

# MINUTES

April 21, 2021

## University of Nebraska – Lincoln Academic Planning Committee

**Members Present:** Ankerson, Bloom, Boehm, Buan, Clarke, Everhart, Gay, Geisinger, Hachtmann, Latta Konecky, Miller, Moberly, Rodene, Smith, Spiller, Tschetter, Wilhelm, Zeleny

**Members Absent:** Hebets

**Guests:** Dean Lance Perez, Professor Marilyn Wolf, Dean Heng-Moss

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

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### 1.0 Call

Geisinger called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

### 2.0 Recognition of Outgoing members: Tim Gay, Kevin Smith, Kurt Geisinger, Roni Miller, Richard Moberly, Jennifer Clarke

Geisinger thanked the outgoing members of the APC for their service and noted that he was impressed with the work of the members and stated that it was a pleasure to get to know the members.

### 3.0 Approval of April 7, 2021 Minutes

Spiller moved for approval of the minutes. Zeleny seconded the motion, and the APC approved the minutes.

### 4.0 Review of Proposal to Establish the School of Computing (Bloom, Clarke, Hachtmann, and Wilhelm)

Clarke welcomed Perez and Wolf to the meeting to address any questions. She reported that a subcommittee consisting of Bloom, Hachtmann, Wilhelm, and herself reviewed the proposal to establish the School of Computing (SoC) at UNL. She noted that the proposal calls for taking the existing department of Computer Science & Engineering, which currently is administered by the College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) and the College of Engineering (ENG), and shifting the degree programs to ENG. She stated that creating the school would help meet the demands of employers in Nebraska who need graduates who have computational skills and computer literacy. She reported that the proposal cites the need for the SoC to have a high level of research and outreach with multiple levels in which to engage the business sector. She noted that additional investments would be needed to increase the faculty contingency.

Clarke stated that there were numerous discussions about shifting the degree programs in Computer Science and Engineering to the ENG, but the plan is to allow CAS to develop programs in areas that touch on computing. She reported that there was also discussion regarding what defines a school. She noted that this is a question that has been raised in APC meetings numerous times and is a question that the campus needs to consider.

Clarke stated that the proposers for the establishment of the SoC felt that having a school would allow for more interdisciplinary opportunities with other colleges and this is supported by the chair of Computer Science and Engineering. She stated that there would be opportunities to work with IANR, the Fine Arts, and other units that incorporate computing. She pointed out that having a SoC will send a message to stakeholders and the State that the university heard their concerns for needed computing expertise within the state.

Bloom stated that he was disappointed that Computer Science and Engineering were being moved out of CAS but noted that the ambitions can be supported in either college, if moving the SoC into ENG is what is needed to advance the SoC then he supports it.

Buan asked if the prerequisites for students who enrolled through CAS, but who will now be enrolled in ENG, have been worked out. Clarke stated that her impression from the proposal was that there was substantial work done to ensure that students will have as seamless a transition as possible. She noted that the prerequisites for current students will remain the same. Wolf pointed out that there are three degrees currently offered through CAS. She stated that the degree itself and the requirements have not been changed. Wilhelm stated that the review committee had several discussions about this issue, and he strongly supports the proposal and noted that it is a good step forward and provides us with a runway to expand and grow the school in upcoming years. Spiller pointed out that in addition to the concerns about the requirements, Perez and Wolf have considered student advising as well to ensure that no student gets left behind when the transition occurs.

Clarke stated that there is a larger philosophical debate about what is a school that the APC should undertake. She stated that functionally a school is different from a department and there will be three divisions within the School of Computing, but while the disciplines of these divisions are complimentary, they will each have its own distinction. Spiller agreed and pointed out that forming the school creates an opportunity for more collusion and collaboration between the three divisions. Buan noted that sometimes departments can become so large that it becomes paralyzing while a school can have a collection of more high function groups. Geisinger stated that the School of Computing would create a grouping of synergies which allows for good collaboration, and the school would probably have more funding opportunities.

Moberly moved for approval of the proposal. Motion seconded by Ankerson and then approved by the APC unanimously.

## **5.0 Review of the Proposal to Establish the B.S. in Environmental Engineering Degree (Clarke)**

Clarke reported that historically environmental engineering has been considered a part of civil engineering but due to the growth of the discipline the department felt that it was more logical to have a separate degree program. She noted that the department is requesting a waiver to go over the 120-credit hour limit which is consistent with other programs in engineering. She stated that when she asked how the college would support increasing diversity and inclusiveness it was pointed out that environmental engineering attracts more under-represented students. She stated that the college plans to have better advising for students which will help with recruitment and retention.

Clarke stated that she asked the proposers about the limited number of electives and was told that the program has limited capacity for electives due to the amount of required courses. She suggested the proposers consider elective courses across the university that would be relevant to the degree program and the proposers agreed to do so and would help students choose electives.

Bloom pointed out that it is difficult to look at the budget tables in program proposals and determine how they will interface with the new budget model because the tables seem to indicate that all of the tuition generated by the program will go to the program, which is not how the new budget model works. He pointed out that the budget information provided in program proposals does not accurately reflect the revenue that will be generated, or the costs associated with the new program such as remissions. Clarke agreed and stated that budget requests for program proposals are predicated on growth and enrollment. Boehm stated that he is supportive of the proposal and his understanding of the incentive-based budget model is that the cost center belongs to the college, not the academic unit, and if the college feels that this is a strategic investment it will find the resources to support the program. Spiller stated that she reviews the budget tables and thinks Academic Affairs pushes the proposers to provide relevant information on both the expenses and revenue of a program. She pointed out that as enrollment increases in a program there is a mechanism with the incentive-based budget model that allows the resources to flow to the department. She reported that her office is working on a tool that would allow chairs to see if a proposed program would be viable. Ankerson stated that the tool should enable the expenses and revenues to be more defined and noted that the budget tables need to present a more accurate depiction of what the true costs are for a new program.

Buan moved for approval of the proposal. Motion seconded by Hachtmann and approved unanimously by the APC.

## **6.0 Review of the Proposal to Establish the Statistics & Data Analytics Bachelor of Science Program (Buan and Gay)**

Buan reported that there is a definite need for the statistics and data analytics program. She stated that the curriculum for the program is very strong and while it incorporates some topics similar to the computer science program, it is still very much a statistics program. She noted that there were discussions between Mathematics, Computer

Science, and Statistics and while there are other colleges that have some statistics, none of them have the depth of the proposed program. She reported that students in the program would have opportunities for broadly based internships and the same program at other universities have seen sustained growth in enrollment. She stated that the proposal included letters of support from Engineering, Mathematics, and Computer Science and the program does not require any new resources as Statistics has many new faculty members who can teach the courses. Dean Heng-Moss reported that the CASNR curriculum committee has approved the proposal.

Gay stated that he is in favor of the proposal, and it is clear from the marketing reports that there are a lot of opportunities to train students in a rapidly growing area. He stated that it is clear that we need a program in data science and data analytics yet no one either he or Buan spoke to could distinguish between the two areas. Buan stated that she has concerns about the strategy of the data analytics program and believes the APC would want to see a good interdisciplinary data program. Gay stated that there has been no strategic movement to have a School of Data Science which he believes could be a great opportunity for UNL and would be good for recruiting. Spiller stated that she very strongly supports the proposed degree program, and it is exactly what a modern looking program in statistics should look like. She wanted to stress that this is a disciplinary proposal and the Statistics' faculty has been working for a very long time on developing the proposal. She noted that there is a difference between discipline-based proposals and interdisciplinary domain and the discussions about the proposal was to not create duplicate programs but to fit the program with our areas of expertise. She stated that there will be a core set of courses that will be shared, and these courses will come from contributions from the three key departments but there is also a lot of opportunities for modular expansion.

Ankerson stated that she is very much in favor of the proposal and is enthusiastic for fields like Architecture which are increasingly needing statistics and data analytics. Boehm noted that Statistics recently went through an APR and the visiting review team lauded the proposal as being cutting edge.

Gay moved for approval of the proposal. Motion seconded by Hebets and approved by the APC.

## **7.0 Project Initiation Request for the Global Education Center (Zeleny, Latta Konecky, Wilhelm)**

Latta Konecky stated that the request is to create a centralized hub for global engagement offices which would be located on the first and second floor of Pound Hall. She noted that the space would include classrooms, a central gathering space and display space. She reported that the project cost would be under \$5 million, and a donor has already provided the funds.

Zeleny stated that the project would not require Board of Regents approval and the project would move quickly once the faculty and staff of the College of Education and Human Sciences move out of their temporary location in Pound Hall.

Clarke asked if the space is intended to be a magnet for all the global engagement activities on campus. Latta Konecky stated that it would create a centralized location and would provide resources for faculty and students. Ankerson asked how large of a space the center would be. Latta Konecky stated that it would be 22,000 feet and Zeleny noted that the space includes an atrium which would be used as a display space as well as a student study space.

Boehm stated that he highly supports the project request because it aligns nicely with UNL's global engagement strategy. He noted that while the hub would be the central location, there will still be satellite offices like the one in IANR.

Wilhelm moved for approval of the project initiation request. Motion seconded by Latta Konecky and approved by the APC.

#### **6.0 Reports from EVC Spiller, VC Boehm, and VC Wilhelm**

Spiller ceded her time to accommodate the Chancellor's schedule.

Boehm thanked the APC for all of the work it did today and noted that people are excited about recent program proposals that have now been approved by the Board of Regents and are being forwarded to the Coordinating Commission. He noted that physical changes are still occurring on East Campus with Miller Hall slated to be deconstructed this summer.

Wilhelm reported that this Thursday is a campus community connector for faculty members to learn how they can connect with different community partners in Lincoln and the state.

#### **7.0 Chancellor Green – Annual Report to the APC**

Chancellor Green stated that he wanted to thank the APC personally for the investment of time and energy in addressing the monumental budget reduction that the campus faced this academic year. He noted that even though the budget reduction was difficult, it has put us in a good position as we come out of the pandemic. He reported that the campus is now in the implementation of the budget reductions which will continue for two more years.

Chancellor Green stated that in the coming academic year the APC will take up more responsibility as we move into the first year of the incentive-based budget model. He noted that the APC will have some role with the Budget Advisory Committee and the Data Quality Committee, and he plans on having these committees formed by early July.

Chancellor Green stated that the APC will also see an increase in the number of project initiation requests since LB 588, authorizing funds for deferred maintenance of state buildings, has been approved. He noted that 600 of these state buildings are on UNL campuses and many of these buildings will become construction projects. He reported that \$216 million has been identified for UNL in the first round of funding and proposed

future projects include renovations in Architectural Hall, the replacement of the Westbrook Music Building, renovation of Kimball Hall, and continued work on Andrews, Bessey, and Canfield Administration.

Chancellor Green reported that there has been a lot of consideration around our tuition model and the N150 vision. He stated that consideration will be given to a one-tuition model, and he noted that he plans to launch a group to consider the idea further and he will come to the APC for some counsel about the idea.

Chancellor Green thanked Geisinger for his leadership and stated that he was looking forward to working with Hachtmann.

Everhart asked how UNL is looking in terms of retention and recruitment. Chancellor Green stated that it is very early in the enrollment process, but current data shows some slight demographic shifts. He reported that enrollment for international students shows a decrease which is not surprising since the Rwanda program has now phased out. He stated that enrollment deposits were down slightly from last year. Spiller reported that we are up 1.5% relative to last year with first-time freshmen applications and there is currently a 5% increase in resident students. She stated that we are flat on out-of-state students and down in the number of international students, but we are up by 4% in first-generation students. She noted that new students will have the option of submitting ACT scores and students will be admitted based on their high school grades and ranking. She reported that the biggest change demographically is with non-cohort students with a large number of students who graduated high school but did not attend college last year. She pointed out that since we are now test optional, we are seeing students from many regions that we have previously not seen. She stated that we are on a good track, but it is too early to make any predictions. Chancellor Green noted that the shift in demographics is probably occurring nationally with more students opting to stay in-state.

Buan asked if the funding for buildings from LB 588 is only for renovations and when a second Beadle Building would be built. Chancellor Green stated that the funding is for deferred maintenance and renovations and the only time it would be used for a new building is when an existing building is being torn down and needs to be replaced. He noted that Westbrook falls into this category. He reported that fundraising for Beadle 2 will be associated with our upcoming capital campaign.

Bloom asked if the University's financial situation improves whether it would be possible to avoid some of the budget reductions identified for the third year of the budget-cutting process. Chancellor Green reported that when the budget reduction recommendations were made, they were based on the state budget that the University recently requested, and while enrollment was slightly better this year, we are not expecting to see an increase in tuition revenue. Spiller pointed out that while the Nebraska promise was a wonderful initiative, the funding for it came from the campuses. She noted that we are weak in graduate and international admissions. Chancellor Green stated that if the financial situation is better than anticipated there could be consideration of reducing some of the recommended budget cuts, but he believes it is going to take us longer to recover because

even after receiving the stimulus funding we are still short \$25-30 million and we eroded a significant amount of our cash reserve.

Geisinger asked if there will be a vaccination mandate. Chancellor Green reported that there are no plans to mandate vaccinations at this point, but efforts will be made to encourage as many people as possible to get vaccinated. He noted that there has been discussion of requiring mandatory testing for those who do not get vaccinated.

#### **8.0 Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m. The next meeting of the APC is scheduled for Wednesday, September 1, 2021, at 3:00 in the City Campus Union, Heritage Room. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator.