

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
2008-09 FACULTY SENATE

JANUARY 26, 2009

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Afolayan, Barrows, Gross and Kaen. Excused were Huang, Kenick, Lewis, Morgan and Nimmo. Bruce Mallory and Aimee Lockhardt were guests.

II. Remarks by and questions to the provost – The provost said that he recently attended a conference, of the American Association of Colleges and Universities, that included a national discussion of how to shape the undergraduate curriculum. The AACU has also documented its findings in several publications in the last few years. The most recent AACU initiative is project LEAP, which stands for Liberal Education and America’s Promise, articulating “essential learning outcomes”. The national dialogue discusses the central importance of integrated and interdisciplinary learning, personal and social responsibility, and what students learn in formal, credit-bearing experiences as well as in informal, residence-based learning in order to understand themselves and their place as citizens in a global context. As the Discovery Program proposal moves forward, UNH faculty might consider this national discussion of the implications of interdisciplinarity and personal and social identity considerations in current educational thinking and how other universities have successfully articulated how to accomplish this.

Included in the conference was a session entitled “Who Owns the Curriculum”, organized in response to a statement published by the National Association of Scholars, claiming that the kind of co-curricular activities being developed by student life offices represents an infringement on faculty authority over what students learn and how. The panel argued that the faculty own the curriculum but that the totality of student learning must be supported by the student life offices, in order to achieve the kind of personal and social-responsibility learning goals identified by the AACU. The provost said that faculty not only are responsible for the curriculum but have a duty to refresh it over time and that the administration is responsible for obtaining the resources to support such an effort.

Regarding the state of the university’s endowment funds in the current market situation, UNH has two main types of endowment funds. Some are managed by the university system and tend to be older funds, which thus are more likely to be above their historical value at the present time. Another group of endowments managed by the UNH Foundation are of more recent vintage and thus are more likely to fall below their historical value. Due to the current economic situation, payouts from the endowments are expected to be significantly reduced, which will affect both operations and scholarships and may cause scaling back in certain programs. There is also a reduction in returning and transfer students, affecting tuition income in each of the colleges. Regarding strategic planning, the working groups are being formed; co-chairs have been chosen; and the provost asks that faculty accept invitations to be members of those working groups. The provost said that over half of the members of the working groups are faculty. The provost also invites faculty to attend the Martin Luther King week activities at which Laura Knoy, Angela Davis and others will speak.

III. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The senate chair said that, since President Huddleston’s recent letter indicates that UNH is facing severe budget challenges, faculty should

participate in a thoughtful discussion of the alternatives. The president would like to see increased enrollments in graduate and professional programs and enhanced summer and off-calendar programs, among other initiatives, and plans to restrict new hiring. Regarding strategic planning, nine working groups have been formed; and information on the planning process in general and the working group charges in particular is available on the website, as is a section for suggestions and input. The senate chair listed the co-chairs of the working groups expected to identify three to five initiatives which will define UNH for the next ten years. He will email the senators regular updates on the planning process.

IV. Minutes – The minutes of the last senate meeting were approved unanimously, except for two abstentions.

V. Blue Ribbon Panel on Research – The chair of the senate’s Research and Public Service Committee said that the report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Research is advisory to the president and has many detailed recommendations. In addition, one of the working groups for the strategic plan will review that report. The RPSC chair presented to the senate the draft of a motion which would express general concerns rather than comment line by line on the report. The draft is as follows:

The UNH Faculty Senate applauds President Huddleston for opening a campus-wide discussion on research and values the discourse that has resulted. The senate affirms the university’s commitment to research and thanks the Blue Ribbon Panel for their thorough report. The Faculty Senate has a number of concerns about this report, however. First, many aspects of this report have clear implications for a multiplicity of academic programs for which faculty have primary responsibility; we believe a continued process of shared governance is necessary for further consideration of policy change recommendations. Second, there are recommendations that have significant financial implications: the faculty senate is confident that the President will implement policy recommendations in a manner consistent with the procedures and practices of shared governance when balancing priorities for scarce resources.

A discussion ensued as to whether to include examples of specific concerns about the panel’s recommendations. A professor said that the senate minutes will form a record and should be attached to the motion when it is sent to the president. A senator proposed a friendly amendment which was accepted, to substitute “principles” for “procedures” in the last sentence. Other senators said that the final sentence is not sufficient. Suggestions were made to change “is confident” to “expects” or “is concerned” or “urges”, but other senators wanted a stronger sentence indicating more explicit expectations.

A former senate chair said that this motion means that faculty expect that the administration will bring any particular proposals for implementation or policy change to the Faculty Senate for discussion and review. When the president considers implementation of recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Panel’s report, the administration should bring concrete and detailed proposals to the Faculty Senate for vetting. In regard to the panel’s report, a senator asked why the university should damage undergraduate education providing a primary source of income, by taking funds from undergraduate education in order to give them to graduate education which is losing money. Also, how will the current economic conditions and the strategic planning process

affect possible implementation of the panel's recommendations? Two senators tried to make and second a motion that, with regard to the Blue Ribbon Panel report, whenever the president should seek to implement the panel's recommendations, the Faculty Senate expects that he will follow the procedures and practices of shared governance and that, in particular, the president will deal with the following faculty concerns. However, since the senators were not ready with a list of concerns, the motion was ruled out of order at this time. Gaining consensus on a list of specifics might not be the best use of senate time. Some senators said that, as a matter of shared governance, the Faculty Senate has an obligation to respond to the panel's report, because it is an integral part of academic policy and deals with issues that are very important for both research and undergraduate teaching. Such a senate response could form a part of the strategic planning process.

A senator said that some proposals in the panel's report could have very deleterious effects on some programs and that the senate's motion should say that faculty are very concerned about the implications of those recommendations and the ambiguity about their funding. Faculty are also concerned that recommendations in the panel's report could bring about an erosion of the governance of programs. Each recommendation would have financial implications, and funding is a very important issue. There are significant concerns about redistribution of funds. Also, faculty are worried that finances might drive academic matters instead of the reverse. The Faculty Senate passed a motion on 12/12/05 stating in part that "As we make and support choices among alternative uses of our limited resources, the Faculty Senate emphasizes that the standard by which fiscal decisions must be judged is their effect on academic goals of teaching, learning, research, artistry, and outreach, never vice versa. A good budget system serves academic priorities; it does not define them." A senator suggested that the motion should read:

The UNH Faculty Senate applauds President Huddleston for opening a campus-wide discussion on research and values the discourse that has resulted. The senate affirms the university's commitment to research and thanks the Blue Ribbon Panel for their thorough report. This report has significant implications for many programs. The whole university serves academic values and not the reverse. The standard by which fiscal decisions must be judged is their effect on academic goals of teaching, learning, research, artistry, and outreach, never vice versa. The Faculty Senate stands ready to assist the president in decisions on any implementation of the panel's report.

Another senator suggested that the senate motion might include wording to say that the Faculty Senate is concerned that implementation of the panel's report might result in an evisceration of undergraduate education. Other senators agreed, saying that the panel's report, if implemented, would signal a significant shift in what the university does. Faculty should discuss this aspect more widely and specify that there are more concerns than just financial ones about the panel's report. A professor suggested that the senate motion should just remind the president that all matters that touch on academics must go through the shared governance procedures when specific changes are proposed. A professor said that research dollars could be brought to those parts of the university which do not have such funds and that the university needs expanded opportunity for undergraduates to participate in research. The chair of the senate's Research and Public Service Committee suggested that he could withdraw the motion and, after considering the above discussion, bring a revised motion to the senate at its next meeting. The senate chair

asked that senators send their suggestions via email to Kevin Gardner. The senate unanimously agreed to table the motion until that time.

VI. Library – In November, the Faculty Senate passed a motion that matters pertaining to information technology be added to the committee's purview and that a member of the Library Committee serve each year on the Steering Committee for Information Technology (SCIT). This steering committee is developing a master plan on information technology; and the committee is structured so that only the five vice presidents are voting members, with others including two faculty members attending as non-voting members. Faculty senators were concerned that the committee has no faculty as voting members; and on 11/17/08 a motion was made, seconded and tabled until the next meeting, that faculty should have a voting member on SCIT. The chair of the senate's Library Committee spoke recently with the vice president for Finance and Information and the head of Computing and Information Services, who said that the committee works on consensus and is advisory to the president and that the rationale for the structure of the SCIT is the same as that for the Space Allocation, Repair and Renovation Committee (SAARC). A lengthy charter for SCIT is accessible from the CIS web site. Most university committees work on consensus unless a particularly contentious issue arises. Are faculty concerns fully considered by SCIT? The chair of the Library Committee will ask whether SCIT consensus recommendations ever include minority reports.

VII. Motion on student use of electronic devices – The chair of the senate's Student Affairs Committee presented a motion as follows.

**Regarding the policy on cell phone/PDA/pager/digital music player/laptop/other electronic device use during class, students may not use cell phones, PDAs, pager, digital music players (like IPODS), laptops and other electronic devices during class unless designated by the course instructor. If use of any of these items is permitted by the course instructor, these items are not allowed to be used for non-class activities. If students violate this policy, they will have a choice either to temporarily relinquish the device to the professor for the remainder of the class or to leave the classroom. If you, the student, have a learning disability that requires the use of one of these items, you must provide evidence from the Office of Disability Services (ACCESS), to inform the course instructor of this situation so that he or she can accommodate your use. Also, if you need to leave a cell phone on for an emergency situation, you should inform the course instructor at the beginning of the class session as well as keep the phone on in a silent mode, so as not to disrupt the course.**

**The senate approved this motion with thirty-four ayes, one nay, and two abstentions.**

VIII. Other business – The chair of the senate's Professional Standards Committee said that the committee is reviewing a new policy on academic misconduct. Changes in the policy are being instituted in order to bring it into compliance with national standards. The chair of the senate's Academic Affairs Committee said that at the next senate meeting he expects to present the committee's final recommendations on the Discovery Program. Faculty are invited to provide to the search committee nominations for candidates for the position of provost.

IX. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned.