

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

**January 14, 2026 Minutes**

**Members Present:** Bradshaw, Clarke, Combs, Cressler, Gay, Hanrahan, Henson, Jemkur, Morrison, Mueller, Nelson, Sharif, Tschetter, Van Den Wymelenberg, Wilkins

**Members Absent:** Eklund, Heng-Moss

**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.

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**1.0 Call**

Hanrahan called the meeting to order at 3:06 p.m.

**2.0 Introduction of Brian Morrison, Interim Chief of Staff**

Hanrahan introduced Interim Chief of Staff Morrison, who assumed the role after the departure of Josh Davis from the University.

**3.0 Interim Chancellor Ankerson**

Ankerson wanted to thank everyone for the important and the difficult work that they have been doing as members of the APC. She noted that she previously served on the APC, and she recalls having discussions about how the Committee could be involved earlier in the budget reduction process. She stated that while a member of the APC, a lot of relevant data was developed that could be useful on an ongoing basis and APC members' feedback on helping to develop the data was incredibly helpful. She pointed out that the data, along with information gathered from academic program reviews can be used to look at areas that we have strength in and where there are areas that there is a need for more investment. She pointed out that the array of viewpoints at the university makes us stronger and allows us to work better.

Ankerson suggested that the APC take an opportunity to reflect on what could have been done differently with the budget reduction process and how information could be better organized and conveyed to the campus community. She questioned how the APC can engage people outside of the committee earlier and what kind of mechanism could be used to get their expertise. She pointed out that she is not suggesting more regulation, but rather the APC could exam how it allows people to make curricular adjustments which require APC approval.

**4.0 Approval of December 3, 2025 Minutes**

Hanrahan asked if there were any revisions to the minutes. Button stated that he had some minor revisions which he would send to Griffin. Hanrahan then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Tschetter moved for approval, motion seconded by Cressler and approved by the APC.

**5.0 APC Representative Needed for Communication Studies APR (October 12-13, 2026)**  
Sharif volunteered to serve as the representative on the Communication Studies APR.

**6.0 Report on Animal Science APR (Gay)**

Gay reported that the APR went very well and the department's self-study was extremely impressive. He stated that the meetings occurred over a four-day period and were well coordinated.

Gay stated that the external review team's report stated that Animal Science is a very good department that is highly regarded nationally and is in fact, one of the top ten animal science departments in the country. He stated that the students love their major and are eager to succeed in their classes and they feel like they are being properly mentored. He pointed out that there are some problems such as having a high turnover rate with Extension faculty, unclear tenure processes for new faculty, and a heavy focus on beef science but the department wants to hire faculty in other animal science fields such as dairy, companion animals and equine and there needs to be more interdisciplinary courses.

Clarke asked if Gay had the opportunity to review the department's response and whether he felt that the department welcomed the input from the review team. Gay stated that he did not read the department's response, but he would be happy to report further on this at the next meeting.

**7.0 Report on Agricultural Economics APR (Clarke)**

Clarke reported that the Ag Econ APR was conducted in May 2025 and the external review team was excellent and gave very careful and thoughtful feedback. She noted that it has been quite a while since the last APR was conducted, but this was due to the department having an interim chair.

Clarke noted that the department has 33 faculty members with their main strength having varied faculty members from different areas of Agricultural Economics which results in strong teaching, Extension and engagement within the state. She stated that students have demonstrated that they really like the department and the training they receive. She noted that the department receives strong state funding from various activities, but the team did have recommendations for the department to consider what other things the department can provide for the state. She reported that the department's operating budget received a significant reduction recently.

Clarke reported that the department has seen a decline in undergraduate majors, although she noted that this is occurring nationally, and the team suggested the department consider trying to recruit students from urban areas. She reported the review team recommended consolidating graduate programs, expanding recruitment to urban areas, and working with the Center for Ag Profitability to increase their reach. The department, now under new leadership since August 2024, responded positively to the recommendations and developed action plans to address them, with plans to incorporate these findings into the anticipated merger with other departments.

## **8.0 Subcommittees for Ag Econ/AgLec Merger and Entomology/Plant Pathology merger**

Hanrahan noted that the APC's Guidelines on Mergers gives the chair the opportunity to create a subcommittee to observe the merging process and to make sure the Guidelines are followed, particularly around issues about tenure and promotions. He pointed out that different departments and cultures are coming together and the standards may be different. The observer would then report back to the APC on how the merger process is progressing. He pointed out that the merger of the units will eventually need to be approved by the APC.

Cressler and Sharif volunteered to serve on the subcommittee for Entomology and Plant Pathology merger.

Henson and Gay volunteered to serve on the subcommittee for Ag Econ/AgLec merger.

## **9.0 Discussion on APC Processes – do the existing documents provide enough oversight and/or meet our expectations?**

Hanrahan noted that this was a good time for us to review the APC's existing documents pointing out that the APC has guidelines for merging units but no specific guidelines on eliminating a program. Bradshaw stated that UNL Bylaws, which defines the APC, does not provide operational procedures for elimination of programs. Hanrahan stated that there needs to be greater clarity and transparency such as developed teach-out plans before the APC considers elimination of a program.

Button pointed out that there are discrepancies between the current UNL Bylaws and the APC's operating procedures and that these should also be addressed. He noted that the membership of the committee should be reconsidered as well because there are some areas that can be overrepresented while other areas have no representation.

Gay stated that there is also a conflict of interest that the senior leadership team that is advising the Chancellor on budget issues also serve on the APC. Button noted that the Board of Regents have defined conflict of interest and suggested that it needs to be included in the operating procedures. He suggested that the deans and administrators could be ex-officio members.

Button moved to create a subcommittee to look at the procedures and guidelines to make sure that the documents are congruent and to consider revisions. Bradshaw seconded the motion. Griffin noted that any changes to the UNL Bylaws need approval from the APC, Faculty Senate, ASUN, the Chancellor and final approval must be made by the Board of Regents. She stated that revisions to the Procedures to be Invoked for Significant Budget Reallocations and Reductions will require approval of the APC, Faculty Senate, ASUN, and the Chancellor. Combs asked what the scope of the committee would be, pointing out that the APC cannot make changes to the Faculty Senate's Syllabus for Campus-Wide Committees which defines the disciplines for serving on various committees, such as the APC. The motion to create a subcommittee was approved. Hanrahan, Button, Van Den Wymelenberg, McLean, Combs, Bradshaw, and Jemkur all volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

## **10.0 Reports from EVC Button and Interim VC Nelson**

### Button

Button reported that our student success numbers for this academic year are still very strong with our first-year retention rate at 85.7%.

Button stated that ASEM is working hard to convert applications for admittance into acceptance and is working to ensure that we have a strong class in the fall. He noted that by the end of the week they will probably have 25% of admittance applications completed and there will be more by the end of the month. He stated that international student enrollment is still a significant concern pointing out that many of our international students come from countries that the government has recently put on a watch list, except India where we still get many students from.

Button reported that AVC Goodburn and AVC Hope are working diligently on developing degree completion programs for students in programs that are scheduled for elimination. He stated that the meetings are going well and the plans should be finished in February, so they are ready by March 1<sup>st</sup> to allow undergraduate students to register for fall. He noted that there has been great collaboration which is allowing the detailed work to be completed in a fast timeline.

Button stated that the outlines for a new strategic framework will be rolled out sometime this spring and the APC will be involved in developing the framework. He stated that work will begin with the deans, APC, and the Senate Executive Committee regarding the academic indicators, such as what can be improved and if there are other indicators that should be added.

### Nelson

Nelson noted that the Office of Research and Innovations has sent out a few updates concerning research. She reported that she spent some time in DC in December and while there the focus was on F&A and the university team meeting with our federal delegation offices to update them on our research enterprise across the university system. She stated that there may be an OMB proposed adjustment to the F&A rates at some point in the future. She pointed out that there is a lot of activity on the congressional side and a new bill was introduced that proposes a model that might work better for universities, and this bill is carefully being watched.

Nelson stated that work around the research identity framework, which has been ongoing for several months, had a lot of faculty engagement and the opportunity for faculty comment closes on Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup>. She stated that she hopes that the full framework will be done by early February and then the plan is to have some events to gather faculty around some of the areas in the identity framework.

Nelson reported that Cheryl Horst was appointed as the Executive Director of NUtech Ventures. She stated that Sara Quinn, the Director of Research Compliance, Integrity and Security, has now also been appointed UNL's Research Integrity Officer. Professor Jordan Soliz remains the Institutional Official. She noted that there have been a few changes in the roles of members on the compliance team and she noted that the compliance team is happy to coordinate with any of the faculty members who may need assistance in these different areas.

The meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m. The next meeting of the APC will be on Wednesday, January 28, 2026. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator.