

University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Academic Planning Committee
January 28, 2026
Minutes

Members Present: Button, Combs, Cressler, Eklund, Hanrahan, Heng-Moss, Henson, Jemkur, McLean, Morrison, Mueller, Nelson, Sharif, Tschetter, Van Den Wymelenberg, Wilkins

Members Absent: Bradshaw, Clarke, Cressler, Gay

Guests: Jerri Harner, Sabrina Russo

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

Hanrahan called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

2.0 Approval of January 14, 2026 Minutes

Hanrahan asked if there were any revisions to the minutes. Nelson stated that she had a couple of minor revisions which she sent to Griffin. Hanrahan then asked for approval of the minutes. Tschetter moved for approval, Mueller seconded the motion. The APC approved the minutes.

3.0 APR Report on the School of Global Integrated Studies (Russo)

Russo reported that she served as the APC representative for the School of Global Integrated Studies last March. She stated that the other internal representative for the APR was Jordan Soliz from Communication Studies. She noted that the External Review Team (ERT) was great and was extremely earnest and active and provided a lot of input.

Russo stated that the SGIS was formed several years ago by combining the departments of Geography and Anthropology with the Global Studies program, undergraduate major. She noted that SGIS offers undergraduate major and minor degrees in Geography, Anthropology, and Global Studies, an MA degree in Anthropology, a Ph.D. degree in Global Integrative Studies with concentrations in either Anthropology or Geography, and MA in Geography, as well as several graduate certificates. She stated that the SGIS has an explicitly interdisciplinary and integrative focus. She reported that there are eight tenure-track faculty (all in Anthropology), five Professors of Practice, six Lecturers, 14 courtesy and adjunct faculty from several units across UNL.

Russo noted that overall, the APR process was well-executed, offered a genuine and thoughtful assessment of SGIS, and provided suggestions for more strategic positioning. She stated that the self-study included a number of questions for the ERT to focus on. She reported that she attended all the meetings, however, some meetings were scheduled simultaneously and the ERT had to split in order to have someone present at all the meetings.

Russo stated that the ERT noted that strengths of SGIS included fundraising successes, excellent and robust connections with external stakeholders which provide internships and job

opportunities for students, a successful BA program in global studies, stable and successful Anthropology programs that highlight the UNL land-grant mission and history of Nebraska, and great student enthusiasm for all programs. She noted that the ERT highlighted the following key weaknesses: lack of clear and meaningful branding of the school that points to collaborative teaching and research across the units within SGIS, loss of faculty in Geography making it difficult to deliver undergraduate and graduate degrees the support the mission and focus of the school; unclear mentoring processes for junior and mid-level faculty; variation in quality and nature of mentoring for graduate students.

Russo reported that the ERT recommended that the department's website be overhauled with clear branding about what makes SGIS so distinct from the other three units that call the department home. The ERT also recommended having better communication between SGIS and the graduate students conveying available classes, internships, job opportunities and upcoming events. Student research projects should be featured on the website in order to recruit quality students and enhanced efforts should be made to showcase student research at the university level, drafting of mentoring plans every three years, and revising the bylaws that would allow the Executive Committee some independence from the Director.

Russo stated that the department's response only seemed to address one of the major challenges identified by the ERT. This challenge was the credibility of the academic programs in Geography, particularly the graduate training, and she pointed out that this was also reflected in the College's response to the SGIS response. She noted that the geography graduate program was viewed as essential to SGIS and pointed out that the Dean's response suggested that the other challenges identified by the ERT should be addressed first before changes were made to the department's bylaws.

Russo reported that the APR went well and that there was no need for a hearing.

4.0 Addendum to Animal Science APR

Hanrahan noted that Gay submitted an updated revision of his report on the Animal Science APR.

5.0 Update on the Progress of the Mergers

Heng-Moss thanked the APC subcommittee members for attending the meetings to merge the Entomology and Plant Pathology departments and the merger of the Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication departments. She stated that the IANR leadership team met with the four units and shared with them the APC Guidelines about what the next steps in the process would be, established a timeline and what that would look like. She noted that the goal is to have the process done by the end of April.

Heng-Moss stated that at this point in the process it is in the hands of the units and they are moving forward to establish transition teams which will have faculty and staff members. She stated that there will also be discussion on what the name of the schools will be, identifying the mission and faculty governance structure as well as establishing promotion and tenure processes. She pointed out that there is emphasis on the importance of culture and how they will get to know each other. She reported that the Interim Chancellor has said that a facilitator would be

provided if needed. She noted that the IANR leadership is available for any questions the units may have.

Hanrahan noted that Harner represents the staff and in an email, Cressler reported that he attended the initial meeting for the Entomology/Plant Pathology merger and the IANR leadership team answered questions from the faculty of the two departments. Cressler stated in his email that he has not been informed of any subsequent meetings.

Hanrahan stated that the members of the subcommittees should look at the APC Guidelines for Mergers. In particular, he stated that concerns about the promotion and tenure process will need to be monitored and addressed. He suggested that the subcommittees should ask the unit leaders what the promotion and tenure process for the merged units will look like.

6.0 Review of Governing and Procedural Documents (Initial Meeting of the Subcommittee Working on Reviewing and Revising Documents)

The subcommittee members attending were Button, Combs, Hanrahan, Jemkur, McLean, and Van Den Wymelenberg. Button suggested that the chair of the subcommittee should be a faculty member. Hanrahan volunteered to be chair.

The subcommittee agreed to first look at the APC Operating Procedures to see what possible revisions need to be made. Button pointed out that the operating procedures need to be consistent with the UNL Bylaws and suggested that the subcommittee should think about adding information that might help to explain what the APC does.

The subcommittee suggested looking at the membership of the APC and having conversations about what is meant by representation. Button noted that some of the faculty members can overrepresent some of the colleges. Another item for consideration is whether every member of the APC should vote on all motions. Combs pointed out that the subcommittee needs to think about what the intended purpose is of the committee, and the documents, so we don't misalign revisions with the original purpose of the committee.

Hanrahan stated that a when2meet poll would be sent out to see when the subcommittee could meet again.

The meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m. The next meeting of the APC will be on Wednesday, February 11, 2026. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator.