Meeting called to order at 3:11 on March 31, 2014

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Harkless, Kazura, Morgan, Mulligan, Shannon, and Tenczar. Afolayan served as proxy for Mellyn. Connell and Kinghorn were excused. Lisa MacFarlane and Ed Mueller were guests.

II. Remarks by and questions to the provost – The provost greeted the senate and informed them that the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) team is on campus and conducting their review, and spoke of the meeting this afternoon at 4 o’clock. She asked if senate members had any questions for her. A senator asked how the review was going. The provost said that many of the questions being asked by the team members, who are from private and public institutions throughout New England and adjoining states, are shaped by issues relevant to their own campuses. Others are ones we anticipated. She suggested that as well as answering the questions of the team members, faculty could ask team members for suggestions and advice regarding methods they have implemented on their own campuses. She thanked the senate members for their attendance at and participation in the meeting.

III. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The chair had no comments, and there were no questions.

IV. Minutes – The minutes of the last senate meeting, March 17, 2014, were unanimously approved.

Action Items:

V. Vote on Motion from the ad hoc Committee on Teaching Evaluations motion on the exemptions of non-tenured instructors teaching all non-eUNH courses from piloting the web-based evaluation for all courses. The senate chair presented this motion, first presented at the March 17, 2014 Faculty Senate meeting where a friendly amendment was accepted. (APPENDIX V.A Senate agenda 3/31/14).

Rationale: Given the value placed on evaluation forms for promotion and tenure cases of faculty as well as for renewing lecturers’ contracts, the ad hoc committee charged with revising the teaching evaluations for UNH courses recommends that both groups be exempt from the pilot study until a comparative analysis of the web-based and paper-based systems is completed. The committee also recommends course exemptions remain in place during the pilot phase for all UNH courses currently exempt from the standard evaluation process.
Moved on recommendation of the ad hoc Committee on Teacher Evaluations,

“Departments, programs, and divisions that take part in the pilot of the web-based evaluation shall exempt their non-tenured instructors teaching all non-eUNH courses from participating in the pilot. Those exempted faculty members will continue to use the procedures for in class student paper evaluations. This exemption for designated faculty shall be effective as long their department, program, or division is involved in the pilot study.”

The senate vice chair, a member of the above committee, noted that the intent of this motion is to minimize the risk to non-tenured instructors whose advancements rely heavily on student evaluations of teaching. The chair noted that in a recent meeting with members of the Lecturer’s Council and the Research Council, appreciation was expressed to him for the efforts of the senate in bringing forward this motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Vote on Academic Affairs Committee motion on the acceptance of credit for writing-intensive courses taken online or at other universities. This motion was first presented at the March 17, 2014 Faculty Senate meeting where friendly amendments were accepted. (APPENDIX VI.A –Senate agenda 3/31/14)

“Students in residence at UNH must take their four required Writing-Intensive courses (English 401 plus three in the disciplines) at UNH or at UNH-managed study-abroad programs; that is, they must be designated as acceptable UNH courses. This stipulation also applies to continuing education students in degree programs and students in study abroad and other exchange programs. (Students may not shop around for on-line courses that might qualify for WI credit, or even face-to-face courses or hybrids, offered elsewhere.) This restriction will apply to all students beginning in the fall of 2014. It will not affect the current policy of exempting certain entering freshmen from English 401 if they have passed an Advanced-Placement writing course or the equivalent in high school.

Among transfer students only English 401 equivalents will be considered among courses completed prior to entrance to UNH; the remaining three WI courses must be UNH courses as described above. This restriction will apply to students who matriculate after the fall of 2014.

The Senate endorses the current Writing-Committee policy regarding petitions, as stated on its website: “In general, petitions will not be favorably received if there are any conventional means available of acquiring WI credit, either in the immediate or future term. In other words, UNH students are expected to enroll in UNH WI courses to satisfy the WI requirement. Scheduling convenience or falling short of graduation requirements do not, by themselves, provide valid grounds for petition.”

Michael Ferber, as chair of the AAC noted the changes in the wording of this motion regarding study abroad programs, saying that in the College of Liberal Arts, students are not allowed credit
for writing-intensive courses on study abroad unless the courses are part of the UNH managed programs. He also noted that there had been concerns regarding the petitioning process and pointed out the new wording which was added to reduce the potential for abuse of the petitioning process, while still allowing for that process. He indicated that similar wording exists on the website.

The senator from Civil Engineering stated that students in his department have been getting credit for writing-intensive courses taken while on study abroad, and that this policy has been in place in CEPS for about twenty years. He was concerned about the impact of this motion on students who expect to receive credit for such courses. He was asked who approves such writing courses, and responded that the courses are pre-approved. He suggested that the limitation might work strictly for online courses, but Michael pointed out that his committee determined that there is no practical way to distinguish between online and other courses when looking at transfer credits.

The past senate chair suggested amending the motion to include approval for such courses with prior approval from the department. This way, departments can review course content to determine ahead of time if the course meets the writing-intensive requirement. Ed Mueller, Director of the Writing Program, said that he was not aware of this practice in the Civil Engineering department, but agreed that a prior-approval process would resolve this issue. Michael Ferber indicated that it was reasonable for the motion to be superceded by college rules. A senator asked if the prior approval wouldn’t expose issues with online courses which prompted this motion in the first place.

The chair asked if more than one department was affected by this, concerned that if we re-word the motion for one department only, such wording might impact other departments in the future with unintended consequences. A senator asked if a problem would arise if many departments tried to seek the “prior approval” exception. The past chair noted that the general policy of prior approval for study abroad courses is already in place, and said that the question becomes, will faculty follow through with good care in reviewing courses for that prior approval? A senator asked where the approval for writing intensive courses comes from. Michael replied that it comes from the departments, through the colleges and the Discovery program.

A senator expressed concern that changes made in the motion to accommodate study abroad programs might weaken the intent of the motion. The chair noted that these programs are tightly constructed. It was noted that the courses currently approved through the Civil Engineering Department are not just study abroad, but courses taken from accredited institutions across the country as well.

The chair suggested that the motion lay over for further review of the language by the committee to determine if these changes could be considered a friendly amendment, or if an amendment should be coming from the floor to more substantively change the motion. The AAC chair agreed.

Discussion/Report Items:

VII. Report by Finance and Administration Committee on proposed UNH policy on compliance with federal HIPAA law. (Appendix VII.A.- Senate agenda 3/31/14) – Michael Carter, chair of the Finance and Administration Committee offered a brief powerpoint presentation regarding the
federal legislation impacting protected health information. This policy went into effect at the end of January. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, establishes that the university is aware of the existence of this federal legislation, that it has a mechanism for educating all of us in its provisions, and that it creates training programs for select people who actually do deal with HIPAA information, and finally limits the scope of applicability. The question the committee asked is whether faculty, in their normal context of teaching, service, engagement and scholarship, are generally affected by this new policy. The committee determined that most faculty are not, noting that student health records are also considered academic records, covered by the Family Educational and Rights of Privacy Act (FERPA). There are also protections for privacy and security for protected health information. Except for those who are providing actual health care services, these new regulations do not affect routine conduct at UNH.

Michael noted that he received information from Melissa McGee, the Compliance Officer in the UNH Research Integrity Services and Julie Simpson, director of that office. He also thanked the members of his committee, Clyde Denis, Fred Kaen, John Hasseldine, Ann Morgan and Peter Urquhart. The senate chair accepted the committee’s report and thanked them for their work.

VIII. Report by Academic Affairs Committee on recent drop in enrollments in study-abroad programs. (Appendix VIII.A.- Senate agenda 3/31/14) – The chair of the AAC felt that there was not time to address this matter during this session of the senate, and the chair agreed to put the report off until the next senate meeting.

IX. New business – none

XI. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 3:42 p.m.