

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
2008-09 FACULTY SENATE

OCTOBER 20, 2008

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Afolayan, Dowd, Greenberg, Gross, Onosko and Tobin. Excused were Howey, Rebellon and Zunz. President Huddleston, Lisa MacFarlane, Kevin Linton, and Thomas Pistole were guests.

II. Remarks by and questions to the president – President Huddleston said that the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, which he chairs, has had two meetings and will meet every two weeks. The university has engaged a firm, Learning Alliance, to facilitate the strategic planning. The steering committee has thirty members who are expected to act for the benefit of the university as a whole rather than as representatives for specific groups. The facilitators have interviewed all committee members and some other people, to get an overall sense of campus issues. In November the committee will host a series of round table discussions, in order to get fuller input from the campus community, on major themes and priorities for the coming years. There will also be an interactive website on which people may provide further input, and input may also be sent to members of the steering committee. Then working groups will meet to flesh out the themes; and in the middle of the second semester, the themes will be winnowed down to a few major priorities which will be circulated for further discussion by the campus community. The president said that written and oral updates will be provided on a regular basis during this process. A senator said that a winter term has benefits for revenue and that night school and a more robust summer school are other possibilities; and the president agreed. He added that revenue streams and extra-mural funding will be considered when discussing priorities.

III. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The senate chair said that the Faculty Senate will host a potluck dinner for the Student Senate on November 3 at 5:30 p.m., right after the next Faculty Senate meeting. He asked the faculty senators to sign up to bring potluck dishes to that dinner. Senators are also asked to review and give input on the Blue Ribbon Panel for Research's draft document which is now available. That report will be forwarded to the president at the end of this month; and then the Faculty Senate will review the document, after receiving a recommendation from the senate's Research and Public Service Committee.

The university is considering the idea of offering the university catalog only on line, in order to save \$35,000 annually and be more environmentally friendly. The senator from the library expressed concerns about that proposal, because of the need to know in later years what commitments were made and requirements were stated in the catalog of any given year. The senate chair said that the senate might get a report from Jennifer Murray and Mark Rubinstein and that they had said that the university could provide a few hard-copy catalogs for use by the library and similar entities. The senate's Student Affairs Committee is also reviewing the idea of paperless advising and would like input from faculty on that as a separate issue. The senate chair said that he had indicated to Vice

Presidents Murray and Rubinstein that the administration needs to be aware of when cost-saving devices are really cost-shifting devices.

The senate chair said that he has been attending the Strategic Plan Steering Committee meetings and has submitted the faculty senators' names for the working groups and round table discussions. The steering committee has six faculty representatives but, including deans and senior administrators and others, there are twelve academics on the committee. Is that enough for a committee of thirty members which will recommend the university's priorities for the coming years? The group also includes one undergraduate and one graduate student.

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

V. Discovery Program – The chair of the senate's Academic Affairs Committee said that the committee is reviewing the Discovery Program proposal and working on a recommendation for the senate. The committee is evaluating the components of the program, including inquiry, the breadth requirement, capstone, and the various attribute requirements. Today the committee is reporting its work only on the inquiry section. Contingent upon the following eight conditions, the Academic Affairs Committee recommends passage of the Discovery Program's inquiry requirement, whereby students must take a 444 inquiry course or a designated inquiry attribute course. The conditions are as follows.

(1) All inquiry 444 courses or inquiry attribute courses must contain four individually necessary and collectively sufficient attributes which are:

- a. an inquiry student will compose open-ended questions that lead to further investigation into increasingly focused problems and issues;
- b. an inquiry student will explain a central issue or question of the course using at least two unique perspectives;
- c. an inquiry student will be able to identify, compare and evaluate different interpretations, hypotheses or explanations of a given phenomenon; and
- d. an inquiry student will present, in clearly organized form, the results of the investigation.

(2) A rigorous approval process is established that insures that all proposed inquiry and inquiry attribute courses fulfill the four aforementioned attributes. Approval must be certified by the academic department, the college or school dean's office, and the Discovery Program Advisory Committee.

(3) All designated inquiry 444 course enrollments must be capped at either 25 or 35 students.

(4) The cap of 25 or 35 students for all designated inquiry attribute courses will be either in the total course enrollment or in weekly discussion sessions, labs, or other interactive contexts.

(5) All inquiry attribute courses must be lower-division courses at a 400 or 500 level.

(6) Evidence is provided that warrants a reasonable inference that there is a sufficient number of inquiry 444 or inquiry attribute courses to meet the needs of the fall of 2009 freshman class.

(7) Delivery of a sufficient number of inquiry and inquiry attribute courses to meet the needs of the fall of 2009 freshman class is under no circumstances purchased at the expense of ongoing undergraduate and graduate curricular programs.

(8) The Discovery Program Advisory Committee will work with the registrar to ensure that there is sufficient space for scheduling the requisite number of inquiry and inquiry attribute courses.

In response to a question, the Academic Affairs Committee chair said that the approval process would vary for the different components. Inquiry courses would be approved by the department, the dean, and the Discovery Program Advisory Committee; but some other Discovery Program components would be approved just at the department level. A senator stated that some teachers of UNH courses have only a baccalaureate degree, and the AAC chair responded that departmental faculty are empowered to decide that. However, the senator replied that his colleagues believe that there should be criteria for the qualifications of those who will be allowed to teach these courses. Another senator said that, in some cases, expertise might make up for the lack of a higher degree. The department could also decide whether the inquiry 444 course or inquiry attribute courses would be capped at 25 or be permitted to have 35 students. That would have a financial impact. Since there will be a lot of writing in inquiry courses, a cap on students is needed to keep the course manageable. Lab sections, if separately listed, could qualify for the needed cap on students. Many current courses could be adjusted to have the four inquiry criteria. Barbara White said that, in the fall of 2007, 457 course sections served 8,717 students in sections of forty or fewer students. A senator asked what percent of the freshmen are currently enrolled in 444 courses. Thomas Pistole said that, not counting the honors courses, there are approximately fifteen 444 courses this semester.

Some inquiry attribute courses may be restricted to the students who are majoring in a specific department. Some senators said that the inquiry method is a great way to teach and to learn. The AAC's recommendation on the inquiry requirement is contingent on there being a sufficient number of inquiry courses; and so perhaps the department chairs could be asked how many such courses are available; or perhaps faculty could be surveyed to see how many of their courses might meet the inquiry criteria and how many students are already in those courses. A senator asked how he could get different perspectives into a major course in, for example, chemical engineering. This would have to be decided by each discipline, but one can recognize that one can have a point of view that can change and be influenced by experiential results. A senator said that his colleague believes that the Discovery Program should have a field test, such as in the Honors Program, before being required for all students; and Thomas Pistole responded that the 444 courses have been in operation for four years and that the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has started comparing a group, of first-year students who have taken 444 courses, with a comparator group and will monitor the two groups over four years. The comparator group is matched according to criteria such as class ranking and high school grade point average. Thomas Pistole added that the inquiry portion of the Discovery Program will be the most challenging, since the breadth requirement is more similar to current requirements. Interdisciplinarity is different from the inquiry courses, has not been discussed today, and may vary across the disciplines.

The senate chair thanked the Academic Affairs Committee for its continuing work on the Discovery Program issues.

The Discovery Program is intended as requirements for a baccalaureate degree and thus does not refer to the course numbering used in the Thompson School. Although the Faculty Senate discussed the Thompson School course numbering a few years ago, the situation may have changed due to agreements the university is making with community colleges. The senate chair said that, although the issue of Thompson School course numbering could be brought up later in the senate, this is not a Discovery Program matter. Senators from the Thompson School said that it is important for the senate to review the Thompson School course numbering, because students lose a great deal when transferring from Thompson School into UNH baccalaureate programs. The Thompson School senators said that, if a vote on the Discovery Program does not affect the Thompson School, they may abstain from voting.

VI. Reports from the Student Affairs Committee – The chair of the Student Affairs Committee said that the committee has considered its charge to review the issue of amplified music at student events held in the central campus and disruptive to classes and office work. Since the university has recently instituted a policy on such music, the committee will observe how the new policy works during this academic year.

The committee also reviewed another charge, to consider the high costs of required textbooks and creative ways to deal with this matter. The cost of textbooks continues to escalate. Student Senate has expressed its concern and asked that the Faculty Senate consider how faculty can assist with keeping textbook costs reasonable. The Academic Affairs Committee believes that the students' concern about the cost of textbooks is a legitimate one, but this issue is difficult to address quickly. The two main textbook retailers in Durham are the Durham Book Exchange and the UNH Bookstore, and these retailers tend to price materials comparably to each other and usually have a stock of used books too small to meet the demand. To facilitate competitive pricing and the finding of used books, instructors can provide course text information (i.e., ISBN, title, edition, publisher, date of publishing) in advance of the semester. Instructors may elect to participate in UNH's Booklist Pilot Program by posting textbook information on Blackboard, and hopefully this can be accessible to students well before the semester starts. Instructors can provide book information in the course syllabus, but this is often not available until the first day of class. Instructors can post textbook information early on departmental, course, or a specific faculty member's website. Once students have this textbook information, they may then elect to purchase texts from alternative book retailers.

Students seeking to reduce their costs may also purchase older versions of the text. However, instructors using newer editions are not required to provide corresponding page numbers from older editions; and it will be the students' responsibility to ensure that the required course material is covered in that text. Another alternative is for two students to share the cost of a text, but this has its challenges if both students are to keep current on reading assignments. Faculty could also be more judicious about using the latest editions

of their favorite texts. The committee recognizes that this is discipline sensitive, as specific types of texts may update essential demographic data, cover emerging issues, or respond to changed realities or trends. To decrease the cost to students, faculty could also request, when they place a book order, that the bookstore secure as many used texts as possible. In addition, faculty could place at least one copy of the course text on reserve in the UNH library, arrange for texts to be available online, or use relevant texts that are already available online. Finally, students who want to donate or sell their textbooks directly to the next generation of students might want to consider some creative ways to accomplish this “service learning” approach.

A senator expressed concern about the funds the university bookstore sends to the university library; but when faculty post the textbook information on Blackboard and that information goes to the UNH bookstore, the bookstore sends funds to the university library, as part of the agreement for the bookstore to be on campus. A senator said that faculty who have accepted an examination copy should not sell it. Another professor said that in her courses she uses some journal articles available on jstor.org.

VII. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned.