

MINUTES
September 6, 2023

University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Academic Planning Committee

Members Present: Ankerson, Boehm, Clarke, Cressler, Davis, Doll, Heng-Moss, Hiatt, Hole, Latta Konecky, Minter, Mowat, Ourada, Pechous, Theiss-Morse, Tschetter, Wilhelm, Haake

Members Absent: Button, Kelley, Vuran

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

1.0 Call

Clarke called the meeting to order at 3:06 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Bennett

Chancellor Bennett stated that he was happy to meet each of the APC members noting that we have important work to do together as we navigate the uncertainties of this academic year. He noted that President Carter’s announcement that he would be leaving the University at the end of the year has left some things unresolved resulting in the campuses not receiving any clarifications or specifics from Central Administration about the budget.

Chancellor Bennett reported that he has already had some very good meetings with APC Chair Vuran, and he has expressed how much he wants to work collaboratively with the APC. He pointed out that he has a strong track record of early engagement with the faculty and believes the faculty should be more actively involved in making decisions about budget reductions. He stated that he really likes the approach of grassroots efforts and wants to work together as partners as we deal with the budget challenges we are facing.

Chancellor Bennett noted that in his conversations with Vuran he predicts that we will have to do some difficult work very quickly and he believes that Central Administration will want us to have some decisions made about how we are dealing with our budget deficit by the end of the fall semester. He stated that he knows the faculty like to be very intentional, methodical, and diligent in dealing with budget reductions, but he does not think that this option will be viable for us. He pointed out that Chancellor Emeritus Green did leave him some notes with suggestions on how to deal with the reductions so there is some guidance, but he really wants the APC to be involved in how we deal with the budget reductions. He noted that for the past ten years he has had to deal with budget reductions, and he is aware of the difficulties of doing this work and he is relying on the APC to partner with him in making the necessary decisions.

3.0 Approval of August 23, 2023 Minutes

Clarke asked if there were any revisions for the minutes. Hearing none she asked for approval of the minutes which were then approved by the APC.

4.0 Proposal to Create New Undergraduate Major – Business Analytics

Clarke noted that at the last APC meeting there was discussion about expediting some proposals while others may need to be reviewed more thoroughly by committee members. She noted that since this proposal is for a new undergraduate major there should be a subcommittee to review it and asked for volunteers. Hiatt and Cressler volunteered to review the proposal.

Clarke noted that she did have a discussion with AVC Batman about the proposal because there were some courses for the program that were still pending approval and it was not clear what the difference is between the proposed program and the data science undergraduate program. She reported that she received an update from AVC Batman which addressed her questions, and she will share the email with the reviewers.

5.0 Proposal to Modify the Medical Family Therapy Graduate Certificate

Ankerson noted that this was a certificate that had been jointly offered with UNMC, but they no longer have the faculty or expertise to teach it and they are very much supportive of having the College of Education and Human Sciences take the lead on the program.

Theiss-Morse questioned that the proposal states that no additional resources are needed but then the proposal states that UNMC will be relying on three temporary instructors to teach the core courses. Mowat stated that these temporary instructors were from the community and have a long-standing relationship with UNMC. Ankerson noted this arrangement has been occurring for a long time.

Mowat moved for approval. Motion seconded by Doll and approved by the APC.

6.0 Review of Proposal to Rename Space, Cyber and Telecommunications Law to Space, Cyber and National Security Law (Mowat and Theiss-Morse)

Mowat reported that they reviewed the proposal and there was some concern about course titles being accurately named to reflect the changes but a memorandum from Ankerson explained that the proposal is just for a name change. Clarke asked if the proposal has been adjusted because there was a lot of additional information in the proposal. Ankerson explained that it is just a name change and the additional information was just to provide context for the proposal. She suggested that in the future providing additional background information might be helpful for the APC, so the Committee is made aware that the curriculum has been approved by the college.

Clarke asked for a motion to approve the name change. Doll moved and Mowat seconded approval of the proposal and the APC voted to approve it.

7.0 Review of Social Entrepreneurship Undergraduate Certificate (Latta Konecky and Minter)

Minter stated that she and Konecky reviewed the proposal and while doing so they identified principles that the APC could use for determining when proposals could be expedited. She stated that they considered several different criteria: 1) interest or student demand and the likelihood of interest; 2) verify that there is no duplication of the program across the campus and perhaps the university system; 3) would the investment into the program be minimal; 4) is the course of study doable in terms of offering and availability of courses; 5) was there sufficient

evidence of buy-in (letters of support not being necessary if there is collaboration across units;) 6) was a market analysis included; 7) what kind of impact would the program have within Nebraska.

Minter reported that the proposal addresses the criteria listed above and was well prepared. She and Latta Konecky supported approving the proposal.

Cressler asked what would happen if the anticipated enrollment would not meet the minimum requirement of ten students. Minter stated that the CCPE asks the university to review enrollment. She suggested that with a new undergraduate initiative we would want to give them a certain amount of time to hit the targets of enrollment. Ankerson stated that the question shows why we need to look carefully at what the future demands are for a newly proposed program.

Clarke asked the APC to vote on the proposal. The proposal was approved by the APC.

8.0 Proposal for An Undergraduate Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (Doll and Hiatt)

Doll reported that no new courses were needed and there is substantial depth of faculty members to teach the courses. She pointed out that this is not a teaching certificate and is targeted for other departments and colleges who have requested this kind of experience for their students. She stated that this program would be a good opportunity to provide more expertise in this area. Hiatt stated that the proposal clearly showed the demand for the program and how it could be beneficial for students in other colleges. She pointed out that given the data and support that was provided in the proposal she would recommend approval of it. Motion was approved by the APC.

9.0 APC Representative Report on Plant Pathology APR (Hiatt)

Hiatt reported that Plant Pathology plays an important role in many different areas of the state and within the university serving a critical role in the Ag industry. She noted that there is a diagnostic laboratory managed by the department that is always busy and in high demand. She stated that the self-study was thorough and included numerous goals pointing out that the department recognizes it has challenges that it wants to address.

Hiatt stated that the External Review Team (ERT) was very well respected and there was mutual respect between the ERT and the faculty in Plant Pathology. She stated that challenges that were identified by the ERT were the distance between buildings where various faculty members were located and a high turnover rate of faculty members. The ERT felt that there needed to be a cohesive vision for the department and strategies developed to address the challenges.

Hiatt reported that the response from the department to the ERT's report identified some steps that were already being taken to address the recommendations made by the ERT. She stated that the APR went very well and there was no need for a hearing.

10.0 Reports from EVC Ankerson, VC Boehm, and VC Wilhelm

Wilhelm reported that two director positions were filled this summer: Dr. Aron Barbey is the new Director for the Center for Brain, Biology, and Behavior, and Professor George Gogos was

hired as the Director of the Nebraska Energy Science Research. He noted that Professor Gogos has been a faculty member in Mechanical Engineering and is Graduate Chair for part of the department's graduate program.

Wilhelm stated that in the next few days announcements will be made regarding our research expenditures and awards. He noted that post pandemic there has been considerable acceleration in our research efforts and stated that an announcement will be made next week regarding a research effort between faculty at UNL and UNMC which has received a grant of \$24.5 million.

Wilhelm stated that our museum accreditation process was recently completed and that feelings are confident that it went well. He reported that this week we are hosting tribal elders associated with Nebraska, pointing out that there are periodic meetings with them as we honor our commitment with the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act, and we are making more arrangements with them.

Wilhelm stated that there are a lot of different programs being set up for the fall semester. Ankerson suggested talking about the research strategy data working group. Wilhelm stated that between ITS, the Libraries, EVC office, and ORED a working group has been assembled to define what our approach is going to be to research data. He noted that the first part of the effort has to do with finding foundational elements in how we are going to support the data and recently a draft was written and is being reviewed by people around the campus. He reported that the group wants to be very transparent about what requirements we must meet and then we need to put the right kind of funding in place that will support research data across all disciplines.

Ankerson reported that the Chief Academic Officers have been charged to look across the campuses to identify duplication of programs. She pointed out that while there are some necessary duplications of particular programs, we need to find opportunities for us to save money by working collaboratively with the other campuses. She noted that there might be different philosophies behind the programs and this needs to be taken into consideration before any budget reduction decisions are made. She stated that the CAOs have been meeting periodically to discuss what are core programs and where opportunities exist for collaboration and cooperation. She reported that the timeframe for completing this work is very short.

Ankerson stated that the Coordinating Commission for Post Secondary Education (CCPE) has a minimum threshold for the number of degrees granted during a five-year period and she pointed out that there are several programs throughout the university system that don't meet the minimum. She stated that the CCPE is getting stricter about allowing these programs to continue although there is a mechanism in place for a college or department to appeal a decision to eliminate the program; however, the reprieve would only be for a period of time. She stated that the President has asked the CAOs to consider whether we need to increase the minimum threshold for these programs, although she noted that there are some small programs that are core to our mission. She stated that one option is to have more general bachelors' degrees but with specializations. She pointed out that many of these potential changes will impact the APC later.

Ankerson reported that VC Anderson started yesterday, and she believes she will be very successful. She noted Volleyball Game Day elevated women's sports and garnered nationwide

exposure, and this could have a positive impact in our student recruitment. She stated that we are starting a new initiative for new students who apply before November 1. These students will be notified by February 1 what their total financial package would be from the university.

Ankerson reported that not only are we focusing on recruitment, but also on retention and this work is being done at both the undergraduate and graduate level. She stated that we are looking at what the essential elements are that we need to provide to students at all levels to increase retention rates and to elevate student success and she has assigned Bill Watts, who was serving as Interim VC for Student Affairs, to develop a system that would help improve retention rates.

Doll noted that a couple of years ago we tightened up our time to graduation which resulted in some of the largest graduation classes but impacted our enrollment numbers for the next academic year. She asked if we are still grappling with lower enrollment because of these large graduating classes. Ankerson stated that we have reduced the time to graduation. She noted that we are part of a Big Ten effort that uses a program called Curve Curricular Analytics which looks at the complexity of a program and estimates what the time to degree is which can be compared with our Big Ten peers. She stated that the program can also be used to see if there are any differences in the time to degree if changes are made to the program. She stated that she believes we are turning the corner in terms of enrollment and our first-time freshmen enrollment is up, but we still need to work on improving our retention rate. She stated that our graduate retention rate still needs improvement and the retention of returning Nebraska students to graduate programs was actually very low. She reported that in addition to these efforts AVC Shriner has been working with the colleges to prioritize online programs that are in high demand.

Hiatt stated that she has been meeting with students recently and noted that over the past year she has seen an increase in the number of students who are working more than 20 hours a week and that many students are feeling overwhelmed most of the time. She noted that she has a growing concern that many of her students do not have the time to take a full course load which will extend their time to graduation, but she assures them that this is okay if this is what they need to do. Ankerson stated that access to the university is one of our core missions and it is important for us to know which students can complete their degree in four years and which students are struggling. She pointed out that first-year students receive the Husker Power Survey, and this identifies whether a student has developed a network of friends, if they are having financial difficulties, and if they know who to go to for help on campus. She reported that the academic navigators reach out to the students to help them tackle these problems so they can be successful. She noted that a similar survey is being developed for second-year students and one needs to be developed for third-year students, which is where we really see the decrease in retention rates. She stated that retention is a complex issue that needs to be addressed in multiple ways.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:56 p.m. The next meeting of the APC will be on Wednesday, September 20, 2022. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator.