

MINUTES
May 10, 2023

University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Academic Planning Committee

Members Present: Ankerson, Button, Davis, Doll, Heng-Moss, Hiatt, Kelley, Latta Konecky, Mowat, Ourada, Pechous, Theiss-Morse, Tschetter, Vuran, Wilhelm

Members Absent: Boehm, Clarke, Moriyama, Wilhelm

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

1.0 Call

Tschetter called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

2.0 Announcement

Tschetter announced that if a meeting is needed on May 24th for the APC to complete its work on the budget reductions, the meeting will begin at 3:30.

3.0 Two APC Members Needed to Review the Agronomy Graduate Certificate Proposal

Tschetter asked for two APC members to review the graduate certificate proposal. Ankerson noted that Dean Hope of Graduate Studies stated that this was a straight-forward certificate and asked if the proposal could be moved forward. Heng-Moss stated that she would appreciate it if the APC could review the proposal and vote on it before the last meeting of the Committee in May. She pointed out that once a graduate certificate is approved it automatically becomes available and the Agronomy and Horticulture department would like to recruit students for the program this summer.

Tschetter suggested the APC could review the proposal as a group. Vuran and Latta Konecky volunteered to review the proposal and to present their findings and recommendations at the next APC meeting.

4.0 Report on Mathematics Academic Program Review (Theiss-Morse)

Theiss-Morse reported that the external review team for the Mathematics APR was well done, and very prepared. She noted that the team members, including one who had to participate via Zoom, had the opportunity to meet confidentially with department members.

Theiss-Morse noted that the number of undergraduate, masters, and Ph.D. students is growing in the department, and it was pointed out in their self-study that the department is concerned with its lack of resources and its ability to handle the increasing student population because of the decrease in faculty that has occurred.

She stated that some of the outstanding things about the department is that it teaches an incredible number of student credit hours, the department has a national reputation for its

scholarship of mathematics undergraduate teaching, is renowned for its work on developing women mathematicians and recruits a higher proportion of female graduate students and it has a very high retention and success rate. The department also received the Chancellor's Outstanding Contribution to the Status of Women award.

Theiss-Morse reported that the department posed nine questions to the review team, one of which was the concern of how the department could continue to provide excellence in research, undergraduate and graduate education and provide outreach given the diminished resources it has. She noted that the department felt that it needs to make some strategic decisions of what it should focus on and what it could do differently to use the limited resources it has.

Theiss-Morse stated that the review team recommended that the department increase its efforts to retain and support existing faculty with these efforts including increased mentoring of both assistant and associate professors. The team pointed out that the graduate program faces several issues, one with it being too large for the number of faculty members and the course load for the faculty should only be two per academic year, not three. Also, attention needs to be paid to the graduate program in terms of mentoring and pay. The team recommended that the department and college need to work together to devise a strategic plan for moving the department forward and it needs to address the best configuration of personnel which includes increasing the number of postdocs. The team recommended creating a post baccalaureate program by reducing the number of graduate students which would reduce the advising load.

Theiss-Morse noted that the department and Dean's response were both great and she did not feel there was any need for a follow-up hearing.

5.0 Report on School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences APR (Doll)

Doll reported that SVBMS is a very complex unit within IANR and is doing some exemplary work. She noted that the external review team was very strong.

Doll stated that SVBMS has both an educational entity and a strong research presence as well as having some service units that service agriculture throughout the state. She noted that undergraduate students can major in Veterinary Science and Veterinary Technology and there is the Professional Program in Veterinary Medicine through a collaboration with the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine (this leads to DVM credentials). She reported that there are two graduate degree programs: a Master of Science in Veterinary Sciences and a Ph.D. in Integrative Biomedical Sciences. She noted that there are two service centers: the Nebraska Veterinary Diagnostic Center located on East Campus, and the UNL Great Plains Veterinary Educational Center located in Clay Center.

Doll reported that the self-study was well-organized and clearly structured, providing an understandable description of the complexity of the academic program while listing its strengths and successes as well as its challenges. She noted that the unit identified not having enough faculty members to meet its responsibilities in teaching, extension and outreach, research, and service. There was also concern that many faculty members were hired during the same time period which may result in them reaching retirement age about the same time resulting in a limited number of faculty members who have enough experience to assume leadership roles. It

was noted that the funds for graduate assistantships depend heavily on funded projects which are more difficult for early career faculty to secure.

Doll stated that undergraduate students can take either one of two routes to get into the professional program in veterinary science which collaborates with Iowa State's veterinary program. Students can either go through SVBMS or they can go through Animal Science but noted that this creates some competition between the two departments. She stated that SVBMS is seeking ways to grow its undergraduate enrollment, particularly given the shortage of veterinarians in Nebraska, but there is no capacity in the Iowa State agreement to allow for an increase in more Nebraska students. Ankerson asked how many students are allowed with the Iowa State agreement. Heng-Moss stated that the cap is 25 although sometimes 26 or 27 students are allowed. She pointed out that with the program, the first two years of classes occur at UNL after which the students go to Iowa State Veterinary College to complete the program.

Hiatt reported that there is a high need for veterinarians who can serve both small and large animals. She asked if it would be worthwhile to start our own DVM program. Doll noted that this would not be just a matter of hiring new faculty members, investments in facilities and staffing would be needed. Heng-Moss pointed out that SVMBS is thinking of some creative ways with Iowa State to increase the size of our classes, but there are some obstacles with the accreditation group. She noted that the Veterinary science major at UNL currently does not define the difference between veterinary technology and veterinary science, but the department is trying to solve this problem. She reported that local veterinaries would like to see specialty areas developed at UNL. Hiatt asked if SVMBS could have clinics. Heng-Moss stated that it is an idea the is being explored but accreditation is a consideration.

Hiatt asked if UNL could also partner with Kansas State University's veterinary school. Heng-Moss stated that curricular areas would not match up and Kansas State would lose out on the first two years of tuition. She noted that having two different partnerships with vet schools usually doesn't work out.

Doll reported that the review was carefully conducted, followed the expected schedule and deadlines had active participation from the faculty and staff. Requests made by the review team were promptly met, the review team and the dean's response were on time.

Doll stated that some of the key weaknesses and challenges for the unit identified by the review team were limited visibility of the unit within UNL and across Nebraska; the very broad and complex mission encompassing graduate, undergraduate, and professional training together with an ambitious research program; low enrollment in the Masters program in Veterinary Science, and competition from the undergraduate programs. Recommendations from the review team to address these challenges include careful consideration of the space limitations in SVMBS and in the cooperative agreement with Iowa State before expanding the PPVM program. Ensuring that students, both from UNL and other institutions comply with strict behavioral expectations when they are doing their rotation at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center. Developing a clear identity for the Nebraska Veterinary Diagnostic Center in light of the new commercial diagnostic laboratories that are rapidly expanding in Lincoln and encouraging the faculty to support both

research initiatives and federal partnerships. Providing leadership and strategic planning to early and mid-career faculty were also recommended.

Kolbe asked if the incentive-based budget model adversely affects the program since the degree is not conferred at UNL. Heng-Moss replied that the students just pay a flat rate, and the tuition sits outside the IBBM because the tuition for the last two years must float over to Iowa State. Kolbe asked if there was consultation with Iowa State about the curriculum we offer. Heng-Moss said yes and noted that a faculty member from Iowa State was on the APR review team. She pointed out that we have a great partnership with Iowa State.

Doll stated that another hearing was not needed.

6.0 Report on Food Science and Technology APR (Latta Konecky)

Latta Konecky reported that the APR took place in October 2021 but there were some delays with receiving the responses. She noted that the external review team was extraordinary, very active and invested and included a person from an industry partner.

Latta Konecky stated that one of the challenges during the 2014 APR was the move of the department to Nebraska Innovation Campus. She noted that in 2015 the department was able to assess some of the advantages and disadvantages of being located at NIC.

Latta Konecky reported that the review team was very impressed with the food processing center and also with the Nebraska gnotobiotic mouse program which is a very unique program. She noted that the gnotobiotic mouse program was developing well although the review team had some concern about continuation since it was tied to one faculty member.

Latta Konecky noted that the food science and technology department has multiple and affiliated programs and centers including the food processing center, the food allergy research and resource program, and the gnotobiotic mouse program. The department is also affiliated with the Quantitative Life Science Initiative, the Industrial Agricultural Products Center, the Nebraska Food for Health Center, and the Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute.

Latta Konecky reported that the self-study was extensive but was delivered at least a month prior to the on-site review and the team leader was very organized. She noted that each area of the department developed questions. She stated that the review went very well although the department head needed to be reminded that he was not allowed to attend the meetings but when he was informed, he graciously accepted. She noted that the department head was very generous with answering questions and supporting the review team.

Latta Konecky stated that the one department response that was unaddressed had to do with the transportation issue since the department is located at NIC. Undergraduate and graduate students as well as the staff were vocal about the transportation challenges they face to get to NIC and how the lack of transportation options makes the unit feel disconnected from the rest of UNL.

Vuran noted that there was some concern about the sustainability of the 3+1 program and the ability to fund the salaries of several professors of practice tied to the program. Latta Konecky

explained that the 3+1 program was a combined program with international students, primarily from China. However, with the Covid pandemic students were no longer able to come and the fourth-year students were being combined into common courses which caused a concern over the lack of belongingness. She stated that the review team did point out that there was too much reliance on foreign students for the program and not enough on local students. Heng-Moss pointed out that everything was disrupted due to Covid and there are still some challenges in getting students into China, but the program has done a lot more of its work by Zoom. She noted that there is a cohort of students now and the campus is welcoming people back. Vuran reported that the School of Computing is seeing a significant decline in the number of students from China and asked if CASNR has similar concerns. Heng-Moss reported that currently the 3+1 program is in the middle of its second collaboration with Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University (NWAUFU) in Yangling, China and these students receive a dual degree from the University of Nebraska and NWAUFU. Davis pointed out that there is still strong demand from China for the program.

Latta Konecky reported that the review team made some general recommendations some of which included improving the visibility of the department through social media, websites and other means of communication; including stakeholder input for significant strategic changes such as options for MS degree titles and curriculum changes; and holding periodic staff meetings with department administration to facilitate communicate and to encourage a sense of belonging.

Latta Konecky noted that there was no need for a follow-up hearing.

7.0 Report from EVC Ankerson

Ankerson announced that a candidate is on campus for interviews for the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. She noted that two more candidates will be coming for on-campus interviews.

Ankerson reported that Button has agreed to serve on the search advisory committee for the Dean of University Libraries, but a search firm has not yet been hired, although she hopes that we can find a compatible search firm within the next month. In the meantime, the position description is being developed.

Ankerson stated that professional enrollment figures have stayed consistently flat, but graduate student enrollment, in comparison to this time last year shows applications are up by 9%. However, she noted that graduate student enrollment is difficult to predict because they are often the last to register for courses.

Ankerson reported that the deadline date for first-time freshmen was May 1, but we will still accept them for admittance after that date. She noted that the enrollment is still down slightly and is similar to 2021 enrollment, but we are still hopeful for the fall semester. She stated that recruiting trips to India and other countries have gone well with enrollment from Vietnam looking good.

Ankerson stated that we are having another record undergraduate commencement but that this will probably be our last large graduating class for some time. She noted that retention is critical for all our students. She pointed out that data analysis shows some strong equity gaps in the

DWF rates in and when this occurs in gateway courses it can stop students from progressing which impacts retention. She stated that her office is focusing on trying to reduce these equity gaps.

Vuran noted that the School of Computing has seen a 100% increase in applications, the majority of which are from India. He stated that the real challenge is getting the students into the country. He noted that a graduate student being offered an assistantship who gets a delay in obtaining a visa may have to miss a semester and the school has no choice but to offer the assistantship to someone else. He stated that previously the application deadline date in the school was in January, but they have now moved it to December to allow students more time to apply for visas and suggested that other units might want to consider doing something similar.

Button pointed out that when the current recruitment round began there was a lot of focus on non-resident students but most of our current decline relative to last year has been with non-resident students. He asked what we have learned about the process for the non-resident students and if we are tracking numbers of Regents scholars. Ankerson reported that projections for fall are occurring this week and that the team from ASEM and Business and Finance will be looking at the numbers. She stated that the pilot program put into place last year shows that enrollment from Minnesota is looking very strong, however California is down slightly, and Illinois is down significantly. She noted that this is probably due to the loss of recruiters in the state which could be due to the new policies the University has in regard to employees working out of state. She noted that enrollment from Iowa, Kansas, and South Dakota are also down pointing out that competition for students has become fiercer.

Kolbe asked if there has been any consideration of offering students in the pilot program a one tuition rate. Ankerson pointed out that an analysis was done several years ago of the one tuition rate, but it was not a viable option. Kolbe suggested that the analysis be conducted again to see if it would be viable now. Button noted that the number of Regents scholarships given last year contributed greatly to the budget crunch. Ankerson pointed out that previously there were 1500 Regents scholarships but last year it was 1900 which created a significant loss in tuition revenue.

Heng-Moss stated that the dashboard figures look different since Covid, and retention seems to be impacted by the late end date of the spring semester. She suggested that retention rates from last year to this year be reviewed and to see comparative numbers on deposits.

Ankerson reported that recently the promotion and tenure celebration was held with 93 faculty members receiving promotion and/or tenure.

Ankerson stated that a question that has arisen with the passage of the Legislative bill allowing people to carry a concealed weapon without a permit is whether a concealed weapon would be allowed on campus. She reported that there is a Nebraska statute that makes it unlawful to have a weapon at a school and the university is included under this statute. She pointed out that what now needs to happen is that there needs to be education and communication about this to the broader community.

Vuran noted that graduate students across the nation have talked about their salaries, living conditions, and workplace environments and there has been considerable discussion about the graduate students forming unions. He asked what UNL's stance is on unionizing. Ankerson reported that her office has worked with Graduate Studies and the Graduate Student Assembly to address these issues and as a result the minimum graduate student stipend has been raised from \$10,900 to \$14,000 but noted that many of our graduate students receive much more than that. She noted that 248 stipends have been impacted by the increase in the minimum stipend. Mowat pointed out that GSA is looking at all aspects related to graduate student wellbeing. She noted that the Office of the President recently conducted a survey of graduate students from the campuses and Dean Hope has asked for to get that information for UNL since we have a larger graduate student population. She noted that graduate colleges in the Big Ten universities and elsewhere are having these conversations.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:56 p.m. The next meeting of the APC will be on Wednesday, May 17, 2023. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator.