

# Spring CAS Faculty Meeting Minutes

Stephen Ramsay

The online meeting was called to order at 3:30 on May 3, 2022 by Dean Mark Button with 60 in attendance (a quorum, as per the College bylaws).

Robert Gorman serving as Parliamentarian.

Stephen Ramsay serving as Recording Secretary.

1. Approval of the minutes of the Fall 2021 meeting, held on 15 December 2021.

**Poll Results: 37 yes, 0 no, 3 abstain. Motion passed.**

2. College Updates and Information Items

- a. **Updates from the Dean**

Dean Button noted the importance of being able to recognize achievements of the faculty, and the need for competitive compensation for faculty and staff throughout the College. Several initiatives have been undertaken to this end:

National Competitiveness Initiative for tenure-line faculty (funds provided by President Carter). First phase of adjustments went into effect this year; next phase will commence at the beginning of the 2023 academic year. This process has been informed through consultation with chairs and unit heads, as well as data provided through several sources (e.g. Oklahoma State Salary Survey, American Association of Universities data exchange). Process has prioritized meritorious faculty at all ranks with record of achievement over time, but whose salaries were below salary benchmarks for unit and rank. In 2021, Chancellor Green noted that UNL tenure-line salaries lag behind peer institutions by 6%. The cumulative increases being enacted amount to an 8% increase across the College.

With partial one-time bridge funding from the EVC, the College conducted a comprehensive review of compensation levels and merit review of research professors and professors of practice (using similar data sources and methods). Adjustments to salaries for these members of the faculty will begin at the start of the 2023 academic year, and these recommended adjustments will constitute a long-term commitment from the state-aided permanent budget.

Dean Button noted that all these adjustments are distinct from ordinary salary processes associated with annual merit review, as well as increases associated with promotions.

Other initiatives are focused on staff compensation. This effort is focused on pay equity relative to people holding similar titles at UNL and peer institutions, but wasn't focused on the appropriateness of existing job codes. Phase one of the review resulted in January salary adjustments for 39 staff across 14 different title codes. Additional adjustments were made for 13 staff across 4 additional staff title codes in March. The second phase will address positions that do not have comparable benchmarks (and which may require re-classification) before making adjustments. This is a complex process that requires review by both the Dean's Office and HR for each job requirement. Still, the hope is that some of these adjustments will be made by July 1st, with a third phase of the effort in the Fall of 2022.

As noted in past meetings, the College continues to operate with a constrained fiscal outlook (this is the last year of our three-year \$5.9 million permanent reduction in State aided funds). Nonetheless, the College *will* be hiring in the coming few years, but must limit itself to hiring that meets the highest priority hiring needs based on on enrollments and academic program demand; our commitments to increased research and creative activity; and our commitments to enhancing faculty diversity. These considerations are expressed in a hiring proposal rubric that the Dean's Office is happy to share with everyone. Even though the budget is extremely tight, units will have the opportunity to submit more than one faculty hiring authorization request.

This process will be guided by a faculty hiring advisory committee consisting of seven unit leaders from all areas of the College. The Dean's office (which makes the final decision for the College in these matters) will complete its review by the end of May, and the EVC's office has indicated that they will have a response to our requests by around mid-June.

**b. Teaching Academy Update and plan for next year (Kathy Castle)**

(Kelly Kingsbury Brunetto reporting on behalf of Kathy Castle)

The Teaching Academy has been following national conversations around common faculty struggles, reading about these issues, and talking to colleagues. The TA will be circulating a brief (3-5 minute) survey this fall, and encourages faculty in the College to respond to it, so that the TA can develop policies, resources, and event planning to address these issues.

**c. Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education updates (June Griffin)**

Associate Dean Griffin notes that the College's strategic plan contains some ambitious goals with respect to undergraduate education, and that we are only at the beginning of a long process. This year the Dean's Office mainly focused on benchmarks related to first->second year retention, four- and five-year graduate rates, and reduction in the equity gap.

Reviewed undergraduate enrollments. Started lower than usual, but these numbers are undoubtedly being affected by Computer Science moving out of CAS, but also improved graduation rates.

Trouble with first-year retention this past year, fewer students returning. Griffin notes that it's hard to read the data in light of COVID, but that graduation rates are improving (and already meeting six-year graduation rate goals). She expects a large graduating class this spring.

Focused on having students meet with advisors (>91%) and increased outreach to unregistered students. The College is very involved with the Husker Power survey and following up with students of concern.

There is now a grant-funded position for an Academic Navigator. Recruitment and advising will be working with the new CRM this month, and with predictive analytics.

Excited to be increasing the number of career coaches (made possible through donor funds).

Thanked people for their engagement with CASUP—an important part of addressing these strategic goals. Has asked all units to look at their data and continue working on student success plans.

CAS will be hosting a re-imagined humanities event planned for September 28.

d. **Associate Dean for Faculty updates (Pat Dussault)**

No searches last year; seven underway this year. Continue to have faculty participate in FDL.

Major initiatives: Active look at MoUs across the College, revising documents related to PoPs. Several units have provided input, hoping for adoption next year.

After this process is completed, the College wants to start the same process for research faculty (a classification with far less specification).

e. **Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education updates (Will Thomas)**

(Mark Button speaking on behalf of Associate Dean Thomas.)

Research funding awards at a ten-year-high: \$31 million to date. On the other hand, total external proposals are down.

Very active participation in the Grand Challenges program. 18 faculty taking part as PIs.

Working with NU Foundation for faculty interested in working with private foundations.

Research advisory committee's annual report is included in the agenda. The committee reported \$152,000 to faculty in internal grants.

College supported two graduate-oriented programs: A writing retreat, and campus career development workshop for grad students.

Over 1,260 graduate applications this year. 50% from outside the United States. 20% underrepresented minorities, etc.

f. **Assistant Dean for Business and Finance updates (Alecia Kimbrough)**

IBB (incentive based budget model). Several units making sure that the data that feed these models is cleaned up.

Lots of discussion of research centers (which will now be standalone entities under the new budget model).

In FY 2023, there will be more active (and accurate) shadowing of the model, because some of these sources of data feeding the model will have stabilized.

Number 1 question: How will incentives flow across the campus, but also within the College.

3. Recommendation from the Dean and the College Executive Committee to approve the proposed changes to the Bylaws of the Faculty, Article II—adding Section 4 which addresses academic due process. (See Appendix, pp 6–7).

Motion to approve the recommendation by Clint Rowe. Seconded by Courtney Hillebrecht.

EVC requested that all units review bylaws involving due process for faculty in all cases where a complaint may produce an adverse action.

**Poll Results: 45 yes, 0 no, 2 abstain. Motion passed.**

4. Discuss recommendation from the Dean and the College Executive Committee to update the College mission statement. (See Appendix, pp 7–9).

Process started in 2019/20 involving the College Executive Committee, a smaller *ad hoc* group of the Executive Committee, and consultation with faculty from Ethnic Studies. Changes included incorporating lecturers into the definition of “faculty.” College mission statement has not been revisited since since 1992 (and so contains some material that is factually inaccurate). Dean Button also intends to seek input from the staff council.

Discussion:

Eric Malina asks why indigenous people are being singled out, given the land grant mission of the college.

Dean responds that this is also about *expanding* equity.

Mellisa Holmstead notes that the land that was granted was taken from indigenous people.

Ken Bloom wonders about the inclusiveness of the liberal arts. Wonders if it would be good to define the liberal arts more precisely.

Dean Button agrees that the definition should be extremely broad, and if that message isn't getting across, a more explicit definition might be desirable.

Regina Werum wonders about the political nature of the term "citizen."

Dean Button takes the point, and notes that the intention is primarily ethical and not specifically legal.

Clint Rowe: Suggests "conscientiousness . . ."

Regina Werum: "engaged community members?"

Eric Malina: The term is not qualified in terms of *U.S.* citizenship.

Kelly Kingsbury Brunetto notes while the intentions here are undoubtedly positive and non-political, intent and impact are not always the same

Mike Hermon agrees that the wording is problematic. Suggests that the word "stewardship" might be incorporated somehow.

5. Opportunity for faculty to ask questions arising from annual reports of the various college committees. (See Appendix, pp. 9–15).
  - Executive Committee (pp. 9–10)
  - Promotion and Tenure Committee (p. 10)
  - Curriculum and Advising Committee (pp. 10–11)
  - Committee on Student Academic Distinction, Awards, and Appeals (pp. 11–12)
  - Assessment Committee (pp. 13)
  - Research Advisory Committee (pp. 13–14)
  - Endowed/College Professorships Committee (p. 14)
  - Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Committee (pp 14-15)
  - Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Committee (p. 15)

Dean Button invites open discussion on the reports from any of these committees, and acknowledges the hard work by the many members of the College involved with these committees.

6. Recommendation from the College Curriculum and Advising Committee to approve for the 2023–2024 Undergraduate Catalog. (See Appendix, pp 16–32)

Changes to the major in Environmental Studies—Changing the title to Environmental and Sustainability Studies. (See Appendix, pp. 16–20)

**Poll Results: 43 yes, 2 no, 1 abstain. Motion passed.**

Deletion of the major in Plant Biology—declining interest for CAS students; this will continue to be offered as a major in CASNR. (See Appendix, pp. 210–22).

**Poll Results: 42 yes, 1 no, 1 abstain. Motion passed.**

Deletion of the minor in Plant Biology—this will remain an option for CAS students through CASNR which offers its minors to students who are degree seeking in other colleges. (See Appendix, pp. 23–24).

**Poll Results: 42 yes, 1 no, 1 abstain. Motion passed.**

New Certificate in Social Entrepreneurship. (See Appendix, pages 25–32).

**Poll Results: 38 yes, 3 no, 4 abstain. Motion passed.**

7. Questions and Feedback

Dean invites open discussion . . .

Tom Marley: We've seen efforts to increase faculty and staff salaries (PoPs, etc.). Anything on the horizon to address GTA stipends?

Dean responds that it has to be a priority, and is the next logical step in this process. Must be conducted in the context of the budget. Notes further that a more realistic shadowing of the IBB process will be key to this.

Mark Van Roojen: We need to push the Foundation on this, and also suggests that we not think of this as a *cost* (since the graduate students are providing necessary labor).

Dean notes that the College is seeking \$81 million as part of the public-facing combined campaign, and that compensation for GTAs is part of that (as well as endowed chairs and professorships). Agrees that the the contribution of grad students to our teaching mission is and research key.

Meeting adjourned by Dean Button at 4:40

Minutes respectfully submitted by Stephen Ramsay