Meeting called to order at 3:11 p.m. September 23, 2013

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Caron, Denis, Guo, Harkless, Kalinowski, Minocha, Morgan, Pohl, Shore, Tenczar. Guests were Monica Chiu, Karen Graham, President Huddleston, Lisa MacFarlane and May-Win Thein.

II. Remarks by and questions to the president – President Huddleston expressed pleasure to meet with the senate in its new venue and in this time of relative calm in the university climate. He reported on the Board of Trustees retreat held a few weeks ago. At that retreat, the president reported to the board on four major topics: 1. Making good on the university’s commitment to double STEM graduates by 2025. 2. Securing our enrollments. This is a national topic of concern, but UNH has done well, generally speaking, in terms of enrollment. The expectation is that this will become more difficult in the coming years, but the administration understands that enrollment problems are not just admission problems, but rather are connected to academics as well. 3. Advancement and fundraising – UNH has had a couple of banner years in this area, raising a record breaking $35 million. 4. Research and commercialization – the president would like UNH to lay claim to our distinctiveness. We are the research institution of USNH, and even in an atmosphere of funding cutbacks, the university’s number of patents, disclosures and licenses are up, which demonstrates the value of the research on this campus. To wrap all four of these topics up, the president emphasized the notion of being the ‘University of Choice,’ which can be interpreted two ways. His aim is for UNH to be considered the place to go for students in this area, as well as for the university itself to be as flexible as possible in finding meaningful ways to help our students reach their academic goals.

He reported that the Trustees are concerned about enrollment issues, and that he is trying particularly to maintain adequate degrees of separation between UNH, which is doing relatively well in maintaining enrollments, and Keene and Plymouth, where these challenges are currently more problematic. Our mission is clear – to be the state’s public research university with an unusual commitment to high quality undergraduate education. The questions continue to come, “Isn’t research too expensive? What do we get out of that?”, but the president sees this rhetoric as a diversion, and is committed to the unique mission of UNH. He sees the coming year as challenging but not as difficult as previous years have been.

A senator asked about the financial aspects of enrollment issues. The president explained, from the report he gave to the Board of Trustees, that the number of high school graduates are down 1-2% nationally, 6-8% in the New England area, and 18% of in New Hampshire. He noted that the states of Massachusetts and Connecticut have invested heavily in higher education, and wonders how long UNH will be able to draw students from these two states when they are working hard
to keep their students in-state. The president suggested that UNH needs to brand and market more effectively. He sees us as undervalued in the current marketplace, and feels that there is a lot that the university can do to change that. While he recognizes that we are expensive for a public institution, we are competitively priced with private institutions. He referred to a report by Mark Rubenstein that UNH lost students to more expensive out-of-state institutions, rather than to less expensive universities, and conjectured that this might mean that we have not yet hit the breaking point for price.

Another senator asked, in reference to our marketability, if the university has a survey of placements for our graduates. The president responded that what is in place is not as comprehensive as he would like.

A senator mentioned the $35 million raised, and asked what the needs of the university are at this moment, referencing the PCAC and Hamilton-Smith Hall and their needs for upgrades. The president responded that it might be a good idea for the senate to invite Deborah Dutton, the Vice President for University Advancement, to speak to the senate regarding these issues. He pointed out that fundraising is often more fortuitous than planned, depending heavily on who is willing to donate in any given year, with most of the money coming from a small number of donors with close ties to the university. The Campus Planning Committee has been charged with examining the needs of the University, starting with student aid and faculty support. He said that the bricks and mortar list of needs is relatively short, naming a new center for the arts and the Hamilton Smith building as clear needs. There is hope that there might be help for Ham-Smith in the state capitol dollars fund.

Another senator asked how the shrinking demographic mentioned earlier affects the quality of the students enrolling. The president hopes that it does not, but asserted that the university will look to new markets before decreasing our standards, although UNH is committed to serving New Hampshire residents. He doesn’t see this as a desperate situation, but asked the senators if they have seen a decline in student quality in recent years. A senator from CEPS indicated that he has seen some decline with increased enrollments. The president asked if this has to do with the preparation students are receiving in K-12, and wondered if there were a way to engage more to help fix the problem early on.

A senator asked about the progress of the new logo. The president indicated that they’ve gone back to the drawing board to find a distinctive logo that will help to refresh our visual identity, pointing out that the clock tower is not necessarily a unique feature of this campus as well as that it may not fully represent the entire university system. Joel Seligman has been hired as a new Vice President for Marketing, and will be starting soon.

In reference to enrollments, a senator asked what other universities are doing that we are not doing. The president pointed out that more than the colleges in other states, nearby state governments themselves have invested very heavily into higher education. Those states that have not, such as Maine, Vermont, and Rhode Island, are not as robust as those who have (Connecticut and Massachusetts). He reiterated that New Hampshire is not in bad shape as far as enrollments go, but that we need to be looking to stay competitive.
As senator asked if the university tracks the number of students coming to UNH over time from different areas, noting that UMASS-Lowell is offering deep discounts to NH students near the Massachusetts border. The president indicated that we do track those numbers, and that in the last two enrollment cycles, there was a sharp drop in NH Hampshire applicants, which he attributes to state budget cuts and a perception by some in the population (including some high school guidance counselors) that budget cuts must equal lower quality education. The president believes we can turn this around.

A senator asked if there was data on Greater Boston Area students, and asked what our identity is in the collective consciousness of the public. The president said that an alumnus has done some pro bono work for the university in advertising and visual identity. One problem that has been identified is that the decentralization that we enjoy here at UNH (less bureaucracy) sometimes creates a deluge of multiple messages that can be problematic and confusing to the public. The president would like to create a more central message across campus, including our visual identity.

A senator asked if there were some way to invite employers of UNH graduates to promote those employees and thus the university. The president said that the administration is reaching out; that this group is a separate target for marketing. Many such employers have reported that they haven’t known how to talk to UNH, and that is changing.

Lisa MacFarlane mentioned that there is some recruitment of faculty to reach out to potential students. The president said that our faculty are our strongest sales force, and referenced the dramatic increase in enrollments in the computer science program (roughly 111%) as a result of faculty reaching out.

III. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The chair referenced the motion, attached to this meeting’s agenda (see APPENDIX IIIA), presented by the Student Senate regarding the increasing cost and number of required course materials, some of which may be little used during the course. He acknowledged that the higher cost of higher education includes the cost of course materials and encouraged the senators to take this information back to their departments and examine ways to be mindful of this issue.

IV. Minutes – The minutes of the last senate meeting were approved with all ayes except for one abstention.

V. Motion from the senate’s Academic Affairs Committee, on numerical evaluation forms – The chair of the Academic Affairs Committee proposed the following motion: “The Academic Affairs Committee moves that the Student Evaluation Form be changed to show the mean score for questions 1 through 13.” The rationale is as follows:

One of the weaknesses of the current numerical form is the confusion bred by question 14, the “overall rating,” which seems to be (but is not) the average of the thirteen specific questions immediately above it. More than a few professors and other instructors have not known that it is a separate question. If the “overall rating” is low or somewhat low (say, 4.2 or less, which is low in these inflated days),
and one takes the average of the thirteen questions, one finds almost invariably a number several tenths higher, at least in one major department over the past five or six years. Higher or lower, the average of the thirteen questions is a better index of teaching success than the number of the “overall rating.” It is tedious to make the calculations and subject to error.

The fact that this rating is heavily used in Promotion and Tenure reviews and advancement reviews for non-tenure-track faculty begs the need for a more accurate measure. John Krasue from Institutional Research has indicated that this change is doable, and that he could possibly have it ready by next semester. The senate chair indicated that since this motion is being brought forward by the Academic Affairs Committee, it requires no second and opened the floor to discussion.

After a brief discussion of the mechanics of the change, a friendly amendment was suggested that the motion be reworded to indicate that the actual proposed change is not on the evaluation itself but rather on the summary sheet of that evaluation, which wording follows: “The Academic Affairs Committee moves that the Summary Sheet of the Student Evaluation Form be changed to show the mean score for questions 1 through 13.”

The motion passed with all ayes except for one abstention.

VI. Motion from the senate’s Academic Affairs Committee on eight-week schedule - The chair of the Academic Affairs Committee proposed the following motion:

“The Academic Affairs Committee moves that the on-line MSW and all future on-line Master’s programs conform to the eight-week-term schedule as devised recently by the Registrar. If a new on-line program finds a difficult problem with the eight-week-term plan, and cannot resolve it with the Registrar, they may petition the Senate for a waiver.”

The rationale is that with the start of a new Master’s degree in Social work (MSW) in January 2014, the registrar has designed a schedule of five eight-week terms, two in the fall, two in the spring and one in the summer. Other departments are now considering similar programs. The Registrar, Kathie Forbes has proposed a schedule that is flexible enough to provide shorter and longer courses but will avoid serious interference with such matters as financial aid and reporting of student enrollments to the Federal Government. The Committee thinks the proposed eight-week-term schedule is reasonable and practicable. A new program, if it cannot work out its conflicts with the Registrar, could petition the Senate for a waiver. The already existing Master’s in Business Administration (MBA), with a different schedule, should be “grandfathered” in, that is, it may continue under its present calendar, but we invite it to consider the new schedule and see to what extent it can readily accommodate it. We note that this new schedule applies only to on-line Master’s programs, not to individual on-line courses, which will ordinarily conform to the existing semesters and J-term, though if an instructor wishes to conform to the new schedule, with the permission of his or her department, we see no obstacle.
Needing no second, having been proposed by the Academic Affairs Committee, the motion was opened to discussion. It was reiterated that this schedule is only for fully online programs and not for individual courses. A senator asked if this schedule is a move toward centralization, or if it would limit courses shorter than 8 weeks. Michael Ferber replied that shorter courses, such as a four- or seven-week course, could be contained within the 8 week schedule without a problem, and that this is not intended to rule out such courses. Rather, the intent is to prevent courses from straddling semesters, which would impact financial aid and enrollment reporting.

The past senate chair indicated that market research has shown that an 8-week program is optimal for drawing students/customers. When asked about the appeal process mentioned in the rationale for this motion, Michael Ferber indicated that all appeals would be dealt with individually.

**The motion passed with 27 ayes, 4 nays, and 3 abstentions.**

VII. Presentation on GEAR UP program, part of ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Grant - Monica Chiu, Karen Graham, and May-Win Thein prepared a presentation on the ADVANCE GEAR UP program and its goal to initiate sustainable institutional transformation for women and underrepresented people on this campus. Under the Faculty Recruiting Committee - GEAR UP (Gender Equity and Recruitment of Underrepresented People), the charge has come to develop a UNH faculty search process aimed at increasing representation of women and underrepresented people, particularly in STEM disciplines, to develop a professional development program and implementation schedule for faculty members, to change the UNH culture around recruitment, and to assist participants in increasing their awareness. One of their projects is an applied theater project, in conjunction with David Kay and Jeffrey Steiger. They are also planning a pilot seminar with two sessions scheduled for December 5, 2013. There will be workshops on statistics, recruitment policies, information on micro-aggressions, direction and discussion with facilitators, with evaluation and follow-up to follow in the spring.

There were questions from the senators about the definition of STEM used by GEAR UP, which appears to be closer to the NSF definition, as well as how the diverse committee members were selected. A senator asked about the ratio of female to male faculty at UNH, beyond the demonstrated charts comparing men and women on separate graphs. Monica indicated that a great many more graphics are available in the entire report. Barbara White responded that in 2011 the faculty at UNH was 64.3% male and 35% female. Discussion opened about about the progress that has been made on campus over the past years. A senator asked if this is a promotion problem or a retention problem. May-Win Thein observed that GEAR UP has numbers only for the past 10 years, but that the numbers indicate that things are improving slowly. Different colleges have different ratios – COLA is nearly 50/50, but other colleges have a much greater imbalance of male to female faculty, and the differences become more pronounced in ratios of full/associate professors. This grant, funded by NSF ADVANCE program is focused on STEM fields. The chair thanked Monica, Karen and May-Win for their work and for sharing this important information with the senate.

VIII. New business – The chair announced that a pending policy is being developed regarding the presence and engagement of minors on the UNH campus. Originating in Human Resources,
an initial draft has been included in today’s agenda. While it is unclear why the senate was not involved from the initial stages of this draft, clear communication has been made and endorsed by the provost that the faculty senate will be fully involved in the development of any such policy, which has a clear and direct connection to the academic mission of the university.

Though this initiative may have been sparked by the events on the Penn State Campus, the chair made it clear that regardless of what happens elsewhere, developing a policy to protect minors engaged in programs on our campus is simply the right thing to do, and that it is incumbent on the faculty senate to be a meaningful part of this discussion.

The chair asked what are the procedures we can put into place to make our campus safe for the 30,000 children who come to this campus for various programs? The programs that engage minors come from a multitude of departments all across campus. The chair asked senators to review the information attached to today’s agenda and take this information back to their departments for a discussion on the impact on their departments. What works? What doesn’t? What programs and aspects of each department are affected? This information, once gathered, should be sent to the senate senior administrative assistant, who will compile these reports for review by the agenda committee. The chair encouraged senators to report sooner rather than later with this information, and shared that HR has assured the chair that they want and need input from the faculty.

Jim Connell expressed concern that freshmen under 18 would fall under this policy, but the chair indicated that he has been told that the policy is specifically to be designed for non-students invited into programs on campus. The chair agreed that the policy needs to be much more explicit in such distinctions. The Finance and Administration Committee chair asked what the implications might be for faculty in terms of reporting on such programs. Might issues be raised regarding negligent hiring, or the kind of environment created in such programs? Would additional training or reporting be necessary? The chair responded that these kinds of questions are part of the body of information that needs to be gathered. What do programs involving minors on campus do? What do they need to function? What procedures are in place, or what procedures need to be put into place? A senator suggested that departments send a list of programs first to the senate office, and then include their comments and suggestions later in order to hasten the process of reporting and get information to the agenda committee as quickly as possible.

VII. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.