Meeting called to order at 3:51 p.m. Monday, September 28, 2015

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Innis, Kun, Onosko. Hasseldine was excused. Ghayoomi and White served as proxies for Benoit and Mulligan, respectively. Victoria Dutcher, P.T. Vasudevan, and Terri Winters were guests.

II. Remarks by and questions to the interim provost – P.T. Vasudevan announced to the senate that the search for the new COLA dean is progressing, and the off-campus interviews are scheduled for October. The search for the new dean of UNH-Manchester is also progressing; those off-campus interviews will be held around the third week of October.

Vasu urged the senators to read the recent Curran Report on Professional Success, which can be found on the provost’s office’s website. He also encouraged faculty to participate in the related survey linked here.

A senator asked about the length of the interim provost’s term. That term ends in June 2016. The senate chair thanked the provost for his time.

III. Remarks by and questions to the senate chair – Senate chair Kinghorn reminded the senators about the vacancies on several university-wide committees, requiring faculty representation. These include the Transportation Policy Committee, which still needs two faculty representatives, the Financial Conflict of Interest Disclosure Review Committee, needing one representative, and the University Community Scholarship Fund Committee, also needing one representative. Deb said that the representatives do not need to be senators, so if members of this group are aware of colleagues who are looking for service opportunities in preparation for promotion and tenure- or post-tenure 3- or 5-year reviews, they are encouraged to share those names with the senate chair. She said that the agenda committee is also working to populate the new senate ad hoc Committee on Alternative Academic Calendar Options, seeking representatives from COLSA, CEPS, UNH-Manchester, the School of Law, and the Library. September 30 is the date by which she hopes to have all the positions filled for this committee.

Deb then reported to the senate about the ongoing search for a new provost. The second pool of candidates is very promising, and airport interviews have begun. Off-site interviews will go on during October, and the plan is to have an appropriate candidate to bring to campus by November. With the two ongoing deans searches, scheduling is a serious challenge.

A senator asked how long the previous provosts have served. The answer was two years for Provost MacFarlane and four years for Provost Aber. The senator asked if lack of consistency
in this position is a problem at UNH. Deb responded that it is not; usually a provost serves for about 4-5 years before moving on to another institution or moving to another position within their institution.

IV. Minutes – It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the last senate meeting, September 14, 2015. A senator asked for clarification on the statement by Sheila Curran that 90% of the students using campus career services were the 10% who needed it least. The senate admin responded that that was Sheila’s interpretation of the data. A spelling error was corrected, and the senator from the Library offered clarification on her comment in the “New Business” section of the meeting. Thus corrected, the minutes were unanimously approved with 3 abstentions.

Action Items:

V. Report and motion from AAC on Honors Convocation attendance criteria – Scott Smith, chair of the senate Academic Affairs Committee, reported that his committee had been charged with examining the issues related to student eligibility to attend the annual Honors Convocation, presenting the following report and motion:

_The current language on the university website states that students need to be “currently enrolled and matriculated” to be recognized at any level (University Scholar; Presidential Scholar; Honors Program University Scholar and Honors Program Presidential Scholar). This prevents students who graduate in September or December from participating in the ceremony._

_We move that the language “currently enrolled and matriculated…” should be changed to read “currently enrolled and matriculated students, or those who have graduated in the previous September and December terms.”_

Scott said that the current wording on the website excludes students who have finished their coursework in the previous September and December terms, even if they qualify by grade point average to participate in the Honors Convocation. A senator asked why any exclusionary wording is necessary at all. Scott replied that it relates to the time frame used by those who are compiling the lists of eligible students. He asked if the rules might be suspended in order to vote on this motion today. It was moved and seconded to suspend the rules. The chair called for a vote, which passed unanimously with no abstentions. She then asked if there were any further discussion on the AAC’s motion. The AAC chair noted that his committee voted unanimously in support of this motion.

The motion was put to a vote and passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Discussion/Report Items:

VI. Discussion with Victoria Dutcher – The chair then introduced the new Vice President for Enrollment Management, Victoria Dutcher. She invited the senators to stop by her office on the first floor of Thompson Hall with any questions. She has been sharing today’s presentation around campus to share a five-year view on undergraduate enrollments for new
students at Durham. She said that this was another record breaking year for new enrollments, with 19255 applications, and 3267 new freshman deposits received in early September. She said that the increases have largely been driven by out-of-state students. The in-state numbers are an item of concern that will be addressed in the future.

A senator asked if our out-of-state students are mostly coming from the same places they have been coming from. Victoria responded that we are getting a somewhat more geographically diverse response, but not as much as we would like to see. He asked about students who enter through Navitas. She said that there are about 52 students entering UNH now through Navitas.

Victoria then said that net revenue has stayed relatively flat despite the rise in out-of-state students which indicates that more financial aid is going to those out-of-state students. She also noted that the class profile (average S.A.T. score) is dropping, but said this is a national trend rather than unique to UNH and that the decline is slight rather than precipitous. A senator asked if that decline is due to a conscious decision to accept students with a lower profile. Victoria said that it is a natural consequence of increased enrollments, generally. Another senator asked if the S.A.T. score drops were in the verbal or the math areas, and she responded that they’re about the same. She noted that we have some of the lowest averages of freshman S.A.T.s.

The VPEM then said that UNH has a comparatively high admit rate, and a comparatively low yield rate, showing similar rates to UVM, URI, and UME. She also noted that the common application has had some impact on the yield rate, as high school students using the common application are now applying to more places than before. She asked how much deeper we can dig into the applicant pool and still bring in students who are academically prepared for the excellent curriculum that UNH has to offer. What can we do differently to put ourselves on a more competitive pace and position us more strongly?

Her suggestion is to implement a target enrollment strategy segmented by college, in which we can selectively raise tuition revenue while also raising the academic profile of our students, noting that the complexity of our institution provides leverage for growth in different colleges and departments at different times. She noted that the Paul College currently has a limited capacity for increased enrollments, with a high demand from out-of-state students. As we promote the programs in the Paul College, perhaps we can look for ways to cap certain enrollments, thus driving up the academic profile of our students.

She noted capacity constraints in CEPS, as well, where the students’ academic profile might be raised with some selectivity of enrollments in specific programs.

She suggested that in COLA, the objective might be to keep the academic profile stabilized, in order to increase demand particularly with in-state students, and thus increase our enrollments. She emphasized that these plans are intended to vary from department to department, and not broadly across any particular college, as department needs and capacities vary widely. She noted that a tool of enrollment management is predictive modeling, which projects out retention and graduation rates.
The VPEM then spoke about the public concerns regarding the value of a four year degree in the current marketplace. She asked how we can appeal to parents, and suggested developing market-responsive programs, such as the Professional Success Initiative, expanded Honors programs, new minors across disciplines, accelerated degrees, 3+1 and 3+2 programs, flexible class calendars, improved facilities (including housing), and seeking to improve our national rankings. She also noted the importance of mobilizing our alumni/friends worldwide, and creating a state-of-the-art campus visit experience for our prospective students.

The senator from UNH-Manchester asked if UNH-M is included in this information. Victoria said that neither the graduate school, UNH-M, nor the School of Law are included, although it is important to consider ways in which those entities can benefit from the branding of UNH undergraduate programs. She said she is looking for ways to create connections between UNH-M and Durham.

A senator in COLA expressed concern about the lower student profiles in that college, and asked if growing capacity in that college means reducing selectivity of students. Victoria responded that this is not the intent, but that in the short term there may not be a ratcheting up of requirements. In the future, the expectations will rise. She noted that high school seniors have already decided where they want to go to college next fall, so her office is looking to the numbers for the fall of 2017.

A senator asked about the kinds of marketing materials UNH sends out to prospective students and their parents. Victoria said there are other ways to market besides brochures and mailings. She spoke about using predictive models to identify pockets of students that we want to recruit, and about becoming more aggressive in our recruitment community and with scholarships for those pockets of students. She also said that the campus experience of prospective students is huge in its impact and is an important way we can step up our recruitments. She suggested that the university should use technology the way that students use technology in order to more effectively reach our target groups.

A senator asked how the recent senate discussion of examining options to the two-semester calendar might appeal to students, and Victoria responded that it might raise the academic profile, but perhaps not change the actual enrollments. Another senator asked if there is a single university-wide unit to measure carrying capacity, and she said there is not. January 2016 begins the next five-year enrollment projections, with targeted metrics by college and by program.

Another senator asked how faculty impact the equation of recruitment, asking if parents care about things like the number of tenure-track versus non-tenure-track faculty on campus. Victoria replied that from a marketing perspective, the qualifications and teaching habits of faculty absolutely has an effect.

A senator asked if the Amtrak rail has any impact as an enrollment tool, and Victoria responded that it should, along with the WildCat Transit system, which she said could use better promotion. She suggested that if prospective students and their parents could actually see how simple travel to and from UNH is using the Amtrak system, it would make a difference, emphasizing the importance of showing them rather than telling them.
Another senator asked how the number of non-traditional students at UNH compares with those numbers at comparator universities, and the VPEM said that the number is quite small.

The senate chair thanked Victoria for sharing this information with the senate.

VII. Report from ITC on UNH VPN changes and other charges – Siobhan Senier, chair of the senate Information Technology Committee shared her committee’s report on three charges. First discussed was their response to the proposed changes to the UNH Virtual Private Network (VPN) Access to Secure Networks:

1. We are not entirely comfortable with the requirement to install new software on individual computers. The new “Host Checker” mentioned in the document is simply an add-on to the existing Pulse software, so no one needs to add anything unless they’re not using Pulse. But we would like to note that the requirement of software of this kind can put some users at a disadvantage (e.g., Linux devotees). In a larger sense, the Committee is mindful of the constant pressure on universities to purchase and run proprietary software, and will likely continue to have honest questions about whether such purchases are necessary.

As of this date, Bryan Scovill has been unable to answer the Committee’s question about the scope of the installation. His sense is that faculty members do not need the Host Checker to access their own data (e.g., pay stubs). They might need it if they are involved in financial transactions like timesheet approval for student workers.

To our question about what, exactly, Host Checker checks, Bryan reports that as of this moment, it is only anti-virus protection and client firewalls (for Windows).

A senator asked what exactly the Host Checker is checking for. Terri Winters, director of Academic Technology and UNH Online, was present for the discussion to answer any questions that might arise, and she said that is really only checking to make sure that the computer has appropriate anti-virus software. The senator asked if there is a list of what those approved anti-virus software might be. A member of the ITC said that this is one of the questions they asked Bryan Scovill, who said that on Windows, what the Host Checker is looking for is an anti-virus update within the past seven days, but was unclear about what the requirements for Mac or Linux systems might be. Terri said that she would gather more details on this and share it with the senate. A senator asked what the consequence of not having an appropriate update would be, and Terri responded that the VPN would then not allow access.

Other senators asked additional questions about the Host Checker related to accessing the VPN from home computers about the firewalls and email issues, and the senate chair asked the ITC committee to gather more information with Terri’s cooperation, noting that today’s report helps us see what additional information we need.

The next topic was the rollout of Canvas and the change from Blackboard:
The committee met with Terri Winters, Director of Academic Technology, to review the attached Timeline and Communications Plan for the transition from Blackboard to Canvas (called “MyCourses” in UNH parlance).

AT has set this up to let faculty self-migrate at their own convenience any time up to May 31, 2016. The ... rollout is proceeding in “waves” by college, with each college getting its own weekly sessions and trainings. In addition, we have access to Canvas’s own extensive online documentation; to students who are being trained by AT to assist; and to 80 pilot faculty already using it in their classes. Many of the pilot faculty express satisfaction with Canvas, but faculty should still expect that the transition will take time, and that it might not be seamless (e.g., when someone is using many nested folders in BB).

In short, faculty members will export their materials from Blackboard, store them in UNH Box, and ask AT to build a sandbox for the building of individual courses. We have until June 30, 2016, to export BB data. Terri is following up on 3 questions the committee had for her: (1) the mechanism for keeping final grades; (2) the possibility of migrating all BB course materials wholesale, in case any faculty miss the May deadline; (3) preparations to help Paul College ensure their courses (May 2016-June 30) are fully loaded on Canvas.

Be advised that the BB portal (to courses, groups, Faculty Activity Report and other systems) is a separate package, not part of Canvas. UNH will retain the BB license for the portal until June 30 and is investigating other options.

A senator asked what faculty who are on leave during their college’s roll-out period should do. Terri responded that AT will be given information about faculty who will be on sabbatical, and they will reach out to faculty who will be on leave to give them assistance in preparing to move to Canvas. All of the Blackboard courses will be exported before June 30 so that faculty will still have access to those files if they need them.

A senator asked about courses not currently being taught that faculty might want access to in the future. Terri replied that all classes need to be transferred at some point. Depending on how the course is structured, the ease of exporting any course may vary. AT will be providing a tool that faculty can use to see whether re-creating a course would be less time-consuming than trying to transfer it over. If there are many nested files, transferring will be more time consuming. This is a decision that faculty will need to make for themselves. She reminded them of the sandbox that can be created to experiment with various methods of importing and moving files. Zip files might be better opened and moved individually rather than as a whole. She recommended that faculty pace themselves to avoid a log jam of work.

Terri said that AT will be providing drop-in training sessions, as well as introductory training. Faculty can also make appointments with AT for training and trouble-shooting. Additional staff has been hired and trained for this very purpose.

A senator noted that J-Term courses all must be ready in “My Courses” (on Canvas) as soon as possible. Terri said that there is a separate set of resources to help make sure that faculty teaching J-Term courses this year have the help they need. They should be contacted by AT
regarding getting those courses transferred over in time, or they can reach out to AT
themselves.

A senator noted that many faculty seem to have a negative opinion already of this change. He said there seem to be few motivators and little information regarding why Canvas is a better option. He asked if there is a way to change this negative perception. Terri thanked him for that important feedback. She said that Canvas has a more contemporary feel, making it more appealing to students, which means they’ll be more likely to use it. Mobile access is better, and greater consistency for students from course to course, again making it more likely to be used.

The senate chair said that two of her departmental colleagues have been part of the Canvas pilot, and that their reactions have been very positive; they say that Canvas is much easier to use than Blackboard. A senator asked if the pilot faculty across campus could be asked to share their experiences with other faculty to dispel some of the negative anticipation of other faculty.

VII. New business – There was no new business.

VIII. Adjournment- It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 5:27 p.m.