UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2014-15 FACULTY SENATE XIX

The fundamental function of the approved minutes of the Faculty Senate is to accurately document actions taken by that body. Additionally, the minutes traditionally seek to provide context by capturing some statements of Senators, faculty in attendance, and guests. The minutes do not verify the veracity, authenticity, and/or accuracy of those statements.

Meeting called to order at 3:15 on March 9, 2015

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Denis, Dowd, Kun, Morgan, and Murphy. Carroll, Minocha, C. White, and Wu were excused. Karen Graham, Lisa MacFarlane, Chris Shea, and Deanna Wood were guests.

II. Remarks by and questions to the provost – The provost reminded the senate of the recent visit of Vice-President of the United States Joe Biden to the School of Law to receive the Warren B. Rudman Center Award for Distinguished Public Service. She also noted that next week our colleagues at UNH-Manchester will be moving from their current location to their new location in the Pandora Building at 88 Commercial Street in Manchester.

The provost said that after the spring break, budget meetings with all colleges will be taking place through the end of March and into April. In April, the Undergraduate Research Conference will take place.

A senator asked about the closing of Sweet Briar College, a small, private, women’s liberal arts school in Virginia. He asked if this were an isolated incident, and what this closing means. The provost responded that this is not an isolated incident, as there are other small liberal arts schools that are struggling right now, but it is unique in that Sweet Briar has had a much higher endowment than other liberal arts schools. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Ed., and other press reports, the board of directors of Sweet Briar reviewed the demographics and determined that the trajectories were unsustainable. The provost said that for several years the proponents of disruptive innovation have been predicting that an entire class of institutions of higher education will be vulnerable. As the state’s flagship research institution with strong out-of-state enrollments, we are in a different position. She said that Sweet Briar’s closing is very sobering.

Another senator asked how commencement speakers are selected. The provost replied that she does not know, but that in looking back over recent speakers, she would say that they are generally high-achieving alumni, highlighting areas that the university values. She said that nominations come forward to a committee that is chaired by the president which then makes the decision.

III. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The senate chair reported that the Faculty Senate Agenda Committee has established an ad hoc Committee on Clinical, Lecturer, Extension, and Research (CLER) Faculty Involvement in the Faculty Senate, with Kerry Kazura serving as chair. Alberto announced that Michael Ferber has agreed to serve on the committee as well, and that invitations to other tenure-track and CLER faculty will be extended as soon as
possible to populate this committee, which should have a membership of about nine; five
tenure-track faculty including the committee chair, and four CLER faculty – one from each
area.

IV. Minutes – It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the last senate meeting,
March 2, 2015. The senate admin pointed out that she had, in error, mistakenly recorded the
vote on the UCAPC recommendation on the Dual Major in Sustainability proposal as 30 in
favor, none opposed and 3 abstentions, when there actually was one vote against the motion.
Item V in the minutes was corrected to reflect the accurate vote of 30 in favor, one opposed,
and 3 abstentions. Thus corrected, the minutes were approved unanimously with four
abstentions.

Discussion/Report Items:

V. Report from the ad hoc Committee on Promotion and Tenure Standards – Chris Shea, chair
of the P&T Standards Committee was introduced to the senate. She brought with her Karen
Graham, Executive Director of the UNH ADVANCE program, and Deanna Wood, Associate
Professor from the Library. Chris presented her committee’s report, which states that this
committee has been working on its charge since 2011, when the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc
Committee on P & T Standards reviewed university-wide departmental P & T guidelines and
reported their findings in a 2011 committee report. The UNH ADVANCE Career Progression
Committee program conducted a similar study of a smaller sample of departments in CEPS
and COLSA in 2014. Both studies concluded that departmental P & T guideline documents
vary tremendously in form and content, and range in length from one page to over 20 pages.

During the 2014/15 academic year, the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on P & T Standards
considered the 2011 report and the findings of the UNH ADVANCE Career Progression
Committee. The Committee concluded that there may be too much variation in Department P
& T guidelines, resulting in inconsistent practices across the campus. The charge to the
committee was

“…to start to develop a manual to guide UNH departments in the development of
comprehensive, transparent and objective promotion and tenure guidelines”

Chris then shared with the senate the ten points of the current committee’s report in her
powerpoint presentation:

1. Determination of Readiness
2. Composition and Role of the Department P&T Committee
3. Process and Schedule
4. Scholarship Performance Criteria
5. Teaching Performance Criteria
6. Service Performance Criteria
7. Consideration of Leave
8. Voting Process
9. Role of the Department Chair
10. Notification
In all of these points, the committee’s recommendations were for clarity and explicitness in the guidelines each department prepares regarding promotion and tenure. She said that her committee’s desire was not to prescribe to any department what its guidelines should be, but rather to advise what could be done to make the P&T process more transparent, and that the inclusion of such uniform and clear standards in department handbooks and instructions to new faculty members would be beneficial to the university community as a whole.

The committee determined that widely varying P&T practices in different departments is not optimal for UNH as an institution. They suggest that an informational table be created, identifying various practices by department, to more clearly establish a best practices approach across campus. The next step would be for the senate to endorse the committee’s report.

A senator asked, regarding the wide range of reports from varying departments on their P&T practices, from 1-20 pages in length, if the committee had determined what an optimal length for such a report might be. Chris responded that about 15 pages should be enough to outline such practices, but that an explicit and concise document might be complete in five pages.

The senator from Human Development and Family Studies said that the College of Health and Human Services has a very explicit document for P&T standards that is used by the college, and also used as a reference point for use by departments, some of which departments have additional documents to detail practices according to the individual accreditations of their departments and faculty.

Another senator pointed out that P&T standards and practices vary sometimes because of the kinds of faculty involved, citing the different criteria needed when evaluating research faculty. It was noted that there is a difference between tenure-track advancements and CLER faculty advancements, and that while the university values the interdepartmental work of some faculty, there are some contradictions in practice. Chris said that this committee’s report was relevant to tenure-track P&T, and that these irregularities should be addressed.

A senator asked what the relationship is between these suggestions and the guidelines for P&T that come from the provost’s office. Chris responded that her committee did not evaluate the provost’s document. She repeated that the committee’s objective was not to come up with a single standard to be used across the university, but rather to encourage departments to formulate their standards and then communicate them clearly and explicitly.

A member of the agenda committee thanked the P&T Standards Committee for their good work, and moved to endorse the report.

The senate chair called for a vote and the senate voted to endorse the report with 37 in favor, none opposed, and 1 abstention.

The senate chair thanked the committee for their lengthy service. A senator suggested adding a timeline to the recommendations for departmental P&T standards, as well as a periodic review of departmental standards by the deans to ensure that there is synchronization between departments and the deans.
VI. Report from the senate Library Committee – The chair introduced Carolyn Mebert, chair of the senate Library Committee for a report on the library’s de-accession policy. Carolyn said that she requested input from the senate members, and received only one response. It was apparent that the History department still had concerns about the culling of books that took place last spring. Over the course of the semester, the History department and the Library worked out their issues independently of the senate Library Committee.

She reported that, as a member of the senate Library Committee, she has been invited to be part of a new university committee; the Information Access Faculty Working Group (IAFWG). This group has met three times this year, with a focus on examining the options for a Natural Science Resource Center proposed for the second floor of the Dimond Library. The proposal is to combine the Biological Sciences and Earth Sciences Libraries into this resource center, and Carolyn reported that she has asked the librarian to create a simple survey to ask faculty what such a resource center might look like.

A senator from the History department said that it is true that the culling fiasco of last year has been stopped, but that many faculty in the Humanities, from departments like Philosophy, Art History, and Music, are still concerned that Humanities resources in Dimond Library remain at risk. Questions have also been raised about the higher level decision making from campus planning that might allow one or two science departments’ space needs to outweigh the space needs of several liberal arts departments in the library. She asked if the necessary culling from the library could be done with more input from the faculty, and pointed to the central role of the main library in the overall mission of the university.

A senator asked for clarification on which departments might be included in the Natural Science Resource Center, and the senate chair repeated that it would be Earth and Biological Sciences. Carolyn reported that in their meetings, the question was raised as to where this decision came from. Deanna Wood, a member of the Library faculty, explained that the librarians were told that the Biological Sciences Library in Kendall Hall had to be moved because of problems with the building, but there was no clear notion of who made that decision. Carolyn affirmed that the discussions in the IAFWG offer no clear idea of what the new resource center will be. A senator suggested that these procedural irregularities call for an examination of the decision-making process, beyond the current outcome or plan for the new resource center.

Carolyn said that many people may have been unaware that there are librarians connected with each discipline on campus, and these librarians routinely send out de-accession lists to departments for review. The senator from Philosophy said he did not see any such list until after his department requested it repeatedly. Deanna reported that his department’s liaison did not receive that list ahead of time, either, and that decisions regarding the de-accession were made without the assent of the library staff. A senator asked, if there is no room for the 3,000 books that had to be disposed of, how can there be room for a Natural Science Resource Center?

Carolyn expressed her concern that decisions that impact the academic mission of the university are being made by university campus planning with no input from the faculty. She
implored the senate members to please let the senate Library Committee know of their concerns.

A senator from English mentioned the fire marshall’s warning that called for the removal of books on top shelves, and said she went to the library to see the space issues for herself. She felt that the space on the second floor is strangely configured with much wasted space. She also pointed out the contradictory requests faculty are receiving; one, to help students spend less money on books and classroom resources, while being told by the library that there is no space for holding textbooks that students could access for free.

The chair of the senate Campus Planning Committee said that he has no recollection of any discussion about the how the decision to move the branch library out of Kendall Hall came about. He said he would speak with Doug Bencks about the matter to see what information he can gather.

A senator asked if there is a process in the faculty senate for members of this group to sit down with decision makers and gain an understanding of the process of de-accession; is this a function of the Library Committee? He suggested it would be constructive to have a process to disseminate this information, and encouraged senators to share their strong opinions with the Library Committee. Carolyn stated that the lists for culling should have been sent out before the de-accession began; that was part of the policy but was not carried out. Another senator suggested that the agenda committee might create a charge to investigate these procedures. The senator from the Library stated that in the past, a librarian has served on the library committee for just such clarifications and communications, but that this has not been the case lately. She advocated that such an appointment would provide a liaison between the senate and the library. Carolyn reported that the dean of the library does attend Library Committee meetings, but has only met with them once this year during their work on the de-accession policy because the Library Committee had no feedback from other senators to share with the dean.

A senator from the Physics department said that he contacted the library seeking information about the number of volumes that might need to be moved, should the Physics library be moved into Dimond library at one point. He said he was informed that the librarians don’t measure in number of volumes but rather in feet of shelf space occupied. According to his calculations, the space taken up by the volumes in the Physics library is equal to about 4% of the space occupied by all the volumes in the Dimond library, his point being that to bring in 4% more books to the library, 4% of the books currently housed there would have to be removed.

The senator from the Library reported that the library has stopped weeding monographs, and are currently working on lists of journals, some of which are being discarded because the library has them electronically, or are being moved to storage where they will be scanned at storage. She said that the lists should have gone out to the departments from their library liaisons in February, and said that as far as she knows, no monographs have been discarded since last May. Instead, they are shifting materials to storage. Several senators reported that they are not aware of their departments receiving such lists. Carolyn urged them to contact their library faculty liaisons to inquire about the lists. The
senate chair thanked Carolyn and her committee for their work, and said that the Agenda Committee would consider today’s comments and the possibility of new charges.

VII. **New business** – There was no new business.

VIII. **Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m.