

Meeting Minutes for the General Meeting of the UNH Graduate Student Senate (GSS)  
24 September 2013, MUB 233  
Ian Cohen, President, Facilitating

- I. Call to Order: Ian Cohen, President
- II. Roll Call and Introductions
  - A. Executive Committee Members Present:
    1. Ian Cohen, President
    2. Joe Gilbert, Vice President
    3. Deanna Silva, Treasurer
    4. John McClain, External Affairs Officer
    5. Madhav Baral, Programs Coordinator
  - B. Executive Committee Members Not Present:
    1. Dan Tran, Clerk
  - C. Senators Present:
    1. Harrison Roakes, CEPS
    2. Surupa Shaw, CEPS
    3. Mike Griswold, CHHS
    4. Myles Lynch, CHHS
    5. Jay Derick, COLA
    6. Luke Dietrich, COLA
    7. Kei Saito, COLA
    8. Mike Verney, COLA
    9. Mica Kurtz, Paul College
    10. Patrick Lacroix, Babcock Hall
    11. Matt Smith, Graduate School
  - D. Senators Not Present:
    1. Brianna Isenberg, COLSA
    2. Thomas Cronin, Manchester
  - E. Other Graduate Students Present: 4
- III. Approval of Minutes from the General Meeting on 10 September 2013
  - A. Mr. McClain moved to approve the minutes.
  - B. Mr. Gilbert seconded the motion.
  - C. **The minutes were approved unanimously.**
- IV. Initial Reports from the Executive Committee
  - A. President, Mr. Cohen
    1. New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Accreditation Committee
      - a) A meeting was held with the chair of the committee. From a graduate perspective, the salient point being stressed was that UNH tends to be undergraduate-centric.
  - B. Vice President, Mr. Gilbert
    1. Graduate Council
      - a) The music department is rapidly putting forward a change to their programs in response to concerns raised by an external review team brought in for reaccreditation.
      - b) The department is replacing the two master's degrees that they currently offer with three different degrees. Current students will have the option to complete the degree program they are in or switch to one of the new degrees being offered.
      - c) One of the existing degrees had three concentrations that were not formalized, which will become the three new degrees.

C. Treasurer, Ms. Silva

- a) No report. The Central Budget Committee will not be meeting until November.

D. External Affairs Officer, Mr. McClain

1. USNH Board of Trustees (BoT)

- a) The USNH BoT had recently held their annual two-day retreat. The purpose was to establish its role and deciding on what to focus on for the year, which has shifted towards higher-level issues, rather than approving or disapproving of every minor thing that a university in the system does.
- b) Key issue highlights were presented from each campus. For UNH, President Huddleston discussed four areas: branding, research and commercialization, enrollment, and advancement. The President is thinking about disruptive innovations in higher education (such as online courses) and how UNH will handle them.
- c) There was much emphasis on UNH being branded as a “university of choice,” part of that meaning that students choose to attend this school and that there are many choices and options for obtaining a college degree (e.g., having better agreements from with community colleges in transferring credits, etc.).
- d) President Huddleston also talked about possibly completely redesigning the academic calendar to have six terms, although this would be a long-term process.
- e) Mission clarity does not seem to be an issue despite concerns from trustees believing that the university is trying too hard to be everything to everyone. The President went on to say that UNH’s mission is “to be a fine, small public research institution with a commitment to high-quality undergraduate education.”
- f) The review of the Graduate School was mentioned several times, but no specific details were given as to cuts or programs that might be phased out.
- g) The Board stressed mission clarity, efficiency and costs, enrollment and revenue, and culture change. Culture change refers to unhappiness with the tenure system, which could mean more hiring of lecturers and adjunct professors.
- h) Within the Academic Excellence Committee of the BoT, topics to focus on were discussed, the first one being how to drive down costs. Other things to focus on will be meeting the economic equality of life needs of New Hampshire and the use of technology, as well as the metric that the Board will try to use to test what students get out of UNH, pre- and post-education.

E. Programs Coordinator, Mr. Baral

1. No report.

V. Ad Hoc, Liaison, and Other Committee Reports

A. Faculty Senate, Mr. Dietrich

1. President Huddleston spoke at the last meeting summarizing the points he made at the BoT retreat. He felt that he was forced to defend the university’s mission. He felt this was odd because it was clear to him, yet the trustees did not seem to understand why research was important to UNH.
2. The President also talked about branding and marketing the university in comparison to other state schools systems, such as UMass and UVM, and how to compete with them. UNH could be going through an identity crisis with its different campuses, and it needs to be able to better market what it has to offer.
3. The Faculty Senate looked at a resolution from the Student Senate for faculty to think about the costs of books for undergraduates and to include this sort of information on syllabi. If students were not to be able to afford books, they should be able to approach faculty or administration about this.

4. Two motions were passed. One was to change the student evaluation summary form to include the mean score for all the questions answered in the evaluation in addition to the average score for the “Overall Rating” question on an evaluation form.
  5. A motion was also passed to approve online courses. The online master’s program in social work is being set up so that there are two eight-week terms per semester. Future master’s programs that are purely online should conform to this schedule.
  6. Monica Chiu briefly discussed an advanced grant to support women in STEM sciences for which UNH has comparatively low number of female faculty.
  7. They are working on a UNH Policy on the Protection of Minors. 30,000 K-12 students visit UNH per year through various programs and this is the university’s statement on what it does to protect them and maintain a safe environment (see “New Business”).
- B. Student Affairs Committee (of the Faculty Senate), Mr. Gilbert
1. This subcommittee had a joint with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate to discuss reducing the number of reading days before spring exam periods. The concern is that the number of reading days gives students too much time on their hands to drink and party during the day.
  2. The question was if this was an indication of exams not being difficult enough and courses being too easy or it is simply the end of the academic year with the weather being nicer which encourages slacking off and drinking.
  3. This needs to be studied more to figure out if this could curb binge drinking, or if it just some combination of the factors mentioned above, despite apparently there being a study that students are spending less time outside of class and GPAs are increasing.
- C. NEASC Accreditation Steering Committee, Mr. Roakes
1. Former UVM President Dan Fogel will chair the NEASC Visiting Committee. He met with a group of deans and administrators to put together an initial self-study.
  2. The NEASC process was described, when Fogel and a team of people will come for a few days (March 30 – April 2, 2014). They will have meetings with different committees across campus, along with ad hoc meetings with faculty and possibly students.
  3. The reaccreditation process should run smoothly and professionally, and the university is encouraged to make the most out of it and grow from it.
- D. President’s Commission on the Status of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Issues, Ms. Saito
1. The commission is trying to focus more on the students and student climate.
- E. President’s Commission on the Status of People of Color, Ms. Shaw
1. The commission recognizes that it does not have many signature events so it is planning to sponsor events, some around a keynote speaker.
- F. Space Allocation, Adaptation and Renewal Committee (SAARC, formerly SARRC), Mr. Lecroix
1. The renovation of Hamilton-Smith Hall remains to be the top priority of SAARC, with the university paying 20% of the costs (the remaining 80% is expected from the state). The BoT has seen the specifications/schematics of the newly renovated building, an indication that the plan is moving forward.
  2. With departments moving to Paul College, an opportunity has presented itself for renovations of the newly vacated McConnell Hall, so that departments, such as some in COLA, can move into the building.
  3. Despite Horton Hall also needing repairs, there are no departments leaving or entering that building. Renovations are being made on an incremental basis as departments are moving in and out of buildings on campus.

## VI. Old Business

### A. Timely Progress Through Degree Programs

1. At the previous meeting, a discussion took place about how each department assesses a student's progress in his or her graduate program and whether or not the progress is complete in a timely manner. The GSS would like to learn of this information.
2. A list of departments/graduate programs and their contacts have been put together with information that will be distributed to senators for them be in touch with constituents on this matter (see "New Business").

### B. Student Loan Refinancing

1. In response to the GSS's letter on refinancing of existing student loans to lower rates, an email was received from someone in Senator Shaheen's office. The email included more information on the affordability acts that would affect new student loan bills which does not apply to the letter (similar to the response out of Senator Ayotte's letter).
2. The end of the email did, however, include information about a new bill sponsored by Senator Kristin Gillibrand of New York. The bill (Senate Bill 1066) talks about student loan borrowers having the ability to refinance, and it references the same Campus Progress white paper that was referenced for the GSS's letter to NH's delegation.
3. The bill discusses refinancing existing federally controlled loans to as low as 4%. The compromise here is that those with rates lower than 4% would have their rates bumped up to 4%. The bill effectively sets the lower limit on rates.
4. The text of the bill, the press release, and the Campus white paper, will be distributed to GSS senators for review in preparation to take some sort of action, whether it is endorsing the bill or making suggestions on what works and what does not work. This might involve sending a letter to Senator Gillibrand as well as to NH's senators.

## VII. New Business

### A. Senator Departmental Assignments

1. Contacts lists for each department one campus were distributed. Each senator was assigned the departments that they will represent for the academic year for their term.
2. When asking for feedback or information from constituents, senators should refer to the respective departments to which they were assigned.

### B. UNH Policy for the Protection of Minors/Procedure for the Protection of Minors

1. The policy was devised as a response to the incident at Pennsylvania State University, surrounding Jerry Sandusky and the abuse of minors who were on campus grounds via university programs. Issues like this are things Penn State should be liable for.
2. UNH wants to protect minors on campus, such that people do not think that there are loopholes or grey areas where the university cannot be held responsible. This ensures that people are properly trained on how to interact with minors and that consequences are laid out should there be mistreatment or violations of the policy.
3. The policy is primarily focused on programs that occur on campus, especially overnight programs (such as summer sports, band camp, tech camps, Project SMART, etc.), during which minors are present without parents and are under the supervision of student volunteers or faculty/staff.
4. Discussion
5. Mr. Cohen proposes and entertains a motion to allow the GSS Executive Committee to follow up on the Policy and return with an update at the next general meeting.
  - a) Mr. Verney made the motion.
  - b) Mr. Roakes seconded the motion.
  - c) **The motion passes.**

VIII. Announcements/Notes

- A. Campus Safety Walk, Tuesday, September 24, 6pm, Alumni Lounge in Bartels Hall
  - 1. Hosted by campus police, students are encouraged to join on an evening walk around campus to identify possible hazardous conditions and provide recommendations.
- B. First Thursday Happy Hour, Thursday, October 3, 5-7pm, at Scorpions Bar & Grill
- C. Homecoming Day, Saturday October 12
  - 1. Graduate team for the 5k race in the morning; tailgating/football game at Boulder Field
  - 2. Volunteers are also needed to man the GSS table and serve hot beverages under the Alumni tent during tailgating.

IX. Adjournment

- A. Ms. Silva moved to adjourn the meeting.
- B. Mr. Kurtz seconded the motion.
- C. The meeting is adjourned until the next general meeting scheduled on 8 October at 12:30pm in MUB 233.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Tran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dan Tran, Clerk  
Graduate Student Senate  
University of New Hampshire