Meeting called to order at 3:42 p.m. on August 29, 2016

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Berlinsky, Finkelhor, Scherr, Simos, Schmidt, Tavares, and Wake. Ingram and Innis were excused. Golinski served as proxy for Mellyn. Jonathan Dean, Mark Huddleston, Jovana Milosavljevic, and P.T. Vasudevan were guests.

II. Remarks by and questions to the University President – President Mark Huddleston greeted the faculty senators and welcomed them back to school. He noted that the 150th celebration of the University is upon us, and invited the faculty to watch for upcoming events, including the kickoff of the new fundraising campaign, “Celebrate 150; the Campaign for UNH,” at the Homecoming celebration on September 30th.

President Huddleston reported that capital projects around campus are moving forward. The renovations on Hamilton-Smith Hall are progressing well. The Hamel Recreation Center should have its soft opening today or tomorrow. The new stadium is ready for the upcoming football season. He said that two items remain on his wish list, including securing state funding for upgrades to our Biological Sciences facilities, and finding funding for a new Center for the Arts. He noted that our fine arts facilities are sub-par in comparison with the extraordinary work of our fine arts faculty.

The president noted that this year marks the first time that CCLEAR faculty (Contract, Clinical, Lecturer, Extension, Alternative Security, and Research) have an opportunity to be elected to serve on the Faculty Senate, praising the change and asserting that the more we talk as a community, the better off we will be. He said that he would like to see more opportunities for less formal campus conversations between the faculty, staff, and administration.

As far as personnel changes, President Huddleston reminded the group that the new provost will be on campus September 1. He thanked Interim Provost Vasudevan for his tremendous partnership over the last fourteen months, and said that new Provost Targett would be a very visible presence on campus.

There is a new dean in COLA, Heidi Bostic, and a new interim dean in CEPS, Chuck Zercher, who will fill in for departing chair Sam Mukasa until a search can be conducted. A search for a new dean of the School of Law is ongoing. There is new leadership in International Affairs, and the Career Center. These changes provide lots of new energy where we need it, the president said. He asked if there were any questions for him.
The former senate chair commented that she fully supports more frequent and informal conversations with the president and other university administrators, noting that issues don’t arise in the community just once a year. The president agreed, saying that the world we live in makes it necessary to have regular and full communication within the university community.

A senator brought up the need for a new performing arts center, saying that the arts don’t seem to be a priority in Concord. He asked if the president has a strategy to promote liberal arts in general, and noted that Vice President Dutcher had mentioned the desire to increase enrollments in COLA. President Huddleston responded that there is a secular national trend towards lower enrollments in the liberal arts. He asserted that we have come to distinguish between the liberal arts and “more practical” studies, which he finds an odd way to view the world. He asked why we should have to choose between Arts and Sciences, and suggested that limiting our studies to one or the other leaves us the poorer for it. Seeing no mandatory conflict between the disciplines, he would like to build stronger relationships between COLA and the other colleges as a means for students of every discipline to be more well-rounded, and to build the understanding and skills that will make them more valuable to employers.

A senator asked what the president meant by saying he would like to seek more state funding for biological science facilities on campus. The president responded that, in general, our facilities which are intended to serve the Biological Sciences are below standards. Other buildings have been upgraded during earlier influxes of state funding, and he believes it is time for similar upgrades in buildings such as Spaulding, Kendall, and Conant. He is seeking funding from the state for such upgrades. New initiatives in Bio-Engineering and Bio-Tech need new facilities to reach their potential.

The senate chair thanked the president for his comments.

III. Remarks by and questions to the Interim Provost – The senate chair introduced P.T. Vasudevan at his last meeting serving as interim provost and the senators showed their thanks for his service with their applause.

Referring to his conversation at the Senate planning session last week, Vasu said that he had answers regarding questions about the UNH Travel Registry and International SOS insurance, he said faculty who are traveling for business in tandem with personal travel should register your travel, and they will be covered for the business portion of their trip. The SOS health insurance can be purchased for the personal portion of your journey for $1.25/day. Coverage for the trip is available regardless of the source of funds for the travel. He pointed out that the recent coup in Turkey is an example of situations in which the registry is an important tool for the university, so that our traveling faculty can be reached in the case of emergency, in order to assure their safety. The coverage is available whether one is presenting at a conference, or is traveling at the invitation of another university, as long as one is registered.

Vasu noted that there are 88 new faculty hires in our departments this fall, over 50% of which are female faculty. There were no questions from the senators. The chair thanked Vasu for his comments and his service.
IV. Remarks by and questions to the Senate Chair - Chair Dante Scala welcomed all senate members to the twenty-first session of the UNH Faculty Senate. He said this is a new chapter in the history of the Senate, with the addition of CCLEAR faculty to our ranks, and asserted that the Senate can now better represent all faculty. He encouraged all senators to be the eyes and ears of the Senate, communicating with colleagues and bringing their ideas and suggestions back to this group. He said it is incumbent upon every senator to bring up senate business at every departmental faculty meeting and urged senators to seek a place on such meeting agendas for sharing senate business.

With nearly eighty senators in this group, Dante suggested that the work of the senate committees will be extremely important. He noted that in these meetings we deliberate as a group, but that it is within the committees that creative, productive work that will be considered here is carried out. He encouraged all senators to be succinct in their comments during senate meetings, noting that with a larger body, discussion time will be at a premium.

He then introduced the current Senate Agenda Committee – himself, Deb Kinghorn (past chair), Dan Innis (vice chair), Jim Connell, Emily Poworoznek, and Allison Wilder. He said that the Agenda Committee is here to help the senate members, and encouraged senators to reach out with questions or concerns. He then asked if there were any questions for him.

A senator asked if charges have been sent to the committees yet. Dante replied that the Agenda Committee is currently reviewing the suggestions for potential charges from last week’s senate planning session, and that a draft of initial charges should be ready by the end of next week. He said that there may be some overlap of charges, enabling committees to collaborate on issues.

Another senator asked if Senate documents would be made available on Box. The senate admin said that a Sharepoint site is under construction for archiving and accessing senate documents like agendas and reports, which are not posted on the public website. The website houses items like minutes and motions, along with the constitution and bylaws, senate committee memberships, and some supporting documents. The Sharepoint site will require a login with faculty members’ ad accounts to provide some security for the work that will be stored there. There will be areas for committees to search archived reports, as well as to collaborate on new reports.

V. Conversation with Student Body President – Jonathan Dean, Student Body President, was introduced. He offered a brief overview of the structure of the Student Senate, and then shared some of the Student Senate’s goals for this year. He shared three:

1. The Student Senate has drafted a resolution regarding campus grading policies. Students are seeking clear guidelines regarding grading policies, and suggest that such policies be clearly stated in faculty syllabi.

2. Students would like to re-visit the idea of a Fall Break, beyond the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.
3. The Student Senate would like to be included in any conversation regarding changes to the common exam time.

A senator asked if, regarding the grading policy, students are looking for a single policy to be implemented, or if they are simply asking that faculty make their course grading policy clear. Jon replied that it seems unrealistic to expect a single policy to work across all departments. He said that a policy expressed in a course syllabus would clarify the issue for most students.

Another senator noted that the Student Rules, Rights, and Responsibilities (SRR&R) manual discusses academic integrity, cheating on exams, and the recirculation of papers. He said that the Senate will be reviewing this document, and asked if the Student Senate will also be reviewing the manual for possible solutions to these problems on campus. Jon said that he would bring this topic up to the SS Academic Affairs chair, and said that the Student Senate would love to collaborate with faculty regarding solutions to those problems.

The chair of the Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee introduced herself to Jonathan and said she looked forward to working together.

A senator said that she has heard that students are frustrated without feedback on their grades throughout the semester. She asked if there is a way to convey to the students that not every course is structured in order to provide points every day throughout the course. She said that faculty are not trying to hide grades from the students, but that there are many ways of calculating a grade. She asked if there is a way to bring this up and address the students’ expectations for transparency in the grading process, while communicating the variety of methods of assessment used by faculty across courses and disciplines.

Jonathan responded that he believes that much of the frustration has to do with the fact that the “My Courses” grading function is not working well. He said a particular problem occurs when the grades to one assignment are not posted before the next assignment is due. He said that he could work to create a resolution outlining student desires on this topic.

A member of the Agenda Committee noted that the Senate passed a motion last year to include student representatives on the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs, Campus Planning, and Student Affairs Committees. He said there is much work to be done, and that input from undergraduate and graduate student representatives is welcome. Jonathan replied that the students are happy to be invited to participate on those committees.

Another senator asked Jonathan about students’ perceptions of online courses. There is a general trend toward creating more online courses, and she wondered how students feel about online versus face-to-face instruction. Jonathan said that one of the issues he hears students talk about with online courses is that it is more difficult to remember to do the assignments for online courses; that regular classroom courses have a built-in reminder to complete homework. He said he will bring this question up.

VI. Conversation with Graduate Student Senate Representative – Dante introduced Jovana Milosavljevic, a PhD student in Education who is serving her second year as representative to the Faculty Senate for the Graduate Student Senate. Jovana said that the GSS has a list of
twenty-one priority action items they would like to address. She shared the first twelve of those items with the Senate members.

1. Increase stipend to be equivalent to other similar schools
2. Interdisciplinary graduate student space for collaboration and adult beverages
3. Ask career services about the feasibility of holding a graduate student specific career fair in the fall or noting companies targeting graduate students
4. Make it easier/streamlined for graduate students to change their email address to another alias
5. UNH-wide policy that department meetings include a graduate student representative, excluding for confidential personnel discussions
6. Schoolwide listing/calendar of seminars with topics and abstracts to promote attendance and cross-disciplinary communication
7. See if graduate students can negotiate with legislators to start a grant program for NH-focused research as a way to raise more money for graduate students
8. Fee and tuition receipt for each fiscal year: what did my dollars pay for? e.g. faculty salary, buildings, research, etc.
9. Graduate specific career service liaison/advocate. Could be existing person with this focus
10. UNH to initiate evaluation/assessment of how to provide childcare on campus
11. Push for department-based graduate handbooks
12. Teaching Assistant evaluation of professor/Professor evaluation of TA – the need for someone in each department with TAs to communicate with and evaluate the TAs.

Jovana said that if any senators have questions for the GSS, she will be available at Senate meetings.

VII. Minutes – It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes from the last meeting of Senate Session XX, May 2, 2016. One correction was offered in Item IV. The minutes were approved unanimously as corrected, with 14 abstentions.

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes from the last meeting of Senate Session XXI, May 2, 2016. The minutes were approved unanimously as submitted, with 8 abstentions.

VIII. New Business – There was no new business.

IX. Adjournment - Upon a motion and second to adjourn, the meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m.