

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2000-01 FACULTY SENATE
APRIL 2, 2001 MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following Faculty Senate members were absent: Denis, Draper, Hageman, Halstead, Hiller, Macieski, McCann, Morgan, Reardon, Simpson, and Tagliaferro. Excused were Afolayan, Kies, Planalp, Shippee-Rice, Smith, Trowbridge and VonDamm.

II. Communications with the President – President Leitzel has sent a letter to the senate chair to confirm as university policy that the Faculty Senate’s Agenda Committee shall be asked to recommend two or three faculty members for each vacant position on certain standing committees of the UNH administration that are advisory to the president. These committees include the Athletic Advisory Committee, the Committee on Recognition for Philanthropy and Service, the Honorary Degrees and Awards Committee, the Space Allocation, Repair and Renovation Committee, the Committee on Campus Aesthetics, and the University Governance Communications Council. The president said that the same method will be used for search committees for key administrative positions reporting to the president such as the provost, the vice presidents, the president of the UNH Foundation, the director of Intercollegiate Athletics, the executive director of the Alumni Association, and the special assistant to the president for Affirmative Action.

The president said that, as part of the academic planning process, a review is being conducted of the students’ first-year experience both within and outside of classes. Would faculty be willing to participate in both the planning and execution of a ceremony to start students out in their first year with an enthusiastic understanding of the academic mission and values of the university? Next year new students will arrive over the Labor Day weekend. Some universities have a freshman convocation; and in other universities, students and faculty read a certain book over the summer and discuss it together. The purpose of any such ritual would be to help the students have pride in the institution and an understanding of the mission of the university.

A number of faculty expressed interest in the project. A faculty member suggested a freshman mentor program with groups of twelve to fifteen students or possibly faculty and staff having lunch with four or five students at a time. Another professor suggested beginning with an opening convocation with a theme that the students have been asked to do some reading on, followed by related work in the department and conversations with the advisor. Another idea was to have a giant scavenger hunt with a test at the end and the prize of a scholarship. The president asked for two or three people to work on the planning committee, and the senate chair said that he would contact her with names of faculty who could work with the planning group to be convened by Mark Rubinstein.

III. Communications from the Chair – The senate chair said that the Academic Planning Steering Committee is proposing a planning document on the academic future of the university, and the senate chair has asked the senate’s Academic Affairs Committee to review this document. He has also asked this senate committee to review proposed

changes in the university's discriminatory harassment policy. He will ask the senate's Student Affairs Committee to work on the issue of a possible ceremony for first-year students. The senate chair said that Faculty in the News, a compilation of news items about faculty, is now being distributed to faculty, legislators, and others.

IV. Library Representative to the University Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee – **A motion was made and seconded to nominate Barry Hennessey to be the library representative to the UCAPC, and the motion passed unanimously.**

V. Minutes – The senate minutes for both February 19 and March 19 were unanimously approved.

VI. General Education Study Committee – John Seavey said that the General Education Study Committee is an ad-hoc committee set up by the Faculty Senate in March of 1999, when there were concerns about the impact of budget cuts on the quality of general education. In 1965, a university-wide Educational Policies Committee was established. In 1978, the Academic Senate established an ad-hoc committee to review the proliferation of general education courses. In 1982 the report of the Undergraduate Curriculum Review Committee established the eight general education categories which we have now. In 1991, a diversity requirement was proposed but not given a common definition, and so implementation was delayed and eventually tabled in 1995. From 1991 to 1993 the first-year seminar was voluntary, and in 1994 it became mandatory but was then tabled, although there are some similar activities in a few schools or colleges and in some dormitories. In 1985, the Writing Across the Curriculum Program began; and in 1995 the Faculty Senate passed a university writing requirement, with implementation beginning in 1996 and courses approved in 1998. Currently the university has many courses designated as writing intensive; and last year the Writing Across the Curriculum Program was moved from the English Department to the Provost's Office.

Nationally there is a new wave of general education reform, and many universities are doing a major revision of their general education programs. Often universities are under pressure from their accreditation agencies to do so. General education should start with a solid freshman year, build upon that in the following years, and remove barriers to interdisciplinary education, as well as link communications and course work and use information technology creatively so that it has meaning and utility. General education should culminate in a cap-stone experience and should make a lasting impression on the student. Graduate students should be educated as apprentice teachers, as in the Teaching Excellence Program at UNH. There should be incentives for faculty to teach general education courses, and the general education program should encourage a sense of community and emphasize critical thinking and reading and writing skills.

A professor said that the large class size is a problem with many general education courses. General education may incorporate freshman interest groups and interdisciplinary studies, learning communities, service learning, and globalization, with an emphasis on the nature of inquiry and discovery, so as to develop competent and confident inquirers and to build a common and unifying frame work. Students need to

know how to read critically, utilize mathematics, and use the empirical method. A faculty member asked how quality control can be achieved and how the university can know that a general education course achieves what it tries to do. After a course is approved as a general education course, its instructor and content may change.

The general education web site will be at www.unh.edu/gened. The General Education Study Committee will draft a proposal which will be reviewed by student focus groups, faculty, and existing general education groups. The proposal will then be brought to the Faculty Senate.

VII. Motions to Amend the Senate Constitution – At the last senate meeting, motion six, which was originally paragraph two of motion five, received a vote of eighteen ayes and ten nays. This motion was declared to have passed, but it was actually a fraction of a vote short of the two-thirds majority required. The senate parliamentarian has ruled that a procedural error occurred when the senate was not informed that a two-thirds vote was required, and so a revote is needed. A motion was made, seconded and approved to vote again. Motion six says that the following will be inserted as item 1.D. of the senate bylaws: “If a department is not satisfied with its representation, the departmental faculty may decide, by a two-thirds vote, to substitute another faculty member as the senate representative for that department. That representative would be elected by the standard method for selecting senators.” After discussion about the first clause of the amendment, **the vote on motion six** was taken and **did not pass**, with thirteen ayes, thirteen nays and one abstention. **Motions one, two and three and motion five** (which consists of paragraphs one and three of the original motion five) were revisited as well, and all **passed** unanimously except for two abstentions.

VIII. Academic Standards and Advising - The senate’s Academic Affairs Committee and the university’s Academic Standards and Advising Committee have agreed that ASAC will notify any faculty member when a variance is granted for the faculty member’s course and that ASAC will also meet with the senate’s Academic Affairs Committee twice a year to present a quantitative and qualitative analysis of ASAC’s activities. The two committees agreed that no faculty representative will serve on ASAC, because of its heavy meeting schedule at times of the year when faculty are less available. If ASAC has any questions or concerns about a potential decision, the committee will contact the faculty member for clarification during the decision-making process. The committee says that it rules on changes in registration status rather than grade changes.

Faculty cited incidents in the past and expressed concern that the course instructor might not be notified. A faculty member might be able to appeal to the provost a decision by the committee. A professor said that the faculty senate should tell ASAC that the instructor should be automatically informed of any attempt to change a grade to withdraw/pass or any other status change, and the chair of the senate’s Academic Affairs Committee replied that his committee has told ASAC that it must inform the faculty member when ASAC changes anything that originally required the instructor’s signature. The senate’s Academic Affairs committee will bring to the senate written recommenda-

tions for policy changes for ASAC. A professor said that the instructor should be permitted to say why he made the decision that is being questioned.

IX. Intellectual Property Policy – The Intellectual Property Policy currently in effect was written about ten years ago. Revisions have been proposed by the Academic Computing Advisory Committee and reviewed by the senate’s Research and Public Service Committee. At this senate meeting the Research and Public Service Committee distributed a list of comments that it has prepared on the policy. Faculty are asked to send input to the committee chair, Tony Tagliaferro, via email at anthonyt@cisunix.unh.edu. Some faculty expressed concern that the modifications proposed recently might change faculty’s benefits, ownership, or compensation.

X. Acceptable Use Policy – The Acceptable Use Policy is on the web for faculty review and input. Regarding when the administration would be able to access the hard drive of a faculty member’s computer, this policy makes reference to another USNH policy. A professor noted that the USNH policy is vague and should be revised.

XI. Adjournment – Today’s meeting was adjourned.