

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
2008-09 FACULTY SENATE

SEPTEMBER 22, 2008

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Dowd, Gross, and Tobin. Excused were Barrows, Ciccone, Lanier, Nimmo, Powell and Slomba. President Huddleston, Dick Cannon, Barbara Arrington, Kevin Linton, and Tom Pistole were guests.

II. UNH health initiative – Vice President Dick Cannon said that the new health initiative will be a comprehensive look at how UNH can best interact with the medical care system and how UNH can encourage the best individual health practices among faculty, students and staff. Including both the employee and employer contributions, UNH spends approximately forty million dollars on medical care each year; and that figure has been growing at a double-digit rate. Dick Cannon said that the administration wants to engage in a conversation to review what we are spending on medical care and what alternatives may exist. Are there ways to buy care at better prices? The current insurer is Harvard Pilgrim; but some employers self insure. The administration is recruiting a team to work on these matters. The group will have about twenty-one members, of which one third will be faculty, including senate representatives James Lewis and Gale Carey. Dick Cannon said that the administration understands that any modification of benefits would be subject to collective bargaining. He added that the new group would be an information-gathering rather than a decision-making group and that the Institute for Health Policy will provide staffing for the group.

One of the many questions the group would try to answer is what proportion of the inflation of health costs is due to the rising costs for actual care. Medical technology is a big driver of costs, and the age of the workforce also affects costs. The dean of the College of Health and Human Services, Barbara Arrington, said that health prevention is important and that, as we learn what might be useful, she hopes that faculty in some areas might want to include some information on this in their classes, in order to help students to be good stewards of their own health. A senator responded that colleagues in his department would like to talk about that, and the dean invited those faculty to contact her. She added that the University System of New Hampshire has a wellness coordinator and also that a desk has been developed with a treadmill which goes at one mile per hour, so that people can work and walk at the same time.

Among the issues to consider are the level of insurance deductibles and also the fact that the costs of procedures may vary from hospital to hospital. There have been some studies on wellness programs and how they affect health costs. However, the costs of health insurance would likely not decrease, at least on the short term, if we increase preventive measures and become healthier. In answer to a question, Dick Cannon said that he does not know if other institutions of higher education self insure. A senator suggested that a future Discovery Program dialogue theme might deal with these health issues. Costs seem to rise in health care as health technology increases; but in other fields, technology often reduces costs. If a higher deductible plan were used, a health savings account

might be added. Faculty are invited to send input on these matters to Dick Cannon, James Lewis or Gale Carey. There will also be a website with information on the health initiative.

III. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The senate chair said that President Huddleston has announced the end of the university-wide hiring freeze but that this lifting of the freeze will not include the many units with deficit problems. Faculty have expressed concern about that decision, since the university is reviewing the RCM formulas now and therefore deficit patterns may change. There are also collegiality concerns. Steps have been taken to balance the UNH budget for fiscal years 2009 and 2010, but 2011 looks difficult. Many units, including COLSA, CEPS, UNH-Manchester, the Whittemore arena, athletics, and the New England Center, have projected deficit problems. Also, the Steering Committee for Information Technology is discussing possibly changing to a new facility management infrastructure system (FAMIS); and that would be a major expense. That committee has been charged with developing a master plan for technology. The committee is developing a list of stakeholders, and Mihaela Sabin will be a faculty representative on that committee. In addition, membership of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Intersarsity Athletics will include faculty representatives Elizabeth Slomba and David Bachrach.

The Faculty Senate chair has met with the Student Senate, and Kevin Linton from that group will be an observer at the Faculty Senate meetings. A Faculty Senate/Student Senate potluck may be scheduled soon, to replace the potluck which the Faculty Senate planned to host previously but had to cancel due to a snowstorm. Last year the students asked that a mechanism be set up so that faculty might make advance announcement of textbook selections in time for students to have a wider choice of book purveyors, in order to try to reduce costs. This fall, the effort was a partial success. Perhaps in the future, the list can be available earlier; and more professors can participate. The Barnes and Noble Bookstore gives a contribution to the university library, if a certain proportion of the UNH faculty lists their texts with that bookstore; but the textbooks can also be listed with other sellers. The Faculty Senate's Student Affairs Committee is charged this year with reviewing issues related to textbook costs.

The chair of that committee asked that faculty also consider and provide input on a recent proposal for paperless advising, in which the information would be kept in electronic form. There is also a proposal to publish the time and room schedule only online. Paperless advising in which the information is on line would increase legal and privacy issues related to the right to know law. Would outside companies and also accreditors have access to the information? Moreover, would this paperless proposal just move the printing costs to the departments? It would be necessary to have a place where a professor could make notes of special circumstances or concerns. Some notes might be personal and not appropriate for electronic input. Would there be enough server space for the needed backup? Faculty have many questions and concerns, and the Student Affairs Committee will consider these matters. The senate chair said that the Faculty Senate does not have a committee charged with dealing with technology and might need

to establish such a committee or to modify the purview of the Library Committee to include technological matters.

The senate chair said that he met with Claire Malarte-Feldman and Lisa MacFarlane and set up a plan for shared governance on the study abroad tuition issue. A summit meeting will soon be held to share information on the managed study abroad programs and to set up a working group to create a plan for the next three years. That group would include some of the faculty directors of the study abroad programs, one member from the Center for International Education, one faculty senator, one associate dean, and Leigh Anne Melanson and Lisa MacFarlane. The working group could bring a plan to a second summit meeting if needed and to the Faculty Senate.

The senate chair said that 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 October 6 Faculty Senate for a preliminary discussion and again on November 3 after the draft has been released. The senate chair today agreed to tell the president that the senate plans to review the document after the panel completes it and sends it to the president.

IV. Remarks by and questions to the president, on strategic plan issues – The president said that a new strategic plan is necessary, that strategic planning must be updated regularly, and that the planning must include input from the entire university community. The Strategic Plan Steering Committee will be chaired by the president and will include about thirty members from within and outside the campus community. In addition there will be four roundtable groups and perhaps additional fora for discussion as needed. This planning process will identify eight to twelve themes, which can be winnowed down to four or five important ideas to be used as the institutional priorities for the coming years. These ideas could also enhance discussions with alumni and potential donors. The president said that the Strategic Plan Steering Committee would be used for creative thinking and that, if any changes were contemplated, they would first have to go through the normal campus decision-making process.

A professor said that the university is overdue to revisit the Academic Plan and asked how the strategic planning will relate to that. The president said that academic planning, information technology planning, and space planning would fit into the strategic planning, which should take about a year and cover the next five to ten years. A former senate chair said that the work of the Blue Ribbon Panel for Research is part of the strategic planning process and that the panel's recommendations need to be vetted, discussed and approved by the Faculty Senate and its committee system. He added that the blue ribbon panel and the administration should allow time for that process to occur correctly. The president agreed and said that, in whatever he initiates, the creative thinking goes on and then recommendations for change must be submitted to the usual decision-making process, including shared governance as needed.

A senator said that the university operates on a restricted budget and asked how the president envisions reallocation in order to accomplish the strategic planning goals. The

president said that the money for this strategic planning effort was all raised from private funding sources. He added that it is critical that we think as far down the road as possible, so that we can use our funds efficiently, and also that the strategic planning be creative thinking outside our existing constraints. Later the ideas can be evaluated with an eye to funding. A professor asked why the previous very successful capital campaign has not already been followed up by a new campaign, and he indicated that a new campaign needs to start. The president agreed and said that the first campaign picked the low hanging fruit and that a good infrastructure is needed to create a culture of philanthropy. He said that the university needs to develop a better alumni relationship function and an improved UNH Foundation.

In answer to a question about a possible winter term, the president said that this is an issue he supports and about which he is interested in talking further with the faculty. He understands that a winter term would probably push graduation a bit later in the calendar and that this could have some disadvantages, but he believes that on balance the positives far outweigh the negatives. Faculty would find a winter term congenial for experimental courses and creative pedagogy and as an opportunity for earning additional pay. A winter term would generate additional income for the university. One of the Faculty Senate committees is charged with reviewing this issue.

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

VI. Discovery Program – Barbara White said that she, Tom Pistole and Lisa MacFarlane met with the senate's Academic Affairs Committee to discuss the Discovery Program categories. Michel Charpentier, a member of the AAC, will also attend the meetings of the Discovery Program Advisory Committee. A "frequently-asked questions" page has been added to the Discovery Program website, and the program has scheduled three departmental liaison meetings. The capstone working group has made recommendations to the advisory committee and has drafted seven guidelines which are listed on the website. Today the AAC chair said that the registrar was to check on the availability of 400 and 500 level courses which could be used as inquiry courses, and Barbara White replied that this information has not yet been received.

Four new Discovery Program attributes would be inquiry, personal identity, interdisciplinary and capstone. The existing attribute, writing intensive, would remain the same. The criteria of the identity attribute also are available on the website. The capstone attribute is the only one which may be met by an experience and not necessarily a course. Examples of such experiences include projects, research, artistry, portfolios and/or written work. Courses fulfilling the various attributes could be indicated with certain icons or tags, and the university would keep tabs on the attributes which had been met. Barbara White said that, if the capstone attribute were met by an experience rather than a course, a mechanism would be developed to include this information in the student's record. Faculty are invited to bring questions or concerns to Barbara White and Tom Pistole.

VII. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned.