

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2008-09 FACULTY SENATE

MARCH 23, 2009

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Aber, Afolayan, Fraas, Gross, Gunlogson, Morgan and Tobin. Excused were Chavda, Echt, Hartter, Lanier and Pringle. A student observer was a guest.

II. Remarks by and questions to the president – The president congratulated the senate on finishing its charge on the Discovery Program. The president shared some good budget news regarding the stimulus package for education. Also, the university has two very active faculty/administrative teams working to qualify for federal and state stimulus funds. The president added that UNH recently held a budget summit meeting attended by sixty people from across campus, to discuss ideas for increasing income and reducing expenses, and that the Central Budget Committee will consider those suggestions soon. Estimated student enrollment numbers for next year look good. A discussion ensued about the possibility of using more adjunct professionals in non-traditional programs. The president also invited faculty to give input at a campus-wide Strategic Planning Open Forum on Tuesday, March, 31st, from 11:00 to 3:00 p.m. in the fifth floor reading room of Dimond Library and at another such forum which will be held next month.

III. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The senate chair said that employees must exchange their UNH parking permits for new ones by the end of the semester. Employees may do so at the parking office at the Visitor Center (next to Lot A) during normal service hours. Also, the faculty senators are invited by the student senators to a dinner after the senate meeting on April 6, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Waysmeet Center at 15 Mill Road across from parking lot C. The provost search will bring candidates to campus next month, and faculty are asked to meet with the candidates at that time. Also, faculty can talk with three candidates for chief information officer on March 24, 25 and 30 in MUB theater one. The chief information officer is in charge of the computing and information technology services on campus. The senate chair asked that faculty participate in the strategic planning open fora and also said that the process for nominations and election of the UNH Discovery Committee members has been initiated by the deans' offices. All faculty, including those from the Thompson School, are eligible for nomination. In April, that committee should work to define the course description criteria; and in the summer the committee will consider course approvals. The senate chair said that tomorrow the Central Budget Committee will discuss the budget summit meeting's brain storming session which included ideas such as cutting programs, furloughs, and a hiring freeze. The senate chair has sent to the senators the ballot results on statements about the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel for Research; and he will forward the information to the president, the strategic planners, and the Blue Ribbon Panel co-chairs. In the first week of March the senate office sent, to the faculty members in many departments, ballots for the Faculty Senate elections; and the senate chair asks that faculty return their ballots to the senate office by March 31.

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

V. Student use of electronic devices – On 1/26/09, the Faculty Senate passed a motion on student use of electronic devices, with the rationale that the use of electronic devices during class for non-class activities is disruptive to students and faculty and reduces the quality of the learning experience. The motion was that “**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.**”

Subsequently, the Student Senate asked the Faculty Senate to reconsider this motion; and the Faculty Senate’s Student Affairs Committee met with a Student Senate representative and agreed to recommend that the Faculty Senate modify the wording. The senate chair said that Robert’s Rules state that an already-passed motion may not be revised but may be rescinded and a new motion crafted. Therefore Faculty Senate voted at its last meeting to rescind the 1/26/09 motion on electronic devices. At that meeting, on behalf of the Faculty Senate’s Student Affairs Committee, James Lewis moved that the Faculty Senate pass a revised motion in which the third sentence of the motion would be changed to say that “If students violate this policy, they will have a choice either to put the device beyond use for the remainder of the class or to leave the classroom.” Today the motion was removed from the table by acclamation. Many faculty members found the proposed revision too soft and wanted the motion to allow faculty the same choices that they traditionally have to deal with students who are disruptive in class, including asking the student to leave the class. An amendment was proposed by Erik Swartz and seconded by Ruth Sample to end the motion before the sentence which begins: “If students violate this policy....” The amendment passed with thirty-one ayes, three nays and two abstentions. A senator said that faculty set the norms of behavior in the classroom and should exercise that duty. Another professor said that there has recently been an onslaught of use of electronic devices for non-classroom purposes, especially in the larger classes; and so faculty should pass a motion on this subject, in order to reinforce that this is inappropriate behavior. A friendly amendment was proposed and accepted to include also in the motion the last two sentences of the original motion. **The original motion, with the sentence on penalties removed, passed with thirty-four ayes, three nays and one abstention. The motion is:**

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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 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.

VI. Amplified music – The chair of the Student Affairs Committee said that the administration has put in place an experimental policy on amplified music, to confine such events to certain locations during class hours, and that there have been no complaints on the new policy. The committee believes that, since the policy seems to be working, there is no reason to recommend a change; and so the committee recommends no action on this charge.

VII. Student debt – The chair of the Student Affairs Committee said that the average student debt load for UNH undergraduates is between \$25,000 and \$28,000. Director of Financial Aid Suzy Allen told the committee that her office uses Project Cash as the resource for information and advice about student loan issues. This can be accessed on line at <http://www.projectcash.unh.edu/contact.htm>. If a student comes into the Financial Aid Office to discuss borrowing money from an alternative loan program, a staff member will discuss what this will mean in terms of debt. Alternative financing information can be accessed on the office's website. New students are now required to complete an online counseling tutorial at <http://www.mappingyourfuture.org>, and they can get additional handouts of information from the Student Aid Office. One option might be to develop a mandatory on-line financial literacy course for first-year students, similar to the course currently available to promote alcohol awareness. The senate's Student Affairs Committee thinks that the Financial Aid Office is guiding students adequately on these issues. Apparently the aid package that UNH offers students meets the appropriate guidelines.

VIII. Academic calendar – The chair of the Student Affairs Committee said that the committee considered the question of whether UNH should change its academic calendar. Criteria used for evaluation include the following student factors: (1) impact on ability to complete curricula more quickly, (2) minimizing the incremental cost to students, (3) enhanced opportunity for new courses, (4) enhanced opportunity for off-campus experiences, (5) meeting demonstrable student need, (6) minimizing negative impact on student services, such as housing, meals, billing, etc., (7) impact on course cancellation policy, (8) impact on summer/other vacations, earning capacity, completion of internships, etc., (9) impact on curricular sequencing and (10) overall financial impact. The committee also considered faculty factors such as the following: (1) ability to supplement faculty income, (2) enhanced opportunity to offer new courses/enrich curricula, (3) impact on faculty workload, (4) impact on ability of students to graduate in a timely fashion, (5) impact on course cancellation policy and (6) impact on the AAUP contract; and the committee considered other factors including: (1) impact on use of UNH facilities more fully/efficiently, (2) impact of students' use of time if on campus but not taking classes, i.e. UNH/town impact, (3) impact on UNH administrative services, (4) RCM implications, and (5) politics.

Potential calendar models are listed in order of increasing difficulty associated with implementation:

1. The calendar as is except creating two semesters of equal length by shortening winter break. As the current model, this is well understood; and many current courses, internships, etc. are built around it. Administrative systems are built to accommodate this model, and it saves energy during early to mid-January. However, the facilities are underused at times during the year; there may be problems when unequal terms occur; and this model may stifle creative short course opportunities, particularly off-campus.
2. 4-1-4 model, with a mini-term of up to four weeks offered in January. This model would shorten the current winter break and push back graduation slightly but is used in the University of Delaware and several small, liberal arts colleges. The model provides greater use of facilities and potential for development of enriched courses, off-campus activities, etc; and use of a January term could result in earlier graduation of students, which could have a financial impact. However, the financial impact on students is unclear. Would they have to pay for a separate term? The committee thought that they probably would. Would financial aid cover this term? That answer is unknown, but likely not. Also, what would be the impact of students not taking a course during this term but staying in Durham? How would this model affect teaching schedules, workloads, vacations, and the faculty contract?
3. 4-4-1 model, with a mini-term of up to four weeks offered in May. This may be a first summer school term or offered as a “regular” term followed by summer school terms. This would shorten winter break but is done in institutions such as Pratt, Transylvania, Wartburg, and other small, liberal arts colleges). There would be greater use of facilities and potential for development of enriched courses, off-campus activities, and enhanced fieldwork possibilities in May; and the use of a May term could result in earlier graduation of students, which could have a financial impact. However, the financial impact on students is unclear. Would they have to pay for a separate term? The committee thought that they probably would. Would financial aid cover this term? That answer is unknown, but likely not. Also, winter and summer breaks would be shortened. This model could affect teaching schedules, workloads, and the faculty contract. In addition, UNH summer school enrollment has been modest for years; and so why expect a higher enrollment for May term?
4. One week courses in lieu of spring break. This model could offer additional courses and off-campus opportunities and might be administratively more manageable than other modified models and allow for increased use of the facilities. However, would elimination of spring break appeal to students and faculty? What would be the workload and contract impact and the impact on the community if students stay on campus but do not take courses? What would be the impact on students’ tuition and financial aid? The overall financial impact on UNH is unclear.
5. Year-round classes. Students would be required to complete a defined number of summer terms, as is done at Dartmouth College. This model allows for a greater use of facilities in historically “quiet” periods, potential expansion of summer course offerings and field work, potential benefit for graduate students if funding continues over summer, and potential benefit for businesses in Durham. However, this model could affect teaching schedules and workloads, vacations, and the faculty contract and have a negative

impact on students' summer earning capacity, although students could pick up employment during other terms when not in school. The impact on programs and internships is unknown but may be negative in terms of sequencing.

6. Trimesters/quarters, with three 10-week-long quarters starting in mid-late September and ending in mid-late June, as is done at Northwestern and Stanford. In this model, more courses can be completed in a baccalaureate career; there are more opportunities for electives; and a lower percentage of courses might be taken within the major. However, there would be fewer class meetings. Also, classes would start in mid-late September and end in late June, which would have an impact on students' ability to obtain summer employment, on energy costs, and on workload and contract issues.
7. Block schedule model, in which students take one class at a time for approximately 2-3 weeks, each followed by a short, 3 to 4 day break, as is done at Colorado College. In this model, students can complete more courses and can focus on courses one at a time; and the model will encourage smaller classes. However, there may be a perceived difficulty in framing courses to accommodate this model; essentially all courses will need to be re-configured; and there will be increased administrative challenges and workload and contract impacts.

The committee said that the models on quarters/trimesters and block scheduling should be eliminated from further consideration. The committee recommended that, although the other alternate academic calendars may be acceptable, all of them present significant challenges; and therefore additional, detailed analysis should take place for the remaining models, in order to answer questions including the following: (1) why do we wish to change the academic calendar, (2) what would be the financial impact on students, (3) what would be the impact on UNH administrative systems and use of campus/facilities, (4) what would be the impact on faculty workload, income and other contract-related issues, and (5) how would each model be affected by student and faculty demand? Also, any academic calendar model should support successful implementation of strategies articulated in the UNH Strategic Plan which is now being developed. What costs would be incurred by the university regarding financial aid, extra billing, separate registration and many other issues? The answers to such questions should accompany any specific plan which the administration may propose and bring to the Faculty Senate for consideration. Currently the fall semester is shorter than the spring semester because of the limited number of weeks between Labor Day and Christmas. Faculty are invited to give input on the various calendar models. The committee intends to forward the models for calendar change to the Provost and request that relevant data be accessed to address information which is needed to more accurately predict relative costs (including transaction costs) of the changeover to each, as well as longer term benefits and efficiencies to be gained relative to academic programs and UNH facilities.

IX. Master Plan and housing – The chair of the Campus Planning Committee said that the master plan, which was described at the 2/9/09 senate meeting by Doug Bencks, gives a great deal of information and describes a number of accomplishments. She added that several years ago the university raised the rents in the family housing at Forest Park and demolished a number of housing units there and that the administration had agreed at that time to replace the demolished units by converting some of the Woodside Apartments from undergraduate to family housing; but that did not happen because the administration admitted more undergraduates and did not actualize the plan. The senate's Campus Planning Committee is concerned about where

graduate students and new faculty can live. Any housing at Leawood Orchard would be far in the future, if it ever exists. Immigration law for foreign graduate students limits the number of hours the student may work and prevents the family members from working; and so housing is an important problem. A senator expressed a wish that the Faculty Senate would approve a motion that the administration should live up to its agreement to change some of the Woodside Apartments to graduate and family housing. The senate chair said that the senate would continue this discussion at a future meeting and asked that the senate's Campus Planning Committee provide a representative to serve on the group looking into the Leawood Orchard housing possibilities.

X. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned.