UNL FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
March 6, 2018
City Campus Union, Regency Suite
Presidents Purcell, Rudy, and Woodman Presiding

1.0 Call to Order
President Purcell called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

2.0 Announcements
2.1 Elections for Faculty Senate Executive Committee
President Purcell reported that elections for a new Faculty Senate President Elect, Secretary, and two Executive Committee members will be held at the last meeting in April. She noted that these people must be from the Senate and asked Senators to please consider taking the next step towards involvement in shared governance. She pointed out that she has found that serving on the Executive Committee has been fun and personally rewarding and she encourages anyone interested in learning more about how the University operates to run for one of the positions on the Executive Committee. Anyone interested should contact herself, any member of the Executive Committee, or Coordinator Griffin.

3.0 Chancellor Green
Chancellor Green stated that he was pleased to come to the Faculty Senate to finally report on some good news that is occurring. He reported that yesterday he had a Town Hall meeting where he talked about the launch of a new Commission, the N150 Commission, which is tied to the University’s 150th anniversary and will lead into the development of our next campus strategic plan. He stated that the effort will be led by an Executive Steering Committee which is comprised of 25 members, the majority of them faculty members, and co-chaired by Professor Will Thomas, History, and Executive Vice Chancellor Plowman.

Chancellor Green reported that there will be eight task forces which will focus on core pillar areas: our mission and values; student experiences; creative activity, research and scholarship; engagement in Nebraska and beyond; economic development and innovation; internal operations and infrastructure; campus community and faculty roles and diversity and inclusion. He reported that the timeline is to develop the big ideas that will go into the project over the course of this semester and the summer, followed by focus group session in the fall with the goal to have the strategic plan completed and ready to roll out in February 2019, which will be our 150th anniversary month.

Chancellor Green stated that the Steering Committee met for the first time yesterday with a consulting group, Academic Leadership Associates, which will help guide us through the strategic planning process. He noted that the consulting firm has helped develop many strategic plans for universities. He reported that efforts will not need to start from the ground up because some preliminary work has been done through the task forces he created last year that studied student success, retention and enrollment; budget models, scholarship and creative activity; and achieving distinction in the Big Ten and beyond.

Chancellor Green noted that he has been asked about the Academic Planning Committee participating in the strategic planning process given the APC’s responsibilities. He pointed out that the APC’s charge is not designed to look at long-term strategic planning because it deals more with curriculum, but he stated that the APC will be engaged with the strategic planning effort.

Chancellor Green reported that there is a second group that will be working on plans for a year-long anniversary celebration. He stated that this group is being headed by Associate to the Chancellor and Chief of Staff Mike Zeleny and Meg Lauerman, retired Director of Communications. He noted that there is a subcommittee that is working on creating a commemorative book, and each college has been asked to identify faculty members to serve on a faculty advisory subcommittee.

Chancellor Green stated that there will be a fundraising campaign effort in conjunction with the 150th anniversary and colleges are being asked to provide ideas on what the campaign could focus on. Examples would be a $150 million engineering building or endowments for graduate students and faculty teaching excellence.

Chancellor Green reported that he just came from the State capitol where it is NU Advocacy Day. He stated that students, alumni, and supporters can go visit with the Senators today to express their support for the University. He noted that the testimony of the students at the Appropriations Committee on February 14th was powerful, and
Chancellor Green stated that other goods news is that the State Revenue Forecasting Board's report on February 28th was positive and the Board estimated that tax receipts will go up $25 million this year and $30 million next year for a $55 million increase in revenue for the biennium. He pointed out that this is the first positive forecast from the Board in some time.

Chancellor Green noted that the question that needs to be addressed, should our budget cuts be lower than what the Governor proposed, is what happens with the proposed program eliminations that President Bounds reported at the Appropriations Committee hearing. He pointed out that should we have a much lower level of reduction we will need to step back and recalibrate those proposed budget cuts. He noted that tuition revenue could also help offset some of the budget reduction, but the Board of Regents needs to make any decision regarding a tuition increase. He stated that we will, first and foremost, try to protect degree programs before other cuts. He stated that we will probably know by late March what the University’s budget will be, and he will start the budget reduction process with the Academic Planning Committee thereafter in April.

Chancellor Green reported that there has been a change with the Mabel Lee Hall renovation. He noted that previously the Board of Regents approved renovating the building to turn it into an all-academic space for the College of Education and Human Sciences, but the Board has now approved the construction of a completely new building. He stated that Mabel Lee Hall will be demolished and a new building constructed on the site for the same amount of money ($40 million). This is an excellent result for the College and was very welcomed.

Chancellor Green noted that it is important to understand in situations like this that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits universities from publicly disclosing privacy issues pertaining to students. He noted that we have to adhere to this law or risk being out of federal compliance. He stated that FERPA makes these kinds of situations difficult because, even if the administration has dealt with an issue, it cannot always be publicly revealed because of...
the federal regulation.

Professor Gay, Physics & Astronomy, thanked the Chancellor for speaking to the Senate and said he was excited to hear about the potential growth of the freshmen class. He asked what the average ACT scores are for this group of new students. Chancellor Green reported that in the last few years the ACT scores were fairly flat, but with this class we are seeing a slight increase in the scores.

President-Elect Rudy asked if there is a notification process for those departments that are on the proposed budget cut list should they no longer be considered for elimination. Chancellor Green stated that first some steps will need to happen: first, we need to know the Legislature’s decision on the budget and then we will need to get the figures from Central Administration on our share of the cuts. After that the senior administrative team will need to recalibrate the cuts, which the team has already been considering, and at that point the programs will — be notified if they are removed from the list of proposed cuts. He stated that any remaining cuts will need to be reviewed by the Academic Planning Committee.

Tony Lazarowicz, UAAD Representative, noted that UNK and UNO staff are unionized and will be receiving a salary increase. He asked if the staff at UNL will also be receiving an increase. Chancellor Green stated that there is a proposed 1.75% salary increase in place in the budget. He pointed out that this will include promotion and tenure, but there will be no increases for administrators. He projects that we will be doing a regular salary increase exercise, but there is a question of whether increases will be implemented on July 1 or whether there will be a six month delay. He pointed out that the delay would save funds that could be used to help deal with the rescission.

Professor Smith, School of Accountancy, asked if there are any indications of which colleges might be impacted by the growth in students. Chancellor Green reported that the increase is surprisingly across the board and every college should have an increase in enrollment. He noted that the level of increase ranges from 8% to 20%. He pointed out that we will need to see if these figures hold.

President Purcell pointed out that there is no one from Extension on the N150 Commission Steering Committee. Chancellor Green stated that he pointed this out to Executive Vice Chancellor Plowman this morning and reported that she will try to get this taken care of soon.

4.0 Approval of the February 6, 2018 Minutes
Professor Dam, Metro District, moved for approval of the minutes. Motion seconded by Professor Dussault, Chemistry and approved by the Senate.

5.0 Committee Reports
5.1 University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Report (Professor Dodd)
Professor Dodd, chair of the UUCC, reported that the Committee members represent each of the undergraduate colleges, the Faculty Senate, and the Academic Planning Committee. He noted that the diversity of the committee members helps to provide a campus-wide perspective on curricular issues.

Professor Dodd noted that the UUCC has the ACE subcommittee with representatives from each of the undergraduate colleges. He stated that the ACE subcommittee reviews requests for ACE certification and recertification. He reported that there was a break in the cycle of the ACE assessment for one year, but the subcommittee will now begin to look at recertification for ACE Outcomes 1, 2, and 3.

Professor Dodd reported that the number of courses reviewed by the UUCC has been similar for the past two years, however there was some change due to the cleanup of prerequisites for courses.

5.2 Parking Advisory Committee (Professor Barker)
Professor Barker reported that the Parking Advisory Committee reviews and makes recommendations to the Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance on all policies and regulations pertaining to UNL parking facilities. He pointed out that there will not be a fee increase for faculty and staff, but there will be an increase in UPFF fees, which represents a 62 cents increase per semester for students. He noted that football game-day donor parking fees will be increased to $23.00.

Professor Barker reported that the construction for the Health Center and College of Nursing will be completed this summer and 85 parking spaces will be reinstated. He noted that 25 spaces will be for departmental and patient parking and the rest will be returned to an Area A parking lot.

Professor Barker stated that the Memorial Mall loop road replacement project has begun and permit holders have
been directed to alternate A lots at the Champion’s Club and 16th & X streets. He noted that the loop renovation will be completed in August 2018.

Professor Barker stated that the Cather Pound demolition cleanup is slated to be completed by the end of this spring semester and the pedestrian walkway from 19th street west to the Cather Dining Hall will begin in May 2018 and be completed by the end of the summer.

Professor Barker reported that ASUN representative Ayat Aribi proposed a citation forgiveness proposal for students who have difficulty paying a fine, but the Committee has not taken any action on this proposal. President-Elect Rudy asked what the nature of the proposal is. Professor Barker stated that the idea is to allow students to work off their citation.

5.3 Graduate Council (Interim Dean Carr)
Interim Dean Carr noted that the report is from 2016-17 when Dr. Bellows was the Acting Dean at the time. He stated that he assumed the position as Interim Dean on July 1. He pointed out that the report identifies the new majors that were approved and these have gone through the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education’s approval process and are now up and running. He noted that the report also identifies the new graduate certificates that have been proposed. He pointed out that the Executive Graduate Policy Handbook indicates that certificates are handled like a new degree program, but if they are deemed to go through an expedited process they could be approved at the Provost level. He stated that two graduate certificates were approved and are now available to students, but two have not been approved yet. He reported that new specializations are approved by the Graduate Council and do not need further approval.

6.0 Unfinished Business
6.1 Motion to Approve the Ballot for Elections to the Academic Planning Committee, Academic Rights and Responsibilities Committee, and Academic Rights and Responsibilities Panel
President Purcell stated that there is a slight change in the ballot because Professor Gailey withdrew her name so she could run for election to the Faculty Senate. She called for a vote to approve the ballot. The ballot was approved by the Faculty Senate.

6.2 Motion to Add Districts to the Faculty Senate
President Purcell noted that a motion was presented at least month’s meeting to add four districts to represent faculty members in Centers. She pointed out that the Centers are: the Center for Children, Families and the Law; the Nebraska Center on Research for Children, Youth, Families and School; and English as a Second Language; and an at-large district for non-tenure track faculty members in Centers that are not affiliated with an academic department. She called for a vote on the motion. Motion approved by the Faculty Senate.

7.0 New Business
7.1 Proposed Changes to the Class Attendance Policy (ASUN Members Sam Brower and Camille Sippel)
President Purcell introduced ASUN representatives Sam Brower and Camille Sippel who will provide context on why the ASUN would like to have the Faculty Senate approve revisions to the Senate’s existing Class Attendance Policy. She noted that the ASUN reps have previously met with the Senate Executive Committee three times to discuss the proposed changes.

ASUN Rep Brower thanked the Senate for the opportunity to present the ASUN’s proposed changes to the existing Class Attendance Policy that was last revised and approved by the Faculty Senate in February 2013. He pointed out that very few students know of the existence of this policy, and he assumes that there may be some instructors who are also unaware of it. He noted that the idea of proposing revisions to the policy came about after ASUN members networked with other Big Ten students and reviewed their attendance policy. He stated that proposed revisions to the policy is to reaffirm that commitment of instructors to have a class attendance policy. He pointed out that one of the reasons for absence not listed in the current policy is mental health, which is an increasing concern at many universities. He stated that including language that refers to mental illnesses has been a huge driver for proposing changes to the document. He stated that the goals of the proposed changes are: 1) to include more excusable absences implementing provisions for mental illness, family issues for non-traditional students, pregnancy issues, and judicial and military service; 2) to provide a more organized document; 3) to establish a more clear method for appeals; 4) to reaffirm a commitment to the instructor. He noted that in considering revisions ASUN members met with Associate Vice Chancellor Goodburn, Counseling and Psychology Services (CAPS), the Women’s Center, Services for Students with Disabilities office (SSD), Student Affairs, and the Senate Executive Committee.

ASUN Rep Sippel read statements from a student who experienced difficulties with mental health issues and the difficulties he experienced trying to attend classes, and another student who had to choose between attending a class
versus staying home with his newborn infant. ASUN Rep Brower pointed out that mental health concerns are increasing significantly on campus and the Services for Students with Disabilities office has seen a 44% increase in the use of its office from last year with half of the students using their office for mental health issues. He noted that the Daily Nebraskan reported in the spring of 2016 there were 48 suicide attempts on campus, which was triple the number of previous years.

ASUN Rep Brower stated that another issue is for non-traditional students and their dependents. ASUN Rep Sippel read the statement from a student who is a veteran who had to return to class the day after he returned home from the service. She stated that this falls short of what the campus should expect of people who have provided service to our country.

ASUN Rep Brower noted that members of the Senate Executive Committee were concerned that the proposed revisions could infringe on the principle of academic freedom and that the policy seems to expect instructors to accommodate absences. He pointed out that some instructors have no attendance policy and the proposed changes are not trying to dictate to the faculty a list of excused absences that an instructor would be required to accept. He stated that the goal is to provide guidelines for faculty members to use with their attendance policy.

ASUN Rep Brower stated that the revision to include an appeals process is new. He stated that the process would provide students with information on what procedures should be taken if they feel that they have been wrongly denied the opportunity to makeup work due to a disagreement with the instructor about the legitimacy of an absence. He noted that this procedure could be burdensome for some departments, and students are encouraged to go through ASUN to serve as a liaison between the student and the department if there is potential violation of the policy.

President Purcell pointed out that a motion and a second will be needed in order for the Faculty Senate to vote to approve the proposed changes. She noted that voting on the motion will not occur until the April 3 meeting. Professor Lee made the motion to accept the proposed changes. Motion seconded by Professor Peterson, Agricultural Economics. President Purcell called for discussion on the motion.

Professor Shen, Durham School of Architectural Engineering and Construction, noted that one of the proposed changes relates to prolonged illnesses or injuries of a student for three or more days. He asked what the reasoning was for three days rather than one or two days. ASUN Rep Brower stated that the revision is to point out to students that prolonged illnesses would need to go through the Office of Student Affairs and the instructor has the ability to request documentation of the illness.

Professor Banerjee, Agricultural Economics, pointed out that no details were provided about pregnancy related absences and asked if ASUN has considered what this absence would refer to. ASUN Rep Brower reported that ASUN has had discussion with the Women’s Center about pregnancy related absences. He noted that including pregnancy as an excusable absence is not meant to be used as maternal leave, and is to be used for students who might be experiencing a problem for a day or two. Professor Kohle, Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film, pointed out that not providing detailed information about the pregnancy absence could leave to misinterpretation. ASUN Rep Sippel stated that all of the absences in the Class Attendance Policy refer to one or two day absences and anything longer must be addressed through the Office of Student Affairs.

Professor Cramer, Nutrition and Health Sciences, noted that he is on the University Health Center’s advisory board and providing medical documentation becomes burdensome for the health care providers. He asked if consideration has been given in terms of how much of a burden these changes place on the health care providers. He pointed out that the Health Center believes in not providing documentation. ASUN Rep Brower stated that this issue has been discussed, but they have heard that the verification form is important for some instructors who require documentation.

Professor Weissling, Special Education & Communications Disorders, stated that she wanted to address the mental health issue and students’ with disability issue. She stated that she is not sure how this policy fits for students who might miss one or two classes. She noted that the policy states that students with chronic conditions that may affect their class attendance should register with Services for Students with Disabilities. ASUN Rep Sippel stated that students who use SSD can get accommodations throughout the school year, but if a student has not been diagnosed with a mental health issue, they should go to CAPS. Professor Weissling pointed out that under the current policy students would still need to adhere to an instructor’s class attendance policy. ASUN Rep Brower stated that the proposed revisions are attempting to distinguish the difference between CAPS and SSD. Professor Weissling pointed out that students having mental health issues are going to the instructor instead of going to SSD, and the policy should include a clarification that students with mental health issues need go to SSD. ASUN Rep Sippel stated that she and Brower met with SSD about this issue. He noted that he and Sippel spoke with Sam Goodin,
Director of SSD, who was satisfied with the language. Professor Hoyt, Sociology, stated that there is an issue here between chronic and acute. He stated that if students are dealing with long-term issues they need to go to SSD so the student and the instructor understands that there could be a flare up of a chronic condition, rather than a more isolated incidence. He pointed out that there also needs to be clarification of the language regarding the use of the word days because it is confusing for those who might teach a course one-day a week. He noted that having three absences for a one-day a week course would mean that a student misses three weeks of the course. ASUN Brower stated that days refers to calendar days.

Professor Minter, English, asked if the students had spoken with the Academic Solutions Council which is a group of undergraduate Deans who address academic issues. ASUN Rep Sippel stated that Associate Vice Chancellor Goodburn was sent a copy of the proposed changes to the class attendance policy, but ASUN wants to work with the Faculty Senate first. Professor Minter stated that she appreciates the work the students are doing, but pointed out that there are many university and college policies that are referred to in this policy and she thinks it is important for other areas of the campus to also approve the policy. Professor Peterson pointed out that the Class Attendance Policy is a long-standing Senate policy and it is the Senate that must approve any changes to it.

Past President Woodman asked if the policy supersedes any classroom policy of an instructor. He noted that it needs to be clearly established that the instructor has the right to set the classroom attendance policy. ASUN Rep Brower reported that the policy does not supersede an instructor’s classroom policy and the list of absences written in the document is just a list of potential absences.

Professor Kohle stated that he expects most of the Senators will take the policy with the proposed revisions back to their faculty and he suspects that there may be amendments. President Purcell stated that Senators should discuss the policy with their constituents and noted that there are indications that there will be some amendments. She stated that any amendments should be sent to her by March 13th and they will be presented to the Senate at the April 3rd meeting for consideration.

7.2 Resolution to Support University Funding
President Purcell reported that the Executive Committee approved the resolution calling for the Legislature to support University funding. She noted that since the resolution is coming from the Executive Committee it does not require a second. Professor Schubert, Electrical and Computer Engineering, called the quorum. Coordinator Griffin reported that there was still a quorum. The Faculty Senate approved the resolution.

7.3 Campus Climate Poster
President Purcell stated that the Executive Committee approved a motion to present to the Senate a poster that would hopefully help foster a better climate on campus. She stated that, if approved by the Senate, the poster will be sent to all faculty members and they have the option to decide whether they want to print out the poster and place it on their door. Professor Schubert asked if the motion was presented at last month’s meeting and noted that it comes to the Senate without any explanation. He stated that he is not clear what the message is and does not feel that the language used is logical. He stated that he does not think the message “Hate Never Wins” is necessarily true and is divisive. He stated that if the poster states “United We Stand” he could see the point of it.

Professor Hanrahan called the question. Professor Kohle suggested an amendment to replace the word “targets” with “against”. Professor Hanrahan seconded the amendment.

Professor Brantner, Modern Languages and Literature, stated that she thinks the poster is a white washing of the issue and that it is more important to keep the discussion going, and we need to see where the diversity piece of the issue is going. She pointed out that the campus has not really heard anything from the administration since the listening sessions were held. President Purcell agreed that the poster is not enough and the campus needs to make diversity a positive aspect. She noted that the Executive Committee is meeting next week with Executive Vice Chancellor Plowman and she will be presenting the position description for the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion to the Committee.

Professor Lee stated that the Senate’s Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Inclusion has been working with the Executive Vice Chancellor’s office to conduct focus groups with various diverse groups of students. He noted that he has heard students comment that the symbols or signs that appear on doors welcoming diversity make a tremendous difference to them, making them feel more comfortable. He noted that the poster may not be as significant as some other efforts, but these kinds of posters and statements do make people feel more comfortable.

Professor Regassa, Agronomy & Horticulture, pointed out that people of color cannot tell by looking at a white person what they stand for, but everyone would know where he stands in regards to diversity just by looking at him.
He stated that making the campus climate better is good, but we need to be consistent and we need to keep pushing diversity efforts.

Professor Joeckel stated that he does not want to offend anyone on substantive issues and he endorses the efforts of those trying to make the campus a friendlier place, but he is far more concerned with our colleagues whose programs have been identified as possibly being cut due to the budget situation. He noted that their disciplines are diverse and we need to clarify the issue and work to prevent the programs from being eliminated. Professor Lee seconded Professor Joeckel’s comments and pointed out that the cultural geographers are probably the best people we have on campus that understand the diversity of the world.

8.0 Open Mic Session
8.1 Academic Planning Committee and Procedures to invoke Significant Budget Reallocations and Reductions

Professor Bloom, Chair of the APC, stated that he came to talk about the budget reduction issue, but wanted to point out that efforts are also being made to ensure that the APC is engaged in the Strategic Planning process. He noted that the APC will be meeting with the consultants hired to help with the strategic planning on April 4.

Professor Bloom stated that the budget process has been very fluid this year due to the budget situation. He noted that on February 14th President Bounds was required to identify programs that have been proposed for elimination. He pointed out that making a public announcement about these proposed cuts is very much different from what the procedures call for and what has been done in the past. As a result, the APC decided to take control of the communications regarding the proposed cuts and a message was sent out to the campus pointing out that the procedures and process still exist and will be followed should we need to do further budget cuts. He stated that Chancellor Green will need to invoke the procedures for budget cuts, the APC will need to see and approve the budget framework, and public hearings will need to be held on the proposed cuts. He noted that it will be very important that the campus be engaged in this process so that we can get the best advice. He pointed out that there is some information that the administrators will not be able to publically share, but if anyone feels there is information that the APC needs to consider they should contact him.

Professor Shea, School of Natural Resources, stated that he is familiar with the budget cutting process because he has previously served on the APC. He noted that it is his understanding that all of the actions of the APC in regards to the budget cuts are strictly advisory. The APC can make recommendations, but APC approval is not required for any final decisions. Professor Bloom stated that this is correct, but the APC will be making very public statements about its opinions on the proposed cuts. Professor Shea pointed out that the APC is comprised of administrators, faculty members, and student representatives, but it is not really a faculty committee. He stated that all of the voting conducted when he was on the Committee was done openly and faculty members of the APC could be sitting across from an administrator that they might be reporting to. He pointed out that many faculty members do not understand that the APC does not have any real authority in the process.

Professor Bloom stated that if the Chancellor wants to take some action he can, but there are political prices to be paid if the Chancellor makes a decision contrary to what the APC proposes. He stated that if the administrators do a good job and present supportive data, the APC may agree with the administrators’ decisions, but he assured the Senate that the faculty members on the APC are not afraid to ask questions.

Professor Hoyt stated that the faculty know the basic philosophy of the administrators in regards to proposing budget cuts, but it would be helpful for the faculty to know what criteria is being used to consider which programs to cut. He stated that he hopes the APC will be able to consider other viable options as opposed to eliminating degree programs and questioned whether we are at a place where we have to be cutting programs. Professor Bloom stated that this is a Phase One question of the procedures and questions will be asked about what should be reduced. He noted that the budget proposals from each of the four campuses are different. President Purcell pointed out that if our enrollment rates increase by double digits then the budget could be significantly changed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on Tuesday, April 3, 2018, at 2:30 p.m. in the East Campus Union, Great Plains Room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator, and Joan Latta Konecky, Secretary.