

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2003-04 FACULTY SENATE

MARCH 8, 2004

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Burger, Cioffi, Cook, Giraud, Herold, Neefus, Niesse, Sable, Schlenrich, and Sheriff. Excused were Broussard, Garcia-Rasilla and Hinson. Guests were President Hart and Palligarnai Vasudevan.

II. Communications with the president – The university will not know until early this summer what the results of the budget deliberations in the New Hampshire legislature will be. In the biennial budget already passed, the university was to have a three percent increase for this coming year. If that were reduced to flat funding, it would be equivalent to a reduction in the monies available for academic programs, since certain expenses increase each year and are not under the university's control. Higher education is critical to the future of the state, both economically and in other ways. The university will continue to work to convince the legislators that higher education is an investment in the future.

There is a one million dollar deficit in the university's financial aid budget, due to a decline in the average family income in New Hampshire. This deficit cannot be made up in increased tuition for other students, because UNH must stay in line with its peer institutions in order to maintain enrollment. Students often take poor-paying jobs as undergraduates; but the students might be better off in the long run to accept a student loan, be able to graduate sooner, and pay it off when they have a job with a higher salary. A student loan would also be wiser financially than running up a large credit card debt.

Regarding the programmatic review of COLSA, the AAUP had said that instituting the formal review at this time would be premature. President Hart told the senate that the provost is now setting up a system of informal pre-review for COLSA. Regarding housing, she said that a few units will have to be removed from Forest Park in order to put a road through the area. The university has asked the trustees to support a new bond issue this year. The plan is to get a bond approved quickly and build four hundred units at the Gables. Then forest Park would be demolished in a five-year plan. The total number of places for undergraduates, graduate students and new faculty would be increased; and a day care center would be included.

III. Communications from the chair – The senate chair announced that the Affirmative Action Office has asked the Faculty Senate and other bodies to give input on a proposed revision of the UNH Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment Policy. The policy has been rewritten to improve clarity and to ensure that the policy conforms to updates in the law and becomes "more inclusive in providing protections against discrimination and harassment to members of the UNH community". Pat Gormley will speak to the senate on March 22. [The draft policy can be accessed at <http://www.unh.edu/affirmativeaction/policies.htm>.]

IV. Minutes – The minutes of the previous Faculty Senate meeting were approved unanimously except for one abstention.

V. Graduate Dean Search – Palligarnai Vasudevan said that the university sent out an advertisement to the Chronicle of Higher Education and other publications ten days ago and that

the search committee has received many responses. The Graduate Dean Search Committee will select eight to ten candidates for airport interviews in late April and four to five candidates for on-campus interviews in early May. Faculty are invited to send suggestions for both internal and external applicants, to Graduate-Dean.Search@unh.edu. The list of applicants will be confidential.

VI. SAT writing component – Regarding the new writing component of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, on behalf of the senate’s Academic Affairs Committee, Steve Johnson moved that the senate approve **motion VIII-M7. This motion includes the context that the Academic Affairs Committee’s charge was to consider how UNH should propose to make use of the introduction of a new required writing section on the SAT examination. Mark Rubinstein and Director of Admissions Robert McGann met with the Academic Affairs Committee and presented an overview of the present admissions process, in which the SAT examination score is used only as a supplement to the core elements of the admission process. The committee discussed potential uses of the planned new SAT writing section.**

The motion would:

- 1) Request that the Admissions Office treat the score in the writing section (which will be introduced in the 2005 SAT examination) as a supplementary piece of information for the admission process;**
- 2) Request the Admissions Office to correlate, over a four year period of time, how well the score on the new writing component of the SAT examination reflects and could be used to predict student retention at the university through the freshman year, reporting back to the Faculty Senate in the 2010 academic year; and**
- 3) Request the Admissions Office to correlate over a four year period of time how well the score on the new writing component of the SAT examination correlates with overall student grade point average and, more specifically, grade point average in English 401 and Writing Intensive courses, reporting back to the Faculty Senate in the 2010 academic year.**

Jim Farrell suggested that the motion should change from requesting action to directing or recommending it and that the motion should also ask the Admissions Office to correlate the SAT verbal score with the SAT writing component score. Jeff Salloway responded that the SAT is going to change the verbal component to a critical reading component to go along with the mathematics and writing components. Some faculty members expressed concern about the usefulness of the SAT scores. Other professors responded that, if writing is not tested, high schools and middle schools will give less emphasis to writing. A professor said that gathering data about how the SAT scores correlate with retention and success at UNH would be a positive step. The SAT scores are only considered by the UNH Admissions Office as supplemental information. **A friendly amendment was made and accepted to change the word “request” in the motion’s last three paragraphs to “recommend”. The motion with this wording change was passed unanimously.**

VII. Diversity statement – Paul McNamara introduced the diversity statement by saying that the supreme court decision in Michigan means that faculty should develop a statement on the compelling need for diversity, in order to provide justification for targeted financial aid. **On behalf of the senate’s Academic Affairs Committee, he moved that the senate adopt the following statement on diversity as a compelling interest.**

The Vision:

The Faculty Senate, composed of the duly-elected representatives of the faculty, believes that the University of New Hampshire exemplifies our state and national commitment to both liberty and inquiry. The latter values have always been intertwined. Part of the value of liberty is that it allows for a plurality of voices, which in turn enhances inquiry. So to advance the interests of inquiry at UNH it is essential to construct an intellectual environment in which a plurality of voices can be heard. Furthermore, to prepare our students for the future, we must provide them with an environment that reflects the multi-cultural and socio-economic diversity of our nation and our world. This too is continuous with a traditional concern: the cosmopolitan aspirations long associated with a higher education. A corollary to both of these considerations is that we should be especially attuned to those groups that have been underrepresented.¹ Therefore, the University of New Hampshire must exert every reasonable effort to create and sustain a community of students, faculty and staff that reflects the multi-cultural and socio-economic diversity of our nation.

Our Special Challenge:

It is the goal of the university to provide students with a balanced education. UNH expends significant effort to do so. This is demonstrated in its long-standing commitment to required general education courses, as well as study abroad programs, a program of broad intercollegiate and intra-mural athletics, and extensive programming in the arts as a part of non-classroom campus life. In the same way in which UNH seeks to provide students with exposure to a diversity of subjects, international cultures, athletic activities, and arts, UNH has an obligation to offer its students exposure to that multicultural diversity that comprises our nation. Were UNH situated in a state with a diverse population, the normal processes of recruitment might naturally provide an educational experience which reflected the desired diversity. Alas, this is far from our situation. UNH faces special challenges. For example, UNH serves a state in which minorities are not present in large numbers: in 2000, New Hampshire had a non-white population that is one-eighth the national average. As a result, the vast majority of native New Hampshire students at UNH have had very little exposure to a plurality of voices which comprises approximately 25% of our nation’s population (in 2000).² Thus it is

¹ For example, in our nation, many people have been traditionally underrepresented in various forums because of disability, economic status, ethnicity, gender, lack of educational opportunity, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

² 2000 Census Bureau: http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2001/tables/nh_tab_1.PDF; in friendlier format at: <http://www.usatoday.com/graphics/census2000/newhampshire/state.htm>. There are, of course, subtle gradations: the proportion of Asians, Native Americans, Hispanics, and Blacks in NH is one-third, one-fifth, one-seventh, and one-eighteenth that of the nation, respectively. (Percentages and proportions are per one-race declarations.)

essential that UNH take significant affirmative action to recruit and retain students, faculty, and employees from such underrepresented groups. Absent this effort, we have left a serious gap in the educational program which we offer our students. With it, we may yet fully achieve our ideal of the sort of diverse educational community that is optimal for inquiry and that facilitates the emergence of cosmopolitan graduates.

Jim Farrell said that he objects to an implication he sees in the statement, that students at UNH are suffering some kind of deprivation, in the reference to “a serious gap in the educational program”. Also, he said that the motion calls for significant action to recruit and retain students, faculty and staff from underrepresented groups but that it is impractical for the university to recruit the same ratio of disabled persons, poor and rich people, races, genders, religions, sexual orientation and ages that are found in the nation and the world. In addition, he said that, if potential students who have a lack of educational opportunity are recruited, this might encourage enrollment of students who are not qualified. He also said that trying to recruit a person from a racial minority might imply a belief that the thoughts and ideas of persons of that race were the same and that such an implication would be insulting.

Paul McNamara replied that the committee is not claiming that UNH students cannot accomplish their responsibilities but rather that exposure to more diversity would be helpful to the students. He added that the document is a general policy statement and is not meant to establish specific policy implementation plans. Moreover, any such implementation plans should come before the Faculty Senate for review in advance. Footnote one lists groups that are underrepresented in our nation but does not say those groups are underrepresented at UNH. This diversity document does not advocate admission of unqualified students. Students who are academically unqualified should not be admitted to the university, and the Faculty Senate should continue to monitor that. This document says that diversity is valuable, but the paper does not try to deal with how to balance resources with a plurality of values. The paper says that we should take some steps to promote diversity but does not say what those steps should be. The committee expects that the Faculty Senate should be systematically involved in decision making about any steps which may be proposed in the future.

Another professor emphasized that the courts have decided that the university can support diversity and targeted financial aid, if the faculty provides a statement on the need for diversity. The UNH strategic plan has moved forward on diversity but needs a faculty statement on diversity in order to stay legal according to this court case. Without such a statement, our current affirmative action policies could be challenged in the future. After extensive discussion on the wording of the document, friendly amendments were accepted to change in the vision paragraph a word from “environment” to “community” and to remove certain references to our nation and our world, thus **amending the vision paragraph to the following:**

The Faculty Senate, composed of the duly-elected representatives of the faculty, believes that the University of New Hampshire exemplifies our state and national commitment to both liberty and inquiry. The latter values have always been intertwined. Part of the value of liberty is that it allows for a plurality of voices, which in turn enhances inquiry. So to advance the interests of inquiry at UNH it is essential to construct an intellectual community in which a plurality of voices can be

heard. Furthermore, to prepare our students for the future, we must provide them with an environment that reflects multi-cultural and socio-economic diversity. This too is continuous with a traditional concern: the cosmopolitan aspirations long associated with a higher education. A corollary to both of these considerations is that we should be especially attuned to those groups that have been underrepresented.³ Therefore, the University of New Hampshire must exert every reasonable effort to create and sustain a community of students, faculty and staff that reflects multi-cultural and socio-economic diversity.

The motion, as modified by the accepted friendly amendments, was approved by a voice vote.

VIII. Recommendations to ASAC – Jeff Salloway presented the recommendations of the senate’s Academic Affairs Committee to the university-wide Academic Standards and Advising Committee as follows:

The Committee on Academic Affairs has met with Dean Vroman of ASAC and has reviewed his report on ASAC activities. Dean Vroman has indicated to the committee the importance of the ASAC function to the orderly processing of students through the curriculum. It is the sense of the Committee on Academic Affairs that this function is sufficiently vital as to merit a process of continuous quality assessment to be conducted with the assistance of the Office of Institutional Research. Therefore the Committee on Academic Affairs recommends to ASAC the following:

Inasmuch as the system for student designation of courses as Pass/Fail is a popular feature of course selections, it is respectfully recommended that ASAC conduct timely and periodic review of that process with particular attention to the following questions:

- a. Are there systematic patterns of students who select the pass/fail option, by such variables as gender, class, major, grade point, etc. when these are compared to students taking courses for the normal grading option?
- b. Are there systematic patterns of grade performance among students who select the pass/fail option, i.e. do students using the pass/fail option perform at a statistically significantly lower level of grade than students who do not select the pass/fail option?

Reports on these issues should be submitted to the Committee on Academic Affairs of the Faculty Senate by the end of semester 1 of Academic Year 2004-2005 and biennially thereafter. The Committee on Academic Affairs further recommends to ASAC the following:

Inasmuch as the system for assessing student petitions for variances from academic policy is an important feature which permits students flexibility in their academic

³ For example, in our nation, many people have been traditionally underrepresented in various forums because of disability, economic status, ethnicity, gender, lack of educational opportunity, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

programs, it is respectfully recommended that ASAC conduct timely and periodic review of that process with particular attention to the following questions:

a. Are there systematic patterns of students who submit petitions by such variables as gender, class, major, grade point, etc. when these are compared to students who do not petition?

b. Are there systematic patterns of petition requests indicating areas in which academic policy can be made either more firm or more flexible in order to obviate the necessity for the petition process?

Reports on these issues should be submitted to the Committee on Academic Affairs of the Faculty Senate by the end of semester 1 of Academic Year 2004-2005 and biennially thereafter.

The senate adopted the report by a voice vote.

IX. Adjournment – The Faculty Senate meeting was adjourned.