

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2006-07 FACULTY SENATE

FEBRUARY 19, 2007

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Baldwin, Balling, Brown, Burger, Chasteen, DeMitchell, Ferber, Graham, Morgan, Robertson, Schiller, Tenczar, and Walsh. Excused were Ament, Carr, Jacobs and Kistler. Stephanie White was a guest.

II. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The senate chair said that, although some directors of centers serve two-year terms, this may be practice and not policy. What is the policy regarding term length? For the Discovery Program, Joanne Curran-Celentano will serve for another year but Cliff Brown will be replaced by an assistant director. A senator asked if the Faculty Senate will reciprocate the potluck dinner the student senators hosted for the faculty senators. The Agenda Committee will consider this matter at its next meeting.

III. COLSA reorganization – The senate chair has sent a note to the university president, to thank her for her expeditious handling of the recent decision on the COLSA reorganization. Tom Brady will be the next dean of COLSA. The provost has said that, since the COLSA reorganization will consolidate the COLSA departments into fewer departments than before, even though the tenure-track faculty will continue to have jobs in the combined departments, he considers this to be displacement which requires a meeting of the administration, the faculty union and the senate's Agenda Committee. However, many faculty believe that, because no tenure-track faculty are expected to lose their jobs in this reorganization, no displacement is occurring. No university-wide financial exigency has been declared. The determination of whether displacement will exist, under the terms of the faculty contract, is a negotiable issue between the AAUP and the administration; and the Agenda Committee will await that determination.

IV. New university programs – The senate chair said that a new university program is being discussed, on community and environmental health planning. The provost is considering the possibility of having the current UNH schools (WSBE and SHHS) designated as colleges and then creating as schools certain cross-college programs. These new schools might report to a college dean and not be responsibility-center-management units. The senate chair said that such programs/schools should be proposed by faculty, approved by deans, and then brought to the Faculty Senate for approval. Mimi Becker will have informal discussions with faculty members who are likely to be interested in a program on community and environmental health planning, and the discussion could then be broadened to all faculty. Such a school could merge teaching with a heavy emphasis on the “discovery” model, service and outreach, and coordination with state organizations such as the Jordan Institute. This might be a model for other kinds of interdisciplinary efforts. A school of marine sciences might be developed as well. Interested faculty should propose such schools and present the proposal to the provost and the senate. What would be the administrative arrangements under which such schools might be constructed?

A proposal for an inter-college program on eco-gastronomy may be presented to Vice Provost Ray at the end of March and would be similar to the International Studies Program. The new

program would be part of a dual major, and the student would be enrolled in the college of the other major. Any such proposal would need to come to the Faculty Senate for approval and would probably be dealt with after work to rule. Submitting a proposal to the University Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee alone is not sufficient, because the charter of UCAPC says:

The UCAPC is a standing committee of the UNH Faculty Senate. The UCAPC is intended (1) to serve as an appeals and fact-finding body to consider academic and curricular matters which have inter-college and/or campus-wide effects or which are likely to affect the quality or integrity of the realization of the university's academic mission and (2) to advise the Faculty Senate on its findings and recommendations. The Faculty Senate will consider the UCAPC's recommendations, act and forward the recommendations arising from the senate's deliberations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Such new schools might be run by faculty directors who would report to deans, and academic faculty appointments might be restricted to colleges and not schools. Faculty might report for tenure to the dean of the college but report to the school director regarding curriculum development for courses in that school. Faculty would have their home departments in a college but could collaborate with other faculty so that courses could be offered in a new interdisciplinary school, which might offer undergraduate and/or graduate courses. Proposals for such programs should be approved by the Faculty Senate before they are submitted to the Systems Academic Planning Committee.

A senator said that International Studies is also a dual major, inter-college program. He added that current interdisciplinary programs tend to have difficulty funding teaching in which faculty members work outside their home department; and so any new proposals should make clear how the teaching would be funded. Another senator suggested that current courses could be combined across colleges in a conscious, collaborative approach and that this collaboration might not require a great deal of new resources but could help students better prepare for future employment. An environmental conservation studies major already exists.

V. Shared governance – The senate chair wrote to the director of the Office of Institutional Research, asking for data on comparisons of the grade point averages of certain categories of students at UNH. The administration replied that the senate chair went out of the chain of command and should direct future requests to the vice president for academic affairs. However, the senate and its committees cannot review certain issues without collecting appropriate data; and the senate has traditionally asked for data from university offices as needed, as part of the senate's shared governance function. The senate chair discussed this matter further with the vice president for academic affairs. The director of the Office of Institutional Research has said that his office will work on preparing the data.

VI. Task force on grade distributions, course evaluations and course rankings – On 4/17/06, the Faculty Senate discussed how to deal with course evaluations and their dissemination on the web by pickaprof.com, grade distributions and course rankings. The senate chair said at the end of that discussion that those matters would be dealt with in the subsequent academic year. Last week, the Agenda Committee decided not to set up such a task force until the end of work to

rule. David Richman said that he would like to serve on a task force on course evaluations at that time, and he added that he considers this issue to be separate from grade distributions. However the senate vice chair said that some faculty had expressed concern that there may be pressure to give higher grades in order to get good course evaluations from students and that this may contribute to grade inflation. Other possible task force members previously suggested were David Feldman, Alan Ray, Victor Benassi, Lee Seidel and a student senator. A member of the Student Senate's Academic Affairs Council said that students are very interested in putting on blackboard the student evaluations of faculty members' courses. Those evaluations are currently available in hard copy at the university library and electronically on pickaprof.com. However, many faculty have concerns about these matters; and therefore the senate will not approve that request at this time and will consider having a task force take a comprehensive look at the whole issue after work to rule.

VII. Minutes – The senate unanimously approved the minutes of the last Faculty Senate meeting.

VIII. Presidential search – The senate vice chair said that the search committee is now talking with many interesting individuals and is trying to make sure that there is a good match before bringing candidates to campus. If necessary the current interim president may stay on for another year, but the committee may be able to complete the search by July 1. A search advertisement has been published, and the consultants are also working to find suitable candidates who have good academic experience. The candidates are aware of the contract negotiations, work to rule, working with the university system, the COLSA reorganization, and the high turn-over of deans, among other issues.

IX. McNair Undergraduate Opportunity Program – Senator Rebellon, who is an advisor to the McNair Program, said that the goal of the program is to help first-generation economically disadvantaged students or minority students from groups underrepresented in doctoral programs to prepare themselves for the graduate and doctoral experience. Sophomore students and some juniors participate in a two-credit INCO course each semester designed to develop an understanding of the culture of graduate education and to help students focus their research interests and identify a faculty mentor. Summer research fellowships are available to eligible college juniors from institutions around the country. UNH students must have participated in the academic year component in order to be a summer research fellow. Participants engage in an eight-week graduate-school-preparation program, produce a research proposal, work with a faculty mentor, and later try to enroll in a graduate program.

In the first summer, the program pairs each student with a faculty member with similar research interests. For the UNH students, the faculty mentoring continues into the fall semester. Senators are asked to invite their departmental colleagues to review the McNair Program website at <http://www.unh.edu/mcnair/> and to fill out a form on that site to indicate their interest in possibly serving as a mentor for a suitable student. There is a stipend for the mentoring faculty. A senator asked if the syllabi of the research courses are available on line, and Senator Rebellon responded that that might be arranged in the future. Other suggestions were for the program to send an email to all faculty in the spring, indicating for what areas of research faculty mentors are needed and perhaps combining this email with information about the Undergraduate

Research Opportunities Program (UROP) and the International Research Opportunities Program (IROP).

X. Off-campus guests in the classroom – The Vice President for University Communications has sent a memo directing that faculty and staff contact the president's office prior to sending invitations to many categories of persons including many national and state office holders and candidates and even Durham town council members. However, a number of faculty have such people speak to their classes on a regular basis and do not want to ask for the administration's permission to do so, because that could be an interference in academic matters. The senate chair discussed this with Vice President Murray and also with the provost. Although the directive said "it is essential that the President's Office is contacted prior to the invitation being issued", the provost said that this is not the same as asking permission. Some senators said that, to comply with this request, they would have to report to the president's office so many times per semester that it would be impractical and inappropriate. Also a senator pointed out that five state legislators are current students at UNH.

XI. Adjournment – Today's meeting was adjourned.