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UNH/USNH Human Resources and Faculty Senate Joint Resolution on Shared Principles

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Introduction and Purpose

This document is the product of a collaborative effort between UNH Faculty Senate and UNH/USNH HR leadership, based primarily on meetings and discussions occurring in the 2021-2022 academic year.

The primary impetus for this document is our shared interest in improving the university's change management processes. The various technological and administrative changes occurring over the past several years brought the need for such improvement into sharp relief. The challenge of such far-reaching changes offers an opportunity to review our shared processes and recalibrate our pathways of communication. By doing so we can anticipate impacts and coordinate our efforts as we adapt to changing circumstances.

Shared Governance at UNH¹

The principle of shared governance in universities is long established by tradition and was formalized in the 1966 Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities, jointly formulated by the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (see <http://www.aaup.org/report/1966-statement-government-colleges-and-universities>). The Joint Statement affirms that the academic institution is a "joint effort," requiring communication and consultation among all constituencies, and addresses the distinctive responsibilities of trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students in university governance.

The distinctive responsibility of the faculty is the academic mission of the university. In particular, the joint statement asserts:

The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. On these matters the power of review or final decision lodged in the governing board or delegated by it to the president should be exercised adversely only in exceptional circumstances and for reasons communicated to the faculty.

Organizational Context

The UNH Faculty Senate is an elected body of faculty representatives from each academic department at UNH. The Faculty Senate is the legislative body that has primary responsibility for fundamental areas of curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process, and it should actively participate in the reviews and development of policies concerned with the academic mission of the University.

UNH/USNH Human Resources act in their area of responsibility as designees of the University President and the Board of Trustees. Their responsibilities include relating likely needs to resources, retaining existing resources and recruiting new resources, managing nonacademic functions, operating the communications systems that links to some of the components of the academic community, engaging with departments/organizations, helping leaders to create a productive work environment and solving problems.

The HR Executive Council (HREC) mission is to serve USNH as the guiding body on human resources matters. The HREC is charged with identifying, analyzing and presenting recommendations – incorporating campus needs, best practices, policy, faculty and staff impact and financial considerations – to the USNH Presidents Council to advance the goals of attracting, retaining, developing and rewarding our faculty and staff. Additionally, HREC is committed to ensuring integration and partnership in its core services and service delivery with other executive councils and in tandem with HR affinity groups, as deemed necessary and appropriate. The HREC committee members are responsible for representing the specific needs of their campus, thinking of solutions that are based on fact and best practice and collectively making recommendations that will promote the HREC mission (as stated above) and support and advance the goals of each campus and USNH.

Statement of Shared Principles

A well-defined relationship founded on trust and communication between the Faculty Senate and Human Resources is critical to the functioning of the entire university. Here, we describe a set of principles and guidelines that, moving forward, will ensure a more productive working relationship between the two by operationalizing our activities and improving our communications with each other through the following principles:

1. Human Resources and Faculty Senate leadership agree to contact each other at any time, should the need arise. This includes periods of time outside the academic year.
2. Human Resources will have the opportunity to meet regularly with the Finance and Administration Committee of the Faculty Senate. The frequency of these meetings is for the committee chair and HR administration to determine, but shall occur no less than once per semester. Any administrative/operational change with actual or potential impact on teaching or research, as well as any academic initiative with actual or potential impact on administrative or operational issues, shall be brought to this group as early as possible within the development process. Faculty Senate will commit to a fair and timely review of relevant proposed HR administrative/operational changes, which may include debate with the full Senate.
3. Human Resources and the Faculty Senate Agenda Committee will be available to meet with each other as needed.

4. Human Resources administrators and/or staff are welcome to attend Faculty Senate meetings with prior agreement from the Agenda Committee, as per standard Senate guest attendance policies and the Faculty Senate Constitution.
5. Human Resources will be given time to provide updates to the Senate as needed and as the schedule allows.
6. A Faculty Senate liaison will be invited to attend UNH HR monthly meeting once per semester and additionally as needed to discuss projects, updates, etc. that may affect faculty.
7. Both parties agree they should discuss with the other any significant initiatives that may impact their ability to fulfill their respective responsibilities, and will do so early in their development of such initiatives.
8. HR and Faculty Senate leadership will continue to review and update these principles and their operationalization on an annual basis.

¹ From Section 2.1 of the UNH *Faculty Resource Guide*. Available here: <https://www.unh.edu/provost/section-2-faculty-governance-and-faculty-senate#s1>