

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2005-06 FACULTY SENATE

SEPTEMBER 11, 2006

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Afolayan, Burger, Frankel and Tenczar. Those excused were Naumes, Niser, Ogembo and Wrighton. Guests were President Newman, Provost Mallory and student observer Katherine Steere.

II. Remarks by and questions to the president– President Newman said that her state-of-the-university address is available on the website. The presidential search committee is working hard and would like input from faculty. President Newman said that, during the interim period, we will not tread water but will work to keep the momentum going. She added that she expects to work closely with the Faculty Senate, the deans and the faculty as a whole. She met with alumni and others in Chicago before the football game with Northwestern University which UNH won.

The past chair of the Faculty Senate thanked President Newman for taking on the role of interim president for UNH. He added that two principles of fundamental importance to the faculty are academic freedom and shared governance, and he asked her to comment on those principles. She replied that she spoke of academic freedom in her state-of-the-university address. She said that she shares the faculty's concern about academic freedom and that it is of utmost importance to the academe. Of course, with those freedoms comes the inherent responsibility of exercising them in a responsible manner. She said that she has talked quite a bit about shared governance, with the Faculty Senate chair and vice chair and the Agenda Committee. She said she is optimistic that we will be able to do our history proud as we go forward committed to those two principles.

III. Remarks by and questions to Provost Mallory – The provost said that last year we dealt with shared governance frequently and that he reaffirms his commitment to shared governance. He said that the Academic Plan calls upon us to (1) “clarify, support, and strengthen the university’s system of shared decision making and strong faculty governance including the integration of extension, research, and clinical faculty into the academic and governance structures of departments, colleges, and the university where appropriate,” and (2) “clarify and strengthen the role of the Faculty Senate in curriculum development and oversight.” The Academic Plan was developed with a strong faculty voice. This fall we will revisit the Academic Plan and will want strong faculty input in that effort.

The recent dialog on academic freedom was catalyzed by the press’ inquiry into a faculty member’s teaching on the subject of an article about the 9/11 attack. The provost sees this dialog as a teaching and learning moment for ourselves, the UNH trustees and the general public. He is appreciative of President Newman’s and Trustee Chair Andy Lietz’ strong public statements on academic freedom; and the provost will also express his commitment to the principles of academic freedom, this week during a New Hampshire Public Radio program on the topic.

The memoranda of understanding of some private scholarship funds do not clearly address whether the scholarship was based on need or merit. After the Faculty Senate motion on that matter last March, Vice President Rubinstein worked with the senate’s Agenda Committee and arrived at a workable policy that will preserve departments’ discretion and deem as "merit-based" all student

scholarships except those where the donor explicitly expressed a contrary intent on the occasion of making the grant.

The provost said that there has been much progress made on the COLSA reorganization and strategic planning process. There has also been significant progress on deficit remediation in COLSA over the past two and one-half years. As a result, the college closed the last fiscal year near the break-even point, with a deficit of only \$200,000. Although work remains to be done, the foundation has been laid for a strong future for the college.

The next step in the phased implementation of the Discovery Program will require Faculty Senate confirmation of the Discovery Program categories. The provost said that the Discovery Program concept, design, and delivery have been entirely the work of faculty, in a true example of shared governance, whereby faculty design and oversee the curriculum while the administration generates the financial resources necessary to deliver the instructional program. Central strategic funding of 1.2 million dollars over three years will be provided, as a bridge to permanent RCM funding for the inquiry courses in the Discovery Program. The funds will be allocated to each college according to a formula which is tied to how many sections of inquiry courses each unit will offer. Then the disposition of those funds will be decided in each college by the deans working with the department chairs and faculty.

This fall the Academic Plan will be reviewed, with input from the faculty, deans and others, and the intention is to have an updated plan in place by January 1. The provost said that the plan has lasting value but needs more specificity in some areas such as international education, interdisciplinary programs, outreach, integration of academic and student life, students' oral communication skills, and diversity. One of the key challenges now is bringing the contract negotiations to a close. We have worked on this for at least six months. The provost said that faculty with views about the terms of the contract should express them not only to the administration but also to the leadership of the faculty union. The provost would like a member of the senate's Agenda Committee to attend Deans' Council meetings on a monthly basis. The provost urges faculty to attend the Academic Convocation on 9/12/06.

IV. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The senate chair said that the provost has indicated that there is progress on the COLSA situation, a resolution of the department scholarships issue, and an allocation of 1.2 million dollars over three years for inquiry courses in the Discovery Program and that all these have to do with efforts by the Faculty Senate in the past. Katherine Steere and Sean Kelly will alternate as student observers to the Faculty Senate meetings, until the Student Senate is able to provide one person who can stay for the entire two hours.

The senate chair said that recent events at UNH have spurred renewed discussion of the principles of academic freedom. In addition, over the last year, there has been discussion of the limits of free speech among students. Academic freedom and also the guarantees and limits to free student speech are not static ideals but cherished principles which need to be revisited. These principles are part of the process of education and of engagement with the larger community in which we reside. Absent that discussion, academic freedom and free speech atrophy and become endangered. In response to the need for renewal, the senate chair has talked with Professor Todd DeMitchell, who has researched and published in the areas of academic freedom and is a senior professor at UNH and a member of the UNH Faculty Senate, about convening a forum to discuss basic principles of

academic freedom and free speech. This forum would include representatives of the constituencies of the university and be open to the public and the press. The forum could recommend further steps toward development and/or clarification of these basic principles. David Richman moved that the Faculty Senate approve sponsorship of such a forum, and the motion was seconded.

A senator said that the purpose of the forum would only be to explain the principles of academic freedom and not to explore the current case. The forum could confirm current principles or suggest new ones. The forum could explore the question of how robust academic freedom is and who has it, the faculty or the university, and what the legal grounds for academic freedom are. The purpose of the forum is meant to be educational. Another professor responded that the principles of academic freedom are well settled and that the current issue is to uphold those principles. Instead of the forum, he suggested offering a course or a program on the 9/11 attack. A senator pointed out that the forum would be an educational process open to the public and the press. A professor said that the matters of academic freedom and the professor's right to express his opinion are settled and that no forum is needed. The motion to implement a forum on academic freedom failed with four ayes and 5 abstentions, with the remaining votes nay.

V. Minutes – The senate unanimously, except for one abstention, approved the minutes of the last Faculty Senate meeting.

VI. Orientation – The Faculty Senate is governed by its constitution and bylaws and by Robert's Rules of Order. The senate parliamentarian will be Mimi Becker. It is the right of the minority to ensure that decisions are made only after a full and fair discussion of the issues. The constitution states that the faculty has "primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. On these matters the power of review or final decision lodged in the governing board or delegated by it to the president should be exercised adversely only in exceptional circumstances and for reasons communicated to the faculty." The responsibility of the faculty is the academic mission of the university. The senate reviews charges via its standing committees and ad-hoc task forces. Senators are representatives of their departments and should represent the interests and concerns of the department and not just the senator's own views. Senators should bring the issues to the departmental faculty and the departmental faculty's concerns to the senate. Senators are assigned to a senate standing committee and also to university-wide committees. Senators who will be absent are asked to arrange for a proxy from that department to attend the senate meeting, participate in the discussion and vote on motions. There are no absentee ballots.

VII. Senate Committees – The chairs of four senate standing committees are: Marco Dorfsman of the Academic Affairs Committee, Allen Drake of the Campus Planning Committee, Lynn Kistler of the Library Committee, and Lyn Ament of the Student Affairs Committee. Chairs are pending for the Finance and Administration Committee and the Research and Public Service Committee. The committee charges have been sent to the senators.

VIII. Academic Plan Review – This year the Academic Plan is up for review; and senators are asked to read the plan, which is available on line at <http://www.unh.edu/academic-affairs/pdf/academicplan.pdf>, and to ask their departmental colleagues to give input on it as well,

prior to the discussion on this matter at the next senate meeting. Please also review the “Academic Plan Review and Renewal” document which was sent to the senators.

IX. ASAC and pass/fail – Bill Stine said that, during the 2005/06 academic year, the senate’s Academic Affairs Committee, which he chaired, met with the chair of the Academic Standards and Advising Committee twice and noticed no issues that raise concerns. In addition, the Academic Affairs Committee looked into the effectiveness of the pass/fail policy and decided that there is no problem with that policy currently, because the departments appear to be seeing that students use the pass/fail option wisely.

X. New Business – David Feldman moved and David Richman seconded that an interdisciplinary program on 9/11 should be established. The Faculty Senate could form a committee to look into which departments would participate. The past chair said that the senate’s Agenda Committee could discuss whether this matter should be reviewed by an ad-hoc task force or an existing committee, and he added that this motion should not be voted on today. An academic program arises out of a broad set of discussions and interests. A discourse would be needed to see if courses would come out of such a discussion. This could be fertile ground for an inquiry course. The 795 special topics course could also be an option. The course or program could deal with terrorism in general as well as 9/11. The dialog part of the Discovery Program next year could perhaps deal with this if the issue was deep enough and sufficiently sustained. Some faculty spoke against starting a university program on this issue, on the grounds that the matter of academic freedom has already been settled and that the university should not try to develop academic programs in order to change public opinion. A senator said that he teaches a sociology 697 course entitled “Perspectives on Terrorism”. The accountability of our system of government means that we have many arenas for raising that discourse. We should first ask for a compilation of courses across the university that already address these issues, and then we could better decide what may be needed. The senate chair said that this decision can be postponed to a future meeting.

XI. Adjournment – Today’s meeting was adjourned.