

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Baesu, Bearnese, Billesbach, Boudreau, Eklund, Kopocis, Krehbiel, Lott, Minter, Weissling, Zuckerman

**Absent:** Kolbe

**Date:** Tuesday, June 21, 2022

**Location:** 201 Canfield Administration 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 (*Minter*)

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

### 2.0 Chancellor Green

#### Consultation

#### **Future of Work Taskforce Report**

Chancellor Green stated that he has received the Future of Work Taskforce report which he is currently reading noting that he will eventually share the report with the Senate and the public in early September. He stated that the Taskforce conducted a survey of the staff through the Bureau of Sociological Research and over a quarter of the staff responded. He stated that from the data the Taskforce came up with three tiers of implementation of the recommendations. He noted that the first tier would be for the academic year and principally deals with the implementation of hybrid work and a policy to allow it. He pointed out that the survey results and the Taskforce very strongly supported this recommendation noting that this is what is occurring both nationally and locally in the workplace. He noted that there was a recommendation that administrators and chairs needed to be trained on the hybrid work policy, and stated that other recommendations were about improving benefits, although these revolved mostly around parking and parking costs, providing some level of benefit that would encourage wellness, and having the ability to trade leave days for tickets to athletic events.

Chancellor Green reported that the second tier of recommendations to consider would occur in the following year primarily focuses on compensation, the classification system of jobs, and the reclassification of positions. He noted that while this year there will be a 3% salary increase, improvements in salaries for staff members are needed and he will be looking very hard at the data to see what our options might be to make salary enhancements.

Chancellor Green stated that the salary issue bleeds into the issues of climate and burnout and the Taskforce looked hard at what we need to do to make improvements. He stated that there will be mechanisms in place that would allow hybrid work, flexible working hours, and remote working but the decision to allow this would be locally based as not all

staff positions can accommodate these kinds of work arrangements. Billesbach asked if the local level would be the department level. Chancellor Green stated that it would be. Krehbiel asked if there would be guidelines about the different working arrangements to help promote understanding of it and to prevent confusion. Chancellor Green stated that this was one of the Taskforce's recommendations.

Chancellor Green reported that the survey results showed that almost 80% of the respondents are satisfied with their work experience, although this figure did decline during the pandemic. He stated that when asked if they would consider working elsewhere, a minority of staff members said prior to Covid they would, but this number increased mid-pandemic, and is currently slightly more than half of the respondents with the respondents saying the lack of the flexibility of work hours and compensation being the two top reasons for wanting to leave. He noted that Gallup has done many surveys during the pandemic about working arrangements and the data reflected very strongly that flexible working arrangements will become the norm for the future of work across the country and those workplaces that can't respond will have trouble competing for staff members.

Billesbach asked if there will be a provision for having some path for arbitration if there is a disagreement between an employee and their supervisor for having a flexible work arrangement. Chancellor Green stated that Human Resources will have some guidelines to deal with this. He noted that this is a new era in working and the key is to be flexible. He pointed out that productivity is not an issue with allowing flexible working arrangements. Krehbiel noted that for staff who have a significant commute into work the price of gas is hitting them very hard. Billesbach suggested having a discounted pass for StarTran could also help staff members.

Weissling stated that the message that faculty and staff will get a 3% increase is misleading because they may not actually get a 3% increase. Chancellor Green stated that the salary pool will have a 3% increase, but the amounts given to members within that salary pool can vary due to a number of factors and the decision is based on annual evaluations.

Minter stated that it is interesting to consider the impacts that flexible work arrangements might have on space and the parking needs of the campus. Chancellor Green noted that the Taskforce's report did talk about the way space allocations could change due to the limited number of people being in the office. Kopocis stated that some local businesses now have hoteling options for some of their offices and noted that the Durham School of Architectural Engineering and Construction has commuting offices for those faculty members who just come in occasionally.

Billesbach suggested that another incentive to retain staff might be to offer a retention bonus to staff members who have served here for a number of years. Chancellor Green stated that this could be something else to consider. He reported that when he first became Chancellor six years ago UNL had 6,350 employees but it is now down to approximately 5,700 with the loss mostly being staff employees. He stated that faculty

numbers may have changed compositionally but faculty numbers are consistent over time. He noted that we need to be as competitive as possible to recruit staff people. Eklund suggested offering a four-day work week. Chancellor Green stated that this is in consideration with the flexible work schedule.

Bearnes stated that Nebraska Extension has had a high percentage of new hires and pointed out that it would be helpful if people could be hired closer to when an employee is leaving so that the new employee could shadow the current employee for a bit. Chancellor Green stated that he is aware of the decrease in Extension Educators and pointed out that during the pandemic we have seen a significant number of long-term employees leaving the university resulting in us having a heavy concentration of entry-level employees. Weissling stated that a lot of junior faculty members have left too.

**2.1 What could be done to track the effectiveness of major policy shifts which had minimal faculty input? What will be done to track the impacts on the newly revised EM 16 policy on teaching and research?**

Chancellor Green stated that with the revised EM 16 policy now in place, we will quantitatively track to see whether it will impact teaching and research. Minter suggested that one way to obtain information about the impacts of EM 16 might be through the IT support people in the colleges but asked if there are enough dedicated UNL IT support people who could provide the needed support and obtain the quantitative data that would be needed. Chancellor Green pointed out that it is his understanding that most of the issues regarding problems with the policy and its impact on teaching and research have been resolved and the major issue is about privacy. Minter suggested that good information about the impacts of the changes needs to be developed for faculty members who are collaborating with colleagues at other universities.

Weissling noted that the question about having enough IT people goes back to the changes made by the budget reduction taskforces and relates to the problems with travel. She questioned if there has really been any savings with the changes because, for example, the travel impacts on faculty members have interfered with faculty productivity. She pointed out that whenever major changes are made, the campuses need to gather data to see if a change has any value.

**2.2 The results of the Gallup survey for faculty and staff showed some negative data concerning burnout, communication, and confidence that the findings from the survey would be acted upon. The survey also suggested that students, faculty, and staff of color had greater concerns about the climate. Could you share your perspective on the survey data? Are initiatives underway or planning that might address or positively impact any concerning trends identified by the survey?**

Chancellor Green noted that the data from the survey has certainly been carefully studied and while the results were not pristine, they were better than expected given that the survey was conducted during the middle of the pandemic. He noted that there were lower response rates from people of color, which was disappointing, but over all our climate result was above the national average. He noted that more people here were skeptical

about anything being done from the results of the survey as compared to results nationally.

Chancellor Green pointed out that the survey asked about how well the leadership of the institution communicated with the campus. He noted that the results of the survey indicated that system-level policies were made top-down with little input from the faculty. He stated that the results of the survey have already made influences, predominantly with the Future of Work Taskforce which has taken into consideration some of the suggestions made from the survey.

**2.3 While we understand the impact of inflation on Nebraska families, we have concerns about the financial impacts of the announced tuition Freeze for 2022-23. What additional budget adjustments will need to be made at UNL to accommodate President Carter’s plan to look for additional efficiencies? What plans are there to ensure that faculty and staff salaries keep pace with increased cost-of-living? On a related note: How many of the 7,000 students who qualify for the Nebraska Promise are UNL students and are we tracking the graduation rates of these students?**

Chancellor Green noted that the Board of Regents will consider approval for the July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023, operating budget which will be the second year in the current biennial budget. He reported that the campus has already done the planning for upcoming fiscal year, including the salary exercise which includes a 3% salary increase pool, plus the \$5 million for salary competitiveness for tenure line faculty members. He pointed out that the budget does not address the 8.5% inflation rate and costs associated with it and we will need to manage how we handle these costs.

Chancellor Green reported that Nebraska Promise has increased the family income threshold to \$65,000 which should slightly increase our enrollment in the fall. He noted that students qualifying for the Nebraska Promise must meet the academic qualifications and either have a family income of \$65,000 or less or are eligible for Pell Grants. He stated that the Nebraska Promise applies federal, state, and institutional grants but does not include scholarships from private scholarship donors. He noted that Nebraska Promise has had an incremental impact on our budget but not significantly.

Chancellor Green reported that we are working with the Nebraska Promise students to ensure their success. He stated that the previous College-bound Nebraska program had less students and we tracked them closely. He noted that initially they tended to graduate at a lower rate but the graduation rate for the students in the program has been improving. He pointed out that when the Nebraska Promise program was put into place, we created a non-credit seminar series for the students which has been helpful, and the retention rate of these students was 93% which is 10% above the national average.

Zuckerman asked how promotion raises were determined. Chancellor Green pointed out that there is a fixed amount of salary increase for promotion to the different ranks. He noted that EVC Ankerson would have more specific information on how salaries have been determined for the last couple of years.

## **2.4 Clarifications of the State Monies and Added Donations for the Westbrook Music Building Replacement**

Chancellor Green reported that \$75 million from LB 384 is going into the construction of a new music building and he told the Glenn Korff School of Music that any building plans above that amount would need to be obtained through fundraising. Eklund stated that the school is hearing that the state's contribution decreases when outside donations are received for the building. Chancellor Green stated that there may be some misunderstanding regarding donors having a space in the building named after them. He pointed out that the donation would need to be significant, and it would be scaled against the state's \$75 million contribution which will not be decreased.

## **2.5 Update on the Vice Chancellor for Business & Finance Search**

Chancellor Green reported that the search is active, and a search firm is working with the campus. He noted that the decision to use a search firm was made because this will be a difficult search. He stated that he hopes finalists for the position can come to campus early in the fall semester.

Chancellor Green stated that the Dean of Agricultural Research Division is active and that the search committee will be selecting the short list of candidates. He noted that the Dean of Architecture search is working towards being able to develop a short list.

## **3.0 Announcements**

### **3.1 Annual Salary Notifications**

Minter reported that the annual salary notifications would be available through Firefly on July 1 and faculty members can access the notification through the Employee Self Service tile, then click on the About Me tile to view the notification.

## **4.0 Approval of May 31, 2022 Minutes**

Minter asked if there were any further revisions to the minutes. Hearing none she asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Billesbach moved, and Bearnes seconded the motion to approve the minutes. Motion approved by the Executive Committee.

## **5.0 Unfinished Business**

### **5.1 Professional Code of Conduct**

Minter reported that she is working to schedule a meeting with Dean Hope, Graduate Studies, to discuss graduate teaching/research assistants and whether the Code of Conduct would apply to them. Kopocis pointed out that the faculty develop the curriculum for a department and when graduate teaching assistants teach a course, they need to follow the Professional Code of Conduct.

### **5.2 Correspondence Update**

Minter reported that she attended a meeting of CIO Tuttle and English faculty members, many of whom are associated with Digital Research in the Humanities, to discuss the concerns they had with the revised EM 16 policy. She noted that the concerns coincided with the Libraries' concerns with privacy. She stated that she discussed with Griffin the

idea of writing a summer President's newsletter which might be an interview with CIO Tuttle about the latest EM 16 information and where things stand currently.

Minter announced that after the Board of Regents meeting on June 23, the Faculty Senate Presidents would be meeting to discuss the EM 16 concerns. She noted that the Presidents do not have a meeting set with President Carter but may request one.

Minter reported that EVC Walker reached out to Director Monk of the Center for Transformative Teaching to thank him and Professor Balschweid for their work on the peer evaluation teaching assessment and to state that she understood the Executive Committee's reasons for not endorsing it. She stated that EVC Walker indicated that she would post an update about the peer evaluation teaching assessment in her DEO update and will write about it in the faculty affairs bulletin.

Minter stated that she had been contacted about some Professors of Practice and Lecturers losing their access to UNL email, mostly over the summer, when their term expires at the end of the academic year. Weissling pointed out that this is controlled by the departments. Minter stated that she would correspond this information with those that emailed her with the concern.

## **6.0 New Business**

### **6.1 Acknowledgement and Appreciation of EVC Ankerson's Recent Email Messages**

The Executive Committee discussed their appreciation for EVC Ankerson's efforts to communicate with the faculty including her recent email encouraging faculty to take time over the summer to relax and take good care of themselves after the heavy workload they endured during the past academic year due to the pandemic. She stated that she also appreciated EVC Ankerson's email explaining the procedures for the salary competitiveness increases for tenure line faculty members.

### **6.2 Retreat Agenda Item Suggestions**

Minter noted that the Executive Committee will have its annual retreat on July 26 and asked Executive Committee members to consider possible goals for the Committee. She suggested:

Getting accountability for policy changes that impact the work of the faculty.

Identifying administrative tasks (travel, purchasing, IT) that erode faculty productivity. What are efficiencies and how do we measure if they are being effective.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Tuesday, July 12, 2022 at 2:30 pm. The meeting will be held in 201 Canfield Administration Building. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and Signe Boudreau, Secretary.