Meeting called to order at 3:13 on December 1, 2014

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Dowd-Solorzano, Hight, Minocha, and Morgan. Gingras was excused. Terri Winters was a guest.

II. Remarks by and questions to the provost – The provost was out of town.

III. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The senate chair shared handouts from Debbie Dutton and the Advancement office as a follow up to her report to the senate on November 3 (Item VIII, 11-3-14 senate minutes). The handouts report on the Advancement Services campaign progress and achievements in FY2014.

The chair informed the senate that the UCAPC has submitted its report on the dual major in sustainability proposal, and that committee cannot recommend the proposal in its current state. However, the UCAPC has submitted requests to the proposers that would resolve the committee’s concerns. The proposers are currently reviewing these requests, making the UCAPC’s report moot. The senate will be appraised of any forthcoming changes.

IV. Minutes – It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the last senate meeting, November 17, 2014. With one correction, the minutes were approved unanimously, with two abstentions.

Discussion/Report Items:

V. Vote on motion from the senator from the Chemistry Department – The senate chair brought forward Rudi Seitz’s motion regarding the recently approved change in the common exam time.

UNH FACULTY SENATE
MOTION # XIX-M7

on moving evening common exam time

1. Motion presenter: Rudi Seitz, Chemistry Department


3. 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.

4. 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 motion was opened for discussion. A senator from the Mathematics department asked if anyone knew why this evening common exam (CE) time was only two hours, as opposed to the three-hour time slots for daytime common exams. With her department’s need for exam times for large classes, she suggested an additional change to this motion to create a three-hour block on Tuesday evenings so that two 90-minute exams could be held on an evening schedule, allowing for more flexibility with the CE schedule. She suggested 7:00 to 10:00 PM as the change.

A senator said that if, historically, 7:00 to 9:00 PM has been the time utilized, there is likely a reason for that, although no senators were able to explain why the evening time slot is two hours instead of three. One senator did confirm that his department schedules full two-hour exams during that time slot, rather than using the two-hour slot for a 90-minute exam.

The motion presenter suggested that back-to-back evening exams might be difficult, whereas the original purpose of this motion was to ease strain for students and faculty. He also noted that scheduling exams until 10 o’clock at night might create staffing issues. At that point, 6:00 to 9:00 was suggested as an alternative. It was noted that many courses are currently scheduled from 4:10 to 6:30 PM, which would conflict with 6:00 to 9:00 PM exams. The senator from Mathematics asked if the registrar could be consulted to review the feasibility of such a plan, and moved to amend the motion, pending approval from the registrar. A senator from the History department seconded this motion.

When asked if he would accept this as a friendly amendment, the motion presenter said he would prefer that the senate vote on the amendment, as he perceives it as a significant change to his original intent. There followed some discussion regarding the advantages and disadvantages of such a change. Large, multi-section courses require extra space and time for students to take exams with double-seating and to prevent faculty from having to create multiple exams. It was noted that the fourth 90-minute time slot created by this amendment might ease some of the strain of scheduling other common exams. Two senators pointed out that if classes cannot be scheduled during this common exam time, that could be a problem, as some departments rely heavily on Tuesday night scheduling, with part-time instructors who come to campus only on that night, and whose schedules might not align with classes moved from Tuesday to Thursday evenings.
The amendment was put to a vote, and passed with 21 voting in favor and 12 voting against.

The amended motion was put to a vote, now reading:

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, 6:00 to 9:00 PM or 7:00 to 10:00 PM if the registrar deems it feasible, 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 passed with 33 votes in favor, none opposed, and 5 abstentions.

VI. Presentation on the UNH Learning Management System – The chair introduced Terri Winters, Director of Academic Technology and UNH IT, who came to discuss potential changes to the university’s learning management system (LMS), which has been Blackboard since 1999. Terri said that there are several options regarding the LMS, and that she has presented these options to the Academic Standards Committee and most of the schools and colleges on campus. In January, she will take this presentation to the Student Senate and the Graduate Student Senate to get feedback from the students regarding their experience with Blackboard.

She shared a PowerPoint presentation in which she described three possible options for the university. We can stay with Blackboard without any changes, we can continue with Blackboard with a hosted on cloud architecture, or we can switch to an alternate LMS such as Canvas, Moodle, Sakai, Desire2Learn, etc.. She said that our current two-year contract with Blackboard runs through AY16, so if a decision can be reached by May 2015, there will be a year in which to prepare for the changes, if any. She shared a timeline that outlined the process of reviewing requirements, open vendor demonstrations, surveys for faculty and students (including an incentive for participation), and the implementation of a sandbox environment to provide faculty with the option of “test driving” the new system, if that is the decision.

She invited interested senators to volunteer for the “Champion Role,” to be more directly involved with the selection process in four ways: 1. Review and prioritize requirements (such as utilization of options like Tegrity and Discussion Board), 2. Attend vendor demonstrations and offer feedback, 3. Review and provide input in the Evaluation Report and, 4. Share project updates with other faculty to get the word out so that all faculty have the chance to express their support or opposition to the project.

She emphasized that if faculty are opposed to the idea of changing the LMS, she wants to know about that. She invited anyone who wants to participate in the “Champion Role” to contact her by email at terri.winters@unh.edu or through the IT Communications. They are hoping for faculty from every school and college to participate. She also invited any feedback on Blackboard, its utilization, or issues with it.

A senator asked what the difference is between Blackboard as we know it and Blackboard hosted on the Cloud. Terri replied that users would notice very few differences; that the greatest difference would be more regular updates to the system. Another senator asked what the cost to UNH is for using Blackboard. Terri said that, including servers, system administration, and staff, the cost is about $180,000 per year, and noted that not only faculty, students, and staff use
Blackboard, but also parents and alumni. The faculty member from the School of Law said that the School of Law prefers using Blackboard, and called the system essential to their online programs, although he did note that there is some trending away from Blackboard and suggested that some newer LMSs might have additional functionality that would be worth investigating.

Another senator said that the constant changes in Blackboard make it difficult to find things, and that he is unsettled by the inclusion of commercial interests on the site, suggesting that the tool is controlling the user rather than the other way around. Terri responded that those commercial references are building blocks for publishers, and they are placed there for use by some faculty who want to adopt publishing packages.

A senator asked if other LMS are similarly priced. Terri answered that a feature of the current plan is to have the ability to negotiate for price. She said that Blackboard has about 75% of the current market share, but that Blackboard also does more than just learning management systems.

The senate vice chair asked what the driving force behind this examination of Blackboard was. Terri replied that many new products and services have become available since Blackboard was introduced here in 1999, and that some faculty have requested changes to the system. Several senators brought up problems they’ve had with Blackboard, and Terri reminded the group that she is available to answer questions and offer help. She said that Blackboard is doing a significant rewrite to simply the program and make it more user friendly. A senator asked if the various providers utilize applications for mobile devices, and Terri said that a requirement for any system selected will be that it must be mobile enabled.

The senate chair thanked Terri for her presentation.

VII. Discussion of NTTF service on the senate – The senate chair expressed the agenda committee’s desire to extend the discussion of non-tenure track faculty service on the faculty senate. To facilitate this Jim Connell moved on behalf of the agenda committee that the senate enter into a Committee of the Whole in order to open the discussion more fully. He said that the agenda committee has not gathered a clear sense of the mind of the senate on this topic, and that the agenda committee would also like concerns about the current motion on NTTF, which might lead to it being voted down, to be worked out within the senate discussion. By establishing a Committee of the Whole, all voices can be heard and from ideas gathered, suggestions can be sent back to the NTTF Committee for a well-informed revision of the original motion. The senate vice chair will serve as chair of the Committee of the Whole.

Needing no second, the motion to enter into a Committee of the Whole was put to a vote, and passed by majority vote.

The vice chair asked if there was a motion to recommend passage of the original motion by the NTTF committee to revise the senate constitution and bylaws to allow NTTF to participate in the faculty senate, with only minor revisions to the original motion. There was some discussion about what minor revisions might mean. The senator from Sociology moved to accept the existing motion in general. A senator from Mathematics seconded her motion, and that motion was opened for discussion on the senate floor.
A member of the agenda committee reminded the senate that the votes within the Committee of the Whole are not binding on the original motion, but rather a method to establish opinions of the group regarding points of the motion in order to move the discussion forward; voting for one particular idea does not preclude or mandate a future vote within the Committee of the Whole. Once the Committee of the Whole has risen, the original motion can be officially voted on.

The chair of the Academic Affairs Committee informed the senate that in 2013, that committee was charged with examining the status of lecturers. That charge was never completed, but the AAC did recommend at that time the admission of lecturers to the senate.

A senator from the History department said that her department is opposed to the inclusion of NTTF on the senate, believing in general that these NTTF deserve representation within a separate body, without pressure to serve on the senate without compensation. Senate service is based on the threefold academic mission of the university; teaching, research, and service. A senator from the Physics department said that his department opposes the original motion more on the basis of rank than on status as tenure-track or not. Another senator said that he likes the part of the original motion that states that all members of a unit should have the right to vote for senate representation of that unit, and asked if the senate could vote on that piece. He asserted that the senate needs some members of those NTTF groups - lecturers, research, clinical, and extension faculty - to speak for themselves in the senate, saying that their absence leaves a significant void. He pointed out that some research and clinical faculty have service obligations as part of their terms of employment, and asserted that with limited service on senate committees, and tenure-track faculty to report back to their departments, such inclusion of NTTF would be essential.

The chair of the NTTF committee reminded the senate of the pressures on NTTF when speaking in a body like the senate, and pointed out that the same pressures exist for assistant professors who have not yet received tenure, calling it hypocritical to disallow NTTF to participate in the work of the senate while allowing, or requiring it of, non-tenured TTF. There was some discussion about whether these pressures are genuine or perceived. The chair of the NTTF committee asserted that there is always a chance of irritating someone here within the senate, but that serving as the voice of a department should not be the basis of sanctions and that NTTF should be able to represent the departments in which they teach or do research.

The faculty member from the School of Law informed the senate about a group of faculty in that school called Secure Status faculty, who are not tenure track and run the clinical programs. These faculty serve on committees and in other ways, and appear to be an additional group of NTTF to add to the mix, stating that his school would want these faculty to be able to vote for senate representation and perhaps even serve on the senate.

Another senator suggested that we de-couple the NTTF from their departments and allow lecturers to vote for their own representatives.

The motion to accept the original motion was put to vote. The vote failed, with 7 votes in favor, 26 opposed and 3 abstentions.

The senate vice chair then asked if anyone wanted to move that no NTTF should serve on the faculty senate. A senator so moved and it was seconded, then opened for discussion. A senator strongly voiced opposition to this motion, saying that the senate needs the benefit of the voice of
the NTTF. The chair of the NTTF committee pointed out that this motion makes no mention of voting rights for NTTF, only service. A member of the agenda committee clarified that the intent of this motion was status quo. Another member of the agenda committee pointed out that the discussion is not just about lecturers, but about all NTTF.

This motion was put to a vote and failed, with one vote in favor, 34 opposed, and 4 abstentions.

With a clear voice that the senate desires that their NTTF colleagues participate in the work of the senate, the vice chair introduced another discussion to determine if there are concerns among senate members regarding status (tenure-track or non-tenure track), or if rank (assistant, associate, or full professor) was of greater concern for determining eligibility for senate participation. The ensuing discussion illuminated the stark differences in the way NTTF function and participate in various departments and colleges, and the differences between various NTTF (clinical, research, extension, lecturers, and secure-status faculty). Some NTTF are distinguished by rank (assistant clinical professor, associate research professor, full research professor, etc.). Some NTTF have service requirements in their contracts, while others do not.

It was mentioned again that the issue is not just about service on the senate, but about the right to vote for senate representation. The question was raised as to what the hierarchy is, and whether the same ordering should be applied to tenure-track faculty, restricting membership in the senate to tenured professors only?

The subject of the threefold academic mission was again raised, asking what is to be done about faculty who by contract only serve one or two parts of that threefold mission. The senator from Sociology asserted confusion arises from the fact that research faculty in her department do not teach, although lecturers do. It was noted that tenure-track faculty by contract fulfill all three areas, and yet a senator noted that there are some faculty who fulfill all three and yet have no representation in the senate. The vice chair noted that the discussion seems to indicate that the fulfillment of the threefold mission seems to be more important than rank or tenure.

A member of the agenda committee moved that the senate recommend that all NTTF of any rank be treated in a similar fashion. The motion was seconded and opened for discussion.

It was clarified that a yes vote on this motion means that rank should have no bearing on participation in the senate. A senator said that his department would like to see NTTF represented in the senate, and that if certain departments are not comfortable with NTTF representing them, the solution would be to allow NTTF to represent themselves. The concern of this motion is the function that faculty members are contractually obligated to perform rather than rank or tenure.

A senator asked if tenure itself is contractually connected to the threefold academic mission, how can we separate the function of tenure-track faculty from their status? Another senator asserted that rank and tenure appear to be easy ways to sort faculty, but that the issue is more complicated when the function performed is considered. A senator moved that the senate recommend that rank does not matter in regards to senate participation.

After further discussion, noting that a motion had already been proposed on the floor, the proposer of the prior motion offered to withdraw his motion in order to address this new
issue. With the prior motion withdrawn, a senator moved that the senate members agree that rank does not matter in regards to senate participation. The motion was seconded. Another senate called for a vote. The motion passed with 22 votes in favor, 7 opposed, and 9 abstentions.

A member of the agenda committee moved that the Committee of the Whole rise. A motion to adjourn today’s meeting was moved and seconded.

VIII. Adjournment- The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.