

UNH FACULTY SENATE
MOTION # XVI-M19

on cluster hires

1. Motion presenter: the Agenda Committee
2. Dates of Faculty Senate discussion: 4/23/2012 and 4/30/2012
3. Rationale: See the "whereas" sections below. Also, in response to a question, the senate chair said that, if a department is already in process of getting a cluster hire, that could continue. A senator expressed concern, about how promotion and tenure would be included in the motion, and the senate vice chair said that the default assumption would be that cluster hires would have to face the department's promotion and tenure procedures.

4. Motion:

Whereas current and anticipated rates of hiring new-tenure track faculty are low in view of ongoing budgetary restraints, and

whereas academic departments are unable to anticipate replacement of tenure track positions that have opened due to retirements or resignations, and

whereas the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture hired seven tenure-track faculty as "cluster hires" during the 2010-2011 academic year, and

whereas the President's Report on Internationalization proposes the hiring of twelve tenure-track "interdisciplinary" positions within five years, and

whereas the proposals for the interdisciplinary schools, such as the Marine School, call for tenure track positions that are placed within individual academic departments but whose duties are shared with a particular school, and

whereas academic departments have been directed by their colleges to privilege "cluster hires" over single department hires that serve the specific disciplinary teaching, scholarship, and operational needs of particular departments when applying to the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs for tenure-track lines, and

whereas the practice at UNH has long been that the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs approves or disapproves requests for tenure-track hires generated by departments and colleges, and

whereas there is no official university document that defines or describes the meaning of "cluster hires," the criteria for proposing or authorizing them, and how that process relates to customary hiring practices of academic departments initiating hiring proposals in collaboration with the respective Offices of the College Deans, therefore

the Faculty Senate resolves that the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the

six Offices of the College Deans and the library, and the Faculty Senate collaborate in establishing a university policy document on cluster hires that includes but is not limited to (1) a definition of the tenure-track cluster hire, (2) clarification of criteria for proposing and authorizing cluster hires, (3) delineation of a transparent decision-making process that clearly designates which unit or units have the authority to propose or authorize cluster hires, (4) identification of safeguards or "tests" that cluster-hire proposals must meet that ensure they are not authorized at the expense of eroding the strength and quality of academic departments in terms of undergraduate education, curriculum, operational capacity, and scholarly programs (the University of Wisconsin provides an example of such a policy, based on fourteen years experience with cluster hires), and (5) establishment of a process for periodic evaluation and reporting of the effectiveness of cluster-hire activities in meeting the goals and objectives of the university, colleges, and academic departments.

The Faculty Senate further moves that the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs refrain in the future from privileging cluster hires over departmental hires until "cluster hires" are institutionalized within the framework of official university policy as prescribed above.

The Faculty Senate further resolves that the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs provide an annual report to the Faculty Senate, the six Offices of the College Deans, the Dean of the Library, and the Director of the Thompson School, that provides data on the number and type of tenure track positions proposed to that office (e.g., cluster hire, joint appointment, department hire), which college or other unit made the proposals, and which positions ultimately were authorized by that office.

5. Senate action: passed unanimously.

6. Senate chair's signature: 

Forwarded to: President Mark Huddleston, on 5-8-2012

Forwarded to: Provost John Aber, on 5-8-2012

Forwarded to: Lisa MacFarlane, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, on 5-8-2012

Forwarded to: the college deans and the dean of the library, on 5-8-2012