

MINUTES
October 23, 2024
University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Academic Planning Committee

Members Present: Ankerson, Bloom, Boehm, Button, Clarke, Combs, Cressler, Gay, Herbin, Jemkur, Jones, Kopocis, Russo, Thomas, Tschetter

Members Absent: Davis, Heng-Moss, Mueller, Ourada

Guests:

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

Clarke called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

2.0 Approval of October 9, 2024 Minutes

Clarke asked if there were any revisions to the minutes. Ankerson and Jones noted that they had minor revisions which Griffin noted that she had made to the minutes. Clarke asked for unanimous approval of the minutes. The APC approved the revised minutes.

3.0 Proposal to Create a New Center: Nebraska Children’s Justice and Legal Advocacy Center

Button stated that the proposal integrates two existing Centers, the Children’s Justice Clinic, housed in the College of Law, and the Children’s Justice Attorney Education Fellowship Program in the Center on Children, Families and the Law within the College of Arts and Sciences. He reported that the University recently received \$1.2 million which will help support the merger of the two Centers and the funds will help increase the number of law students in the Children’s Justice Clinic and will double the number of rural attorneys trained through the Children’s Justice Attorney Education Fellowship Program. He stated that the expected visibility of the new center will propel the work forward which will result in additional external funding.

Clarke asked for two people to review the proposal. Griffin stated that she would contact Mueller and Ourada to see if they would review the proposal.

4.0 Proposal to Create a Ph.D. in Computer Engineering

Clarke noted that the proposal states that the College of Engineering historically had a single Ph.D. program but with different tracks. However, the College now seems to be moving away from this model which will result in more independent Ph.D. programs. Kopocis reported that some smaller units in the College will remain under the unified Ph.D. program but some of the larger units want their own Ph.D. program. Clarke asked for two APC members to review the proposal. Thomas and Clarke volunteered to review the proposal.

5.0 Proposal to Delete the MS in Architecture

Ankerson stated that the MS Architecture program also included a specialization in Interior Design that was created many years ago as a hybrid program with either in person or an online program with the latter having more students. The demand for the degree program is not currently present and in recent years it has not met the CCPE minimum threshold for degrees granted. The degree is not the licensable degree, but rather provides an opportunity for students to go into depth on particular areas of interest.

Bloom stated that he understands the motivation for the proposal but noted that the budget tables show no savings with the program being cut. Ankerson reported that there is a small amount of differential tuition that would not be coming in with the deletion of the program.

Boehm moved for approval of the proposal. Bloom seconded the motion. The APC approved the proposal.

6.0 Reports from EVC Ankerson, VC Boehm, Interim VC Jones

Boehm

Boehm noted that two weeks ago he went to Washington D.C. and attended a good meeting with colleagues from across the Association for Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU). He reported that they discussed how these universities could advocate for more funding and noted that it was interesting to hear the different perspectives depending on what kind of land grant, college, or university you were looking at.

Boehm stated that while in D.C. he had the chance to meet with the staff of the U.S. Agriculture Committee who put together the authorizing of bills such as the Farm Bill which is renewed every five years. However, he stated that the last time the Farm Bill was approved was in 2018 and, to date, it has still not been acted on. He noted that both the House of Representatives Chair and the Senate Chair would like to have a Farm Bill but with this being an election year, any action on the bill will not happen until after the election and the urgency of passing the bill will depend on the results of the elections.

Jones

Jones reported that a recent Nebraska Today story listed approximately 130 faculty members at UNL who are on the top 2% scientists list as identified on the Elsevier/Stanford website. She pointed out that this demonstrates our excellence and prominence, and this will be celebrated during the upcoming Research Week. She noted that President Espy from Wayne State College will be giving a presentation during Research Week.

Jones reported that President Linton from Kansas State University will be visiting our campus to look at our work in the Veterinary & Diagnostic Center and a visit from President Gold is being planned so he can visit our unique facilities and to meet our researchers.

Jones noted that she will be transitioning into retirement, and she stated that she hopes the faculty will support Associate VC Jennifer Nelson as she steps into the Interim VC for Research and Innovation position. She pointed out that AVC Nelson has a strong sense of the Office, and

she is happy that she will be assuming the role of Interim because she believes AVC Nelson will do a great job.

Bloom noted that it was great news to see the list of the top 2% researchers but pointed out that many people that were listed are either retired or deceased. He stated that we must hire new people because we just can't rely on our past laurels. Jones agreed that we do need to continue to hire and develop our faculty in great ways noting that it takes time to achieve the level of work and stature which can often come towards the end of one's career.

7.0 Other Business

Clarke asked about a new initiative called Business Simplified. Ankerson noted that the effort was being led by VC Zeleny and has multiple purposes of making sure we are using the most effective and efficient processes to do the work of the university, and to look across our campus to see if multiple processes occur for the same outcome. For instance, there may be one process in IANR but a different process in the EVC office. She stated that the initiative will try to unify what we can to make sure we are optimizing people's time most efficiently and to have singular systems rather than multiple systems.

Bloom reported that he is serving on one of the working groups for this initiative and noted that there is a forum on Friday for people to provide feedback and if they could provide examples of difficulties they are having, that would be very helpful. Clarke stated that the processes that happen in the business centers are nebulous, and it is hard for faculty to make good suggestions about the processes because they do not understand what happens within the business centers. Russo pointed out that the staff is having difficulties with the P2P process. Bloom noted that this is a central administration system, not a campus system. Ankerson stated that many things are working well, but some are not and for some processes, like procurement, the issue is not in the business center, but further along in the process.

Clarke asked what the remit is of the business offices and where do things go next in the process. Bloom stated that business centers should be articulating to the faculty what they can do and what the next steps are in the process. Button noted that faculty hiring is one of the processes that takes a lot of coordination and communication, and everyone needs to know what each person's role is in the process so they can take ownership on how improvements can be made. He pointed out that taking a process, breaking it down into a timeline and showing the steps of the process can be very helpful. Clarke agreed pointing out that a lot of the process is not transparent to the faculty and when a process doesn't work well there is a lot of strife over it.

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m. The next meeting of the APC will be on Wednesday, November 6, 2024. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator.