

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2003-04 FACULTY SENATE

NOVEMBER 3, 2003

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Burger, Calculator, Gutman, Herold, R. Johnson, Niese, and Schlenrich. Excused was K. Giraud. Guests were President Hart, Steve Fan, Steve Hardy, John Ernest, Ron LeBlanc, Elliott Gruner, and Cari Moorhead.

II. Communications from the president – The president said that she apologizes for not having consulted sufficiently with faculty prior to the recent appointment of John Aber, an interim vice president, to full vice president status. This appointment may have been hastened by a job offer he had received from another university. The president said that she would like to arrange an opportunity for communications and input from faculty who do research, regarding the Office of Research and Public Service. Last Monday, the president spoke with the Agenda Committee, about the communications oversight. John Aber will come to the senate meeting on November 17, to discuss the goals and vision for the Office of Research and Public Service. Grant funding has reached a plateau after good improvement in previous years. The university needs to submit more grant proposals in new areas, and the Office of Sponsored Research could help with that. The Faculty Senate's Research and Public Service Committee could work with John Aber to establish a strategic plan for the Office of Research and Public Service and to make sure that the plan will include opportunities for feedback from faculty.

The president noted that the students seemed to have had a great time celebrating Halloween peacefully and without confrontation, and she thanked faculty for discussing appropriate celebratory behavior with students. Also, the internationally-controversial consecration of a bishop on campus this weekend was held successfully, with a good turnout from various factions who expressed their freedom of speech nonviolently. The president also asked faculty to consider several bills which may come up soon in the state legislature and are of interest to the university. One bill refers to penalties for inappropriate celebratory behavior, and another refers to the student tuition rate.

III. Minutes – A senator noted that the minutes of the last senate meeting do not include the names of those who called the question numerous times and the specific number of aye and nay votes taken to call the question each time, the chair asking this senator to conclude his remarks, and some details of those remarks. The faculty senators approved the minutes of the last senate meeting as is, by a voice vote.

IV. Communications from the chair – The senate chair said that, as soon as he had heard about the appointment of the vice president for research and public service, the senate chair and vice chair contacted the president, discussed the issue in detail with her, and talked about how to improve faculty opportunity for input on the goals and vision of that office. Today the senate chair told the senators that the student dormitories will close for the Thanksgiving holiday at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 26, which is before some classes are concluded. He asked that faculty take this into account and also that, if an instructor does plan to cancel that class, the instructor notify students well in advance. The Honorary Degree and Awards Committee is beginning the process of selecting a commencement speaker and honorary degree and award

recipients for the spring commencement. Nominations along with biographical information should be directed to the committee, care of Gregg Sanborn at 204 Thompson Hall, by November 14. The senate chair asked that faculty contribute to the United Way. The senate chair requested that a senator volunteer to organize the six faculty luncheons during this academic year and added that, if no interest is shown, the luncheons will not be held. The senate chair also asked the Faculty Senate to approve his sending a letter to Coach Umile in the name of the senate, thanking the coach for his stand on the student disturbances. The senate discussed whether or not the coach had the right to bench temporarily some of the hockey players for being present at the disturbance after a sports event, when their coach had told them not to participate in the disturbance. Then **the Faculty Senate voted, with many ayes, two nays and one abstention, to empower the senate chair to send the letter to Coach Umile.**

V. Update on contract negotiations – Steve Fan confirmed that the faculty and the administration have agreed on a new faculty contract. He added that this round of negotiations was very different from the previous ones and was completed much faster. For the first two months, the negotiators discussed the ground rules; and then they completed the contract in six more months, avoiding impasse and the mediator and fact finding processes. This time, the Board of Trustees and the chancellor let campus administrators Bruce Mallory, Jim Varn and Candace Corvey negotiate with the faculty union. Meetings were usually held at least once a week, in an atmosphere of fairness and respect. The new contract includes changes in both benefits and salaries.

VI. Update on the Writing Center and the Writing across the Curriculum Program – Steve Hardy introduced John Ernest who is the director of the English 401 Program, Ron LeBlanc who is the interim director of the Writing across the Curriculum Program, and Elliott Gruner who has a PAT position and is the director of the Writing Center. There is also a Writing Committee which has faculty representatives from all the schools and colleges. These writing groups are working together smoothly and are evaluating the writing process at the university. English 401 is the first-year writing course, and it had a programmatic review in academic year 2001/02. This review praised aspects of the program and suggested reevaluation of the goals, methods and assessment and more consistency across the forty sections of English 401. John Ernest said that, by the end of the current academic year, a document covering these issues will be ready and will be brought to the Faculty Senate.

Elliott Gruner said that the Writing Center had benefited from Bob Connor's cogent vision, Cindy Gannett's energy, and Mike Lee's business plan. The center is serving more students than ever before, assists with writing efforts across the campus, and emphasizes the value of the collaborative experience in the writing process. The center's impact will be assessed through focus groups, feedback forms and other methods. A process for evaluation of the staff has been developed, and writing portfolios will be prepared.

Ron LeBlanc said that the Writing across the Curriculum Program helps faculty develop writing-intensive courses. He added that departments are the best arbiters of what kind of writing is most appropriate for that department. The Writing across the Curriculum Program works very closely with the Writing Committee, which is responsible for developing and assessing the writing-intensive designation on campus. A Writing Fellows Program identifies students who have an ability to write and links them with instructors of writing-intensive courses. This pilot program

is a resource that instructors can use to provide more feedback for students' writing. Steve Hardy said that a faculty development workshop will be offered on the assessment of writing.

VII. Academic Plan – Jeff Salloway moved and Barbara Krysiak seconded **a motion that, in the interest of limitation of debate, each senator requesting to speak should restrict his or her remarks to two minutes and not succeed him or herself, although there would be no limit on the number of times a senator could be recognized in the course of this debate. This motion was approved with twenty-five ayes, nine nays, and four abstentions.**

At the last senate meeting, on behalf of the Agenda Committee, Edward Hinson had **moved the Academic Plan motion which was distributed with the senate agenda. After several paragraphs of rationale, the motion concludes by resolving that the Faculty Senate endorses the implementation of the Academic Plan for the Future of the University of New Hampshire and continuing consultation between the Office of the Provost and the Faculty Senate to ensure that implementation issues are addressed to secure the necessary resources, tools, and an institutional culture that will serve to foster achievement of the goals and values set forth in the Academic Plan of the University of New Hampshire.**

Also at the last senate meeting, Jim Farrell had made and Mark Wrighton seconded an amendment which they proposed to be inserted in the last sentence of the main motion, after “the Academic Plan for the Future of the University of New Hampshire.” That amendment is: “with the proviso that the plan be amended to include goals for optimal class sizes necessary to achieve the academic goals outlined within the plan, especially for inquiry and writing-intensive courses, and that class sizes across the university be investigated to determine where smaller classes are needed to reach the academic goals of the plan.” Today a senator spoke against the amendment and for the main motion, saying that the substance of the amendment may have merit but that it would be best to give our support to the work of our colleagues now on the Academic Plan and then discuss the other issues as they come up before the senate. The proposer of the amendment said that all of the issues should be dealt with before the Academic Plan is approved for implementation, and he asked that senators propose amendments to be added to the Academic Plan motion on each of these issues. The amendment regarding class size was defeated, with seventeen votes for the amendment, twenty-one votes against it, and three abstentions. **The main motion on the Academic Plan passed with an overwhelming voice vote, with one nay and no abstentions.**

Jim Farrell moved and Mark Wrighton seconded **a motion for referral of the Academic Plan motion just approved, to the faculty at large, because the motion is a fundamental issue. Article three of the Faculty Senate Constitution states that “Decisions by the Faculty Senate that envision fundamental changes to current practice must be ratified by the tenure-track faculty as a whole. If one third of the senators or the majority of the tenure-track faculty of any college or school votes that a decision is of such fundamental importance, a faculty meeting to ratify the decision will be called by the Faculty Senate chair. This meeting will be conducted by the procedural rules of the Faculty Senate.”**

A professor said that the senators had been asked to consult with their departments, in order to get feedback and recommendations before voting on the Academic Plan motion. Another faculty member responded that he would like his colleagues to vote on the Academic Plan. A professor

expressed concern that, although the Discovery Program refers to class sizes of twenty-five students, he had seen a memo saying that team-taught courses with two faculty might have to have fifty students. Steve Hardy responded that the small first-year seminars would still have to be approved later by the Faculty Senate after the pilot program; and he added that he would check on the figures mentioned, because they did not sound workable. A senator asked what fundamental changes triggered the motion to refer the Academic Plan motion to the faculty as a whole. A faculty member said that the Academic Plan contains some important changes. A professor said that he has confidence in the senate's Academic Affairs Committee to keep an eye on the implementation of the Academic Plan. **A motion to refer requires a one-third affirmative vote. The motion passed with sixteen ayes, twenty-four nays and no abstentions.**

VIII. Adjournment – The senate meeting was adjourned.