Meeting called to order at 3:10 on November 17, 2014

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Denis, Dowd, Morgan, Ware, and Yalcinkaya. Heather Barber was a guest.

II. Remarks by and questions to the provost – The provost and senior vice provost for academic affairs were unable to attend today’s meeting due to other obligations.

III. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The senate chair opened his remarks by explaining that there would be no discussion today on the matter of non-tenure track faculty inclusion in the senate, as the previous senate discussions have raised important and complicated issues requiring additional preparation and information. He requested input from all senators on this matter, offering to meet in person with anyone who had concerns or input to share. The senate discussion on this matter will resume at the next senate session on December 1st.

The chair then shared that the UCAPC has voted on the proposal for the dual major in sustainability and have submitted their summary report to the senate agenda committee. UCAPC is not recommending that the senate support the proposal in its current form. The agenda committee will review the summary report and has invited the UCAPC chair to address the senate.

IV. Minutes – It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the last senate meeting, November 3, 2014. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Discussion/Report Items:

V. Presentation from UNH Athletic Advisory Board Chair – The chair introduced Heather Barber, who attended to share information with the senate about student-athletes at UNH. She opened her remarks by reminding the senate about the motion from the Student Affairs Committee to accept the modifications to the UNH policy on scheduling games and practices, currently laying over from the last senate meeting. She explained the minor changes to the policy, which was last endorsed by the senate in 1998, noting that the wording in section 16.4.B.2 of the document did not formerly meet NCAA standards. The new wording, that “no faculty member may excuse a UNH student-athlete from class, or from an exam, quiz, or assignment because of a conflict with regularly-scheduled athletic practices.” does meet those standards. She said that the UNH Athletic Advisory Board has approved these changes, and that if the senate votes to accept the changes, that approval will place today’s date on the document, which will move on to the administration for their approval.

She then presented a report on the academic integrity of student-athletes, noting three measures of academic performance that are examined. The first is a ten-year running GPA of all student-
athletes by team that she has compiled. Heather noted that there has been a significant increase in this measure in recent years.

The second item will not be presented today. It is the Academic Progress Rate (APA), which is generated by the NCAA and will not come out until February. This measure involves complex computations and establishes a minimum score by which student-athletes are allowed to play in NCAA tournaments.

The third item is the graduation rate of student-athletes. There is a federal graduation rate which is an annual rate reflecting a cohort of students over a six-year period to determine an annual rate of graduation of all athletes, regardless of why any such athletes might leave school. The Graduation Success Rate (GSR) is a rating set up by the NCAA. This is a four-year rolling average of the six-year cohort of students. The data shared today reflects a six year period ending last May.

Heather provided two handouts; one with GPA information and the other with GSR comparisons to other land-grant universities (for ease of comparison to similar institutions). The data indicated that the four-year UNH student-athlete GSR is 88%, while the national average is 82%, and Heather said that their goal is 90%. She said that changes in coaching staffs can spark higher attrition rates, and that the athletic rates do mimic general rates, including differences between male and female students. She also noted that these rates only measure the GSR of athletes receiving aid. At UNH, in any given year, there are about 75-80 students receiving athletic aid. The senate admin will post these documents on the senate website.

A senator asked if other areas besides coaching changes have impacted UNH student-athletes’ academic success. Heather responded that the increase in academic support of athletes has had a positive impact. She said that a new facility will be opening in March and will provide a larger study/tutoring center, and more academic resources to the student-athletes. She also said that with two new coaches coming in this fall, all student-athletes have been engaged in academic advising now, early in the year, rather than waiting until after the first semester as has been the pattern.

Another senator asked what the maximum number of classes might be that a student-athlete might miss due to games and practices. Heather responded that that is not a fixed number, but that there is a program called ARMS run by the NCAA to help monitor total hours of student-athlete involvement. Coaches enter the number of hours of training and games anticipated and then the student-athletes also report on their actual experience. Based on this data, missed-class rates could be determined in general terms. She pointed out that the study center is not intended to make up for missed classes, saying that students are encouraged to only miss classes for when they travel, and that they should be planning ahead.

A senator asked how the change in common exam time might affect the athletic schedule. Heather said that it will have an impact, and require coaches to maximize their training times, and that some negotiating may be required. She said that there are about 520 student-athletes in all sports, with the majority participating in the fall semester. She also noted that most teams who compete on Saturdays leave on Friday morning, which will require some adjustments for common exams.

Another senator asked if student-athletes at UNH identify themselves first as students or as athletes. Heather responded that there is some variance in that answer, but said that in general student-athletes here understand their responsibility as students first, and that the coaches place a
strong emphasis on academics. She said that the UNH football team has been in the top 10% of APRs in all Division I schools for the last five years. The senate chair thanked Heather for her report.

VI. Vote on motion from the Student Affairs Committee to accept proposed changes to the UNH Policy on Scheduling Games and Practices – The chair of the SAC received questions from the senate about the proposed changes. A senator commented on the potentially broad interpretation of the permissions allowed in 16.4.A.2 of the document, disallowing academic penalties for absences due to regularly-scheduled intercollegiate athletic contests about which the faculty member has been notified, even if a portion of the grade in that course is based on attendance. The SAC chair asked the senate if there were examples of this being a problem in the past, and when there was no response, pointed out that this particular section of the policy is not one of the areas that has been changed; that this has been the standing policy for some time and is not really part of the current motion.

The motion was put to vote and passed with 35 votes in the affirmative, none against, and three abstentions.

VII. Motion from the senator from the Chemistry Department – Rudi Seitz, senator from Chemistry, brought forward a motion regarding the recently approved change in the common exam time. That motion follows:

Motion: I move that the evening common exam time be moved from Thursday evening, 7:00 to 9:00 PM, to Tuesday evening, 7:00 to 9:00 PM, during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 academic years while Hamilton Smith Hall is renovated and the afternoon common exam times are on Friday afternoons from 2:00 to 5:00.

Rationale: Recently, the Senate voted to approve moving the common exam times from Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:40 to 2:00 PM, to Friday afternoons. The Thursday evening common exam time was not changed or even discussed by the Senate. What this means is that all three common exam times occur within one 24 hour period. This means that it is very likely that many students will have two or even three hour exams within one 24 hour period. If we move the Thursday evening common exam time to Tuesday evening, then it is possible for two major courses to offer exams during common exam periods in the same week with a two day interval in between which will allow students time to adequately prepare for both exams.

From a scheduling point of view, any course that is offered on Tuesday evening could be shifted to Thursday evening for just this two year period.

The chair of the senate Academic Affairs Committee (AAC), who presented the motion to support the change in the common exam time, said that his committee has discussed this motion and are in support of it. He said that the registrar has indicated this proposed change will not be able to take effect next fall, when the common exam time will change, because of scheduling that has already taken place. A senator asked why the registrar can’t make such a change, and the response was that the large classrooms needed for common exams have already been scheduled. It was suggested that this motion be sent to the AAC for review, and the AAC chair said that the
committee already endorses this motion. A friendly amendment was made to re-word the above motion as follows:

Motion: I move that the evening common exam time be moved, as soon as the registrar deems it feasible, from Thursday evening, 7:00 to 9:00 PM, to Tuesday evening, 7:00 to 9:00 PM, no later than the 2016-17 academic year while Hamilton Smith Hall is renovated and the afternoon common exam times are on Friday afternoons from 2:00 to 5:00.

The motion will lay over until the next senate meeting to allow for further examination and gathering of information.

VIII. New business – There was no new business.

IX. Adjournment- The meeting was adjourned at 4:06 p.m.