

**University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Academic Planning Committee**

September 17, 2025 Minutes

Members Present: Bradshaw, Button, Clarke, Combs, Cressler, Davis, Eklund, Gay, Hanrahan, Heng-Moss, Jemkur, Mueller, Nelson, Sharif, Tschetter, Van Den Wymelenberg, Wilkins, Brophy, Harner

Members Absent: Henson

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

Cressler called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

2.0 Approval of September 10, 2025

Cressler asked if there were any revisions to the minutes. Hearing none he asked if there was unanimous consent of approval. The APC approved the minutes.

3.0 Budget Reduction Process

The APC talked about the possible release of full data from the metrics analysis used to evaluate programs under consideration for elimination or realignment. Button and Heng-Moss explained that while individual units facing proposed changes have received their full data analysis, the decision not to release all data broadly is driven by sensitivity around program rankings and potential misuse of the information. Clarke raised concerns about the lack of clarity around qualitative considerations used in decision-making and the difficulty for affected units to defend themselves without access to complete data, particularly regarding unique programs proposed for cuts.

The meeting focused on addressing concerns about data transparency and methodology in the budget reduction process. APC clarified that while units are not required to propose alternatives, they are open to suggestions and will work with affected departments on financial impacts. The group discussed issues with data metrics, particularly regarding faculty apportionments and Academic Analytics, with APC committing to help units verify their data and address inconsistencies. Hanrahan noted that there was specific language regarding the possible rehire of some tenured faculty from Earth and Atmospheric Sciences into another department, but the rehiring statement was not indicated under the other units. The APC agreed to include the language under the other units to have consistency across all departments.

The APC discussed guidelines for upcoming unit hearings, focusing on how to ensure diverse faculty voices are represented while managing time and space constraints. They agreed to limit speakers to 8 people per unit to accommodate the room size and time allocation, with flexibility in how those spots are distributed among faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders. The team decided to send guidance directly to all faculty within affected units rather than through

DEOs to avoid potential bottlenecks, and they confirmed that the sessions will be live-streamed but not open to media attendance in person.

The APC focused on shared governance and addressing concerns about budget cuts at the university. Gay emphasized the importance of shared governance involving faculty, administrators, staff, and students in decision-making processes. The group discussed how to gather more information and consider alternatives before making final recommendations on proposed cuts. Jemkur raised concerns about fearmongering among graduate students, suggesting that a town hall meeting could help address their concerns and prevent enrollment drops. The discussion highlighted the need to clearly communicate the situation to students and faculty while advocating for additional funding rather than just budget reductions.

The APC emphasized the need for clear communication about strategic priorities and the potential for reinvestment in certain areas after meeting budget reduction targets. The group discussed the importance of better information flow to faculty about strategic initiatives, including aspirations to join the AAU, and addressed questions about the process for APC members whose programs are affected by proposed cuts.

There was discussion on plans for reviewing and processing all of the online feedback, with Cressler proposing to use Microsoft Copilot to categorize and summarize submissions before the hearings. Brophy asked why the VSIP is not offered to staff. Button explained that the VSIP (Voluntary Separation Incentive Program) was only for tenured faculty members because the university, in essence, is buying back the tenured faculty member's contract. He stated that he could provide Brophy and Harner with talking points about tenure buyouts. The team decided to take an additional week to further refine the hearing process and prepare specific questions for department representatives, acknowledging that the upcoming hearings would be intense and require careful preparation.

The meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m. The next meeting of the APC will be on Wednesday, September 24, 2025. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator.