

MINUTES

Executive Committee

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

3:00pm – Microsoft Teams

Present: Melinda Smith, Chair; Joseph DiVerdi, Vice Chair; Andrew Norton, BOG Representative; Sue Doe, Immediate Past Chair; Marion Underwood, Provost/Executive Vice President; Amy Barkley, Executive Assistant; Jennifer Martin, Agricultural Sciences; Rob Mitchell, Business; Sybil Sharvelle, Engineering; Sharon Anderson, Health and Human Sciences; Antonio Pedros-Gascon, Liberal Arts Christine Pawliuk, Libraries; William Sanford, Natural Resources; Michael Antolin, Natural Sciences; Zaid Abdo, Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

Guests: Brad Goetz, Chair University Curriculum Committee; Matthew Ricke, University Ombuds; Melissa Emerson, University Ombuds; Amy Hoseth, Associate Dean, Libraries; Karen Estlund, Dean of Libraries

Absent: none

Chair Melinda Smith called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

Chair Smith requested introductions be made since this is Provost Marion Underwood's first Faculty Council Executive Committee meeting. Executive Committee members introduced themselves and their colleges.

Chair Smith: Would like to discuss the format of future Executive Committee meetings. Proposed a hybrid option so some could meet in-person while still having a virtual option.

Executive Committee members expressed support for hybrid option.

January 23, 2024 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEMS:

I. Minutes to be Approved

A. Faculty Council Minutes – December 5, 2023

Chair Smith: Asked if there were any corrections to be made to the Faculty Council minutes from December 5th.

Hearing none, minutes approved as submitted.

II. Items Pending/Discussion Items

A. Announcements

1. The Next Executive Committee Meeting will be held on January 30, 2024– Microsoft Teams – 3:00 p.m.

Chair Smith: We will update this meeting and future meetings with the room we will be in for the hybrid option.

2. The Next Faculty Council meeting will be held on February 6, 2024 – Microsoft Teams – 4:00 p.m.

Chair Smith: The Faculty Council meetings will remain over Teams for the remainder of the semester.

B. Provost/Executive Vice President Report – Provost Marion Underwood

Provost Marion Underwood: Would like to discuss activity for the first three (3) weeks in position and emerging priorities. Currently starting fourth week at the University, having started on January 2nd. There have been a lot of meetings and those are encouraging.

Provost Underwood: Since October, have been coming up with a list of Provost and executive priorities that are preliminary priorities anchored to the President. Have been going over these with President Amy Parsons and sharing them with others in meetings.

Provost Underwood: We have launched the search for the next Dean of Agricultural Sciences. The position description is out there, and nominees are being contacted. We have also launched a national search for a Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs. Internal candidates are strongly welcomed. This is such an important position for the University, so we wanted to search as far and wide as we could. The position description is available online and we have a strong search committee. We are looking for a real champion for undergraduate students and undergraduate education and student success. That search is being chaired by Steve Dandeneau. We are also getting ready to launch the search for the next Dean of Liberal Arts. The hope would be to have people who could begin in the summer and be in place at the beginning of the academic year, but we know that might not be possible. We are moving as quickly as we can.

Provost Underwood: Want to explain role in helping Colorado State University map out scenarios for the FY25 operational budget, as well as role in the budget model redesign. Have been included in all key discussions since starting in early January. Have expressed views on how the FY25 budget situation should be communicated and have advocated strongly for transparency. Working to learn as quickly as possible about how money flows around here. Expressed strong support for the budget model redesign and advocating that the President be involved and meet with the committees so that we can ensure we are aligned with the President's desires. Urging us to be creative and innovative, and to consider what we can do to help ourselves to generate new opportunities to drive revenue and innovate. Initial conversations with the deans have been encouraged. Expressed appreciation that Faculty Council has representation in so many of these conversations. Eager to hear concerns and perspectives to help understand and best serve this University.

Provost Underwood: We will continue to move forward with the student success and faculty success initiatives. We will be taking more action on these items soon, and they are high on the list of priorities.

Provost Underwood: One of the preliminary priorities being developed is working with the faculty on the innovation of the undergraduate core curriculum. Think we have an opportunity here at Colorado State to highlight some distinctive themes that are special about where this university excels. Some of those themes get traced back to the Academic Master Plan. Would also like to look at our institutional learning objectives and our core curriculum. Would also like to work with our new Vice President for Research, Cassandra Moseley, to develop some research initiatives around themes of distinctive excellence that can define our University mission. Would like to make sure those things are highlighted in our storytelling. The curriculum, of course, depends on faculty and these will be collaborative conversations with the faculty. Expressed hope that the mission of Colorado State University can become even more distinctive and clear to everyone who steps on campus in a way that helps attract more students.

Sharon Anderson: Have heard that searches are on hold because of budget scenarios. As we talk about proceeding with searches, wondering if we can get a sense of whether this is true or not.

Provost Underwood: Believe that deans need to think carefully about searches and how to proceed. Right now, given the budget planning we have asked them to do for reductions of 2%, 4%, and 6% that will take place in each college might lead some deans to want to pause some searches. Do not think we should cancel all searches immediately, because we do have critical academic and strategic needs. Think the leadership searches should proceed. Believe that deans will still be able to carry on searches that are high priority. Have asked each dean to prioritize searches within their college and discuss strategy. Stressed that this is planning, because we do not know where the budget situation will land, but this planning may lead to some deans pulling back on some searches for now.

Antonio Pedros-Gascon: Welcomed Provost Underwood. Expressed best wishes in this position. Stated that complaints will be heard frequently, as these are part of our function in the shared governance role, as well as support. When speaking about themes, would encourage considering the multilingual nature of Colorado. When they first created our constitution in Colorado, there was an amendment that made it mandatory that all documents produced by the government of Colorado be also in Spanish and German. Expressed hope that this institution can advance toward a more multilingual and multicultural understanding beyond an Anglo-Saxon understanding. Encouraged Provost Underwood's office to consider these kinds of possibilities when it comes to diversity and inclusion. In addition, would like to engage with office on the 3-2 teaching loads that affect eighty (80) plus faculty members in the College of Liberal Arts. Some departments and other areas have been working diligently on making this change happen. Would like to not delay this discussion based on budget discussions, since this is an issue of inequities.

Provost Underwood: Expressed that she welcomes concerns. As far as innovation in the curriculum or any themes we might want to emphasize, that really belongs to the faculty. Am throwing out these initial ideas, but this will be a faculty process. Expressed agreement about the multicultural and multilingual point and am interested in working toward becoming a Hispanic-

Serving Institution. As far as teaching loads, will always want to work with the deans on these because our colleges are so different. Looking forward to working with each dean to make sure that loads are equitable. If we do have to look at budget reductions, which is not for sure yet, do not want the solution to have everyone doing more with less. Understanding is that this campus has been clear in the past that they do not want across-the-board cuts if we have to have reductions. They would prefer that these reductions are strategic, meaning everyone might not get the same reduction. When we hear about 2%, 4%, and 6%, do not want to rush to thinking everyone will get these, because there might be some variability around the campus. The goal here is to preserve our university priorities and strategies.

Pedros-Gascon: Clarified that the 3-2 teaching load is only occurring in the College of Liberal Arts.

Provost Underwood: Thanked Pedros-Gascon.

Chair Smith: Am sure everyone has read the email that was sent out today from President Parsons. Something that was alluded to in the email was that there may not be a compensation or salary increase in the coming fiscal year due to the budget shortfall. Asked if Provost Underwood had heard anything about that.

Provost Underwood: Understanding is that the current models that they are looking at include a 1% increase in compensation. Know this is disappointing compared to what was possible last year and much lower than we would like. We feel it is important to have something in there, and we hope the number can go up as the picture gets better and as the legislative session proceeds. One thing that is under discussion is maybe doing a small increase at the typical time, and if we succeed in attracting more students and we have more flexibility, doing another set of increases once we know where enrollment is. Sense is that there is a strong desire to do something on compensation. Would be interested in thoughts about this and what Faculty Council thinks.

Andrew Norton: Expressed agreement that a 1% increase is better than zero. If we are talking about the trade offs of doing this, it is likely that if we do a 1% increase, that will probably be due to reallocations or cuts. Wondering if the 1% is really worth the cuts that would be experienced at other levels. This is in addition to dealing with some inequities and competitiveness issues that are pretty fundamental right now. There is a lot of discretion to the units and how they implement that, which is a pretty opaque process to mostly everyone on campus except those involved. Would appreciate more transparency and possibilities of input.

Rob Mitchell: Understanding from conversations is that the funds are still there and being considered, even with the 1%. We will see where it goes. Can ask Vice President Brendan Hanlon about this explicitly.

Joseph DiVerdi: We characterize these salary adjustments in terms of percentages, but in the past we have been discussing different mathematical mechanisms rather than percentages to adjust salaries. Would encourage these discussions.

Provost Underwood: Expressed agreement. Different universities handle this differently and have experienced these kinds of discussions. We want to do everything we can to compensate our amazing faculty and staff fairly and equitably, as well as retain talent and attract incredible people.

Mitchell: Stated that there was a report from the Committee on Strategic and Financial Planning as part of an ongoing discussion that was wrestling with the issues stated by DiVerdi.

DiVerdi: It states in the job description for the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs that it requires a tenured faculty member. Wondering if there will be any consideration to revisit this requirement to open up a wealth of extremely talented people among the non-tenure track faculty.

Provost Underwood: Certainly believe there is extreme talent in the continuing, contract, and adjunct faculty ranks. For this particular position, we are hoping for an associate or full professor, because we want someone who can influence the behavior of lots of people on this campus. Would like us to think about how we can do things differently around here to maximize student success, and thought an associate or full professor voice might be the most effective in changing the behavior of people on campus in positive ways.

Chair Smith: Hearing no further questions, thanked Provost Underwood for being here and invited her to stay.

Provost Underwood: Thanked Executive Committee. Expressed appreciation for the opportunity to speak to this group.

C. Old Business

D. Action Items

1. UCC Minutes – December 8, 2023

Chair Smith: Asked Brad Goetz if there was anything Executive Committee should be aware of in these University Curriculum Committee minutes.

Brad Goetz: Indicated that they were standard minutes and actions.

Chair Smith: Asked for a vote to place these minutes on the Faculty Council agenda.

Motion approved. Will be placed on the Faculty Council agenda for February 6th.

2. Election – Student Representative to the Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics – Committee on Faculty Governance – Steve Reising, Chair

Chair Smith: This election is for an undergraduate student representative on the Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics. Hearing no questions, requested a vote to place this on the agenda for Faculty Council.

Motion approved. Will be placed on the Faculty Council agenda for February 6th.

Norton: Asked if there was a reason these students could not be nominated by the Associated Students of CSU and the Graduate Student Council earlier so they can start in the fall.

Amy Barkley: Explained the process. We contact leadership of the Associated Students of CSU and the Graduate Student Council in August each year with the vacancies, and these are voted on at the Faculty Council meeting in October. Sometimes they are not able to fill these positions until later, but we do reach out to them as soon as possible.

Norton: Wondering if we should reach out to them in March or April for the subsequent year.

Chair Smith: Believe there is too much turnover.

Norton: Thinks it makes it challenging for the student representative and the committee chairs to work with this, and it is less effective.

Barkley: Offered to speak with Steve Reising about contacting the councils earlier.

Chair Smith: Expressed agreement with Norton, but unfortunately it is not within our control.

3. Resolution in Support of Libraries Licensing Priorities – Karen Estlund, Dean of Libraries and Amy Hoseth, Associate Dean

Chair Smith: We have Dean Karen Estlund and Amy Hoseth, Associate Dean. Requested an overview. We left off with this in December, with agreement by Executive Committee that we wanted to put forward this resolution.

Associate Dean Amy Hoseth: As a refresher, this is a statement that has already been issued by some of our peer institutions in the region. The language they used in their faculty resolutions was almost identical to the language that we are proposing here as well. The intention here is to demonstrate faculty support for broad licensing priorities on behalf of CSU Libraries. We talked about this last time, but Dean Estlund is continuing to work on Elsevier negotiations, which are ongoing, but the language here with these licensing priorities would actually apply to any kind of vendor negotiations in which the Libraries engage.

Dean Karen Estlund: We had a Libraries faculty group who came up with a draft several years ago, so this has been an opportunity to resuscitate that as well. The main thing we want to demonstrate to publishers is that we have faculty support and the issues that are going on in the scholarly publication realm. We have also added a “whereas” statement that includes a collaborative relationship, which is really what we are looking for with stakeholders for scholarly communications.

Norton: Thanked Dean Estlund and Associate Dean Hoseth. Expressed hope that this is helpful as you move forward with negotiations. Wondering about the structure of this document. The resolution takes up the first page and then is followed by a list of priorities. Wondering if this is the best way to go about this, as these seem like different things.

Dean Estlund: This was the format recommended, but we can change it. The idea is that the resolution supports the Libraries' priorities.

Norton: That makes sense in that context.

Pedros-Gascon: Spoke in support of this resolution. Mentioned a minor edit where some text appeared in grey.

Chair Smith: We will take care of that when placing into the agenda packet. Hearing no further questions, requested a vote to place this item on the Faculty Council agenda.

Motion approved. Will be placed on the Faculty Council agenda for February 6th.

Chair Smith: Thanked Dean Estlund and Associate Dean Hoseth for the effort put into this and we hope this helps in negotiations with publishers.

Dean Estlund: Will provide an update on the Elsevier negotiations when we have information. Thanked everyone for the support.

E. Reports

1. Faculty Council Chair Report – Melinda Smith

Chair Smith: We are continuing to develop a strategic communications plan and implement some parts that we have discussed at previous meetings. We will have an email coming out from Faculty Council leadership this week. It will welcome faculty back from break and provide some information about the next Faculty Council meeting, as well as updates on the Faculty Council meet and greets that are planned for this semester. We have these meet and greets on the books and they will be open to all faculty. The email will include a link where people can register. People are welcome to drop in, but we are attempting to get a headcount prior to these meetings. The meet and greets are scheduled for February 14th, March 21st, and April 25th from 3:30pm-5:00pm in the Lory Student Center. We are thankful that Provost Underwood will be at the first meeting. We will see how these work. The idea is that this will be a way to connect further with faculty and spread the message of shared governance and what we do as Faculty Council.

Chair Smith: The website redesign is underway and will be completed. Expressed appreciation for Rachel Baschnagel in the Provost's Office for working with us on this website redesign.

Chair Smith: We are also working on a spring newsletter to be sent out in April. We are still working on what will be the content of that newsletter. Again, the idea is to reach as broad a faculty audience as we can and inform faculty what we are doing as Faculty Council.

Chair Smith: At the November Faculty Council meeting, we approved Manual revisions to Section E.6, Section K, and Section J. Section E.6 remains with the President's office and we are hoping to get an update on this next week when we meet with President Parsons and Provost Underwood. Reminded members that Section E.6 was a response to a change in state-level policy where contracts could be extended to five (5) years. The Committee on Non-Tenure Track Faculty suggested this change. It went through the Committee on Responsibilities and Standing of Academic Faculty, who forwarded it through Executive Committee and was approved by Faculty Council. It is now under consideration of President Parsons and will not advance to the Board of Governors until we hear back.

Chair Smith: The other sections, Section K and Section J, were also approved in November. Section J is the one on intellectual property and patents, which is an important section. It has been completely rewritten and had not been revised since the early 2000s. Both sections were ready to advance to the Board of Governors but did not make it in time for the December meeting. They are on track to be considered at the February Board of Governors meeting.

Chair Smith: The Committee on Responsibilities and Standing of Academic Faculty are considering changes to Section E.3.1, Section F.3.7, and Sections F.3.14 through F.3.17. Section F.3.7 is being revised to clarify what administrative leave means. We will be seeing these changes in the near future.

Chair Smith: Wanted to provide an update on the Clark revitalization. We left off last semester with a resolution that was passed by Faculty Council around this. From what we have heard, the December group has been completely relocated. The March group will be split between Howes and mobile offices at Meridian, and the May group will be entirely relocated to mobile offices at Meridian. It sounds like a resolution has been achieved and that it is the best possible option provided to individuals being impacted by this revitalization. Asked if Provost Underwood had anything to add regarding this.

Provost Underwood: Nothing further to add. Sense is that this was a positive solution and all groups felt good about this plan.

Pedros-Gascon: As you may remember, there were some concerns expressed previously about Clark C. Clark C flooded during the winter break. Asked Provost Underwood if she could confirm whether the cost of the mobile offices is being deducted from the project budget. This was a serious concern discussed at the previous meeting when we were worried about whether we had enough money to include Clark C.

Provost Underwood: Unsure of the answer to this.

Pedros-Gascon: Asked if clarification could be provided at our next meeting.

Provost Underwood: Requested that the question be sent by email so she can consult someone about it.

Chair Smith: We have an ongoing task force on interdisciplinary undergraduate degrees, which is co-chaired by Shawn Bingham and Sarah Badding. Have reached out to them for an update and will hopefully have more to report next week.

Chair Smith: Met with Norton, DiVerdi, Jimena Sagas, and Jessica Metcalf earlier today to discuss a potential task force on the Principles of Community. We are going to proceed with charging that task force and the plan will be to include this in the email going out this week to ask for volunteers to serve on this task force. We want them to consider whether we want a Faculty Council standing committee that focuses on the framework of the Principles of Community and DEIJ issues around faculty and related to Faculty Council. Will have more updates on this soon.

Chair Smith: Asked if there were any questions.

Sue Doe: Asked if Chair Smith could speak to the concerns regarding Section E.6. We have had some difficulty on campus around this. We have had the availability of up to three-year contracts since 2012, and we have had very few contracts actually offered. Now, we legally have the ability to offer the five-year contract. Curious about the conversation and whether there are insights to the concerns or how we can be involved in that conversation.

Chair Smith: Spoke with the Office of General Counsel, particularly Jannine Mohr, and the understanding was that this policy change was not viewed as compulsory. It is optional, so the President is considering this option.

Norton: There was some concern about the fast process this revision went through, and they wanted to go through it in greater detail. Noted that in some units on campus, a contract is viewed as providing lower job security than if you are hired as a faculty on a one-year renewable. This is considered to be more secure than something with an end date. It is to the point where some non-tenure track faculty colleagues do not want a contract, they want the continuing status.

Doe: This is something we have been hearing for years. Continuing appointments are at-will, and despite assurances that they can move up, these can be ended for good reasons, bad reasons, or no reason at all. Would like this group to remember that we are now basically 50% non-tenure track faculty, and we should be conscious of our colleagues and how hard they have fought for these opportunities all the way to the legislative level. Would encourage everyone on Executive Committee to consider our responsibility to this matter.

Jennifer Martin: With regard to Section E.6, it was a combination of the expediency in which we moved the amendment forward so we were in compliance with recently passed legislation, and the hope to get this to the Board of Governors so that it could be reflected in offer letters beginning January 1st. What we have heard from the Office of General Counsel was that it is not compulsory, so the University needs to consider whether this is something they want as University policy. We did speak to Ryan Brooks, chair of the Committee on Non-Tenure Track Faculty as this was being considered by the Committee on Responsibilities and Standing of Academic Faculty about the challenge we face on campus with the relatively few number of non-

tenure track faculty who have contracts. There is a lot of awareness and education at the faculty level, but we still need awareness at the supervisor level. Have offered to work alongside the Committee on Non-Tenure Track Faculty on how we can be partners around this, whether it is Manual language changes or finding ways to indicate that this is an option. We still see hesitation at the supervisor and administrator level to offer contracts.

DiVerdi: There is still considerable discussion and debate among non-tenure track faculty as to the quality of the two (2) appointment types. Richard Eykholt had the argument that the severance of a continuing appointment is not grievable. Want to also recognize the work that Doe has put in throughout the years and her support of non-tenure track faculty.

Chair Smith: Hearing no further questions or comments, concluded report.

2. Board of Governors Report – Andrew Norton

Norton: Nothing to report at this time. The Board of Governors has not met since our last meeting. The next Board of Governors meeting is the second week of February, February 8th and 9th and will take place at CSU Pueblo. Will need to get a report to the Board in about a week. Requested that members send forward any items they wish the Board of Governors to hear about.

Chair Smith: Would encourage relaying our concern about the current budget situation and the outlook for compensation for faculty and staff.

Pedros-Gascon: Expressed appreciation for sharing the report provided by Athletics and the state audit. Feels it is important to have access to both of these reports.

Chair Smith: Thanked Mary Van Buren for suggesting that these items be sent out to faculty so they have access.

DiVerdi: We discussed Section E.6 and the rapidity at which it went through the system. One of the things we have talked at length about at great length in this group is a dependable timeline.

Chair Smith: We have received some written guidance on what is required for submission to the Board of Governors, and we also received the calendar and timeline, so that information is now available to us. The plan is to share this document with Executive Committee and standing committee chairs. Having this timeline is crucial. It will allow us to form a tentative timeline for some of these Manual changes we are considering and having a sense of what it would take to get it to the Board of Governors.

Martin: Something that has always been ambiguous is the role of the Office of General Counsel and whether they have to approve items to go to the Board of Governors and how we should engage with them on the front end. It is nice to have this document from the System that clarifies that the Office of General Counsel approves agenda items, but we do not have to get approval for the content. It is not a requirement to get approval from the Office of General Counsel around content. With Eykholt's relationship with the Office of General Counsel, the Committee on Responsibilities and Standing of Academic Faculty has gotten into the habit of ensuring that the

Office of General Counsel is involved while we are deliberating, which slows down the front end of the process. A question for Executive Committee, as we continue to do this, is whether we want to slow down the pre-work and making sure the Office of General Counsel is okay with something before we send it to the Board, knowing that they won't use their veto power to keep it off the agenda, which they may do if they hadn't seen it and then we work with them after.

Chair Smith: Can share this item with Executive Committee and plan to have it as a discussion item for next week. We can discuss what strategy we want to employ.

Norton: At the Board of Governors meetings, Manual changes are always presented by the Provost, or the Chief Academic Officer of the System when the Provost is not present. The Provost is presenting and endorsing these changes, so not sure how it would appear on the agenda if it is not in the packet of materials that the Provost wants to be approved. Think what Martin is referring to is working with the Office of General Counsel on the front end, as well as working with them after Faculty Council approvals, before it goes to the Provost's Office.

Martin: It seems redundant and perhaps not the best use of their time and committees' time. In some instances, like with Section J, it may be required to work with the Office of General Counsel through the process, but then they saw it again after the approval of Faculty Council. If we are going to work with the Office of General Counsel, we should do it intentionally and efficiently rather than having it occur at two different points in the process.

Chair Smith: Think it is important to have these conversations, because Eykholt will not be our University Grievance Officer forever. Eykholt has that relationship with the Office of General Counsel and that may not be the case in the future. Codifying an approach will be in our best interest.

Pedros-Gascon: Expressed agreement for a revision in this process. On the one side, we have the Office of General Counsel making the deliberative process very long because of the need to loop them in, and then we have the longer stalling of any decision by them later on. Feels any improvement on this process would be helpful.

Anderson: Asked who the Office of General Counsel reports to. Asked: Who are they accountable to within the University structure?

Norton: The Board of Governors.

Martin: Eykholt has cultivated a good relationship with the Office of General Counsel. To Chair Smith's point, Eykholt will not be in this position forever, so not sure if this is something we can guarantee or rely on.

Pedros-Gascon: Expressed concern that these relations are more based on a personal nature rather than professional standing. It is important that we make sure that no matter who is holding these positions that they are done correctly and not based on relationships.

Chair Smith: Hearing no further questions or comments, concluded report.

3. Budget Model Report – Jennifer Martin, Rob Mitchell

Mitchell: The committees have been meeting and the communications responsibility will be handed to the Steering Committee. Have been primarily responsible, along with Martin, for communicating to campus. There is a subcommittee of the Steering Committee working on communications and has done work in terms of plans around that. They have set aside the last ten (10) minutes of each of their meetings to talk about what they want to be communicating out to campus.

Mitchell: Something to keep in mind is that the budget model redesign process is separate from the other fiscal process going on.

Chair Smith: Asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, thanked Mitchell and Martin.

F. Discussion Items

1. Office of the Ombuds – Melissa Emerson and Matthew Ricke

Melissa Emerson: Thanked Executive Committee for the opportunity to give an overview of what the ombuds do.

Emerson: We have been through many iterations of what ombuds look like at Colorado State University. Our office assists employees who are navigating complex concerns in the workplace. Currently we have two (2) full-time ombuds serving the University. While we are serving employees on campus, we also have employees serving across the state of Colorado, the United States, and internationally who support in an ombuds capacity.

Emerson: Matthew Ricke started just a few weeks ago, and Dr. Kathy Rickard retired from the position last month. We did a national search, and we are excited to have Ricke here. Our plan was to expand the position and we modified the position with support from the President's Office due to demand.

Emerson: We operate with the guiding principles of confidentiality and partiality. We are an informal office and are independent of any other units. These are the guiding principles of the International Ombuds Association. We have a high threshold of confidentiality, which is a reason many employees want access to ombuds services. We do not have reporting obligations outside of imminent risk of harm to self or others, so people come to us to explore their options. We advocate for fair and just processes and help elevate concerns to the highest level possible if requested. Clarified that the ombuds do not participate in any formal processes.

Emerson: Last year, we had 603 different concerns. We assisted employees with supervisory and evaluative relationships, which were the number one type of concern coming forward. We also saw a lot of concerns around communication, performance appraisal, respect and treatment, supervisory effectiveness, and diversity-related concerns.

Emerson: Our job as the ombuds is to be a sounding board. We may serve as a mediator for individuals, since we are both experienced mediators. Again, this is an informal mediation where we pull parties together, but it is on a voluntary basis. We cannot force individuals to come to the ombuds. A supervisor cannot mandate it. We assist with mediation as requested, and we do one-on-one training. We have a tool in our office called conflict dynamics profile. Our job is to be a smoke detector for the University and elevate concerns to the highest level possible to help effect change, so we report on themes to administrators based on traffic we see around issues. We do not offer legal or psychological advice or make decisions. That is with intentionality, so people can explore their options. We also do not keep formal records.

Emerson: Provided statistics on what the ombuds office saw in 2023.

Chair Smith: Thanked Emerson for the presentation. Asked if there were any questions.

Pedros-Gascon: Expressed concern about the number of administrative professionals utilizing the ombuds. Feel it is worth having our administration evaluate what is going on there.

Norton: Asked what themes and concerns are emerging out of COVID, besides numbers of visitors going up.

Emerson: Have noticed some concerns around incivility in the workplace. Interested in earlier conversation around a committee on the Principles of Community. Given what we have heard around how employees are communicating with each other, do think there has been some fallout there from COVID. There were also many individuals hired during COVID and working remotely and had some learning curves around communication. Have heard concerns about us not tracking problems through exit interviews because we have not had the capacity to do exit interviews. Have also seen increases in organizational and climate issues over the last couple years. Last year, we saw more concerns around performance appraisal concerns because the stakes were high with potential salary increases. There were also a lot of people self-advocating or voicing concerns that there were many people in interim positions, and they did not feel they had a fair process of evaluation because people were in temporary roles.

Martin: With regard to the climate concerns, am thinking of the climate survey and how that data reflects what is being shared here. This may not be the ombuds role, but wondering how we can move beyond the data and find ways to offer support and demand accountability for addressing the cultural challenges that we face on campus, specifically with the climate between interpersonal relationships of supervisor and supervisee, as well as colleagues. We all know this is a problem, but not sure how we move beyond capturing the data.

Emerson: We definitely saw that we needed to do more around supervisory training and education, so we created this training and workshops. Noted that we also have four (4) generations of employees in the workplace communicating in very different ways. We have different employee types and how we communicate has perhaps been different in our learning. Think there are still limitations to some of our processes and whether we are creating pathways so that people feel they can bring forward their concerns and that we have the tools to help. There could also be a way to normalize conflicts and show healthy ways to do conflict. We see

examples where people are wanting and needing the information but are not sure how to access resources.

Norton: Asked whether the ombuds office collects information on level of satisfaction of service from their visitors.

Emerson: We do collect that information. When we close a case, the visitor has the option of sharing what they would have done if they had not gone to the ombuds office and whether they feel satisfied. It can be a challenge with response rate, but we do assess for satisfaction.

Norton: Noted that we have run a survey for the University Grievance Officer for the past couple year, and one of the things we discovered was that there was an increased awareness of the office and what it does.

Emerson: Think there are ways we can start marketing. We want to continue providing quality service, and while doing this solo with 10,000 employees, it was a little scary to think about. We want to meet with people timely and effectively. Noted that the ombuds are listed in policies as well, such as the bullying policy. People will see the ombuds listed as an informal resource.

Chair Smith: Thanked Emerson and Ricke. The plan is to have this on the Faculty Council agenda for February 6th. We look forward to seeing this presentation again.

Chair Smith: Before we adjourn, would like to discuss whether Executive Committee wants to weigh in on the budget and the issues that have arisen from the email sent out today by President Parsons. We could provide our voice related to the priorities mentioned in the email. Wondering if people are open to discussing this today, since we are at the end of our meeting time or setting aside time next week.

Pedros-Gascon: Expressed support for discussing this. Have been at this institution since 2008. We have had many years of zero raises or only 1%. There is a different situation when the institution is facing a crisis like they did in 2008. The way financial commitments have been set by previous administration and what they have prioritized is upsetting when faced with a 2%, 4%, or 6% decrease.

DiVerdi: Point of order. Expressed appreciation for Pedros-Gascon's comments, but the question on the table is whether we want to talk now or next week.

Chair Smith: For those still here, asked if everyone is open to adding this as a discussion item for next week.

Executive Committee members voted in approval to discussing this next week.

Chair Smith: Given the sensitivity of the deliberations, feel it would be best to do this in Executive Session so we can look at details and figure out where we want to go.

Chair Smith: Hearing no further business, called the meeting adjourned.

Executive Committee adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Melinda Smith, Chair
Joseph DiVerdi, Vice Chair
Andrew Norton, BOG Representative
Amy Barkley, Executive Assistant