

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Bender, Dawes, Fech, Hanrahan, Lee, Leiter, Purcell, Rudy, Vakilzadian, Woodman

Absent: Konecky, Purdum, Steffen

Date: Tuesday, January 31, 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 VC Boehm, EVC Plowman

2.1 Budget Cut Issues

EVC Plowman stated that President Bounds has made it clear that the budget situation is currently very fluid since we do not know what the Legislature will decide, and no budget cutting procedures for the next biennium have been invoked. She stated that the university is currently dealing with the hiring freeze for this year, and although cumbersome, the administration is trying to speed it along as quickly as possible. She stated that the administrators have worked quickly in January to try and get as much accomplished with the freeze as possible knowing that recruiting and hiring processes must be completed in order to hire people for the fall semester.

Lee pointed out that he served on the APC during the 2003 budget cuts and asked how the administrators will decide to do vertical cuts. EVC Plowman stated that the process has not been mapped out yet and the administrators will need to involve the deans. Lee noted that the AAUP is very strict about budget cuts and that programs should not be selectively targeted for elimination. EVC Plowman reported that President Bounds had said that we may need to do vertical cuts, but we won't see any real savings from these cuts for three or four years even if you cut a program. VC Boehm pointed out that the administration has no intention of doing anything that does not involve the faculty. He stated that it is important that there be informed decisions based on a number of factors that could range from evaluations, analytics, size and scope of a program, number of students, and amount of scholarly and engagement activities. Whatever criteria is used, the faculty need to be informed about it.

VC Boehm pointed out that he came to the University believing in the amazing prowess of UNL, the upward trajectory of the campus, the strength of the programs, and the administrative transparencies that exist. He noted that we will go through a bumpy budget situation, but we need to keep the focus on the things we do well. He stated that we need to use the cultures that exist at UNL and have good conversations regarding the

budget cuts without disrupting our teaching, research, and extension services. He reminded the Executive Committee that we really don't know what the depth of the cuts will be, and the University budget will not be determined until June when the Board of Regents make its decision.

Woodman reported that in 2003 the budget cuts were instant and did not take three years for savings to be found when two departments were eliminated. Faculty members that were not placed in a different department were encouraged to retire. Lee noted that in the 1990's the Classics department was going to be cut and he worries that departments that are critical in maintaining a comprehensive university, but don't bring in significant research dollars, might easily be considered for elimination. VC Boehm pointed out that you cannot have a comprehensive university without the breadth and scope of the university. He stated that the question that may need to be addressed is whether we are balanced in an appropriate way and whether we are aligning our resources properly. He stated that it would be a terrible mistake to have the mentality of having straight vertical cuts to remove programs that would damage the breath and scope of the university. EVC Plowman stated that there is some confusion regarding the term vertical cuts. She stated that she wants to hear back from the Executive Committee members about what they think vertical cuts mean.

Rudy asked how hopeful President Bounds is that the efficiency task forces he created will be able to find short-term and long-term savings. Woodman reported that each of the task forces has a target to reach. EVC Plowman pointed out that the task forces are looking at the service sector such as Information Technology, Accounting, Payroll, Human Resources, and Procurement Services. VC Boehm noted that the task force teams are going to look to see if some services can be outsourced, merged, or cut.

Leiter pointed out that it is essential that the University does not lose sight of the idealism and aspirations to be an institution of quality in higher education. He stated that it is easy when talking about budget cuts to lapse into language about being more efficient, but not if the efficiencies hurt the quality of the institution.

2.2 Timeline for Hiring of Vice Chancellor of Research

EVC Plowman stated that she is planning a meeting on February 28 to meet with a group of faculty researchers to discuss what we want in a VC of Research, what qualifications the person should have, and what kind of search should be conducted. She reported that she just received information from the System office today that will allow us to move forward on the search. Purcell asked if the position has been exempted from the hiring freeze. EVC Plowman stated that the Chancellor and she believes that it will be approved. She reported that she hopes to begin the search this semester, but will follow the faculty's recommendation. She noted that the Chancellor envisions splitting the Economic Development component of the Office of Research into a separate unit, but this all needs to be reviewed and considered.

2.3 Timeline for the Hiring of a Dean of Graduate Studies

EVC Plowman reported that she would like to conduct an internal search for the Dean of Graduate Studies, but she wants to hear what the faculty has to say about it. She stated that she does not know that a large national search needs to be conducted, but she wants someone who really wants to do the job. Lee pointed out that the Dean of Graduate Studies position here is very different from many other universities in that it is largely an administrative position and is not research focused. EVC Plowman stated that one consideration is to have an Associate Vice Chancellor of Graduate Studies.

2.4 Update on Honors Program

EVC Plowman stated that Associate VC Goodburn is reviewing the honors program. She pointed out that we need to determine whether we want to retain a program or perhaps create an honors college. She is encouraging the colleges to develop an honors academy, similar to the one created in the College of Business Administration, which has been very successful.

2.5 Are any changes planned in the Office of Student Affairs?

EVC Plowman reported that she is in the process of meeting with people in Student Affairs to learn more about what they do and what the emphases of the Office are. She feels that a critical issue that the Office of Student Affairs needs to consider is mental health. She pointed out that faculty members are often the first ones to notice if a student is having difficulties, yet many faculty members are not adequately trained to deal with any problems. Woodman asked if the reporting line for the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs will be changed. EVC Plowman noted that it has already been changed and falls under her purview.

2.6 Update on the Higher Learning Commission Accreditation

EVC Plowman reported that the Chancellor just received word today that we have been reaccredited and the report from the HLC will soon be shared.

2.7 Impacts on academics and the campus during a Friday night football game

Woodman noted that the University has agreed to host a Friday night football game without discussing the issue with the faculty. He stated that the disruption of a Friday night game to academics and the campus would be major. Lee pointed out that several other Big Ten schools have refused to play a Friday night game. Woodman stated that consideration needs to be given to classes and labs that are conducted on Fridays, since the location of the stadium and the tailgating culture associated with football games would virtually eliminate any academic activity on city campus.

2.8 Ad Hoc Academic Honesty Committee Proceedings

Rudy reported that the Ad Hoc Academic Honesty Committee will be making a presentation next month to the Faculty Senate regarding the recommendations of the Committee, one of which is to make it a standing committee. He noted that one of the charges of the Committee is to do an assessment of the campus to find out the depth of the problem of academic dishonesty. He stated that the Committee has identified a tool from Rutgers University, but it is copyrighted. He stated that the Committee needs to

determine what the cost will be for using the tool and to obtain an IRB so a survey of students and faculty can be conducted to help assess the problem of academic dishonesty on campus. He asked if it is possible to begin the process to get the funding needed to purchase the tool. EVC Plowman stated that she is completely in favor of this, and likes the idea of surveying the faculty as well. She stated that Academic Affairs can work with the Ad Hoc Academic Honesty Committee to help get the survey.

2.9 Interim Appointment Concerns

VC Boehm noted that the administration's philosophy in general is to look at the functional responsibilities and duties of an open position and try to find a person within our eco-system who could do the job within a short period of time. He stated that if there is a systematic problem with interim hires it would be important for the administration to know this so that something can be done to fix it. If the concern is more focused, he asked what the corrective actions could be and how we could move forward to address the issue.

2.10 Budget Cuts on Research Activities at the University

VC Boehm reported that the campus has worked hard to recruit new faculty members and to keep them here. He stated that there has been clarification from the President's office regarding post docs that are part of the start-up package for these new faculty members. Post docs hired for a start-up package are exempted from the hiring freeze and can be paid by state funds. Woodman asked if post docs for programs of excellence are exempted. VC Boehm reported that they are also exempted. He pointed out that the campus has worked too hard to bring these colleagues to campus to let a temporary budget situation get in the way of our progress.

VC Boehm noted that he has openly said that the grand challenge facing Nebraska and the region won't be solved with technological solutions if we don't consider the human aspect. He pointed out that dealing with the budget situation is going to take appreciation that all of our disciplines are important. He pointed out that Varner Hall is adamantly opposed to horizontal cuts because there is the belief that this would be a march to marginalization. He stated that vertical cuts have not been defined yet. He noted that Chancellor Green and EVC Plowman realize that all of our disciplines are important. He stated that hopefully President Bounds' approach with the Legislature will result in less severe budget cuts.

Lee pointed out that there are two ways to get rid of tenured faculty members, vertical cuts or declaring financial exigency. He noted that a vertical cut would mean getting rid of an entire program. VC Boehm stated that he has not heard any of the administrators say anything about getting rid of faculty members by vertical cuts.

Hanrahan noted that the faculty are sensitive to the issue of cutting programs because of past history. He pointed out that Executive Memorandum #24 which defines an academic program is very broad. He reported that in the School of Music the former Chancellor proposed cutting the faculty member who taught the organ courses, even though this professor had been approved to receive tenure up until the Chancellor's

office. He reported that efforts were made to resist the cut and the position was restored, but there is concern that similar events could happen on a much larger scale.

Woodman stated that the budget cuts could be a way for the University to be restructured. He pointed out that many of the faculty members whose departments were cut in 2003 were senior faculty members. They were not offered reassignment in other departments like some others were.

VC Boehm pointed out that the Procedures to be invoked for Significant Budget Reductions and Reallocations are very spelled out in how the campus is to deal with budget cuts and the Chancellor wants to have an open process to develop a transparent strategy. He stated that the administration is counting on the Faculty Senate to hold the leadership accountable during the process.

Woodman stated that he would like to see this information communicated. He noted that there has been limited information concerning what will happen to staff members if they are cut. He asked if they will be prioritized for open positions on campus. VC Boehm pointed out that there will be some hardship and pain if the cuts are severe and administrators will have to deal with the ownership of the hardships that the cuts cause, but there is a lot of good that is happening on campus and we need to be hopeful that the cuts will not be severe.

VC Boehm stated that partnership with shared governance is critical and we are all in this together. Hanrahan pointed out that in the past faculty input on budget cuts comes at the end of the process and it is the administrators that make both the initial and final decisions. He stated that faculty do not even get to provide input at the unit level in some departments. VC Boehm stated that he really believes in shared governance and he wants it to be trustful and a two-way street. He thanked the Executive Committee for inviting him and EVC Plowman to meet with them.

2.11 Issues on the Horizon

EVC Plowman stated that while the budget cuts are important, she is very interested in the campus getting back to what it is meant to do. She said that she wants to get us on the path towards raising our stature and visibility. She noted that she is excited thinking about the things that are moving us forward and pointed out that this is where we need to be focusing our energy.

3.0 Announcements

3.1 Dean of Law Position

Leiter reported that the faculty of the College of Law met with EVC Plowman to discuss the Dean of Law position which currently is filled by an Interim Dean. He noted that the search process for a Law Dean typically takes three years.

3.2 Updates on Ad Hoc Committees

Rudy reported that the Ad Hoc Academic Honesty Committee will be able to give its report first to the Faculty Senate. He stated that the Ad Hoc Committee on Best Practices

for Non-tenure Track Faculty will have its report written, but the Committee is meeting with Interim Associate Vice Chancellor Walker to discuss what Academic Affairs is doing in regards to non-tenure track faculty.

Lee reported that the Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Inclusiveness just received data from Institutional Research, Analytics, and Decision Support, but it is a great deal of information to review and the report of the Committee will not be written until the fall.

3.3 Report on Board of Regents Meeting

Woodman reported that the Board of Regents Meeting dealt with usual business and academic items, but there was a lengthy process of voting in a new Vice Chair because of numerous tie votes. In the end, Regent Schafer was elected as Vice Chairman.

Woodman reported that the OTICA and ORCA awards were given out at the meeting.

4.0 Approval of January 24, 2017 Minutes

Bender moved for approval of the revised minutes. Motion seconded by Vakilzadian and approved by the Executive Committee.

5.0 Unfinished Business

5.1 Proposed Changes to UNL Bylaws Section on Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee

The Executive Committee agreed to accept the changes to the UNL Bylaws suggested by Professor Peterson, Current Chair of the ARRC. The changes will be voted on by the Faculty Senate.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Proposed Changes to UNL Bylaws - Cumulative Evaluations of Administrators

Woodman proposed amendments to the cumulative evaluation of administration section in the UNL Bylaws. Bender moved to accept the changes proposed by Woodman.

Motion seconded by Leiter and approved by the Executive Committee. The amendments will be voted on and approved at the Senate meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:42 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, February 7, 2017 immediately following the Faculty Senate meeting. The meeting will be held in the City Campus Union, Auditorium. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Sheila Purdum, Secretary.