

The Discovery Committee

Preamble:

The purpose of the Charter of the Discovery Committee is to codify, in one document, the structure and operations of the Discovery Committee previously created by a motion of the UNH Faculty Senate (AY 2008-09 Motion XIII-M11) as modified by changes to the Faculty Senate Constitution (which is the overall governing document) and other motions passed by faculty Senate. It is not the intent of the Charter to make changes in the Discovery Program Committee, but rather to consolidate and clarify its status in a single document. This document also codifies previously *ad hoc* organizational details. Future changes, as adopted by the Faculty Senate, can then be made as amendments to this charter.

Quoting from Rationale of AY 2008-09 Motion XIII-M11, which still applies, “With the Faculty Senate’s passage of the Discovery Program,” (i.e., AY 2008-09 Motion XIII-M11) “it is necessary to call into being a committee, composed mostly of faculty, to review and approve courses submitted for the Discovery Program. Since faculty are primarily responsible for all matters concerning curriculum and academic policy, the faculty members of this committee must be elected by faculty. The motion is guided by the 2002 report and recommendations of the General Education Study Committee; and the salient passage from that report reads as follows:

We recommend the creation of a UNH Discovery Program Committee representing faculty from the various schools and colleges as well as appropriate administrative representatives to assure smooth implementation. The Committee would be composed of two representatives from the College of Liberal Arts and one from each of the other Schools and Colleges. Individual committee membership would be for a period of three years. There would be a sequencing of terms to minimize turnover in any given year. Faculty could serve more than one term. . . . The initial charge for this committee will be to evaluate all courses proposed by academic departments for acceptance into the UNH Discovery Program.”

The motion creating the Discovery Committee did not specify its place in the overall structure of UNH governance, though having been created by the Faculty Senate, it was widely viewed as a Faculty Senate committee. This issue was clarified by AY 2015-16 Motion XX-M14 which amended the Faculty Senate Constitution. Among other changes, this amendment asserted that the Discovery Committee is a permanent committee of the Faculty Senate. (The Faculty Senate makes a distinction between standing committees and permanent, based mainly upon membership.)

A related constitutional issue was the inclusion of non-tenure track faculty (“CCLEAR faculty”) in the Faculty Senate structure, both enfranchising and permitting them to serve with some restrictions (AY 2014-15 Motions XIX-M12 and M13). This change was

generally interpreted as meaning faculty eligible under the Faculty Senate Constitution (as the governing document) who could vote and serve in the Senate, could do the same on the Discovery Committee. This charter explicitly makes this the case.

An *ad-hoc* committee for a five-year review of the Discovery Program (AY 2014-15 Motion XIX-M3) resulted in a report that was referred to the Academic Affairs Committee for recommendations. A series of motions were adopted by the Faculty Senate as a result of this process (AY 2015-16 Motions XX-M21- 28), one of which (AY 2015-16 Motions XX-M25) expanded the Discovery Committee's oversight authority. This too is incorporated into this Charter.

The creation of the Dual Major in Sustainability presented another challenge. The University Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee (UCAPC) found that courses for the Dual Major needed to go through two levels of review in analogy with most courses which are reviewed at both the Department and College level. To accomplish this, such courses are reviewed both by the dual major and by the Discovery Committee. Similarly, it was agreed that any other courses that lacked a second level of faculty review (e.g. courses in schools such as the School of Marine Science and Engineering) would be reviewed by the Discovery Committee, even where they are not Discovery courses.

Generally, language from the original motions has been used in this charter with suitable grammatical changes and amendments that reflect current practices as approved by the Faculty Senate. Organizational details, such as reporting requirements, the election of a vice-chair, and clarification of voting and non-voting members, which were not previously specified, are made explicit.

From the original motion:

#### Responsibilities of the Discovery Committee

The committee's initial task is to establish and enact procedures, by which courses submitted for the Discovery Program are to be reviewed. The committee will take on such other discovery-related tasks as its members deem necessary. This committee will enjoy the administrative support of the Discovery Office, the administrative director, and the director's staff. The committee will establish and disseminate to the faculty procedures, by which potential Discovery courses are to be reviewed, and criteria upon which judgments will be based. Though this committee may wish to work closely with the Discovery Program Advisory Committee, with the current General Education Committee, with the Faculty Senate's Academic Affairs Committee, and with the Provost's office, the UNH Discovery Committee will have the final authority in reviewing and approving courses. The status quo from general education will remain in force unless and until changes are recommended by this newly constituted committee or the Faculty Senate.

## **Discovery Committee Structure and Organization**

### A. Name of committee

Discovery Committee

### B. Relation to Faculty Senate

1. The Discovery Committee is a permanent committee of the Faculty Senate with specific powers related to the Discovery Program. The UNH Discovery Committee has final faculty level authority in reviewing and approving Discovery courses.
2. The Discovery Committee shall work closely with the Academic Affairs Committee and/or other cognizant standing committee of the Faculty Senate as may be determined by the Senate or Agenda Committee.
3. As a committee of the Faculty Senate, the Discovery Committee shall respond to such charges as the Senate and/or Agenda Committee shall from time-to-time make.
4. The Discovery Committee shall report all decisions to the Senate's Agenda Committee in a timely fashion. In addition, at the end of each academic year, the Discovery Committee shall provide the Senate with a full written report of the Discovery Committee's decisions, cases, and activities during that year.
5. The Faculty Director of the Discovery Program shall report to cognizant administrators and departments.
6. The Discovery Program should be reviewed every five years by the Faculty Senate.

### C. The Committee is empowered to

1. review all Discovery courses for academic standards and inform departments should it judge any to have fallen below reasonable university standards,
2. track and report to, and discuss with, departments any changes in syllabi and personnel for Inquiry 444 and Inquiry Attribute courses,
3. track Discovery courses that have not been taught during the past three years,
4. conduct category description reviews of the current categories and make recommendations to the Faculty Senate for possible changes in the language in order to clarify the parameters of the categories,
5. review student petitions for variance in academic policy pertaining to Discovery requirements, and

6. review all courses (e.g. courses in the Dual Major in Sustainability) which would otherwise have only a single level (program, department...) of faculty review, regardless of being Discovery courses, or not. The Discovery Committee may consult with faculty experts on non-Discovery course proposals as needed.

#### D. Membership

The Discovery Committee shall consist of two faculty members from COLA and one faculty member each from PCBE, CHHS, CEPS, COLSA, the Library, and UNH-M. Committee members will serve for three-year terms. There is no limit to the number of consecutive terms any member may serve. After the first three-year term, subsequent terms will be staggered according to procedures the committee will establish. The Faculty Senate shall administer the election. Faculty members will be elected by the units they are to represent by those faculty eligible to vote for Senators under the Faculty Senate Constitution.

1. All faculty eligible to serve in the Faculty Senate who do not currently hold academic administrative positions are eligible to serve.
2. In addition to these elected faculty members, the committee will include, as a voting member, a Faculty Senate representative (who need not be a senator but must be a faculty member) selected by the Faculty Senate Agenda Committee.
3. The committee will also include the following *ex-officio* non-voting members: the Registrar, a representative from the Provost's Office, a representative from the Honors Program, and a representative from Academic Technology. The Faculty Director of the Discovery Program is also an *ex-officio* member. The Faculty Director of the Discovery Program may vote only in the case of a tie among voting committee members or in the absence of a quorum. The quorum requirement is that of the Faculty Senate.

#### E. Organization

1. The Chair of the Discovery Committee shall be *ex officio* the Faculty Director. The Faculty Director shall be selected from eligible faculty through a search conducted by the Provost's Office.
2. The Discovery Committee shall elect a Vice-Chair from among the voting members of the Discovery Committee to preside should the Faculty Director be absent. The Vice-Chair may appoint a Chair *pro tempore*, also to be chosen from among the voting members of the Discovery Committee, should the elected Vice-Chair be unable to preside over a meeting where the Faculty Director is absent. The Vice-Chair shall advise and consult with the Faculty Director between regularly scheduled meetings.

3. The Discovery Committee shall normally meet every two weeks during the Fall and Spring semesters. The Committee shall have additional meetings if a) the Chair or Vice-Chair deems it necessary, b) should urgent business arise outside of the regular academic terms, or c) should Faculty Senate business necessitate additional meetings.