EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Present: Adenwalla, Belli, Dawes, Fech, Hanrahan, Latta Konecky, Lee, Leiter, Peterson, Purcell, Rudy, Vakilzadian, Woodman

Absent:

Date: Tuesday, January 30, 2018

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 (Purcell)
Purcell called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

2.0 EVC Plowman/VC Boehm
2.1 Justification for Creation of New Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty and Academic Leader Success Position in IANR
Purcell thanked VC Boehm for approving the Extension Educators’ salary equity increases. VC Boehm noted that the effort has been one of the most impactful things he has done in his 34 year history of working in higher education.

VC Boehm stated that there were two reasons why he feels the need to create the new Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty and Academic Leader Success position. He pointed out that he cannot think of anything more important than having successful faculty and academic leaders and while there are some administrators who could fill the role of this position, each of these people are already so overwhelmed with work that they cannot take on this additional responsibility.

VC Boehm noted that when he came to UNL he inherited two senior administrators who had not gone through the five-year evaluation process. He reported that he hired an outside person, Dr. Janet Walker of Omaha, who has worked with all four of the University’s campuses, to conduct the reviews and she did an excellent job, but hiring outside consultants is costly. He stated that Dr. Walker has been contracted to help with the review of Dean Hibberd this year. He pointed out that while we hire good faculty, we do not know whether they will be good leaders. He noted that we do not have a clear idea of what our expectations are for successful academic leaders and what are the assessments that are used to determine inclusive excellence, or how you measure responsible fiscal management. He pointed out that the campus does not have any onboarding or coaching for new administrators. He reported that he used to work with an organizational leader when he was at Ohio State to help him deal with the onboarding issue and he recently found Leadership Resources here in Nebraska to help assist with onboarding. He stated that the aim is to have quality leaders who are effective and can work well with faculty and staff.
VC Boehm stated that pivotal to this position is the promotion and tenure process. He noted that while the Institute’s path to attaining tenure is similar to that of the Executive Vice Chancellor’s Office, there is a difference in that East Campus is run as an institute rather than a college promotion and tenure system. He stated that within the Institute there are 15 departments that grant tenure creating a lot of different cultures that people have to navigate in order to attain tenure. He noted that previously once a promotion and tenure file left the department, it would go to the lead dean who weighed in on the decision, then on to the Council of Deans, then to the Vice Chancellor, and then to the Chancellor. He pointed out that this system is very different from any college that he has previously been in and he would like to see the newly appointed Associate Vice Chancellor put together a working group to ask them to consider whether there needs to be a faculty committee in IANR to review promotion and tenure cases. He stated that this group would replace the lead dean concept. Lee pointed out that this is the kind of system that the College of Arts & Sciences has with its Promotion and Tenure Committee.

VC Boehm stated that previously there has been the model of having a lead dean who had specific department heads and leaders who reported to them, but he is instituting a new model now where the deans are to work with all unit leaders in order to move the Institute forward. He pointed out that CASNR is great for undergraduate students, but is missing things at the graduate level. He reported that he has charged Senior Associate Vice Chancellor Yoder to serve as the liaison for all leaders, and pointed out that this change in the model will create more consistency within the Institute.

VC Boehm stated that the other reason for this position is to have someone as a chief diversity officer for IANR. He pointed out that diversity is a key issue that the campus needs to address and IANR needs to have someone who could focus on it.

VC Boehm reported that he had to get permission for the position from President Bounds. Lee asked if the person would be a specialist in agriculture or in human resources and asked if the position would be a tenure-track position. If so, what would be the home department for this person’s tenure? VC Boehm pointed out that this is an internal search, but anyone from the campus can apply. He stated that there have been four applicants and the search committee is recommending interviews for three of the candidates. He noted that each of the candidates has been a unit leader and has tenure.

Adenwalla pointed out that it looks bad to hire another administrator when the University is being hit with severe budget cuts. VC Boehm reported that the Institute has grown over the years with 70 new faculty positions added within the last five years, yet the number of administrators has not grown at all. He stated that in order to have an effective Institute we need an appropriate group of administrators to help manage it.

2.2 Update on Eastern Nebraska Research & Extension Center Director
VC Boehm reported that a verbal offer has been made to Doug Zalesky and he is hoping that the new director will begin on April 1.

2.3 Elimination of Honors Convocation Ceremony
EVC Plowman reported that the idea to eliminate the Honors Convocation ceremony came from the colleges. She noted that the service is old and participation has decreased significantly. She pointed out that the ceremony has typically been scheduled a few weeks before graduation and parents of senior students honored at the ceremony have to come back again for graduation which is problematical for those parents who do not live close to campus. She stated that being on the dean’s list is the academic distinction that most students want, and most of the colleges now have their own ceremonies to honor students who excel. She noted that having a ceremony within the colleges is more meaningful for the students.

EVC Plowman noted that the portion of the Honors Convocation ceremony that was for faculty members was removed last year to create a ceremony specifically for the faculty. She stated that, The Laurels, was held last spring and will be moved to the fall semester this year.

EVC Plowman pointed out that April is a very busy month and many of the deans cannot attend the Honors Convocations ceremony. She reported that a proposal was presented to the deans who were in agreement that the ceremony should be discontinued. She noted that Chancellor Green is also in agreement.

EVC Plowman stated that the proposal was presented to the Commencement and Honors Convocation Committee (CHCC). Rudy stated that the CHCC was not in complete agreement with the decision and that it would have liked to be given prior notice before the proposal was presented. He noted that the Committee is concerned whether each college has a ceremony where senior students would be honored. EVC Plowman pointed out that the proposal recommends that each college has its own recognition ceremony. She noted that the plan is also to provide more recognition for students who have achieved distinction at the graduation ceremony. She stated that she would get a copy of the proposal to the Executive Committee.

Rudy reported that a subgroup of the CHCC is beginning to discuss graduation ceremonies for 2019.

2.4 Grading & Examinations Committee Report on Proposed Changes to Final Exam Schedule
EVC Plowman stated that she read the Grading & Examinations Committee report and was disappointed by the Committee’s findings. Purcell noted that the chair of the Committee, Professor Hinchman, is currently on leave in London and ASUN member Sam Brower submitted his take on the report to the Daily Nebraskan before the Executive Committee received the report. Purcell noted that Professor Hinchman indicated to her that someone from the G & E Committee could speak to the Senate about the report.
EVC Plowman pointed out that we need to do something about the final exam schedule because 1,000 students have been documented as being double booked for exams in some years. She noted that one case in particular pushed the problem to the limelight because the professor was not accommodating to the student who missed his exam resulting in the student having to take the class again in the summer instead of graduating in May. She stated that she feels an urgency to fix the problem. She noted that a focus group of students said they would be favorable to having Saturday exams, but only if they had the Thursday and Friday off of the 15th week which she said is not likely to happen.

Purcell pointed out that the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee had concerns with having exams on Saturdays because it would negatively impact a number of student-athletes competing in various sports. EVC Plowman stated that the survey conducted by the G & E Committee indicated that students would be in favor of having more time slots in a day, but she noted that indications are that faculty members are not willing to reduce the exam time. She asked if one suggestion would be to have the exams continue later into the evening.

Lee asked if the problem of double booking is caused by the unit exams. EVC Plowman stated that it may be a contributing factor, but we teach more course sections than we have exam time slots. Lee pointed out that every course has an exam time coordinated with the course. Latta Konecky noted that some classes only meet once a week may contribute to the problems with the exam schedule. EVC Plowman stated that the University Registrar’s Office closely monitors the number of classes and the exam times that are available. Adenwalla pointed out that another contributing factor to the problem is people who do not adhere to the exam schedule.

2.5 Update on Hiring of Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development
EVC Plowman reported that four candidates were interviewed and she and the Chancellor were reviewing the candidates and are hoping to wrap up the search and have someone identified by the end of this semester.

2.6 Plans for the College of Journalism and Mass Communications
EVC Plowman reported that there is an interim dean, Professor Amy Struthers, who will serve for 18 months. She stated that she had a good meeting with the faculty as a whole to talk to them about the high turnover in leadership that the college has experienced, and she asked the faculty what needs to be done to build a strong College of Journalism. She stated that Interim Dean Struthers will form two focus groups: one to look at the student experience and the other to determine what kind of culture the college wants. She stated that she will stay in close contact with the faculty to get these efforts moving. She pointed out that the college needs to be stabilized and focused before a national search for a new dean can be conducted.

Woodman asked what the root cause was for the college having so many deans within a relatively short time frame. EVC Plowman stated that she did not know, and even consulted with Professor Jim O’Hanlon who served as interim dean for the college in the
past. She stated that she thinks part of the problem is that the Journalism industry itself is going through significant changes. She pointed out that there are not as many Colleges of Journalism in the United States as there used to be because many of them have become part of a College of Arts & Sciences. She noted that the faculty asked her if the plan was to do the same here, but she replied that this is not the plan. She did inform them that they need to get themselves into a place where they can attract some top educators in Journalism.

EVC Plowman reported that she asked the faculty of the college what the five best Journalism schools were in the country, and then asked if our curriculum looks like those top five colleges. She pointed out that she feels confident that the faculty will work to move the college in the right direction.

2.7 Issues on the Horizon
EVC Plowman reported that work continues on the budget situation. She stated that there has been some encouragement with the full-page ads that have been published in the newspapers showing support for the university, but there is this perception that the University did not fight hard enough against the cuts we experienced this fall. Adenwalla pointed out that the university has been able to deal with budget cuts before and there is the perception that we can handle additional cuts. Hanrahan stated that the size of the budget cuts have not been clearly identified. He stated that there is a rumor that there is a plan to cut salaries by 5%. EVC Plowman stated that this is false. She pointed out that if the Chancellor was going to make a cut on any salaries it would be on administrators’ salaries.

3.0 Announcements
3.1 Email to President Bounds
Purcell reported that the email to President Bounds about shared governance was sent and President Bounds indicated over the phone he would like to meet with the Executive Committee to discuss the issue further.

3.2 Two-Factor Authentication Process
Woodman reported that the university is moving towards a two-factor identification system when logging into programs like Firefly. He pointed out that the two-factor system will help protect the university’s information system by providing more security. Leiter noted that the Information Technologies Services Committee has piloted the program and there is an application that you can use on your cell phone to get verification that will be required for a person to access the system. Purcell pointed out that employees will be able to opt into the system either through their cell phone, office phone, or a key fob. Purcell noted IT will start with voluntary opt-in and probably mandate the two-factor identification at a later date.

3.3 Budget
Purcell reported that she and Fech attended the IANR faculty and senators briefing on January 29th, where VC Boehm did a great job of providing information regarding the budget cuts. She noted that several dates are very important: February 14, when
President Bounds will speak to the Appropriations Committee; February 28 when the Forecasting Board will make an assessment on the State’s revenue; April 1 will be the last day of the fiscal quarter and it is when a 90-day notice would need to be given to 90-day employees who will be riffed due to budget cuts so their employment would end on June 30; and April 15 will be the last day of the Legislative session.

3.4 Commencement
Rudy reported that the Commencement and Honors Convocations Committee have approved the changing of the cap and gowns for undergraduate and doctoral students for the graduation ceremony. He noted that the gowns for masters’ students still needs to be determined. He reported that there will also be a distinct diploma for 2019 graduations to commemorate the State’s sesquicentennial anniversary.

4.0 Approval of January 16, 2018 and January 23, 2018 Minutes
Hanrahan moved for approval of the revised January 16th minutes. Motion seconded by Peterson and approved by the Executive Committee with two abstentions.

Peterson moved for approval of the revised January 23rd minutes. Motion seconded by Vakilzadian and approved by the Executive Committee.

5.0 Unfinished Business
5.1 Senate Representation for Faculty in Centers
Griffin reported that after researching the faculty members in the various Centers on campus she found that three centers meet the Senate’s rules for having five or more faculty of .50 FTE or greater and three successive years of employment to qualify for having their own district. She noted that further research showed that most of the faculty members in centers in IANR and Engineering are associated with an academic department represented in the Senate. She pointed out that there was a small group of center faculty members who were not affiliated with a department and she recommended that an at-large district be created to provide them with faculty representation. The Executive Committee agreed and approved to send a motion to the Senate for its consideration of the matter.

5.2 ASUN Proposed Changes to Class Attendance Policy
Woodman stated that he sent out the proposed revisions to the Class Attendance Policy to the faculty in his department and many of them have severe concerns about the requested changes being suggested by ASUN. He pointed out that some of the proposed changes could significantly impact labs which require an enormous amount of time to set up which is difficult to do for a student who misses a class. The Executive Committee discussed the problems with the proposed revisions. Purcell asked the Executive Committee to send suggestions to her on how the proposed revisions can be changed to address the concerns of the faculty and she will pass them on to ASUN. She noted that the ASUN wanted to vote on the issue tomorrow evening. Peterson pointed out that ASUN could vote on their revisions, but Faculty Senate approval is ultimately required.
The meeting was adjourned at 4:16 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, February 6, 2018, immediately following the Faculty Senate meeting. The meeting will be held in the East Campus, Great Plains room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Joan Latta Konecky, Secretary.