

MINUTES

July 25, 2019

University of Nebraska – Lincoln Academic Planning Committee

Members Present: Bender, Bloom, Clarke, Gay, Geisinger, Hibberd, Moberly, O’Connor, Purdum, Ratcliff, Smith, Tschetter, Zeleny

Members Absent: Boehm, Hinchman, Johnson, Purdum, Sollars, Wilhelm

Others Attending:

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

1.0 Call

Bender called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.

2.0 Proposal to Establish the School of Global Integrative Studies in the College of Arts & Sciences

Bender noted that a proposal to establish the School of Global Integrative Studies has been received and two APC members were needed to review the proposal and give a report of the review at the September 11th APC meeting. He volunteered to serve as did Geisinger.

Bloom asked what the definition is of a school and stated that the APC should be given clarification about what a school consists of other than it is just another unit. Geisinger suggested expanding the request to include whether a school requires administrative personnel.

3.0 Proposal to Establish a New Graduate Program for the M.S. and Ph.D. in Plant Pathology

Bender asked for volunteers to review the proposal for a new graduate program in Plant Pathology. Clarke and Gay volunteered to review the proposal and report on their findings at the September 11th meeting.

4.0 RCM Update - Phil Berlie, Executive Director, University Budget & Business Operations

Clarke stated that the understanding is that the administration is planning to run a shadow RCM model this fiscal year. O’Connor reported that a retreat for the deans is going to be held to provide guidelines on what kinds of information will be provided to the colleges with the new budget model. Bloom noted that how budget decisions are made will change with the new budget model, but there will be more transparency with the new model.

Clarke stated that one concern is that we have gaps in the available data that is required to ensure that the colleges are funded correctly. She noted that some of our data gathering systems are not

sufficient, and she suspects that the implementation timing of the RCM budget will depend on how the shadow model works.

Bloom pointed out that for the APC the change in the budget model will raise some interesting governance issues, and he suggested that the APC should be involved in the ongoing operation of monitoring how successful the budget model is working. He gave an example of Facilities and questioned how we decide what the cost of operating facilities is, and whether they are doing their job sufficiently. He noted that there are still some questions that need to be addressed.

Clarke reported that the RCM model will be dynamic. She noted that the consultants will help us set up the preliminary structure of the model, but the campus will need to determine the specifics for the model. Bloom pointed out that how we implement the model is the question. Moberly noted that people need to keep in mind that in comparison to the budget model we use now, the RCM model will be considerably more transparent. He pointed out that some adjustments to the budget model will be needed. He stated that academic leaders will need to emphasize that the budget model does not necessarily reflect the bottom line. Geisinger stated that one problem identified at other universities, and which our administration is aware of, is that the RCM model does not easily allow collaboration between departments. He pointed out that there needs to be a sense of balance between academics and budgeting. Bloom stated that the academic mission has to be the guiding star in making decisions about the budget model.

Berlie reported that the RCM Steering Committee has met 9 times, there was an open forum in June, and there will be another one in August. He stated that after the forum the deans will review the proposed model which will shadow the current budget model. He noted that adjustments to the RCM model can be made during the shadowing period as issues are identified. He reported that the next key model decision points that are still under discussion deals with the subvention funding (the strategic investment pool) and the model sensitivity - how responsive is the model to changes in institutional activity and how long should changes in enrollment take to affect the model allocations.

Berlie stated that the RCM model decision points identified the following categories: tuition, financial aid, state appropriations, indirect cost recovery, cost pools, subvention and strategic investment. He noted that the feedback received about each of these categories has been invaluable. Geisinger asked what a primary unit is considered. Berlie stated that colleges, centers, and units that generate funds are considered primary units.

Berlie stated that considerations moving forward is having a data quality committee and a model governance committee. He noted that a great deal of data is being used to drive the outcome, but not all of our data is as clean as we want it to be, although efforts have begun to correct this problem. He stated that the governance groups will need to review the alignment of our guiding principles and the strategic mission of the university in conjunction with the RCM model.

Berlie reported that the key takeaways have been: exploring the benefits and considerations of an incentive-based model and moving forward with changing the University's model structure; adopting a hybrid incentive-based model that provides enough central support to sustain and support mission-critical programs; initiate a model structure and methodology which are

currently being reviewed by the academic deans. He stated that the next steps will be: continue to meet with deans, college business officers, department chairs, and other institutional stakeholders to gain additional feedback on the “baseline” model. Hold a second campus forum to provide an update on the process and to host a budget panel composed of peers from other incentive-based institutions. Conduct a retreat with the RCM Steering Committee and the deans to develop an agreed-upon model for use in a parallel process. To consider the infrastructure, policies, and reporting capabilities that are needed to successfully implement a new budget model. He stated that the goal is to have a good workable model and to begin the shadowing process by mid-September.

Gay pointed out that with the current model design indirect costs are used to support the Office of Research and Economic Development, but with the new model if the indirect costs go to the colleges it obviates the need for ORED. Zeleny stated that distributing F & A funds is only 1% of the function of ORED. He noted that ORED oversees compliance, works on strategically growing the research mission of the campus, creates and hosts faculty development activity, and has a whole host of efforts that ensure that the university research and economic development is successful. He noted that ORED may no longer be contributing to the start-ups in the colleges under the new budget model. Geisinger pointed out that with the new budget model the F & A funds will go back to the colleges. Berlie stated that this is correct and disbursement of these funds will be at the discretion of the dean.

Bender asked if the proposed model will result in major changes in how much funding is going to the different units. Berlie stated that it is anticipated that there could be some minor difference in the budget for units. He pointed out that the bottom line will be based on revenue flow back and consumed expenses. He stated that some funding may be shuffled around, but in terms of providing needed support there shouldn't be any change. He noted that the first year of the budget there should not be any changes, but the administration needs to be informed if there are some areas that need more support.

Bender asked if comparative numbers will be available for everyone to see. Berlie stated that eventually information on each unit will be available. Bender pointed out that the funding decisions should not be based strictly on metrics. He asked what criteria are going to be used to support departments that do not generate a significant amount of revenue. Berlie stated that academic and administrative inputs will be required for these decisions. He noted that we want to make sure that units, such as Classics and Religious Studies, are not impacted negatively due to the required criteria for funding.

Geisinger pointed out that some Foundation donations are made with the understanding that the funds are used for specific purposes. He stated that the University has not always honored the purpose of these Foundation accounts and questioned how the funds will factored into the new budget model.

5.0 Updates on Services Delivery Initiative - Associate VC Mary LaGrange

LaGrange reported that the SDI team spoke with faculty, staff, and other stakeholders across the campus to hear peoples' concerns with the idea to create specialized business service centers.

She stated that the intent is to try to find a workable solution that will address the need for improved services while ensuring that the needs of the faculty will be met.

Purdum asked if her support staff person would no longer work for a group of faculty, but instead would work for the dean. LaGrange stated that the SDI team would work with the colleges to develop the business centers. She stated that the administration is not interested in physically relocating staff who will be part of a business center, unless the staff person wants to be moved. She noted that the workload of those staff members would shift.

LaGrange reported that small colleges are under served in terms of business and finance support, and the goal is to help provide these smaller units with people who have expertise in these areas and to ensure consistent use of new business and financial processes. Gay pointed out that the campuses are being forced to use new systems that are not faculty friendly and which are time consuming. LaGrange stated that having people who have expertise with travel reimbursement would actually assist the faculty and hopefully speed up the reimbursement process.

Gay asked why faculty members were not consulted initially when the idea arose to create the service centers. LaGrange reported that the first step was to conduct an assessment, then to develop an initial design option, and conduct an activity study. She stated that an implementation team has been created which heavily involves faculty members. She reported that a draft map indicating the 125 different campus business and financial processes has been developed, and stated that during the summer work has been done to identify the barriers with these processes with the idea of automatizing some things to make the process more efficient and effective. She stated that the plan is to work with each of the colleges to understand their operations better to address the college's needs. She reported that the implementation committee is a high-level committee which will provide input on timelines, discuss options for smaller units, clarify the administrative opportunities, develop governance structures and provide recommendations.

Purdum stated that to the faculty it appears that the plan is another grab of resources to support the deans rather than the faculty. LaGrange pointed out that the staff involved will still be supporting the mission of the college or unit. Purdum stated that what is needed is to have the staff provide support to the faculty. Moberly noted that the university needs to be more efficient as our resources become fewer and the SDI plan seeks to provide the needed services in a more efficient and effective way.

LaGrange reported that the activity study conducted last fall indicated that 900 people across the campus are engaged in processing business and financial transactions, but some of the kinds of transactions are done infrequently. As a result, mistakes can be made and it was clear from the study that we need people who specialize with a particular process. She pointed out that IANR has benefitted from having business centers because the business and financial processes are done much more efficiently. She noted that 100 processes are being revamped with this effort and she encouraged faculty members to send emails to provide input as the project moves forward. Geisinger pointed out that there is a lot of duplication with travel reimbursement with four different people at times reviewing the receipts and travel reimbursement forms.

Hibberd noted that when IANR first implemented the business centers the transition was hard for the first year, but things started to improve and the business transactions were done more quickly. He believes that IANR now operates better because of the centers. He noted that it is crucial to hire a good person to manage each of the business centers.

6.0 Other Business

Moberly reported that Dr. Monk has been hired to be the director of the Center for Transformative Teaching. He noted that the Staff Leadership Academy was very successful last year and it will be held again this year. He reported that a committee is being formed to look at the issues of adequate pay and development for lecturers.

Moberly stated that a School of Computing will be proposed which will move the department of Computer Science and Engineering solely to the College of Engineering. He noted that the department has been split between Engineering and the College of Arts & Sciences. He stated that the proposal will be presented to the APC during the fall semester. Gay asked where the idea to make this change originated. Moberly reported that the idea was from the department in association with the Chancellor and former EVC Plowman. He pointed out that the faculty of the department approved the changes in a vote of 29-2. Geisinger asked if there are costs associated with the proposed changes. Moberly stated that resources will be invested into the school, including funding for new faculty. Clarke asked if a new chair has been hired. Moberly stated that an offer has been made, but he has not heard whether it has been accepted.

Bloom asked for information on the N150 Strategy Team plan. Zeleny reported that hopefully the draft plan, which will cover a five year period from 2020 to 2025, can be presented to the APC sometime in October. He stated that the members of the team is happy with the structure of the plan, but further refinement of the goals is needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m. The next meeting of the APC will be on Wednesday, September 11, 2019 at 3:00 in the City Campus Union, Chimney Rock Room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator.