

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2007-08 FACULTY SENATE

NOVEMBER 19, 2007

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Afolayan, Barcelona, Dowd, Hamlin, Park, Robertson, Tenczar, and Walsh. Excused were Barrows, Charpentier, Hinson, Klein, Lane, Miller, Onosko and Zunz. Guests were Lee Seidel, Ed Mueller, Jeff Ringer, Katherine Steere, Alissa Marchant, Kevin Linton, Nicholas Wolf, and Mike Merrill.

II. Writing Program – Lee Seidel, the interim faculty director of the University Writing Program, said that in 1995 the senate approved the revised writing requirements stating that all undergraduate students would be “required to complete Freshman Writing plus three ‘writing-intensive’ courses, at least one of which will be in the major and at least one of which will be on a 600 level or above”. The UNH Writing Committee is to evaluate the program regularly, using a variety of measures such as analysis of syllabi, interviewing of faculty and students, surveys, portfolios, etc. Now 887 writing-intensive courses have been approved; and during the current fall semester, 690 writing-intensive courses/sections are available. In the fall of 2005, seven supplemental questions which were added to the course evaluation in writing-intensive courses produced a seventy-three percent response from students; and eleven questions sent via email and Blackboard to all writing-intensive instructors produced a thirty-five percent response. Lee Seidel said that the study showed nothing systematically wrong with the writing-intensive experience and that students and faculty report that the writing-intensive experience is in accordance with guidelines and that it contributes to learning and student writing abilities. He stated that students indicate they feel well served by the writing-intensive courses and that the 142 faculty responders mostly agreed with that. The data is now available for use. The Writing Program will make department-specific reports on the status of the writing-intensive courses.

The program is looking for ways to make the writing-intensive evaluation more systematic, and this might include adding evaluative questions for the writing program to the course evaluations done routinely by the students and also establishing electronic portfolios of students’ writing from early to late in their university experience. A professor asked if writing samples could be obtained from a university which does not have a writing program, for comparison with samples from UNH. Lee Seidel responded that this might be possible and that longitudinal studies would also be needed. Students in different departments write differently, and the writing experience in high school also varies. The university writing programs must be sensitive to the different types of writing needed in various disciplines. The writing program will not be able to do portfolio or institutional assessment involving all the students using the program.

English 401 has been significantly modified. Ed Mueller is the administrative director of the UNH Writing Program, which has fifty-six employees. The on-line writing laboratory (OWL) is getting more use and does critiques and review but not editing. There is an active writing fellows program. Guidelines have been established and are being used. There are three writing consultants who are alumni of the Writing Program and professionals in the writing industry. Papers can be archived on the website, and the usage has risen. The writing program asks the professors to tell their students about the services offered. Outreach programs with information are available, but more would be desirable. The plan is to have a permanent faculty director for the next academic year.

III. Student Senate – Katherine Steere, Alissa Marchant, Kevin Linton, Nick Wolf and Mike Merrill gave an overview of the organization and activities of Student Senate. Student Senate provides an informational notebook to all new student senators. The students have a student body president and vice president and a number of councils such as the Academic Affairs Council, the Commuter Affairs Council, the External Affairs Council, the Health and Human Services Council, the Judicial Affairs Council, the Residential Life Council, and one which liaisons with the Greek system. The student body president and vice president hold a meeting weekly with the council chairs and the officers of the Student Senate. The Student Senate parliamentarian chairs the Judicial Affairs Council, which approves the motions and agendas for Student Senate. There is a constitutional ad-hoc committee which evaluates the Student Senate Constitution and Bylaws. The Fee Oversight Committee and the Student Activities Fee Committee work with administrators to see how the fees and their use may be modified, and the Student Senate would then vote on any proposed changes. A student may bring a proposed resolution to a student senator who would bring the matter to a council for consideration. The council's recommendation would go to the parliamentarian and then to the Student Senate. If passed by the senate, the resolution would be forwarded to the university president and others and also to the original council for follow up.

IV. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The Faculty Senate chair said that the senate's nominee for the search committee for vice president for research will be Deb Kinghorn. The potluck dinner which the Faculty Senate will host for the Student Senate will be on December 3 in N121 Kingsbury Hall. The faculty senators are asked to sign up to attend and bring a dish. Setup will start at 5:00 p.m., and guests will arrive at 5:30. The Faculty Senate chair said that, due to work to rule, he had declined the invitation to attend the Faculty Awards Ceremony but that he sent a note to the awardees to offer his congratulations.

The Faculty Senate chair recently attended a Student Senate meeting and gave an overview about the operations of the Faculty Senate. The Student Senate has passed a resolution proposing that faculty send textbook lists to both the Durham Book Exchange and the UNH Bookstore and also that faculty make the booklists available to students before the beginning of the semester, so that students would have more options for purchasing textbooks and perhaps reducing textbook costs. Students would like to have the booklists before arriving on campus, but Blackboard is often only available to students one day before classes start. Faculty asked that the students arrange with the UNH Computing and Information Services to provide an easily accessible webpage where faculty who are willing to do so could post the booklists in advance. The Faculty Senate chair asked that the faculty senators share with their departmental colleagues the email giving information about the student resolution on booklists, and he added that a call for nominations for the Social Justice Awards has also been distributed.

V. Field trip guidelines – The senate chair and Mimi Becker met with Alan Ray and Leigh Ann Melanson to discuss the field trip guidelines, which were written in response to queries from faculty and administrators. The guidelines were sent to the deans; some faculty gave input; and then the guidelines were modified. Since a number of faculty may have been missed during this input process, the current plan is to have the policy redistributed to the colleges with a request that the document be distributed to department chairs and then the faculty. The guidelines could be modified again if appropriate. A former senate chair said that it seems that the university does not intend to cover faculty for liability when driving their own cars, even if the faculty members are transporting students to academic events or doing other university business. Many faculty are not happy with this stance.

The administration has also eliminated the university vans which used to be used for academic field trips, and it is very expensive for departments to rent vans and buses from a commercial vendor. Many faculty feel that this is an unfunded mandate which will negatively impact academic programs and that this is a shared governance issue. Other potential concerns are that some students may choose to stay at a field trip site, especially if it is in a city, and that some students walk or ride bicycles to field sites. Also some students have disabilities and require special transportation but can drive their own vehicles. When the Transportation Committee decided to get rid of the campus fleet, the affected faculty were not consulted before that change was implemented; and the change has had a strong impact on academic programs. Since field trips are an integral part of academic programs, how does the administration propose that the field trips be carried out now? The senate chair said that he will send this senate discussion to Alan Ray and ask him for a detailed response. Perhaps Alan Ray will come to the senate to respond to these concerns.

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

VII. Liberal Arts deans search – Recently the Agenda Committee became aware that the provost was making a decision about the composition and chairs of the search committee for a new dean of the College of Liberal Arts and that the intention was apparently to have as co-chairs a college dean and an institute director. Many faculty believe that such a search committee should be chaired or co-chaired by a senior faculty member who does not have a major administrative role, and so the Faculty Senate sent a letter to the provost describing these concerns and the need for shared governance in this matter. The senate chair has discussed this issue with the provost, who has indicated that he has heard and will take into consideration the faculty concerns.

VIII. Other business – The search committee for a new library dean has passed its recommendations to the provost and communicated to the provost its preference among the nominees.

IX. Adjournment – Today's meeting was adjourned.