to offer testimony without prior notice.

Bloom stated that no other proposed budget cuts have been brought to the APC at this time. Zeleny noted that the Chancellor has stated that in all likelihood the budget cutting process will be invoked again sometime this semester, but this will not occur until process is further along in the Legislature.

Bloom pointed out that the APC can only address the Chancellor's proposed budget cuts and cannot address the cuts from the Budget Reduction Taskforces because it is not in the Committee's jurisdiction. He noted that the BRT efficiency reductions are being declared by President Bounds and concerns about these cuts should be addressed to Senior Associate to the President Marjorie Kostelnik (mkostelnik@nebraska.edu).

3.0 Approval of December 6, 2017 Minutes

Minter moved for approval of the minutes. Motioned seconded by Farrell and approved by the APC.

4.0 APC Representative Report on Chemistry APR

Sollars reported that the External Review Team was very good and productive and came up with excellent recommendations and overall the APR went smoothly. However, she stated that the

Team felt that members of the Chemistry department had some concerns, but there were no requests to meet with the Team individually. She noted that there was a suggestion to hold an open session for the faculty, but no one showed up. She stated that there was some suggestion about issues with the graduate students, and the Team met with the graduate students and had a very good meeting where many good suggestions were made.

Sollars stated that the Chemistry department developed a 940 page self-study document, which was very helpful, but cumbersome to work with. She suggested that in general for APRs the data sets and CVs of faculty members should be put into a separate file from the self-study report.

Sollars reported that the external team members had some reservations about the internal team member because the person was a very good friend of the chair. She stated that she would recommend that the APC consider that there be guidelines regarding who the internal member on APRs should be, perhaps someone who is not involved with the department, and what the expectations are for the internal review team member.

Sollars stated that the External Review Team report identifies the strength of the department, one of which is that there is mutual trust and interest within the department for moving the department forward. She reported that the Chemistry department is excellent in its research efforts. She pointed out that one of the weaknesses of the department is regarding the chair's position which is currently filled by an interim appointee. She noted that the Team felt that it was crucial that the chair position needs to be more clearly identified in the department's vision statement. She stated that the current funding model is not sustainable for getting new faculty members, improving the facilities, and updating laboratories. She pointed out that the Team was openly shocked when they walked into the organic chemistry lab because it was so outdated and dangerous. She stated that the Team was complimentary about the inorganic labs.

Sollars stated that one of the Team's main findings is about accommodating UNL enrollment growth. She noted that the self-study report indicated that for every 1,000 students enrolled, 400 of them will take chemistry courses. The Team pointed out that this growth will require more labs and more graduate students.

Sollars reported that the Team felt that a permanent chair needed to be established as soon as possible because the interim nature of the leadership position is destabilizing for the department. She stated that another suggestion made by the Team is to merge the departments of Chemistry and Biochemistry. The Team thought that merging the two units would help with the increased undergraduate enrollment and would strengthen both departments graduate and undergraduate programs. She noted that it would also help develop the targeting of additional hires.

Sollars stated that the meeting with the graduate students identified two over-arching concerns: the rotation of graduate students in the department and communication issues that had arisen within the graduate student populations. She noted that the Team recommended that the department establish a mandatory rotation for the graduate students so they do not feel pressured to stay with the first faculty member they work with. Another recommendation was that an ombudsman, independent of the department, be appointed so that graduate students could go to someone with concerns.

Sollars reported that the response of the Chemistry department to the Team's report was very positive and the department was grateful for the recommendations which they will try to accomplish when it is feasible. She stated that there was no need for a review or hearing on the review process.

Bloom noted that Associate Vice Chancellor Walker had recently made some suggestions regarding the APR guidelines, and suggested that the APC could review and consider Sollars' suggestions concerning the internal team member along with Walker's suggested changes. He noted that the campus is not large and it may be difficult to specify the qualifications for an internal member. Sollars pointed out that a truly objective internal person is needed for the APRs. She suggested that the internal member should be removed enough from a unit that they do not feel they have to step in and defend the unit, perhaps someone from outside the college. Minter pointed out that there is language regarding the tenure process and whom to identify to provide input. She suggested that if the rationale is similar, the APC might want to look at this language. Plowman asked if the rationale for having an internal team member needs to be reconsidered. Sollars stated that it is the first time that she has seen any issues with the internal team member. She pointed out that the internal team member can usually provide some additional information about how the college operates and provide some other useful information to the team. She noted that the APR Guidelines now state explicitly how the APC rep does not participate in the writing of the report, so it is important to have the internal representative to provide insight and to serve as a resource.

Woodman stated that he was surprised that no faculty members choose to speak to the Team in the private meeting. He asked if there is anything with the structure of the review that would have prevented this from occurring. Sollars stated that initially meetings were scheduled and it was ensured that the meetings would be conducted outside of the department.

Bloom stated that the APC should consider the suggestions and noted that it should check with Associate Vice Chancellor Walker about her suggestions to the Guidelines. Sollars pointed out that Assistant Dean Santiago should be involved as well.

5.0 APC Representative Needed for Animal Science APR, May 13-16, 2018

Sollars begged to be appointed to serve as the APC representative on the Animal Science APR, and was suitably accommodated.

6.0 Proposed Change of Degree Name for the Bachelor of Science Degree and Minor in Environmental Restoration Science to Environmental Science

Boehm noted that the information provided in the proposal was self-explanatory. He reported that there is a good relationship with Environmental Studies, but it is now a much broader discipline and more attractive to students. He noted that there is also greater participation with colleagues in the life sciences and water sciences.

Griffin, from Arts & Sciences, pointed out that Environmental Studies is both a program and major shared between Arts & Sciences and CASNR. She noted that the program was jointly created by the two colleges. She stated that a working group was formed to move forward the

redesigning of the Environmental Science major and the reformatting of the major and the committee was making progress, however, the work slowed down due to the budget situation. She stated that members of the committee were surprised that the proposal was submitted, and Arts & Sciences is concerned that they were not involved in the final decision to move the proposal forward. Boehm asked if the head of the program reports jointly to CASNR and Arts & Sciences. Theiss-Morse and Griffin stated that the head thought there was concurrence with the proposed change. Plowman noted that the proposal came directly to the APC instead of going through her office. She stated that had it gone through the proper channels, it would probably have raised concerns and would have been addressed. Griffin stated that Arts & Sciences has not seen any of the proposal.

Boehm moved that the item be tabled to allow Arts & Sciences and CASNR to have a serious discussion about the proposal. Motion seconded by Clarke and approved by the APC.

7.0 Reports from the Interim Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development, Executive Vice Chancellor, and Vice Chancellor of IANR

Goddard reported that the search for a new Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development is taking place and candidates are coming to campus. He urged faculty members to attend the public presentations of the candidates and to provide feedback.

Plowman reported that this semester her office will be rolling out a series of training programs/discussions with faculty on the topics of free speech/academic freedom and the university policies addressing these issues. She stated that the first session of these discussions will be conducted with the deans. She noted that department chairs will attend a session and will be asked to go back to their departments to convey the information. She pointed out that there is not always a clear understanding of the differences between academic freedom and free speech. She reported that programs providing basic training for classroom instruction will also be conducted and Interim Dean of Graduate Studies Tim Carr will assist with these programs.

Minter asked whose definitions of academic freedom and free speech will be used in the programs. Plowman pointed out that Professor Berger, Law College, will discuss the first amendment. She stated that part of the program will be on academic freedom and AAUP guidelines will be used. She pointed out that we are drawing heavily off of the AAUP website to assist in developing the training programs.

Plowman stated that a priority of the Chancellor is to establish an office on diversity and inclusion for UNL. She stated that the administration has been working with the diversity council that worked with the consultants when the diversity survey was conducted last year. She reported that progress has been made on identifying what the office should look like, the position title of the person who will be overseeing the office, and determining what other positions are needed in that office. She noted that the office would report to the EVC.

Plowman reported that some major restructuring is occurring in Student Affairs. She announced that an Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Jake Johnson, has been hired who will lead student conduct and community standards, academic integrity, student well-being, and student conduct adjudication.

Plowman stated that a critical issue that needs to be addressed is student mental health. She pointed out that the campus needs to find a way to better help students with these issues, and Interim VC Bellows is working with mental health leaders on campus to see if improvements can be made to provide more service to these students, but this will require more resources. She noted that Bellows is looking at programs that would provide training to faculty and staff about behaviors that would indicate that a student may be having some mental health issues so efforts could be made to get the student some assistance.

Boehm reported that he is making his way around the state meeting with colleges and talking to various groups like the Agriculture Builders of Nebraska to discuss agricultural programs and resources. He noted that, as Vice President of the University of Nebraska, he spoke with the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture to talk about its role with the University. He stated that regionally he has had discussion about where the students are going for higher education. He noted that there have been some strategic conversations regarding South Dakota State University's offer to provide in-stated tuition to incoming Nebraska students. He stated that there have been many interesting conversations regarding what we need to focus on to continue our progress and increase UNL's reputation and standings.

Boehm reported that a search for the Dean of CASNR will be starting soon and he hopes to have that person identified before the start of the fall semester. Plowman stated that her office is beginning the search for the Dean of Engineering and a search for the Dean of Graduate Studies will also be conducted.

Boehm stated that there will be a significant cultural change in the Institute. He pointed out that the model that has been used is for administrators to work with a "lead dean" who in turn works with the department chairs/heads. He stated that in order to alleviate inconsistencies with this model there will be some changes. He noted that Associate Vice Chancellor Yoder will become Senior Associate Vice Chancellor and each unit will have a consistent three-piece over-arching structure. He pointed out that there have been a number of gaps with onboarding and coaching of Institute leaders. As a result he is going to hire an Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Success who will also serve as IANR's Chief Diversity Officer. He stated that these changes will allow the Institute to keep its focus on the work that needs to be done.

Purdum asked how the recommendations from the Chemistry APR will move forward and whether consideration is being given to merge the department with Biochemistry. Plowman asked if the APC follows up on the recommendations. Minter pointed out that the APC's role is to provide a procedural check on the APRs to make sure they are done well. She noted that following up on the recommendations is typically the responsibility of the dean and department chair. Boehm pointed out that the APR recommendations are used in developing the strategic agenda for units. Plowman stated that it appears that the EVC office should have the responsibility of bringing the parties together to see if the idea of merging the departments is something that should be pursued. Boehm reported that there are strong feelings from both the Chemistry and Biochemistry regarding the merging of the departments and not everyone is happy to engage in the idea of a merger, however there could be some interesting discussions about it and how it would impact the departments.

Purdum asked why there are not more lab fees to help fund the renovation of labs such as the organic chemistry labs. Bloom pointed out that lab fees are already in place in some units and part of the problem is the matter of budgeting.

8.0 Other Business

Bloom reported that the Chancellor plans to hire an outside firm to help start the strategic plan for the campus. Boehm stated that the independent consultant will pull together the information obtained by the Chancellor's Strategic Planning Taskforces last year to begin structuring the process. He pointed out that the process will include all of the stakeholders and the idea is to have the process completed in time for the State's 150th anniversary. Bloom stated that he hoped the APC will be involved in the process since planning is one of the main responsibilities of the Committee.

Bloom pointed out that the APC will need to stay informed about proposed changes to the budget model because it will have significant impact on how the university operates.

Bloom stated that he wanted to thank Dean Marron for her service on the APC and noted that she is stepping down from her position as dean. Plowman stated that she and Boehm are working on appointing a new dean to the APC.

9.0 Transmittal Letter to Chancellor on Proposed Budget Cuts

The APC went into Executive Session. The APC discussed the Chancellor's proposed budget reductions and Bloom stated that he would draft the transmittal letter for the Committee to review and vote on at its January 31 meeting. Boehm stated that he will recuse himself from voting since he proposed some of the recommended budget cuts.

The meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m. The next meeting of the APC will be on Wednesday, January 31, 2018 at 3:00 in the City Campus Union, Georgian Suite. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator.