I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Baldwin, Ballestero, Barnett, Bedker, Coppens, Gardner, Gass, Herold, Mathieson, Simos, Theimer, Wilder, and Woodward. Endrizzi, LaCourse, Lewis, and Scala were excused. Doug Bencks and Nancy Targett were guests.

II. Remarks by and questions to the provost – The provost announced that the report from the President’s Task Force on Campus Climate is scheduled to be released on Friday, April 6. She invited questions from the Senate members.

A senator from COLA asked for follow-up information on the changes going on in the Thompson School, as described in our last meeting by the provost and Dean Wraith from the College of Life Sciences & Agriculture (COLSA). The senator recalled statements last week that a reason given for eliminating those four programs from the T-School was that those programs are no longer competitive in the current market, because other institutions are able to provide the same programs less expensively than we can at UNH. The senator then asked if the same thing could not be said about many programs across all the colleges at UNH; our tuition is high and there are other schools in this region that can provide a similar program for less money. He asked what is to keep the administration from eliminating any program at all by this criteria.

The provost replied that the answer to that question is nuanced. The administration is focusing on where we should have programs right now. The question, she suggested, is how to right-size our programming while staying true to the core mission of the university. She asserted that it can’t just be about the numbers. In the Thompson School, the provost said, the administration looked at competitor institutions with four-year degrees with two-year applied options, such as the Stockbridge School of Agriculture in Massachusetts. Calling Stockbridge a well-integrated program, she noted that they are also having problems. She suggested that we can’t be all things in all areas, but we can retrench in our areas of strength and rebuild there.

She said that the idea is to continue our commitment to the applied two-year programs in what we feel are areas of strength. We need to think about where we will grow, or consolidate, or build, and ask ourselves those questions, and ask how we can balance the bottom line in the end. How do we best serve our mission and our students?

The Senate chair noted that the Agenda Committee plans to meet with Dean Wraith as well as a past director of the Thompson School at their next meeting.

A senator asserted that the university is not a corporation, and that as a land, sea, and space grant institution, we have a particular charge to serve the needs of our state, and pointed to the
Thompson School of Applied Science as the heart of that core mission. She asked, with the planned consolidation of programs, if there are plans already in place to strengthen the remaining programs so that they can thrive rather than fail. She asked if money saved by eliminating some programs will be used to build up the remaining programs.

The provost replied that the idea is for the remaining programs to thrive. As far as the university not being a corporation, the provost asserted that while her first and foremost concern is for what is best for our students, she believes that we are naïve if we think that the second order factors around cost are irrelevant to our institution. We’re not primarily focused on cost; we must put our students’ success first, and then we must be reasonable about our budget expectations.

Another senator, from CEPS, said that while he hears what the provost is saying about being realistic about our budget. What he says he doesn’t hear enough from the administration is standing up for educational values. When the topic of declining enrollments in COLA comes up, he stressed that it is important for the administration to come forward with a strong public statement about the importance of the liberal arts. He noted that subjects like English and History help students develop the abilities to think and to understand the world around them.

The provost said that the administration understands the value of the liberal arts for all of our students, including STEM and business students. She said she is trying to promote all of the options that are available, encouraging students from other areas to get a grounding in the liberal arts. She asserted that we all own the assignment to get this message out, and that we all need to be discussing these important ideas. She asked how we might innovate and promote ourselves in ways that will resonate with students without compromising the rigor of our programs, and asserted that great universities are the ones that will work within their community to harness the collective energy and skills of faculty and adapt to help students truly succeed.

A senator agreed that COLA faculty and TSAS faculty have a responsibility to be responsive to current trends and educational needs, but he expressed concern that the administration seems to view faculty as the reason behind the problems in these disciplines. He suggested that some of the failures and challenges facing our programs may have their roots in some ill-advised strategic decisions of the administration in the past.

Nancy said that she cannot speak to decisions of past administrations, but urged the faculty to work together now with the administration, asking all to avoid an us-versus-them attitude. Shared governance exists to encourage communication between faculty and the administration in order to produce the best possible result for our community.

Another senator said that it seems that the T-School faculty were shocked by the administration’s announcement of changes there, and added that this reality makes it difficult to avoid a feeling of us-versus-them. She then pointed out that UNH is currently at capacity in regards to student population, adding that if COLA were to suddenly increase their enrollments, that would mean that other colleges would be losing students. Nancy said that there needs to be more alignment between academic strategy in terms of how that is run out of the provost’s office, and enrollment management. We are at our current optimal enrollment.
The chair thanked the provost for her comments.

III. Approval of the Senate minutes from March 19, 2018 – It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2018 meeting of the Senate. Changes were suggested in Items II, III, and VI. Thus adjusted, the minutes were unanimously approved, with 3 abstentions.

IV. Q & A with Doug Bencks, Director of Campus Planning – The chair introduced Doug Bencks, UNH’s Director of Campus Planning and Campus Architect, who came to answer questions from senators about campus projects. Doug announced that the long-discussed update to Spaulding Hall, housing Biological Sciences, has received approval from the administration. The project is budgeted at $86 million, and the university will be asking the state to provide $35 million. The remainder of the money will be provided by the university and university system. The administration is waiting for approval from the trustees so that the design plans can be finalized. Approval is expected, and the project should begin next year. The project will be both an expansion of Spaulding Hall as well as renovation of the current space. The current space is about 83,000 square feet, and the new facility will add about 50,000 square feet. The expansion will be on two sides of Spaulding, with a narrow addition on the Academic Way side wrapping around towards the Paul Creative Arts Center.

Doug reported that there are many other needs on campus, but at this moment, no other specific projects are planned. He said that his office has been working with a developer regarding a project to build a small hotel in downtown Durham. Faculty from the Hospitality Management department will be involved in that.

His office is also working on a master plan for the West Edge Innovation Neighborhood, which would establish a place to engage with business and industry partners in alignment with our academic programs and research. This area is where we currently have service and facilities buildings and library storage. The Graduate Student Senate representative asked if this is the same area that some are calling “the research park,” and Doug said that it is.

A senator asked if there are any plans to fund other projects, such as renovating the performing arts center. Doug replied that much thought has gone into the obvious need for something to be done with the Paul Creative Arts Center (PCAC), saying that it desperately needs renovation. He added that Huddleston Hall and Nesmith Hall also need serious attention.

Regarding the needs of the PCAC, he said that several ideas have been explored over the years, including new facilities for the arts such as an arts village that could be built incrementally as donors come forward to supply the needed funding for the projects. He noted that there has been some concern that some in the arts community in Portsmouth might be reluctant to see an advanced arts facility in Durham, but conversations with members of that community have been reassuring that such a facility would be welcomed.

A senator from the Music department reported that when he came to UNH 32 years ago, he was told that he would soon be conducting in a new arts facility, for which we’re still waiting. He pointed out that every four years, UNH hosts a number of presidential candidates, and these forums only serve to highlight our lack of a suitable performing arts hall. He noted that high schools in the area are better equipped that we are, and that we cannot hold the state music
competitions here at UNH because our facilities are so woefully inadequate. He held up a small
device, calling it his hearing aid and said that he is now functionally deaf because of the mold
in the building in which he has worked for the last 32 years. He can no longer teach violin, for
which he was hired to teach here, and he can no longer conduct an orchestra because of this
hearing loss. He asked Doug what has held up the improvements to the PCAC that he was
promised were on the horizon 32 years ago.

Doug agreed that this is a problem. He said he has not seen any projects for the arts here since
the 1960s, and said that he has shared his frustration over this with others. He said that the
problem may be an inability to articulate within our university mission a focus that will drive
us to mark a commitment to the arts as our highest priority. Ultimately, he said, it comes down
to funds, and without a significant donor, it is unlikely to happen. The senator said that saying
it is about money does not resonate with him; money always seems to appear for dozens of
other projects.

Another senator pointed out that retirement communities are being built up in this area, and that
this demographic is attracted to a well-developed cultural climate. She noted that there is much
emphasis at UNH on promoting research and industry, and that it is important that we also
develop our humanities and arts outreach. She added that this aspect of higher education seems
forgotten by our leadership. A senator said that he is aware of two high school graduates who
chose to go elsewhere because the UNH fine arts facilities are lacking.

The Senate chair pointed out that Doug is not the one making these decisions. Doug said that
he has seen three master plans over the years with three different solutions for the arts.

Another senator thanked Doug for hearing our questions today. As a member of the Senate
Campus Planning Committee, she has sat in on SARRC meetings as the sole faculty member in
that group. She asked how she might best report all that she observes in those meetings. There
is much going on behind the scenes in campus planning that is not obvious to the community.
She referred to a presentation from the Sightline consulting firm about the maintenance of our
buildings and systems. She asked what that presentation means to faculty, noting that she saw
in that presentation that buildings were being ranked by something called program value. She
asked if funding decisions for repairs and projects are made based on the value that the
administration places on individual programs.

Doug replied that there is an annual effort to examine how we’re taking care of our facilities
and resources. He said that there is no data put into that examination regarding program value,
but agreed that decisions have to be made regarding how problems and projects are prioritized.

Another senator noted that his department sees a large amount of deferred maintenance, for
which they apply to SARRC for funding. He said that it seems that a large amount of SARRC
funding is going towards building projects, or towards paying back money borrowed for large
building projects. He asserted that those funds are intended for maintenance projects, and that
the current pattern is not sustainable. Doug agreed that over the past 15 years, we have used
SARRC funds to pay back borrowing that we’ve done for many academic building renovation
projects, and said agreed that it is not sustainable. He pointed out that when we do the renovation
projects, that is deferred maintenance, but called it a huge burden that we’re taking on.
A senator asked if there has been new talk about plans for the area around Putnam Hall. Doug said that while the area between A-Lot and Putnam Hall has been identified as an area for new development, there has been no discussion of any specific plans. With the announcements regarding the changes in the Thompson School, Doug has been interested in what plans there might be but he has been told to wait for now.

The chair thanked Doug for his time, and Doug said he’d be happy to return again.

V. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The chair reported that he received an email from the dean of COLA, reporting that she has heard back from all of the department chairs in COLA regarding how they would like to handle double counting of Discovery courses for major credit, and that she has accepted their recommendations and forwarded those on to the provost. The dean did not specify what the chairs’ recommendations were.

A senator asked if this means that the Senate will withdraw the motion of censure. Dan replied that when we are sure that the actions promised have been taken, that is the plan. Another senator asked how faculty should now proceed as they advise their students on courses for next year. Dan recommended that faculty consult with their respective department chairs, or their associate deans, how their departments will be applying the policy. He added that he will seek more details from the COLA dean, as well. He reported that he and the provost agree that this process has been an important statement on shared governance at UNH.

The chair then announced that Jim Connell, a senator from Physics, is the faculty representative on the Consensual Amorous Relationship Policy Committee, and asked Jim for an update. Jim said that the committee agrees that the university’s current policy is generally acceptable, except for cases relevant to undergraduate/faculty relationships. There are many complicating scenarios, such as if a faculty member’s spouse were to enroll to complete an undergraduate degree.

Jim also said that there are plans to change the policy somewhat to avoid conflicts of interest for department chairs who might have spouses in their department. Currently the supervision of this policy is managed by the department chair, and the intent of the committee is to shift that responsibility to the dean’s level.

A senator asked about the language of the policy in regards to relationships between graduate students and faculty who may be in a position of authority. Jim said that the current language deals appropriately with that. Jim reiterated that the area of concerns has to do with undergraduate students, and that it is difficult to envision every possible scenario. A complete ban on all faculty/student relationships is not practical, and the committee will continue to consider options.

The chair then reported that he spoke with the VP for Finance and Administration regarding concerns raised with inadequate clearing of sidewalks on campus this winter. Several falls and injuries have been reported, and the Senate CPC expressed their concerns in a letter to the VPFA. The VPFA acknowledged to the chair that this has been a particularly challenging winter, with snow and ice that was particularly difficult to remove, and that UNH Facilities did the best
it could under the circumstances. He offered to come and speak to the Senate to answer questions. The chair thanked him for the offer, but being that it is late in the year, the Senate has much work to attend to.

Regarding the time frame for students to complete their course evaluations of teaching, Dan said that he will speak with Terri Winters to see what options might be available.

VI. Campus Planning Committee report – Bill Berndtson, chair of the Senate CPC reported on some of the charges to his committee. The committee met last fall with Doug Bencks to review upcoming plans. The committee believes that SARRC has a good system for prioritizing those projects.

Charge #7 to the committee was to

7. Examine improving the safety/mobility for pedestrians during construction projects that directly impact sidewalks (e.g., Academic Way outside of PCAC – especially during snow events), including obstruction of sidewalks by construction vehicles (marking areas and providing reasonable detours).

The committee forwarded reports of falls and injuries from this winter’s icy walkways and parking lots to the administration to make them aware of faculty concerns. The committee also shared concerns about the difficulty of handicapped accessibility to the MUB during the renovation of the Hood House. Doug Bencks responded that there is no clear fix for issues of construction vehicles and other impediments to pedestrian traffic, but he recommended that when faculty see a problem, they can report it at http://reportit.unh.edu

As an update on the progress of creating additional lactation rooms on campus (Charge #2), the new facility at West Edge is now complete. With the existing facilities in the MUB and Dimond library, that makes three lactation rooms available on campus. Another facility is planned for Morse Hall.

Bill reported that the hotel complex Doug mentioned earlier today may also include a parking garage.

Bill said that a recent letter from a concerned parent raised concerns about the structural integrity of the facility for the Child Care Study and Development Center, as well as and some environmental concerns regarding the facility. Doug Bencks told the CPC that the administration is looking into some long-term issues there, but that there is no imminent danger, safety issues, or health hazards.

Regarding parking on campus, Bill reported that the CPC has representatives on the university parking committee. He said that the university has certain metrics regarding the number of available parking spaces, and that we are well within those metrics. He said that there is a goal to make this a walking campus, with parking in outlying areas. He noted that the number of metered parking spaces has been raised as a concern with recent changes to that number, and that that number is mandated in the collective bargaining agreement. At this point the CPC has no information regarding plans for charging stations for electric/hybrid cars.
Charge #5 to the CPC instructs the committee to

5. Look into transportation for field trips for UNH courses: most economical/efficient method of transport, recommended/UNH-approved pick up/drop off, parking location, mitigating instructor liability, etc.

Bill said that the university has preferred vendors for such transportation needs, and that each department makes their own decisions regarding how to transport students. Liability is a concern. A member of the CPC will communicate with UNH Counsel Ron Rodgers regarding legal issues.

CPC Charge #3 asked the committee to

3. Follow-up on Spring 2017 passed Senate Motion #XXI-M12 on UNH-Private ventures.

Bill said that he spoke with the provost last year, and said that there remains one issue that the administration is concerned about with the policy on private ventures. He hopes this will be resolved soon.

Regarding the tobacco policy recommended by the Senate last year in Motion #XXI-M13 (Charge #4), he said that this matter remains in the president’s hands. A task force has been formed to examine the matter, and Bill said he was told there would be a report this spring.

A member of the CPC will be speaking with the registrar to see if our classroom space is adequate for the number of students enrolled.

The committee also brought forward the motion on the provision of AED units in our buildings.

A senator suggested that the presence of charging stations for electric/hybrid cars would encourage faculty and staff to invest in those vehicles, which would reduce their carbon footprints. He said that Stephen Pesci, Director of Special Projects for Campus Planning has asked faculty for support in the effort to expand the use of these vehicles. Another faculty member pointed out that UNH is touted as a leader in sustainability.

VII. Student Affairs Committee report on policy prohibiting exams during the last week of classes – Martha Byam led the discussion. In the Students Rights, Rules, & Responsibilities Handbook, it states:

05.23(fs) Examinations. Examinations at the end of each semester may be given in any course, but all such examinations must be scheduled and given at the time they are scheduled with the following exceptions: Practical examinations covering laboratory work may be given during the last five days of classes preceding the examination period. In courses of a modular nature with several instructors, the instructor of the final module may schedule a final examination during the last week of classes if approval is first obtained from the college dean. These exceptions apart, no announced
oral or written test may be given during the last five days of classes preceding the examination period. If a student is scheduled for more than two final exams in one day and chooses to take only two final exams on that day, the middle exam will be rescheduled. The instructor, in consultation with the student, will schedule a makeup exam.

Martha then noted that the letter sent to faculty from the senior vice provost for academic affairs and the dean of students in recent years has included a statement on this policy which has added wording to include quizzes as a form of exam that is prohibited in the last week (five days) of class. Some faculty have been concerned about the inclusion of these quizzes, and there have been questions regarding the source of this policy.

After consideration, the Senate SAC does not feel that the policy needs to be changed, but that rather we should better define and interpret the policy. The committee has three recommendations:

1. Recommend department chair as the enforcement mechanism.
2. Rely on current language in Student Handbook, assuming quizzes (low-stake assessments) are allowed.
3. Allow “performance” and language proficiency evaluations to be conducted as if they were a “lab” as it is indicative of student ability, similar to clinical lab testing.

Martha asked if the Senate thought that a motion on this is necessary. A senator pointed out that without a motion, additional wording could be added again in the future, such as the addition of “quizzes,” which began only in 2014. A motion would provide a way to encourage the dean of students to remove this language from his annual letter to faculty. Should we ask the dean to change the language first, and then bring forward a motion if that doesn’t resolve the issue? A senator suggested moving to clarify the language rather than ask for a change to the policy. She noted that in her program, there are assessments which are not cumulative, which are different from exams or tests.

Another senator said his department receives word each year from the registrar that there should be “no graded work” during the last week of classes, and that this instruction was verified by the SVPAA.

A senator suggested that the rules are as they are written, and that the Senate chair understands the rules, and that the chair should have a conversation with the dean of students and the SVPAA to clarify these issues. If that conversation does not resolve the issue, then a Senate motion would be appropriate.

A senator noted that he believes that the original policy was put in place to protect the integrity of the final exam, and to encourage faculty to give their finals during final exam time and not during regular class time. Another senator pointed out that if there is no Senate motion, we have no recourse for this semester. She requested that the SAC have a motion prepared. The Senate parliamentarian said that the SAC can write up a report, and the Senate can vote to endorse that report. This would be a step between nothing at all and a formal motion. The SAC chair said
that the committee had not planned to present a motion. The chair said that he will speak to the administration and report back, but asked that a motion be prepared in case it was needed.

VIII. New Business – A senator from the Thompson School thanked the senators for their inquiries today regarding the changes in the TSAS. He asserted that the programs targeted to remain in the TSAS will be seriously depleted by those programs being eliminated, resulting in what he believes will be the eventual closure of the TSAS altogether. He said that despite the administration’s decisions regarding their programs, the TSAS faculty want to succeed.

He asserted that this is ultimately a real estate issue, and added that since the Thompson School was started by a legislative mandate, the only way to eliminate the school altogether will be by another legislative mandate, which seems likely if enrollments continue to decline as they have.

IX. Adjournment – Upon a motion and second to adjourn, the meeting was adjourned at 4:33 p.m.