Meeting called to order at 3:10 on October 20, 2014

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Fagerberg, Scherr, and Seitz. Denis, Morgan, Samuels, and Wu were excused. Gibson, Chandler, and Foster served as proxies for Basterra, Berndtson, and C. White, respectively. Willem deVries, Lisa MacFarlane, and P.T. Vasudevan were guests.

II. Remarks by and questions to the provost – The provost abbreviated her remarks to leave time for the several weighty discussions scheduled for today’s meeting. Speaking to the topic of the proposed change to the common exam time, the provost made two points: 1) This change inevitably will be inconvenient for some members of the university community, with no way to avoid that. 2) The plan being proposed is the optimal way to ease the inconvenience of this necessity. She asserted strong confidence in the associate deans who have spent a great deal of time and effort working out the details of this solution, and recommended that any faculty with questions should approach their respective associate dean to seek answers. She said that these deans have a superior understanding of the interplay of the curriculum across all areas, and of the domino effect of such changes, and that if any of them believed this change would be bad for the curriculum or for the students, they would not support it.

III. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The senate chair announced that Subhash Minocha has agreed to be the chair of the senate Finance and Administration Committee, and then announced the membership of the Discovery Review Committee: David Richman – COLA - Chair, James Connell – CEPS, Marc Hiller – CHHS, Jessica Bolker – COLSA, Richard England – PCBE, Stephen Pugh – UNHM, Barbara White – Discovery Committee Chair, Ted Kirkpatrick – COLA Associate Dean, and Benjamin Bertrand – Student.

IV. Minutes – It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the last senate meeting, October 6, 2014. The minutes were approved unanimously, with four abstentions.

Discussion/Report Items:

V. Motion from the senate Academic Affairs Committee on the proposed change to the common exam time – Michael Ferber, chair of the AAC, reported that he had met with the new university registrar, who says he believes that the proposed plan is do-able. Michael also said he had spoken with student council representatives who are concerned about the change, but who have no other workable plan to suggest. The AAC chair then went on to clarify from his last report that the renovations on Hamilton-Smith will not begin until January 2016, while the plan is for the schedule change to begin in the fall semester of 2015 in order to have classrooms in Ham-Smith as a back-up in case there are unforeseen problems with the proposed plan. He said that the problem
is still dire, and that the AAC still supports the proposed plan. He then turned the time over to
Senior Vice-provost Vasudevan, who shared a **powerpoint presentation** about the plan.

To summarize the presentation, Vasu described the proposal, which was developed cooperatively
with the registrar’s office, campus planning, and the associate deans. After examining elements
such as the number of true common exams given, the number of classes held on Fridays after 1
p.m., the class utilization rate, the distribution of classes held in Hamilton-Smith, the standard
block times, the large room matrix, the laboratory classes held on Mondays and Wednesdays after
1 p.m. (meaning 4 credit lecture/labs or lab courses), and an analysis of swing space, the following
information was revealed:

The Hamilton-Smith building contains sixteen registrar-controlled classrooms which can
theoretically accommodate about 208 classes (the actual number is 199). The group examined the
utilization rate of classrooms across campus at 8 a.m., noting that Ham-Smith had a 63%
utilization rate, and the rest of campus has about a 40% utilization rate, revealing unused capacity
of about 46 classes. Swing space allows for 108 classes, leaving a difference of 100 classes from
Ham-Smith’s capacity. Shifting the common exam to Friday afternoon will free up 100 classes
during the current Tuesday/Thursday 12:40-2 p.m. time slot. A deficit of 330 seats still remains.

The senior vice-provost offered two models, stating that the second model is preferred, as the first
model, which would move all of those classes to TR 12:40-2 p.m., does not allow departments to
organize other activities besides classes during the new common time. He also pointed out that
some faculty teach multiple courses, which does not work with the first model. The second model
suggests moving half of the classes, about 50, to 12:40-2 p.m. slot, and moving the other half to 8
a.m. time slots or, where feasible, to other times.

Vasu shared five guiding principles that were used in developing this plan:

1. To the extent possible, do not move/change classes that are taught in other buildings both in
   fall and spring. That is, preserve the current time and room schedule for non-Ham-Smith
   classes.
2. Move Discovery classes to other buildings and preserve current time (different room) to the
   extent possible. That is, first accommodate the Discovery courses. Some of the classes will
   need to be moved to TR 12:40-2 p.m.
3. Where feasible, do not change the time of small/upper level classes taught on MWF
   afternoons. These can be taught on the same day/time but in a different building.
4. Discuss with Associate Deans what departments in each college should preserve TR 12:40 –
   2 for meetings. This would likely involve departments that have a large faculty body.
5. Optimize (match) class room size with class size.

The matter was opened to the floor for discussion. A senator from the Physics department said that
he liked the guiding principles, but had a concern about classes with demonstration and equipment
needs, which will be hard to move. Vasu said that this is an issue worth examining. This senator
said that the Physics department is strongly opposed to this change, citing unforeseen domino
effects. He reported that he was greatly reassured after speaking with the associate dean of CEPS,
but that his colleagues were not so reassured.
Vasu replied that there are not many courses in that college that will be moved, and pointed out that this plan has support of some faculty in the Mathematics Department. Vasu said that in some cases, faculty may have to make accommodations for students who end up with back-to-back common exams scheduled, but he suggested that there are ways to negotiate around those kinds of scheduling issues with good planning.

A senator asked about the possibility of 7 a.m. courses. Vasu pointed out the number of PAT and OS who offer services for students early in the morning, who would then have to come to work even earlier and, with the low utilization numbers for that early time slot, said it would not be worth it. Another senator spoke to the burden of 7 a.m. class times on faculty with small children.

A senator asked what a “large” faculty body would be, noting his own department has about 15 faculty. Vasu referenced the English department, which has about 70 faculty.

The AAC chair said that the data in the senior vice-provost’s presentation relieves much of his anxiety about this plan, particularly the option to use Ham-Smith as a back in the fall. As there has been no better plan presented, he tends to agree that this is the most viable option.

A senator asked who will set course schedules – the dean? The registrar’s office? Vasu suggested that it will likely be the associate deans. It was suggested that departmental schedulers could work with the associate deans. Another senator asked just what the senate would be voting on, as Vasu has presented two options. The wording of the motion speaks only to approving a change, not specifying which one. The senior vice-provost prefers option 2. A senator asked if the AAC would consider a friendly amendment to insert the word “reluctantly” into the motion, saying thus, “The Academic Affairs Committee reluctantly moves that the Senate.....” The AAC chair agreed that this was a friendly amendment, and the wording to the motion will thus be:

**Motion:** The Academic Affairs Committee reluctantly moves that the Senate, pursuant to its power to set the calendar, stipulate that for Academic Years 2015 and 2016 the Common Exam time currently set at Tuesday and Thursday 12:40 to 2:00 PM be moved to Friday 2:10 to 5:00 PM.

This change will obtain for two years only. If the renovation of Hamilton Smith takes longer than that, the Senate will extend the new schedule or modify as it sees fit. Otherwise the Common Exam time will revert to its current slot for AY 2017 unless the Senate explicitly acts otherwise.

We call upon the Deans to convene a meeting soon of department Chairs and administrators to explain the change and its consequences and to adjudicate such questions as what departments will be allowed to preserve the current Common Exam time for their members’ meetings.

The senate chair then read a portion of an email from associate dean Neil Vroman to the College of Health and Human Services, sent earlier today. The email follows here in its entirety:

*Neil B. Vroman, Ph.D.*
*Associate Dean*
*College of Health and Human Services*
Dear Alberto: As you know, the University Academic Standards and Advising Committee (ASAC) is advisory to the Provost. Among its many responsibilities, the Committee is charged with enforcing academic policies and practices as defined by the Faculty Senate. We know that the Senate will be addressing on Monday the proposed two-year term (beginning in 2015-16) for the change in the Common Exam schedule. The proposed change is made necessary by the renovation of Hamilton Smith Hall and the reverberating effects on class scheduling. Classroom space already is at a premium on campus. The closing of Hamilton Smith will further strain the relationship between the number of classes to be taught and the number of classrooms in which to teach.

A tweak here and there will not address this looming structural problem. Department chairs, program coordinators, and scheduling committees understand well the complexities of class scheduling, the special circumstances that often inform classroom requests, and the multiple and various permutations that must be considered in any given semester. These variables can never be captured by a university-wide space assessment. For decades, ASAC has admired and respected the competence of Donna Reed and her Registrar’s Office colleagues. She works valiantly each year with each college to meet our respective scheduling needs. Senior Vice Provost Vasudevan, himself a former department chair and associate dean, brings a creativity and a keen quantitative ability to the table in these efforts as well. We all have considerable trust in both Donna and Vasu in helping each and all of us to meet the scheduling challenges of the next two academic years.

We wanted to write to express to you and your Senate colleagues that the five Durham deans’ offices are in strong support of the proposed change in the Common Exam schedule. While the proposal is not ideal, we agree that it is the optimal way to proceed in the face of our shared class scheduling challenges. Please feel free to share our view with your Senate colleagues.

Kind regards,
Neil Vroman
Neil Niman
Kim Babbitt
Chuck Zercher
Ted Kirkpatrick

In his final remarks, the AAC chair suggested that the senate members follow the advice of Henry Kissinger, “Trust, but verify,” and suggested that he is grateful for the verification his committee has been able to gather, and the information from the senior vice-provost.

The motion was then put to the senate for a vote. The motion passed with 35 votes in favor, 4 votes opposed, and 2 abstentions.

VI. Presentation and motion from Academic Affairs Committee regarding the new Honors program
- The AAC chair introduced Jerry Marx, Director of the UNH Honors program, and Kate Gaudet, Assistant Director of the program, who presented their proposal for a new Honors program at UNH. Jerry said that this proposal is the result of a lengthy, ongoing conversation about how to make our Honors program more competitive and attract even better students. He briefly reviewed some of the programs at other New England universities, noting their faculty in residence components, honors dorms, and other benefits that attract high-quality students. He noted that this
proposal involves less expense for facilities, but requires effort and time to implement, in order to provide a coherent, academically challenging experience, along with a strong sense of community for our Honors students.

Jerry presented a powerpoint to provide a curriculum overview. He noted that honors within majors will be maintained, and the changes to be made will be to expand the inter- or cross-disciplinary studies. For first-year and sophomore students, the curriculum will require two Symposia, one Honors Inquiry course, and one other Honors Discovery course. For junior and senior students in the program, a thesis will be added as well as three “high-impact” learning experiences, which might include a research/publication presentation, study abroad, or community group projects. One of these high-impact activities would need to be inter-disciplinary. He noted that these experiences already exist here, but the idea is to feature them more prominently in the Honors program.

A senator asked if UNH is trying to enhance the Honors program simply in order to keep up with other universities, asking how this plan differs any from departmental honors, and noting that high impact activities are already established in existing curricula. Jerry pointed out that the proposed plan does not include many of the high-profile features like separate dorms and other amenities, emphasizing that UNH is not trying to imitate other programs, but rather that the aim is to provide a more distinct and coherent community, particularly for incoming first-year students.

Another senator commented on the external review of the Honors program that was conducted four years ago, which pointed out problems with the program identity as a whole, noting the disparity between the manner in which varying departments embrace the honors concept. Jerry added that the external review also encouraged a better utilization of Hood House programs, and called for better assessment. This plan tries to address these suggestions.

A senator questioned the value of interdisciplinary studies in comparison to creating depth within a single discipline. Jerry pointed out that the second leading major at UNH is “undecided,” suggesting that interdisciplinary undergraduate study can lead to self-discovery and actually bring students to a specific discipline, bringing students from the general to the specific. Kate Gaudet said that the terms “cross- or multi-disciplinary” might be more reflective of the intent of the program.

Another senator asked if the high impact activities referenced would be offered for academic credit. Jerry replies that they could be set up that way, using post-study abroad courses as an example. The senator said his concern was that in some departments, the academic requirements for juniors and seniors create schedules that may be too tight for additional honors requirements.

The senate chair thanked Jerry and Kate for their presentation and the AAC for their report. The motion to approve the new honors program will lay over to the next senate meeting.

VII. Discussion on amendments to the senate constitution regarding non-tenure track faculty representation on the faculty senate – Bill deVries, chair of the ad hoc Committee on the Representation of Non-Tenure Track Faculty in the Senate was present to address questions from senate members. A senator asked if guarantees existed that the senate faculty member majority would be tenure-track faculty, referring to the charge in the senate constitution that the work of the senate reflect the three-fold academic mission of tenure-track faculty; teaching, service, and
research. Bill suggested that the lack of compensation to NTTF for service on the senate should serve as an external constraint to that end, although the current negotiations with the Lecturers’ Council as they unionize may create the need for some other mechanism to shape the balance. He suggested that by willingly serving on the senate, tenure-track faculty will have the opportunity to maintain that balance. The senator suggested that the proposal to allow NTTF to serve on the senate without serving on senate committees could leave the senate committees short-handed. The Lecturers’ Council Representative (LCR) said that the proposal increases the size of the senate in general, bringing more hands to do the work. She said that she sees no intention of the Lecturers’ Council members to serve on the senate without serving on the committees. It was noted that the work of the senate is done in the senate committees, and that there should be no sub-classes. Bill said his preference would be to move forward without any such provisos, and make changes as needed if problems arose in the future.

A discussion ensued about how clearly defined the position of tenure-track faculty is compared to the various positions of non-tenure track faculty; lecturers, extension, research, and clinical faculty. The question of departmental compensation to NTTF for service on the senate was raised, to which Bill responded that the senate has absolutely no say in fiscal matters, only in who may represent their departments and who may vote to select a departmental representative. The Lecturers’ Council has indicated to him that they don’t want the senate to wait to make this decision.

A senator asked why the proposed amendments suggest two separate criteria for voting for their representative and actually serving on the senate. Bill said that the committee felt it was important for all faculty to have a say in selecting their representative, but that the recommendation for two years’ service before being permitted to serve on the senate actually is an attempt to encourage departments to send experienced faculty to the senate. This would impact both tenure-track and NTTF.

Another senator brought up the issue of faculty, both tenure-track and non-, who have no departmental home, and asked that the committee add wording to the amendments to create an “unaffiliated academic unit” for them so that they might also have equal representation on the senate. Bill said that the committee had not determined just how many NTTF were not affiliated with any department. The LCR said that the numbers are insignificant for lecturers, and clinical and research faculty, but that there are several extension faculty members who are not connected to a department.

A senator expressed support of the new lecturers’ union, but expressed concern about the potential for further exploitation of NTTF in their service on the senate. Bill responded that the faculty and lecturers unions focus on the working conditions of faculty while the senate focuses solely on the academic mission of the senate. The question is well raised whether our invitation to NTTF is exploitative or inclusive. He asked if the senate is better off with the inclusion of their voice, and also whether the union will be able to make their service less onerous.

A brief discussion followed regarding the amendments to the senate constitution themselves, and the process by which the committee came up with these suggested amendments. It was noted that the recommended reforms guarantee no seats in the senate, but only a voice in the selection process and the opportunity to serve. It was also noted that some departments will need to change their bylaws to align with the new senate requirements, and that for some departments these changes will mean that NTTF will need to be included in faculty meetings, which they may not
have been before. The senate’s action here is seen as a strong message to departments to more fully engage NTTF in their department meetings. It was noted that departments could set their own rules regarding the number of TT and NTTF representing them on the senate.

The chair asked if there were any senators with strong objections to the amendments to the constitution and bylaws. One senator expressed concerns about the potential coercion of NTTF to serve, and asserted that the logistics of NTTF are complicated and need to be worked out carefully. There was discussion regarding the mindfulness needed in electing NTTF, who are often on short contracts, to serve. It was noted that the same mindfulness is needed in electing TT faculty who must juggle leaves and other obligations in a similar manner. The practice of the senate is that when elected senators, of any position, cannot fulfill their term, a new election is held to fill the seat. The concern was again raised that a department with only one representative might send a single NTTF to serve. The opposing concern was raised that if there were a requirement that there must be a TT faculty from each department on the senate, some departments (with only one senate seat) would never have representation from NTTF.

A member of the agenda committee recommended that any senators with such concerns should direct them to the committee for re-wording, noting that the committee understands the wording of the motion and the amendments to the constitution and bylaws better than anyone else. Bill also suggested that an amendment to the motion could be presented from the senate floor.

The senate chair said that this discussion will continue at the next senate meeting.

VIII. New business – There was no new business.

IX. Adjournment- The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.