

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bender, Dawes, Fech, Konecky, Lee, Leiter, Purcell, Purdum, Rudy, Steffen, Vakilzadian, Woodman

Absent: Hanrahan

Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2017

Location: 203 Alexander Building

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

1.0 Call (*Woodman*)

Woodman called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

2.0 Chancellor Green

2.1 What criteria would be used to make vertical budget cuts if they are needed? If services were to be cut, do you have any idea which services?

Chancellor Green pointed out that until we know the final budget for the University in late spring, we really won't know exactly how to approach the budget cuts. He stated that indications from what the Governor has proposed is that there will still be some significant budget cuts, but perhaps not as high as originally predicted. He stated that he is holding a Town Hall meeting on January 31 to discuss the situation. He noted that we are just modeling some of the various scenarios to get some ideas of how to deal with the budget cuts. He stated that in addition to the budget cuts there will be increases in the cost of health care and salary increases all while we try to hold inflation constant, so we are not sure exactly what our shortfall will be. He noted that the Board of Regents will set the University budget in June.

Chancellor Green reported that any vertical cuts would depend on how big of a budget cut the University is hit with. He stated that everything possible will be done to protect the academic core of the university which has been the philosophy of the University in the past, present, and future.

Chancellor Green pointed out that President Bounds will be holding meetings with the faculty and staff at the end of January regarding the task forces that have been created to look at University services to see if we can become more efficient. He stated that we will not know if efficiency improvements can be made until the task forces have completed their work.

Purcell asked if the procedures to deal with significant budget reductions has been invoked yet. Chancellor Green said no, although he understands that there might be some confusion regarding the need to do this because of this fiscal year's current shortfall. He

pointed out that when we know what the budget will be for the next biennium we will move into the planning process and the procedures will be invoked at that time.

Rudy asked if combining programs and/or departments might be an option instead of budget cuts. Chancellor Green stated that mergers would only be considered if budget efficiencies could be gained. He stated that there may be programmatic reasons to combine units, but usually combining departments does not always produce savings.

2.2 Views on how the Legislature is responding to the University's arguments for keeping the budget cuts as small as possible.

Chancellor Green noted that the Legislature is dealing with a difficult budget situation and there is a significant number of new Senators. He stated that the first step in our process is the reopening of the budget. He reported that President Bounds and the Chancellors from all of the four campuses, along with the Presidents of the state colleges, and members from the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education recently met with the Appropriations Committee and his initial reaction was positive. He pointed out that Chair of the Appropriations Committee, Senator John Stinner, was helpful in evaluating and asking good questions and indications are that there is a good partnership approach to dealing with the budget situation.

Chancellor Green noted that for the biennial budget, the Governor's budget proposed reduction to our current base state appropriation of 2.1% in FY 18 with an actual increase in the second year of the biennium. His proposal would reduce the overall state appropriation by roughly 1% by the end of the biennium. He pointed out that this is a considerably better outlook than what was originally being predicted, but it is still significant when you factor in the cost of doing business across the entire enterprise of the University. He explained that a 1% cut in the budget from state appropriations is only a small part of the equation when increased faculty and staff salaries, cost of health benefits, utilities, and inflation are added to the picture.

Lee asked if the United States pulling out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership would make the agricultural economy worse. Chancellor Green reported that there is a lot of concern in farm country about trade because export trade in Nebraska is a significant part of our economy, more so than for many other states. He noted that the State has been involved in the TPP and have been following what is happening with it for some time. He stated that it became obvious that when President Trump was elected the TPP would be in jeopardy, but it was likely to happen regardless because of unlikely passage of the bill in Congress. He pointed out that an even bigger concern is with NAFTA and what form and shape it will now take. He reported that the agricultural community has been very vigilant in speaking up about it because of the impact it could have if NAFTA was removed. Lee reported that he recently read that the easiest way for other countries to retaliate against us is through the agricultural economy. Chancellor Green stated that this is true and noted that in the 1980's there was a huge downturn in the agricultural economy and there is great concern in the agricultural sector of the country. He noted that he will be speaking at a meeting next week in Washington, DC concerning a number of these and other issues.

2.3 Update on hiring freeze and number of positions that have been approved and denied. Will new hires have an effect on the retention of current employees?

Chancellor Green reported that 57 positions were approved for exemption from the hiring freeze before the holidays. Another 83 positions for exemption were submitted about a week ago. He noted that these positions were prioritized by the deans and department heads, in business units, and in IT and were submitted with the recommendations of the cognizant Vice Chancellors. He reported that President Bounds is aware that action needs to be taken quickly on some of these hires if the people are to be in place by the fall semester and he is expecting an answer from President Bounds very soon. He noted that if these positions are filled there will still be about 255 open positions in the salary pool. He stated that these positions will be put on hold.

Regarding whether new hires will have an effect on the retention of current employees Chancellor Green stated that the administration is being judicious about hiring given the upcoming budget cuts. He noted that those positions that are under consideration for exemption were all deemed to be urgently needed.

Fech pointed out that there is now a federal hiring freeze and asked if this has any impacts on those employees at the University that are partially federally funded. Chancellor Green stated that it is unknown at this time whether there will be any impacts because we do not know exactly what the federal hiring freeze means.

2.4 What effects would a tuition increase have on enrollment?

Chancellor Green reported that a tuition increase would have a negative impact on our enrollment. He noted that during the 2003-05 budget cuts tuition was increased by double digit figures over several years. As a result there was a decline in enrollment of about 1,800 students across the system. He pointed out that we have held tuition increases down for a number of years and the last two increases were around 2%.

2.5 Will the budget cutting process be used to prioritize programs?

Chancellor Green stated that the budget cutting process will not be used to prioritize programs. He pointed out that identifying priority areas will be determined in the long-term planning process. He stated that we may need to prioritize in terms of what areas can be cut that will have the least impact to our academic mission.

2.6 Have the deans asked chairs/department heads to begin looking at program cuts?

Chancellor Green reported that the administration has not asked the deans to consult with the department chairs yet, although some of the deans may have initiated discussions on their own. He stated that he has asked the deans to consider some scenarios that we could possibly be facing in regards to the budget cuts. He noted that he will update the deans, directors, and departmental leaders with the latest information at an upcoming Town Hall meeting.

2.7 Explain the process of hiring someone as an interim -- do the academic qualifications from the position announcement have to be adhered to? Will this become standard practice during the hiring freeze?

Chancellor Green stated that anytime an interim person is hired we look at their qualifications and the responsibilities of the role and he has not thought of an interim position in any other way. Chancellor Green stated that it is his belief that positions need to be filled by someone who meets the requirements of the position.

Chancellor Green pointed out that we will not have more interim hires because of the hiring freeze. He stated that President Bounds understands that there is a great deal of anxiety regarding the hiring freeze and it is temporary to help us get through the budget shortfall for this year. He reported that the intent is to move out of the hiring freeze once we know what the budget situation will be for the next biennium.

2.8 Issues on the Horizon

Chancellor Green stated that he is fully aware of the importance of the budget situation, but he is concerned with getting back to the business of the university because we have a lot of work to do to continue moving the University forward. He noted that we are on an upward trajectory and we don't plan on allowing the budget situation to slow us down. He reported that he is pushing the task forces he created in November to gather the information we need to begin our strategic planning process. He stated that he recently commissioned an outside national group to help us with our enrollment management and both VC Boehm and EVC Plowman are hard at work. He noted that EVC Plowman needs to work on filling the leadership positions in Academic Affairs.

Chancellor Green stated that we are moving forward with fund raising efforts and he will be on the road throughout February trying to raise funds. He stated that he hopes to continue moving forward on building projects.

Lee noted that he is chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Inclusiveness and there is real concern about issues of climate given the recent incidents with two of the fraternities during the Women's March this past Saturday. There is also concern over who the new President will name over Civil Rights and Title IX. Chancellor Green stated that his office began receiving reports Saturday evening about the incidents that occurred during the Women's March. He noted that the initial reports were made by students, but they escalated from other people who attended the March. He stated that immediately an investigation began with the appropriate people from Student Affairs, Greek Affairs, and Title IX Compliance to determine if violations of Title IX and/or the Student Code of Conduct have occurred. He stated that complaints have been lodged with the Office of Equity and Institutional Compliance. Rudy asked if the University Police are also involved in the investigation. Chancellor Green stated that the Police are involved in the investigation. He pointed out that we do not condone the kinds of behavior that were reported and it is not acceptable according to our Student Code of Conduct. He stated that he was pleased to learn that the national offices of the fraternities are on their own accord investigating the incidents and they also have stated that these kinds of behavior do not meet their code of conduct. He noted that he is pleased to hear from our students

about the incidents and that the community is discussing it as well. He stated that the campus is not willing to accept this kind of behavior, but we need to make sure that we understand all of the facts so we can deal with the situation appropriately.

Lee asked if there have been any comments from the Regents on the incident. Chancellor Green stated that he has not heard anything. He noted that he has an obligation to keep the President and the Regents informed about the situation. He stated that while we do not want to suppress someone's right to freedom of speech, when language of the kind reported is escalated it crosses the line and becomes an issue of acceptable speech.

Chancellor Green stated that the campus is watching what happens at the federal level, but we can't reduce our commitment to campus climate and diversity. He stated that if the investigation finds that the actions of the fraternities did happen it creates a level of concern. He stated that we cannot legitimize the kind of behavior that was exhibited. He has asked the University Communications people to see if this was a particular incident that occurred here or that happened at other universities as well. He reported that so far it has not happened at other universities which creates greater concern that this would have happened here.

Steffen suggested that the Senate should make a motion to keep any programs already in place that deal with sexual misconduct, harassment, or discrimination even if Title IX gets rolled back at the national level.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 President's Task Force Meeting

Woodman reported that he will be attending a meeting with President Bounds and the efficiency task forces he created on Thursday. He noted that he and Purcell will be attending the Chancellor's Town Hall meeting on Thursday, January 26 at noon.

3.2 Invitation to Send Joint Letter Denouncing Proposed Secretary of State Betsy De Vos

Woodman reported that he has received an invitation to join other Faculty Senate President's from the other Big Ten universities to denounce the proposed appointment of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. The Executive Committee felt that the content of the letter needs to be reviewed before we can agree to sign on to the letter.

3.3 Report on Ad Hoc Committee on Best Practices for Non-Tenure Track Faculty Members

Rudy reported that the Ad Hoc Committee met today and will be meeting with Interim Associate VC Judy Walker about a document that is being created in Academic Affairs on non-tenure track faculty members. Woodman noted that the College of Arts & Sciences has recently come out with a policy on non-tenure track faculty members. Rudy pointed out that the Arts & Sciences policy only addresses seven points, but the Ad Hoc Committee has identified fourteen points that it would like to see incorporated into policies.

Woodman noted that it is clear that the administrative units are taking interest concerning the rights of non-tenure track faculty members. Rudy reported that his department has just allowed non-tenure track faculty members to serve on promotion and tenure committees.

3.4 Police Advisory Committee Meeting

Vakilzadian stated that he recently attended the Police Advisory Committee. He stated that there was discussion about the Committee guidelines and the need to have women represented and suggestions were made to have the Chancellor appoint someone to the Committee. He stated that there was also a visit by the Police department and they informed the Committee about emergency training. He stated that he was impressed with the Police efforts and all those working in the department.

4.0 Approval of January 10, 2017 Minutes

Purcell moved for approval of the revised minutes. Motion seconded by Rudy and approved by the Executive Committee with one abstention.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Syllabus Policy

Woodman noted that the Higher Learning Commission pointed out that our syllabus policy does not include any information regarding academic honesty and suggested that it be included. Lee suggested that information regarding plagiarism also needs to be included as well as information about accommodations for students with disabilities. Woodman suggested that the needed information be included in the bullet of information section in the policy. Steffen moved to include language regarding academic honesty and accommodations for students with disabilities in the syllabus policy. Motion seconded by Bender and approved by the Executive Committee. The motion to revise the Syllabus Policy will be presented to the Faculty Senate at the February 7 meeting.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Strategic Planning for Budget Cuts

Woodman pointed out that the Senate Executive Committee is only involved in discussions regarding budget cuts and this is not a proactive system that allows the Committee to express its concerns. Lee noted that the Senate liaison to the Academic Planning Committee can be used to provide information from the Committee to the APC.

Woodman suggested that the Executive Committee meet with the APC to discuss the issue. Griffin noted that the Committee has met with faculty members from the APC in previous budget cuts to discuss concerns. Woodman suggested that there be a discussion at a Senate meeting to see what the faculty are feeling so this can be expressed to the APC.

Purcell stated that timing is an issue because the campus won't know the final budget until late spring and the Senate does not meet during the summer months. Steffen stated that in the past departments found their own cuts and presented these to the

administration for consideration. Lee pointed out that it was done for horizontal cuts, not vertical cuts.

Purdum stated that in previous budget cuts the APC was criticized because it allowed departments to cherry pick which programs to cut. She suggested that the Executive Committee needs to review the Procedures to be Invoked for Significant Budget Reductions and Reallocations (http://www.unl.edu/apc/docs/Budget_Reduction_Procedures.pdf and http://www.unl.edu/apc/docs/Budget_Reallocation_FlowCharts.pdf). She pointed out that vertical cuts have to be a whole program. Griffin noted that Executive Memorandum #24 from the President's office defines a program (<https://nebraska.edu/docs/president/24%20Definition%20of%20University%20of%20Nebraska%20Program.pdf>) and it is this definition that has been used in previous budget cuts.

6.2 Agenda Items for VC Boehm and EVC Plowman

The Executive Committee identified the following agenda items to discuss with the Vice Chancellors:

- Budget cut issues
- Interim appointment concerns
- Timeline for the hiring of Vice Chancellor of Research
- Timeline for the hiring of a Dean of Graduate Studies
- Update on the Honors Program
- Are any changes planned in the Office of Student Affairs
- Budget cuts on research activities at the university
- Update on the Higher Learning Commission Accreditation
- Impacts on academic and the campus during a Friday night football game

6.3 What would you say if you had the opportunity to address the Board of Regents?

Woodman reported that there is the possibility of having the four campuses presenting resolutions to the Board of Regents in a common statement. The idea at the moment is to have a statement regarding budget cuts. He suggested that the Executive Committee think about other common issues.

6.4 Proposed changes to the Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee section in the UNL Bylaws

Woodman noted that ARRC Chair Wes Peterson has suggested some further revisions to the UNL Bylaws. He stated that most of these changes are a rewording of what is already in the Bylaws. The Executive Committee stated that they would like to have more time to review all of the proposed UNL Bylaws revisions, including the suggestions made by Professor Peterson. Griffin stated that a motion can be made at the February Senate meeting to table the motion to approve the revisions to the UNL Bylaws until the March meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, January 31 at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in 203 Alexander Building. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Sheila Purdum, Secretary.