

## MINUTES

October 9, 2019  
University of Nebraska – Lincoln  
Academic Planning Committee

**Members Present:** Bender, Clarke, Gay, Hachtmann, Hebets, Moberly, Purdum, Ratcliff, Smith, Tschetter, Wilhelm, Zeleny

**Members Absent:** Bloom, Boehm, Geisinger, Hibberd, Johnson, O'Connor, Purcell

**Others Attending:** Professor Hurwitz, Professor Sheridan, Professor Pannier, Professor Farritor

**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

Clarke called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

### 2.0 Subcommittee Review of Museum Studies Proposal (Tschetter and Hachtmann)

Tschetter reported that the questions she had on the proposal were all addressed by Professor Perdikaris, Chair of the Anthropology. She stated that she believes the proposal should be approved. Wilhelm noted that he spoke to the State Museum who assured him that there has been a legacy of involvement with the Museum and there are still a large number of opportunities for students to obtain internships.

Ratcliff moved for approval of the proposal. Motion seconded by Wilhelm and approved by the APC.

### 3.0 APC Representative Report on Communications Studies APR (Professor Sollars)

Sollars reported that the APR occurred last March and it was a great review from start to finish. She noted that the department is small with 12 full-time faculty members, 6 lecturers, 3 courtesy faculty, 19 GTAs, and a business cooperative staff of 5. She stated that there are 26 graduate students, 188 undergraduate majors and 279 undergraduate minors. She reported that there is a single academic advisor that is shared with other departments.

Sollars stated that the External Review Team felt that Communication Studies is not only an asset to the College of Arts & Sciences and the University, but also for the people of Nebraska. She stated that the faculty members are known nationally and the department is known for its outstanding teaching. She stated that the department is working on developing its research culture.

Sollars stated that the self-study assessment was well organized, and clearly identified the advancements that the department has made since the last APR in 2011. She noted that the department clearly outlined its strategic objectives which include, maintaining tenure-track

faculty stability and productivity, building research capacity and productivity, building graduate student numbers, growing the undergraduate major and increasing student success, and increasing departmental visibility and impact. She reported that the department is considering changing its name, but the Team recommended that the department should celebrate its current name and not change the name.

Sollars stated that the External Review Team was well prepared and asked questions that allowed the team to gain insight to how the department functions and the most likely avenues for the department to develop both locally and nationally. She stated that the APR team identified the strengths and weaknesses of the department.

Sollars stated that overall the review was very well conducted, but the Review Team pointed out that the time allotted was not adequate and the Team wrote its concern in the final report. She noted that the Team recommended that the EVC's office return to the former schedule of having the teams come in on a Sunday and allowing two full days and another half day to conduct the review properly.

Sollars stated that strengths identified by the Team included: a climate of collegiality and shared purpose, stable and thoughtful leadership, a clear identity, strong appeal to undergraduates, and the doctoral program had high yields and placement rates. The Team noted that the department has an extremely strong speech and debate team and suggested that this could be developed into a third area of emphasis in argumentation theory and practice.

Sollars stated that weaknesses identified included the ambiguity about promotion and tenure expectations, the uncertainties of new college-level leadership, the move to a hybrid RCM model and transition to a business co-op model, being overly dependent on temporary instructional funds, and perceived difficulty in the ability to retain minority faculty members. The Team felt that the loss of a promising Latinx faculty member was a serious unforced error. She noted that the Team was shocked when they learned of the University's lack of response to spousal hiring. She stated that the Team felt that it was critical that the department and surrounding culture work at becoming more diverse, and encouraged the department to develop joint appointments for future hires.

Sollars stated that the Team noted that the graduate student stipends were the lowest in the Big Ten. However, when the Team asked the graduate students whether they would like to have larger stipends or more graduate students, the response was to have more graduate students. The Team noted that it is critical for the department to obtain more funding and proposed three possible strategies for doing this: to increase grant funding, secure donor funding for Speech and Debate, or develop a revenue-producing professional master's degree program. She stated that the Team reported graduate students need more direction into developing their teaching skills, and noted that the graduate students felt strongly about this need.

Sollars stated that the External Review Team specifically recommended that the department develop a three-year hiring plan and hire five tenure-track faculty members, three positions should be in Rhetoric and Public Culture and two should be in Interpersonal, Family and Health Communication. She pointed out that this would only equate to a net gain of two additional

faculty members because of upcoming retirements. The Team suggested that the department build interaction both with the unit and between units, and it should give special consideration to opportunities for joint appointments which could help further the goals of diversity and inclusion.

Sollars reported that the department immediately established a committee to work on some of the suggested recommendations. She noted that a hiring plan is being worked on and the committee is actively taking steps to increase funding, and to find a balance between teaching orientation for graduate students and the work they have to do as a student.

Sollars stated that the APR was successful and needed no further follow-up.

Clarke asked if there was a response from the EVC office about the minimal time to conduct the review as mentioned by the External Review Team. Sollars reported that she did not believe the issue has been addressed. She noted that the EVC's office pointed out that it was difficult to get external reviewers to stay long for an APR, but the Review Team members disagreed. She reported that the Team members mentioned several times that they used their allotted break time for interviews because the schedule was too short to review the program.

#### **4.0 Approval of September 25, 2019 Minutes**

Bender moved for approval of the minutes. Motion seconded by Gay and approved by the APC.

#### **5.0 RCM Data Quality Committee**

Clarke reported that she received a request from VC Nunez to identify APC members to serve on the RCM Data Quality Committee. She noted that Hachtmann and Geisinger have volunteered to serve. Zeleny pointed out that VC Nunez is just waiting to hear back from the Faculty Senate before confirming the appointments to the Committee.

#### **6.0 Update on NU Governance and Technology Center Proposal**

Clarke stated that she would only be providing an update at this time on the proposed Center. She reported that she and Bender reviewed the proposal and had several questions. They then met with Moberly and Professor Hurwitz to discuss the proposal further. She noted that she also had a conversation with Faculty Senate President Kevin Hanrahan about the proposal and asked for some feedback from the Senate Executive Committee on it. She stated that she will gather comments that have been made and will send these to Moberly. She stated that, depending on the feedback she receives, she will put the proposal on the APC's next agenda for a vote.

Moberly asked if it is normal to share proposals with the Faculty Senate for a review. Clarke pointed out that there is a Faculty Senate representative on the APC who reports back to the Senate Executive Committee.

#### **7.0 Reports from the Executive Vice Chancellor, Vice Chancellor for IANR, Vice Chancellor for Research & Economic Development**

Moberly stated that he had no new updates at this time.

Wilhelm reported that awards for research grants are currently lagging by 10% this year, but last year we saw a 20% growth in awarded research funds. He noted that as long as our research expenditures increase 6% the campus will continue to keep research moving in the right direction.

Wilhelm stated that recently an FBI agent was on campus to discuss Federal regulations regarding international collaboration in research. He noted that we want to support international collaboration, but we need to be careful to adhere to the many federal regulations that are required to conduct this kind of research. He pointed out that there is not a sharp concern that intellectual property is being leaked out of the University. He noted that the University has organized a working group that is assisting with the issues surrounding international collaboration. He stated that it is important that we watch out for our faculty when international collaboration occurs.

Wilhelm stated that Jeanne Wicks, Director of Sponsored Programs, will be retiring at the end of October. He noted that the search for a new Director has been completed and the new Director will be starting in November.

Wilhelm reported that every two years the University can provide testimony to receive tobacco funds. He noted that his office, and the three other campuses provided testimony to the Legislature at the end of September. He stated that the testimony was well received and he believes we will continue to receive federal funding which could be \$15 million a year to be spread out over the four campuses.

Wilhelm reported that he was recently in Washington D.C. and was looking at research opportunities for our faculty. He stated that there was concentrated effort with the National Drought Mitigation Center to explore these opportunities. He noted that members of the House Agriculture Committee and Subcommittee visited campus recently and we had good discussions with them about future research projects. He stated that this year there will be data collaboration and initiative with funding for seed grants. He stated that there will also be new international research efforts.

Purdum stated that she recently served on the Biological Systems Engineering APR and there was considerable discussion regarding IP restricting or limiting grant opportunities. She asked what can faculty members do to make him aware of the obstacles they are facing with the research. Wilhelm stated that he spent an hour with the review committee today, and the issue did not come up during the discussion, but his office will take a look at providing ways for faculty to gain the most opportunity with funding within the IP guidelines.

## **7.0 Other Business**

The APC heard a presentation from Professors Sheridan, Pannier, and Farritor, on the draft N2025 plan (<https://www.unl.edu/chancellor/n2025-draft-report>). It was pointed out that the N2025 Strategy Team is seeking feedback. Sheridan reported that the N150 developed long term goals, but this plan is a five-year plan. She stated that the Strategy Team was composed of a diverse group of people who met around strategic topics (including student co-

creation/experiential learning/ research and creative activity; every person and every interaction matters; and engagement).

Sheridan stated that the overarching aspiration identified by the N150 Team was that every person and every interaction matters. From here the N2025 Team identified three core aspirations with six interconnected aims. Pannier reported that the aims are goals to be accomplished before 2025. She noted that the strategy or actions to achieve the aim, the measures of our success with the aim, and the desired quantifiable numbers associated with the measures of success all need to be determined yet.

Gay asked what part of the plan is strictly unique to UNL. Pannier pointed out that elevating engagement to the level that is being considered is unique. Gay stated that he was struck with how non-specific the plan is and thought it would be more specific than the long-term plan. He noted that there has been a concerted effort to increase the role of the faculty in shared governance, yet there is no mention of shared governance in the plan. Pannier stated that the last aim “prioritize participation and professional development for all Nebraska students, staff, and faculty” would cover the area of shared governance. Sheridan stated that the document takes into account all of the work done by the subcommittees and the idea was to develop more generalized language, but not be over prescriptive. Gay argued that by choosing to avoid specificity there is nothing that is unique about the plan. Pannier stated that the aims will provide more specificity. Gay stated that an example of specificity is to say that we will have five faculty members in national academies, and the faculty will be included in all-decision making early in the process.

Hachtmann asked how the plan will trickle down to the individual units, particularly given that the metrics are so different for departments across the campus. Pannier stated that it is important for people at all levels buy into the plan, but they need to know that they do not have to do everything that is in the plan. She stated that some of the identified actions will feed into the RCM budget model.

Hebets stated that she is hearing that the plan has some goals and each unit is going to have to determine how to develop these goals, but she is wondering how the plan and the unit efforts will come together. Zeleny noted that once the plan is solidified and agreed upon a number of implementation teams will need to be created to tackle how the goals can be accomplished. He noted that a lot of the efforts will apply campus-wide.

Moberly pointed out that the N2025 plan along with the RCM budget will create a culture shift on campus. He noted that currently we have a centralized budget, but with a very decentralized operation. He stated that once the budget is decentralized it will need to be determined what needs to be handled centrally and what should be handled at the college level. He stated that there will need to be some collective action. Pannier pointed out that some strategies are at the unit level while others are not. She noted that some colleges are developing their strategic plan and are using the draft plan as a guide.

Gay stated that the section on diversity includes a lot of typical buzzwords, but there are no recommendations on how the aspired goals will be achieved. He suggested having a specific

goals such as making a commitment to spend funds for startups to bring the best and brightest diverse faculty to campus. Ratcliff asked if targeting funds for startups for underrepresented faculty would violate the State's anti-affirmative action regulation. Moberly stated that efforts to recruit under represented students and faculty have been occurring through recruiting in different markets than what has normally been done. He pointed out that having a diverse body is of huge value to the university. Sheridan noted that decisions will need to be made on what we need to do to hit the target for this goal.

Purdum pointed out that while the aspirations are all good, to accomplish some of these goals will take significant extra amount of faculty time, and she questioned how the faculty will be rewarded. She noted that many of the deans are focused on faculty obtaining grants which will require faculty members to concentrate more on their research effort and not get involved in additional service work which is what this plan expects.

Zeleny suggested that it might be better to pause discussion on the plan until the targets are developed because they will provide more information on how we can achieve the goals outlined in the aims.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m. The next meeting of the APC will be on Wednesday, October 23, 2019 at 3:00 in the City Campus Union, Chimney Rock Room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator.