

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2004-05 FACULTY SENATE

NOVEMBER 8, 2004

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Baldwin, Burger, Crepeau, Neefus, Quigley, Sheriff, and Vangundy. Excused were Broussard, Gumprecht, Laue, Mathur, Pescosolido, Savage, Shore and Smith. President Hart, Alan Ray, Elliott Gruner, John Ernest, and Joanne Curran-Celentano were guests.

II. Communications from the president – President Hart said that during the elections the town officials were welcoming to students who wished to register to vote and that the students were knowledgeable about what they needed to bring in order to register. The president described a program called “Durham: It’s Where You Live”, in which merchants and others share information about the Durham community. The president congratulated three faculty members (Joseph Durocher, Bill Saturno and David Corbin) on their presentations at the Durham area community breakfast. In the legislature, the leadership of the New Hampshire House will not be clear until November 18 and the senate leadership will not be known until even later; but the university plans to contact the legislative leadership as soon as possible. The USNH operating budget request will go to the legislature in a few weeks, although when the new governor is installed, his budget will no doubt differ from that of the current governor. Vice President Aber has reorganized parts of his office such as the Industrial Research Center to create a new office for economic development. The president said that students who are being deployed overseas or who are spouses of soldiers being deployed may wish to contact the University Counseling Center for help in coping with the changes or the registrar’s office for help on how not to lose credits.

III. Communications from the chair – The senate chair said that the university will not approve transfer credits from any country on the government travel advisory list. In order to advise students correctly, faculty should check the website to see which countries are listed on http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings_current.html. Please note that there is an underline before “current” in that address. Faculty should attend the open meetings set up by the RCM Review Committee to discuss RCM review or let Chris Shea or Don Quigley know of any concerns about RCM. The senate chair said that she has received a letter from a citizen expressing doubt about whether UNH is in compliance with federal law in granting four credit hours for some UNH courses. This fall, the senate’s Academic Affairs Committee and Student Affairs Committee were charged with reviewing the general guidelines for the amount of study time per credit. In 1992, the senate passed a motion to include American Sign Language as meeting the language requirements for a Bachelor of Arts degree. There may be a request to review this issue.

IV. Minutes – The minutes of the last Faculty Senate meeting were unanimously approved.

V. English 401 – John Ernest, the director of the English 401 Program, said that there had been a programmatic review of English 401 in 2001/02. The report praised the composition program and the program’s faculty and staff and also recommended an evaluation of the goals and methods and a refining of the approach to English 401, which is the foundation of writing

instruction at the university. The course could focus more on the fundamentals of critical thinking and the mechanisms of writing and could better prepare students for the types of writing they will do in their other courses. Examples of essays from English 401 are available to students, and examples will be added to show styles of writing in various academic disciplines. Faculty from across campus are invited to talk about the type of writing needed in their courses. The program will use teaching portfolios and develop better methods of assessing the outcome of English 401. Advisors should be aware that there is a choice of English 501 which teaches non-fiction prose writing, English 502 which teaches technical writing, and English 503 which teaches persuasive writing. A single grammar handbook probably will be chosen for all sections of English 401, a choice that will be communicated to faculty across the campus. English 401 will focus on core concerns but cannot provide all of the writing skills needed by students. English 401 will try to teach students how to use the grammar handbook and to get in the habit of using it. However, grammar tends to slip when students grapple with new concepts in more advanced courses.

Elliott Gruner, who is the director of the University Writing Programs, manages the Writing across the Curriculum Program and the Writing Center and works with the English 401 Program. He proposed that the University Writing Committee should review the university writing requirements and make recommendations. He would also like to develop a more cohesive writing program for UNH and to search for the courses and settings where student writing is most successful. A professor asked if the university could negotiate with the vendor of the grammar handbook to get desk copies for all faculty. John Ernest said that would be his goal. He added that consistent standards for all the English 401 sections are important and that there needs to be a new realism about grades in the course. Also, the focus should shift towards less memoir writing and writing about feelings. Personal writing has dominated English 401 writing in the past, and he wants to anticipate the changes that occur when students shift to writing in other styles on other subjects.

In response to a question about whether there is an official procedure by which faculty can state their expectations and needs, Elliott Gruner said that his office collects faculty course syllabi and tells staff during orientation how to access those syllabi. John Ernest said that in the future he hopes to talk with high schools about writing standards and how high schools and universities can help each other. In response to a question about assessment of the Writing Center, Elliott Gruner said that he is confident about the Writing Center's ability to help students with their writing. His office oversees surveys of staff and students, and that report is available on line. He added that the Writing Center could work on serving the needs of a particular course. All staff of the Writing Center are part-time, and most are undergraduates. A senator asked if students can test out of English 401. John Ernest replied that some students with advanced placement skip English 401 but that strong and weak students can benefit each other in English 401 and that the strong students could learn to write in the style required by other disciplines at UNH. The senate chair asked that faculty send feedback on English 401 to John Ernest and writing assessment samples to the Writing Center.

VI. Discovery Program Implementation – Joanne Curran-Celentano is chair of the Discovery Program Advisory Committee and meets regularly with the senate's Academic Affairs Committee. She will report to the Faculty Senate again in February and in April on the Discovery Program implementation progress, and she asks that senators share with their

departmental colleagues the information about the Discovery Program implementation. She said that in 1999 the Faculty Senate charged the General Education Study Committee with reviewing the General Education Program. After a report to the senate in March of 2002, the senate passed a motion commending the efforts of the senate's General Education Study Committee and supporting the basic design of the proposed Discovery Program. The Faculty Senate also recommended that no further action on the GESC report be taken until such time as a comprehensive plan for implementation of the program could be developed and approved by the Faculty Senate. After another presentation to the senate, in May of 2003 the senate passed a motion that the "Faculty Senate commends for its excellent work the Ad-hoc Committee on the Discovery Program and also asks the committee to continue work on the plan, to meet with the new provost this summer, and to report to the Faculty Senate in the fall." On October 20, 2003, the Faculty Senate endorsed the adoption of the Discovery Implementation Plan, as outlined in the senate minutes of May 5, 2003, (and expanded upon on September 22, 2003) and encouraged the provost to go forward with the appointment of a full-time Faculty Fellow and the establishment of an advisory committee to initiate the processes specified by the Implementation Plan.

The Discovery Program Advisory Committee now has nine faculty and five staff members and meets weekly. The Discovery Program is designed to provide a unifying framework for the UNH undergraduate experience, to focus on inquiry with exposure to knowledge in breadth and depth, to integrate curricular and extended curricular experiences, and to develop links with the major. The first-year experiences should include assessment of mathematics and information technology, university dialog and town hall meetings, English 401, and an inquiry course which is a first-year course with twenty-five students per faculty and inquiry-based learning pedagogy exploring multiple perspectives with discussion and problem solving. A number of courses have been accepted as Discovery Program inquiry courses in the pilot program, and those courses would also fulfill general education requirements. The first inquiry courses were taught last spring.

The ten discovery categories include quantitative reasoning, biological science, physical science, historical perspective, foreign culture, fine and performing arts, social science, social identity and the individual, humanities, and technology, environment and society. The inquiry course counts for one of these categories. Additional courses would be used to fulfill the other categories, and one course may be approved to fulfill two categories. All Discovery Program courses will be based on inquiry pedagogy and will be reviewed on a continuing basis. Writing-intensive courses would be as presently constructed, and the advisory committee is currently working to define the capstone experience. Based on information obtained from the Discovery Program Implementation Committee questionnaire in 2003, about forty to fifty percent of the majors already have a capstone experience. There is support from the provost's office to help with course development. Faculty development is key to implementation.

This year the advisory committee intends to work on models of assessment and pilot programs for the university dialogue and town hall meetings, inquiry courses, and capstone experiences, as well as to review the framework of general education and the discovery courses, to identify criteria for discovery categories, to plan faculty development opportunities, to deliberate on the capstone experience, and to establish working groups to engage faculty, students and staff. In response to a question about why foreign language is not a discovery category, Joanne Curran-

Celentano said that foreign language courses would be a selection within the foreign culture category and that she invites faculty to bring input to the Discovery Program Advisory Committee. The advisory committee has a website under construction and a blackboard organization site, and the committee's mailing address is 3 Hamilton Smith Hall.

A professor said that, in some universities when large course changes are instituted, funds are provided to faculty who develop the new courses. He expressed skepticism of the idea that the Discovery Program could be instituted with few new funds. Joanne Curran-Celentano said that there is some support for course development and faculty development and that it will take a while to figure out what the costs may be. John Ernest said that the advisory committee started by discussing budgetary issues. The committee will look at how other institutions manage this. Another senator said that the first-year mathematics assessment would show that some students need remediation. Joanne Curran-Celentano said that the advisory committee is working with the Mathematics Department on the design of the mathematics assessment. A professor asked if the plan that the courses would be taught for at least three years will exclude faculty who are within four years of retirement. Joanne Curran-Celentano replied that this could be discussed on an individual basis. Although the plan was for courses to be taught three times and then reviewed, that was not meant to exclude faculty who would be interested in participating. Faculty are asked to send input on the Discovery Program implementation to Joanne Curran-Celentano or Michael Kalinowski.

VII. Diversity – In order to cast some light on how UNH faculty felt about various issues related to diversity recruitment and retention, Monica Chiu was asked to summarize the results of a survey she had initiated at UNH last spring. Other initiatives included small faculty seminars which were held on pedagogy and diversity. The New England Center for Inclusive Teaching was formed, and a number of colleges and universities participate in this program. Monica Chiu said that the people most likely to respond to the survey were interested in diversity and were often from the College of Liberal Arts. Most responders were tenure-track faculty. Most thought that more diversity among students in the classes would not affect the course topics and that a diverse student body would be helpful to the educational experience at UNH. Currently, minority persons constitute about five percent of the faculty and seven percent of the students at UNH. Many faculty say that they do not know how to bring diversity into their courses.

Senators expressed concern about the way the survey was set up and the rate of response. Monica Chiu said that the survey had a response rate of 249 out of about 800 faculty. She had looked at diversity surveys on other campuses and had received advice from many sources, but she is not an expert on how surveys should be set up and evaluated. A senator suggested that perhaps a professor with expertise in this area could look at the survey and make recommendations. Monica Chiu said that the provost wants another survey done in the spring and that a faculty member with survey expertise would be welcome to volunteer. In response to questions, she said that religion ranked seven out of fifteen categories and that the survey results will be posted on the diversity website. The senate chair suggested that pro-active searches and mentoring for minority faculty could be discussed by the Faculty Senate at a later date.

VIII. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned.