

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2008-09 FACULTY SENATE

OCTOBER 6, 2008

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Afolayan, Baldwin, Cariens, Ciccone, Dowd, Gross, Tobin and Walsh. Excused were Aber, Barrows, and Nimmo. Bruce Mallory, Jan Nisbet, Amitava Bhattacharjee, Jessica Cockerham, Kevin Linton, and Tom Pistole were guests.

II. Remarks by and questions to the provost – The provost said that the Central Budget Committee met last week and considered a proposal to purchase an updated software system, FAMIS, which is a new facility management infrastructure system to replace the previous system which is no longer supported by the vendor. The system would track a great deal of information about the size and condition of each building on campus. The provost said that the initial cost of replacing the current system would be about one million dollars, plus approximately \$350,000 per year to maintain it. These funds would be obtained by an assessment on every academic and non-academic unit, and the costs could be spread over five years. A unit's assessment would depend on factors such as the square footage used by that unit.

A senator said that, when many academic units cannot hire replacement faculty because of a hiring freeze in those units, the university administration should think twice about such a large expenditure and more staff for this purpose. Another senator said that the administration should develop a more appropriate decision-making process for the Central Budget Committee, such as presenting information on a topic and then allowing time for participants to review the information, share it with their colleagues, and return with input from the constituents. The provost expressed agreement with such a process and said that he would discuss it with the president. The provost said that the new software system is supposed to provide better data on the costs of providing research and that this might enable justification of higher facilities and administration rates on external grants. A senator said that the university's budget for non-academic items seems to increase much more than the money available for academic uses such as hiring faculty. The provost pointed out that modern technology requires increasing the size of buildings even when the square footage of academic rooms remains the same, because more space for infrastructure such as pipes, venting and wiring is needed. Maintenance costs are similarly affected. A professor asked if there are other, less expensive software systems for facility management. The provost replied that the committee had considered the possibility of using on-campus expertise to design such a system but concluded that making the new system communicate well with the current Banner software would be expensive and difficult.

The provost said that the university is reviewing the advisability of reaching an agreement with Franklin Pierce Law Center to become a part of UNH, with the possibility of locating the law school in Durham. The law center has about thirty-five tenured faculty and 250 students in each of the three class years. The center is ranked as

one of the top intellectual property law schools and is in strong financial condition. UNH currently offers both a baccalaureate degree and a master's degree in justice studies. To consider this matter, the UNH administration is setting up a working group which will include a number of faculty. The provost mentioned that the working group's faculty representation would be drawn from the Justice Studies Program and that there would also be one faculty member to represent both the Faculty Senate and the Graduate Council together. A senator suggested that the working group should include a faculty member who is knowledgeable about collective bargaining. The provost said that was a good idea and also that he would discuss the review with the AAUP, regarding how new faculty might be integrated into the UNH faculty. Another senator asked that the working group include faculty who are not members of the Justice Studies Program, in order to get a wider cross section of views. Also, a faculty member from the UNH Library should be included, because there would need to be integration of the library facilities.

III. Blue Ribbon Panel on Research – The Blue Ribbon Panel on Research intends to make available for faculty input a draft document on October 13 and to report to the president on October 31. The chairs of the blue ribbon panel will be invited to the Faculty Senate on November 3. Jan Nisbet listed the members of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Research and its working group. The president had charged the panel to explore (1) what UNH needs to do now to ensure the vitality of research, scholarship and creative activity for the next ten years, (2) what the right mission and organizational structure is for the Office of Research and the right qualifications for a vice president for research, and (3) how to ensure that research activities are integrally connected to and supportive of the broader academic mission.

Jan Nisbet described the working group's activities and the more detailed questions the group is attempting to answer. She presented some data on creative activity in the College of Liberal Arts. Also, the Office of the Vice President for Research wrote that about forty percent of the tenure track faculty and all of the research faculty write proposals and that there is a core of 100 to 150 tenure track and 75 research faculty who are very prolific in this area. The document adds that the most successful faculty have success rates of sixty to ninety percent, that the top twenty faculty account for sixty-five percent of the award volume, that seven of the top twenty faculty are research faculty, and that research faculty account for about forty percent of the total award volume. [This section of the report was revised after the senate meeting.] Earmarks have gone down from forty-eight percent of UNH awards in 2005 to twenty-one percent in 2007. Competition is increasing; federal discretionary dollars are decreasing; and private foundation dollars have been negatively impacted by the economic downturn. Thirty-nine of the forty-four university departments offer graduate degrees, but the grant dollars supporting graduate student per faculty vary widely across grant-driven colleges.

Recommendations under consideration by the panel are (1) that the Office of the Vice President for Research needs to be strengthened and set up to plan a pivotal leadership role in research, scholarship, and creative activity throughout the university, with the Research Council and the Faculty Advisory Committee playing crucial strategic roles and

(2) the establishment of an internal fund to promote and seed research, in disciplines where external funding is scarce, and improved integration of the Office of the Vice President for Research and the Graduate School. The working group's recommendations may include (1) better alignment with the academic mission, of interdisciplinary research in centers and institutes, (2) improvements in the quality of life for graduate students and enhancement in stipends, in order to integrate the graduate students and give them greater visibility in the university's mission, (3) reduction of teaching loads for faculty active in research, scholarship and creative activities, (4) changes in the RCM formula to incentivize all research, (5) improved access to within-discipline and interdisciplinary graduate programs for all faculty, (6) better research support at the college level through an associate dean of research and graduate education, (7) improved integration of research faculty in departments, colleges and the university, and (8) strengthening private and public sector involvement to advance research.

A professor said that the group's criteria for defining research are heavily biased towards sponsored research and that the working group seems to measure prolific scholars mainly by the grant funding. Amitava Bhattacharjee replied that the professor's concerns are front and center in the working group's review and that the group is aware that research varies in the university and is discipline specific. A better database is needed with more easily accessible data. A senator said that scholarly activities such as performances do not produce reports but are valuable in themselves. Another senator said that the group seems to give a heavy weight to graduate education, and he added that some areas of the university have heavier teaching loads than others. Jan Nisbet responded that the working group believes that all faculty should have access to graduate programs either interdisciplinary or within the discipline and that faculty active in research, scholarship and creative activities should teach only two courses per semester.

Another senator asked how the OVPR calculated the most prolific and most successful faculty. Was the calculation based on the number of research dollars brought in by those faculty members? Some research, while not lucrative, is necessary to support the state or local communities; and so dollars-brought-in is not an accurate measure of the importance of the research. Dr. Bhattacharjee agreed and said that, while dollars are one important aspect, many criteria should be included. Also, a senator expressed concern about the amount of undergraduate tuition dollars used for graduate education and the need for transparency in this regard. Dr. Bhattacharjee responded that the RCM model is supposed to be transparent and that graduate education can be helpful to undergraduate education. A professor asked if the recommendation to improve "access to within-discipline and interdisciplinary graduate programs for all faculty" would imply anything about faculty who do not choose to utilize that. The recommendation for "reduction of teaching loads for faculty active in research, scholarship and creative activities" would be applied according to the activities of individual faculty. The working group is considering both what has been done at other institutions and what would be most desirable for UNH. Faculty senators are asked to send input to Jan Nisbet and Amitava Bhattacharjee and to review the document which will be available on October 13.

IV. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The senate chair said that the Agenda Committee is setting up a Task Force on Promotion, Tenure, Teaching and Standards and would like to know which faculty are interested in serving on the task force. This senate task force is to begin a dialogue on the standards, not the procedures, for promotion and tenure and should review changing criteria for how teaching, research and service are assessed, as well as to see that departments and colleges should have clearly-articulated criteria for tenure and that candidates should receive proper feedback at regular intervals. A faculty subgroup should also review the questions and processes of student evaluations of teaching and consider course rankings and the issue of grade distributions from individual faculty being distributed to commercial websites, as well as matters of grade inflation in general. Agenda Committee members believe that, because of the criteria for promotion and tenure, these matters are related and should be reviewed by a single group.

The senate chair said that a dialogue is beginning on RCM. Also, the Strategic Plan Steering Committee has met for the first time; and the six faculty representatives are Chris Bauer, Estelle Hrabak, Janet Polasky, Michael Fraas, and the senate chair and vice chair. In addition, the committee includes three deans, the director of the Carsey Institute, and others, with a total of thirty members. The discussions of the committee are expected to be open and available for discussion with colleagues. A senator said that, for a committee deciding the future goals of the university, six faculty out of thirty members is not enough; and she suggested that faculty should comprise one third to one half of such a committee. A professor said that in past times faculty were the “corpus universitatis” but sometimes now are viewed almost as corporate employees. Since the mission of the university is to create and disseminate knowledge, the priorities must conform to this mission.

The senate chair said that John Aber will act as liaison between the Faculty Senate and the EOS Search Committee. The senate chair announced that the summit meeting on study abroad will be held on October 9, to review the study abroad tuition model, and that recommendations are expected on this by the end of the semester.

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

VI. Motion on student voter registration – The Student Senate has passed a motion supporting a student voter registration challenge. In today’s Faculty Senate, Bill Stine moved and David Richman seconded that **“the Faculty Senate of the University of New Hampshire supports the student body’s challenge to the University of Colorado, the University of Florida, the University of Michigan, Ohio State University, and Pennsylvania State University to rally the highest percentage of student voters to the polls on November 4th.”** The students would self-report through the blackboard system to indicate whether they had voted. One faculty senator commented that the Faculty Senate should not support the Democratic Party. A friendly amendment was made and accepted to add **“non-partisan”** to the motion. Senators said that we should inform faculty about this challenge and suggest that faculty encourage students to educate themselves on the national issues before voting. Another friendly amendment was made and accepted to add **“We encourage the students to take the initiative to inform**

themselves as widely as possible about the issues”. After discussion, the amended motion passed with twenty-nine ayes, four nays and one abstention.

VII. 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. Barbara White and the senate chair asked that faculty inform themselves about the reformulated Discovery Program proposals and discuss them with colleagues, because the senate will need to make an informed decision about Discovery Program implementation soon. The details of the proposal and a number frequently asked questions are available on the Discovery Program’s website. Barbara White said that suggestions for possible non-course capstone experiences will be posted on the website. She added that whether a capstone experience is acceptable is up to the academic department to decide. The Discovery Program will make an explicit recommendation that it be the job of the major department and the advisor, not the Discovery Program Advisory Committee, to decide on whether a proposed capstone experience is appropriate. The capstone experience does not have to be interdisciplinary, as that attribute may be fulfilled by one of the other courses. Faculty are invited to bring questions or concerns to Barbara White and Tom Pistole.

VIII. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned.