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2021-2022 FACULTY SENATE XXVI - March 28, 2022 Minutes Summary

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Recommended Citation

Faculty Senate, "2021-2022 FACULTY SENATE XXVI - March 28, 2022 Minutes Summary" (2022). *Faculty Senate Agendas & Minutes*. 62.

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UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2021-2022 FACULTY SENATE XXVI

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 3:10 PM on March 28, 2022, via ZOOM

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Remarks and Questions to the Provost

Provost Jones ceded his time to Tom Cronin, Executive Director of Government Relations for UNH/USNH. Tom shared:

- His work represents both state and federal government relations. Forty percent of Tom's work is Federal Government Relations. All of his work is largely focused on appropriations and to a less degree legislative work.
- Today we will be focused mainly on state government work
- There is a USNH Government Relations Executive Council changed with overseeing Tom's work in Concord. This Executive Council is system-wide and includes representatives from all campuses. The chair of this EC changes. Currently, Tom is serving as the chair.
- Other members of the committee include the Chief Administrative Officer, legal counsel, and the communications director.
- During the January to June legislative session the group meets weekly to review what typically amounts to 1000 bills annually.
- Recommendations regarding legislative action are made via the CAO who is considered the chief government relations officer for the university system. These recommendations are sent to the President's Council.
- When looking at legislation it's a twofold process
 - 1st, the group focuses on what is the acute impact on the university mission, services and business. This mission would include the academic work of the university – freedom of speech for both faculty and students– particularly if it impacts curriculum.
 - 2nd, the focus is on auxiliary services – right now this includes NCAA and the name, image, likeness issue, but may include a topic like pesticide use on university grounds. Other areas this would encompass include dining hall services, dormitory living, etc.; and lastly, bills that might impact businesses practices. The example given was a bill regarding mandating a day off for the state's primary election.
- A point of clarification was made that although the government affairs team is engaging in multiple issues, they are members of the state university system which is a quasi-state agency. This does cause some constraints that a private business would not experience.

- Sometimes the government relations team, faculty and staff can be used as a resource for legislative bodies seeking expertise on a topic. This is particularly true as it relates to the university's R1 status.
- The NH Legislature is comprised of 400 members of the house and 24 in the senate. This is the largest English-speaking legislative body in the country (clarified at April 11 FS meeting – 4th largest in the country). Important to know and understand who the “go to” members of both chambers are; however, establishing relationships with the 24 members of the state senate is easier than the 400 members of the house.
- When reviewing pertinent legislation it's important to understand the end goal. Is the goal to pass an initiative or to squash an initiative; or, is the initiative/effort in question already moving in the desired direction on its own? What is the value of Tom's involvement and who are we trying to influence or impact?
- As important as it is to ensure law makers understand our position on issues, it is equally important to ensure the greater university community hears the message too.
- When taking a position on an issue – particularly those that are controversial, our position recognizes there are two sides.
- The most effective way to have an impact is face to face. Being in Concord is critical. Legislators are inundated with phone calls and email. Testifying before legislative hearings is also important. This is not to negate the written word. Written communication has its place too. In the end, it's understanding what is the best approach given the situation in question.
- Tom shared a tracking tool document used by the Gov't Relations Exec Council to keep a running record of work on a given issue. The document is thorough and includes a multitude of issues.
- Tom offered to come back to Senate more frequently, perhaps at the beginning of session and again later on with an update. He also offered to share the work of the exec committee on a monthly basis.

Questions for Tom:

Chair Kevin Healey asked about the executive council weekly meetings. Are there minutes from those meeting that could be accessible to faculty? Answer: The group does not keep minutes. Tom does write a monthly report which he shares via email. The meetings are strategy sessions and not ready for public consumption.

Vice-Chair Matt MacManes asked about HB1313. He shared there had been Senate talk of a resolution in opposition to 1313, but have received feedback doing so could cause unexpected harm. In your opinion, what are the pros and cons to offering such a resolution particularly one related to HB1313?

Answer: The most important action on an issue as controversial as this is understanding both sides. Academic freedom is not just a right but a responsibility. Faculty do not take this responsibility lightly. In drafting a resolution that marries both the right to academic freedom with the responsibility this freedom carries could be helpful to Tom in his work. It would support the message he is working to convey. In other words, those pushing AF legislation do not want educators proselytizing on issues important to them as individuals. The response is, neither do we (faculty and teachers at schools and universities). A message like this could be very powerful

and helpful to Tom in his work as it's a message coming from someone other than himself. He is not a professor or teacher.

HB 1313 was sent to Interim Study which is a motion that essentially means the bill is in a waiting room and after session legislators may go back and revisit this issue. This provides the university an opportunity to engage in a conversation; to share thoughts, listen to their side, provide feedback. Tom shared he would be happy to help Senate draft such a motion or resolution.

Question: Issues before the legislature often impact groups beyond the university and can include elementary, middle and high schools. Do you engage or coordinate with these groups? Answer: Sometimes. We could be better. Tom offered a few examples of collaborative work. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey was one and the Health 603 COVID initiative started by the hospital association is another. The Divisive Concepts bill was another example. Once it was determined this bill was aimed less at universities, the exec council dialed back it's work on this issue. The exec council will speak out against it and testify against it, but the issue may get dialed back from a 5-alarm fire to a 1.

Tom left the meeting.

Provost Jones shared thanks to Tom for his ongoing work with the legislature. His work has changed the tone in Concord and the university is thankful and appreciative of his work. In addition, Wayne shared the university continues to support students from Ukraine and Russia. There have been a number of inquiries about Ukraine students who may be needing a place to study. The university is working on that. Alumni have also been engaged on this topic.

Questions: 1. Are staff included in the support the university is providing to students and faculty and 2. Is there a pass / fail option for students impacted by the war? Answer: Currently those students would be directed to the Dean of Students. SVPAA Kate Ziemer shared the university is also providing support to staff impacted by Ukraine.

Question: With regards to the university's participation in the international group Scholars at Risk, where is the university with regards to this membership? Is that still being pursued? Answer: Yes. Both President Dean and Provost Jones support joining this group and are actively working on doing so.

Question: This questioner was more concerned that with prolonged contract negotiations the university is losing talented professors to other area universities. Provost Jones and questioner are going to share information with one another.

Provost Jones left the meeting

II. Election Updates and adoption of 3/7/22 minutes

Amanda Peterson gave a brief update letting Senators know the ballots have been distributed. Voting ends this Friday. Senators were asked to encourage their colleagues to vote.

Approval of Minutes from March 7, 2022. The minutes were approved by a voice vote with one abstention.

III. Remarks from the chair

- The AC and relevant standing committee chairs will be meeting HR management tomorrow afternoon.
- The AC has disbanded the GERC for the remainder of this semester, though the committee may be reconstituted next fall pending a decision by new Senate leadership.
- New Faculty Senate leadership will be appointed at the May 9th final meeting of FS for the 2021-22 academic year.
- There is a new email policy coming out of Chief Information Officer Bill Poirier's office. AC will be meeting with Bill on Thursday to raise concerns that have percolated up over email. Bill has agreed to pause implementing changes until he hears from the AC. Please send any questions you have regarding this issue to the Agenda Committee.

IV. Campus construction projects

Campus Planning Committee Chair Moein Khanlari offered an update on campus construction projects. He focused on the work that has started between College Road and the library. Moein asked for questions from Senators. Questions were related to ensuring safe passage for pedestrians and those with mobility challenges including adequate signage. In addition, a Senator wanted to ensure adequate handicapped parking spaces remain available during construction. Moein shared he would be taking the questions to administration and would circle back with answers.

V. First Day Complete Motion

At the 3/7 meeting of Faculty Senate a motion was introduced to endorse First Day Complete. Through Senate discussion it quickly became apparent endorsing First Day Complete was not the will of the Senate. The motion was amended to reflect opposition to the adoption of FDC. The amended motion passed. Therefore, it became necessary to amend the rationale accompanying the motion as the original rationale no longer reflected the amended motion. Jim Connell continued to share "the agenda committee is moving to amend after adoption the First Day Complete motion and add a rationale" where one currently does not exist. Senate voted to add the new rationale language to the FDC motion opposing FDC that passed Senate on 3/7. The rationale language passed with 56 in favor; 0 oppositions or abstentions.

VI. Discussion and vote on SAC Resolution regarding the endorsement of the UNH Comprehensive Prevention Plan

SAC Chair Catherine Moran addressed a question which was raised at the 2/28 meeting of Faculty Senate regarding language in the plan which references the hiring of administrators. The question asked if by administrators the university would be hiring 5 more administrators? Catherine shared the language in the plan was not referring to "university administrators" but instead was referencing the hiring of staff who would "administer" the plan. The SAC resolution

endorsing the UNH Prevention Plan passed the Senate with a vote of 60 in favor; 0 oppositions; 0 abstentions.

VII. Discussion and vote on APC motions regarding online delivery of Dlab and Inquiry Courses

Academic Programs Committee Chair Charles Vannette shared currently these courses are under a COVID waiver for online delivery. This waiver expires at the end of the summer. These motions seek to allow synchronous and asynchronous delivery as a standard practice. These motions are born out of recognition from the Discovery Committee that the online delivery of these courses has a place in future UNH curricula.

- Dlab motion: Are there questions? A Senator felt there was not enough understanding of how labs could be offered remotely and felt it was difficult to support the motion. Charles used Geology 473 as an example of a course that is currently being offered online. This is a weather-related course and has already been approved for online delivery. The idea behind the motion is not to force anyone to offer Dlabs online, but instead offer an avenue for those courses where it would/could work. There are materials available to support this online delivery.

Further clarification was offered by a Senator who asked, if the department is not offering the course online, the student can't take the course online – correct? This is a department decision. Charles concurred and reiterated the point of the motion is not to require online delivery, but instead offer the option for courses where it would/could work. There are disciplines where this could be done well and though it may not work for all disciplines, there are those where this could provide an alternative instruction.

Any course created or converted to online delivery would be done so after both CEITL review and the evaluation by Discovery. The motion includes language stating courses would be developed with Best Practices guidelines.

Jim Connell offered an amendment asking if the motion could include language stipulating CEITL and Discovery report on the efficacy of online delivery at the year 3 mark? The motion was amended by ending a sentence at the end stating, “CEITL and the Discovery Committee will report to the Senate on the progress of the program after three years.” The amendment was accepted as a “friendly amendment”. No vote was necessary.

A Senator voiced concern regarding moving toward online delivery of courses. UNH is a brick-and-mortar face to face residential university. He was not sure how moving towards more online delivery stayed within the mission of the university. This question was addressed by Barbara White (faculty Senate representative and co-chair of the teaching evaluation ad hoc committee) who offered it was true that Dlabs and Inquiry were expected to be rigorous in nature. The mode of delivery is changing over time. The Geology 473 course was again referenced. Though the students were taking the course on campus, the class met in a computer lab on campus. Students were sitting at computers working online. The course was not interactive in nature.

Vote on Motion to lift restrictions on the online delivery of synchronous and asynchronous delivery of Dlabs: 55 in favor; 1 opposition; 0 abstentions. The motion passed.

- Inquiry Motion: Charles shared there was no specific discussion from Discovery regarding Inquiry, but the committee felt if Honors and Dlab were being offered this way, Inquiry should be as well. Clarification was given regarding the language in the motion referencing only “attribute courses.” The motion is written this way because currently only attribute courses are prevented from online delivery.

Vote on Motion to lift restrictions on the online delivery of synchronous and asynchronous delivery of Inquiry: 53 in favor; 2 opposition; 1 abstention. The motion passed.

VIII. RSPC Motions

1. Faculty Senate approves the Indigenous Peoples’ Land Acknowledgement report
2. Faculty Senate endorses the Land, Water and Life Acknowledgement statement

Question: In reviewing the RSPC report, a Senator asked would the committee consider adding a 7th point to the recommendations asking the administration to create a report in 5 years with regards to their plan to recruit and retain indigenous students, faculty and staff? In addition, this report should include the administration’s ability to maintain collaborations with Indigenous populations and researchers.

Committee Chair Ivo Nedyalkov appreciated the language proposed and hoped the minutes would accurately reflect the suggestion so that the RSPC could review.

Jim Connell, Senate Parliamentarian referenced language in the motion that states “The faculty senate also recommends that the ad-hoc committee on General Education Diversity Requirement considers the importance of Indigenous heritage...” He clarified it is the role of Senate to “instruct committees” and committees in turn “report” to Senate.

Another Senator noted his appreciation for the committee’s acknowledgment of university land seizures which was then used to sell land to the settlers. Nationally, this is not widely acknowledged. This acknowledgement should be regularly noted at appropriate university events such as commencements, orientations etc.

A Senator asked who would read the Land Acknowledgment Statement at graduations, orientations, etc. Ivo answered this was intentionally left open. The reading of the statement is not required, nor precluded. There was a conscious effort not to specify how statements regarding land acknowledgements would be read/handled.

Senate Chair Kevin Healey noted the Senate needed to move on due to time constraints.

IX. Presentation and discussion on the report and tool developed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Evaluations of Teaching.

Barbara White, Co-Chair of Ad Hoc Committee presented a power point on the committee's report and teaching eval tool.

Key findings from the report

1. There is no perfect evaluation instrument.
2. Student response is only as good as the instruction they get regarding HOW to use the eval tool.
3. Any instrument must be one of several evaluation methods tied together.
4. Evaluation questions asked of students should focus on elements of the course and not the instructor.
5. Student response rates are low everywhere. Response rates below 65% are not valid.

The new evaluation tool is asking faculty to take a 180-degree shift in perception surrounding the use of the instrument. The questions in this newly developed tool are structured differently and focus on what students found to be effective strategies. The tool includes 5 open ended questions. In addition, the form requires a different perspective as to how it is used for faculty development, promotion and contract renewal.

The committee has developed new guidelines for usage within the evaluation tool and requests a 3-year timeline to determine its effectiveness. There would be a staged rollout beginning in fall 2022. Feedback will be sought. Support from the survey center will be important regarding the formation of survey questions.

The motion offered includes

- Approval of the initial instrument.
- Approval of the process to implement.
- Approval of the report recommendations regarding how the tool is used.
- Approval of an ongoing assessment of the instrument.
- Approval of an ad hoc student experience of teaching review committee for the fall of 2024 to look at data collected and to make recommendations.

The motion was read out loud. The committee co-chair shared there was a friendly amendment suggesting the motion include language pertaining to "post-tenure review". The committee will be adding this language to the motion.

It was also noted the Student Senate passed the motion yesterday. Students appreciated the opportunity to give meaningful feedback on their experiences.

SVPAAs shared the student representative on the ad hoc committee found the work eye opening with regards to what faculty are hoping to learn from students. In addition, the student chair of the AAC wants to meet with Kate Ziemer in hopes of increasing student response rates.

A senator asked how to help students understand the best use of the tool. It was suggested an instructional video posted to Canvas might be helpful. Attacking faculty is an inappropriate use of the evaluation process and student instructions to this end are welcome.

Discussion continued regarding how to ensure the question regarding whether students would recommend the course not feel like a Yelp review. Barbara White and SVPAA Kate Ziemer spoke to the careful thoughtful process the committee went through in crafting every aspect of this tool. There was a significant amount of introspection and consideration given to every aspect. This would include a student's thoughts regarding recommending the course to others.

A senator suggested the tool be renamed "the student evaluation of learning" rather than "teaching". This language was well received and will be presented to the committee.

The meeting was adjourned.