MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Ballestero, Davis, Fertik, Magnusson, Mitchell, and Plachetzki. The following were guests: Wayne Jones, Andy Colby, and Terri Winters.

II. Remarks by and questions to the provost

- Provost Wayne Jones reported that the administration is looking at the financial picture using best case, worst case, and middle case scenarios. The university has provided prorated refunds of room, board, and fees to students at the cost of between $21 and $27 million. As well, there is other revenue we are not receiving. The administration is looking critically at every hire. There are some areas we are continuing to hire but it is a critical decision on every one of these. The university is continuing to make decisions on employment, taking into account whether the employee has work that can be done remotely. We are trying to find ways to support benefited employees. For example, residence hall directors are being redeployed to other areas of work.

In connection with online instruction, Terri Winters from Academic Technology will be putting together a survey of the faculty, a formative assessment, to get a feel of how the faculty are using the resources and to find out what is working well, what could be better, and what kind of additional support is needed. The survey will be deployed this week.

- The administration is working with the Student Senate on a joint communication to students.

- The graduate students are having a conversation about pass/fail and the graduate council will make that decision.

- Lisa MacFarlane raised a concern about the software being recommended to monitor cheating on exams, Respondus Monitor. Wayne said that this was on his agenda to talk to the Senate about. The Student Senate leadership informed Wayne about their concern with this software package that has been recommended by Academic Technology (AT). Both faculty and students were concerned about potential cheating. AT did some research and suggested one of the tools, Respondus Monitor. One of the features of this tool is that it turns on the student’s camera and records the student while they are taking an exam. Students have raised the concern that they are being required to download software and they are exposed. Vasu will be taking the concern to ASAC.

Wayne said that he does take seriously the concern of the students, but he also recognizes the need to control cheating. He is considering putting a hold on the use of Respondus Monitor until it is more fully vetted.
Lisa suggested that the CEITL (The Center for Excellence and Innovation in Teaching & Learning) could help faculty to consider alternative assessment strategies that would make cheating a moot point.

Several senators pointed out that they thought it problematic to require students to install software when information about it was not included in the syllabus at the beginning of the course. The students didn’t sign up for an online course and they didn’t sign up to be observed in their homes. The comment was made that most faculty were uncomfortable requiring students to use their computer camera, whether it is for Respondus or Zoom or something else.

Some faculty indicated that they were using other techniques like mixing up the questions and setting a time limit on the exam. Some faculty in Computer Science are planning to switch to oral exams.

Jennifer from the Student Senate shared that the terms of use and privacy policy from the Respondus website in section 2.3 of the data processing section indicates that the licensee is responsible to inform and obtain consent from all students for the transfer and recording. Jennifer said that if this tool is used faculty should be informing students in a consistent way about how the data is used.

Wayne said that he would take all of this feedback back to AT and he expects in the short term we will not use the camera. He also felt that it would be useful to get guidance from CEITL about alternative assessment options.

- A question was asked about how the financial situation will influence the faculty up for promotion this year. Wayne said that it does not influence promotion whatsoever and, in any case, most of those decisions are already made.

III. Remarks by and questions to the chair -

- We now have an opt-in function for student evaluations of teaching. If you choose to opt-in to the evaluations, they cannot be hidden from chairs or deans. Also, they are accessible under court order. They won’t be used for evaluation purposes. But you need to know that these documents are not private to you alone.

- We are expecting that the tool for students to select pass/fail will be available on April 10.

V. Approval of the minutes from March 30, 2020 - It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of March 30, 2020. Changes were suggested in Sections II, III, and IV, and VI. Thus adjusted, the minutes were unanimously approved.

VI. Updates and Q&A on the implementation of the motion Pass Fail for Spring 2020 - Andy Colby, the Registrar, provided an update on the work being done to implement the new pass/fail option for Spring 2020.

Andy shared that the testing continues in the test environments for WebCat and Degree Works. The work in WebCat is in the area where students will make the selection to change from letter grade to pass/fail. The work in Degree Works is to show that a P will be accepted as an indication of the completion of requirements. The WebCat tool will not be available to students until April 10th.

The process for students to follow is to go into WebCat under the registration menu to find the specific
link for Pass/Fail option for Spring 2020. This section will show a list of their current classes and there will be an option to select pass/fail for one or all of them and then click Submit when done.

Andy is working with Erika Mantz of UNH Communications about the timing and content of an email to the community with a link to directions and screenshots.

Joe Dwyer asked if there is a feature in the WebCat tool that warns students that the course cannot be taken as pass/fail. Andy said that there is not. It is up to departments to communicate that information to students. However, if a student changes to pass/fail they can switch back to letter grade mode before April 28.

Andy clarified that students can take individual courses as pass/fail or all of their courses as pass/fail. He also clarified that faculty will submit the letter grade at the end of the semester. Faculty are not made aware of a student’s decision to choose pass/fail.

The Registrar’s office is working with Jackie Snow’s group (Enterprise Information Management) to develop a report that will allow colleges, or perhaps departments, to identify which of its students has selected the pass/fail option. In the summer, once grades roll to history, that report will include the letter grade submitted. If there is a need for faculty to check up on a student who accidentally chose pass/fail there will be a way to produce that grade in a far more efficient way than was originally expected.

Kevin Healy pointed out that the wording of one of the FAQs (# 4) about departments that choose to not allow a course to be taken pass/fail seems confusing. Andy said that the FAQs were developed by the Senate. The point of that particular FAQ is to encourage students to talk to their advisors.

Jim Connell pointed out that the tool for students to select pass/fail is being made available on the same day, Friday, April 10, as the deadline for departments to decide on whether courses can be taken pass/fail. Andy said that he can wait until April 11 to turn on the tool in WebCat. But he is reluctant to do this on the weekend when there is no support available. The chair offered that the Senate would consider a change to the date for the tool to be available to students during the “New Business” section of today’s meeting. (See New Business for a motion on changing the date for the availability of the selection tool in WebCat).

The Chair thanked Andy and all in the Registrar’s office for their work on making this pass/fail option work.

VII. Updates and Q&A on implementation of motion on Student evaluations of teaching for Spring Semester 2020 - Terri Winters, Assistant Vice Provost for Digital Learning & Communication, joined the meeting. She shared the following information in response to questions:

- For faculty who choose to opt-in to the regular student evaluations of teaching process, and choose to add their own questions, the normal evaluation questions will also be presented to the students.
- Terri is not sure if the normal evaluation questions are optional for the students or if they are required. She will research and follow up.
- In any case, she believes that the responses to the additional questions are exposed to deans/department chairs in the same way as the other data from student evaluations of teaching.
In response to a suggestion that faculty could use an anonymous survey tool in Canvas or use a Qualtrics survey to collect feedback, Terri agreed that her team can put together how-to documentation for faculty for these tools.

VIII. New Business - Jim Connell made a **motion to open the Student Pass/Fail webpage on April 13.** This motion is related to Faculty Senate Motion # XXIV – M12 on Pass Fail for Spring 2020. The motion was seconded. The floor was opened for discussion. There was no discussion. The motion was considered not substantive since it is an interpretation of a motion that has already passed. Therefore, the chair made the decision that this motion could be voted on today.

The motion was put to a vote. **The motion passed with unanimously with 50 in favor, none opposed, and 2 abstentions.**

IX. **Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:00 pm.