

University of New Hampshire

University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository

Faculty Senate Agendas & Minutes

Faculty Senate Documents

1-28-2013

2012-13 FACULTY SENATE - January 28, 2013 Minutes Summary

Faculty Senate

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.unh.edu/faculty_senate_agendas_minutes

Recommended Citation

Faculty Senate, "2012-13 FACULTY SENATE - January 28, 2013 Minutes Summary" (2013). *Faculty Senate Agendas & Minutes*. 238.

https://scholars.unh.edu/faculty_senate_agendas_minutes/238

This Text is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Senate Documents at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Senate Agendas & Minutes by an authorized administrator of University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. For more information, please contact Scholarly.Communication@unh.edu.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2012-13 FACULTY SENATE

JANUARY 28, 2013

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Connelly, Halstead, Harrist, Kaen, Kazura, Mebert, Minocha, Scherr, Shannon, Shore, Simos and Whistler. A guest was John Aber.

II. Remarks by and questions to the provost – The provost mentioned the new state legislature which has been elected and his hopes for the budget situation. Dr. Aber announced that he will resign as provost as of the end of this fiscal year and will return to his work as a faculty member. He will have served four years as provost and another four years as vice president for research. The provost said that in the recent past the provost position has been filled internally, and he discussed the scope of the position.

He has been talking with the Agenda Committee about the revised marine school proposal and also a statement which he has drafted on cluster hires. A senator asked questions about sustainability as a dual undergraduate major, why the original Sustainability Academy was changed to an institute, and why a million dollar professorship in sustainability was created. The provost replied that he has just received the proposal for the sustainability dual major and is in favor of the general concept, although some specifics may need adjustment. He added that the university needs to be good at letting everyone know what UNH does well. The professorship was created because some donors really care about sustainability and want to put money into it. This is about support for existing faculty members and increases the revenue basis of the institution. Regarding the change from an academy to an institute, the provost said that university policy seems to allow such a change; and it was done in order to have the best influence on the public.

Another senator asked about Academic Partnerships, which is an e-UNH vendor which may participate in launching UNH graduate professional and other programs. He said that he has taught such an on-line course and is very concerned about the large amount of tuition dollars which would go to that vendor and also that there may not be enough faculty input and shared governance in that decision. The provost replied that the decision has not yet been made but that the opportunity may be lost if the university does not make a decision soon. There will be a meeting on February 4 to discuss the matter. The provost said that there are a number of programs that could go on line in a big way, that this is a different budget model which is being reviewed, and that the decision must be based on good information. He added that accreditation must be considered and also the fact that the on-line MBA program has started and has small enrollments.

III. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The senate chair said that the Agenda Committee has received the new marine school proposal and has referred it to UCAPC for review and a recommendation to the senate fairly soon. The Agenda Committee has also received the proposal for the sustainability dual major, and some members have provided input about the proposal. The Agenda Committee has agreed that the new program proposal should be vetted via the approval processes of each of the colleges on the resources of which the program makes a claim, for space or funding or other matters, and that the Faculty Senate and UCAPC would not

need to be involved in such a dual major approval unless, after the vetting process is further along, the senate should decide that there is a special concern which would require senate input.

The senate chair said that, in view of the recent killings in schools, faculty need to have a clearer understanding about the warning systems, policies and procedures for dealing with dangerous situations. The senate chair and vice chair have talked about this recently with Mark Rubinstein and Paul Dean. The police chief gives presentations at many institutions about campus security. How should the senate facilitate better faculty understanding about these matters? A professor discussed the policies about and availability of guns on the UNH-Durham and UNH-Manchester campuses and how the policies or practice may differ. David Cross had talked to the Faculty Senate last year about how to deal with troubled students. The senate office will send to the senators the links to the emergency policies and will ask for input on how or whether faculty would like further information made available. The senate chair will also talk with Paul Dean, David Cross and Brad Manning about how the pertinent information can best be made easily available to faculty, staff and students. The senate chair said that such information may be included in student orientation and should be renewed each year. Senators said that any information or training for faculty should be voluntary and succinct. The senate chair will develop a plan and bring it back to the senate.

IV. Minutes – The minutes of the last senate meeting were approved with all ayes except for two abstentions.

V. Report from the senate’s Academic Affairs Committee, on transfer credits – The chair of the Academic Affairs Committee said that the Academic Affairs Committee has looked into the practice of accepting credits for transfer students. In general, the committee does not see any problem with the practice which, simply stated, divides the credits into major and general credits. The student’s major department decides which credits to allow toward the major, and the registrar decides which credits to accept for electives and Discovery Program categories. The Academic Affairs Committee has not been charged with reviewing individual decisions of the registrar or any department. It is possible that, for example, some courses from community colleges may not meet UNH standards but have been accepted nonetheless. There is also the matter of disparate practices regarding three-credit courses. Apparently the registrar usually accepts a certain number of *credits* (so that four three-credit courses from another institution may amount to three four-credit courses at UNH, although often Discovery Program courses are accepted at par), whereas departments usually accept a certain number of *courses* (whether three-credit or more). However, we have not heard of serious conflicts in this regard. Students have the right to petition to have certain courses accepted or a certain number of credits entered; and if the students make a good case their petitions may be granted. Absent specific complaints or questions, we see no reason to pursue this matter further.

VI. Motion from the senate’s Academic Affairs Committee, on grade changing – The chair of the Academic Affairs Committee said that, according to the minutes of the Academic Standards and Advising Committee, the vast majority of grade and course status changes are done with the concurrence of the instructor. Today the Academic Affairs Committee proposed a senate motion on grade and course status changes. The rationale of the motion was as follows.

It has apparently happened very seldom at UNH that the administration has intervened to change the grade or status of a student, with or without informing the instructor. Only one recent example has come to our notice, a case where several students in a UNH-Manchester course were allowed, well past the withdrawal deadline, to change their status to “audit” in order not to damage their GPAs. The professor was informed and objected to the change. The Academic Affairs Committee has not been asked to rule on this case, which no doubt has many complications; and so we will only note that the administrators who overruled the instructor assume the burden of making a strong justification for their interference. We also point out that the difference between a grade and a status is vague, if only because a change in status may affect a student’s grade point average, as in this case.

To change the grade or the status against the instructor’s wishes is always a very serious matter. (It is perhaps less serious in the case of a teaching assistant, even if he or she is the instructor of record, since TAs are in some respects apprentices learning their profession.) We understand that US courts have ruled that an instructor may not be compelled to change a grade/status but that the university or college administration may change it nonetheless. This is a subtle distinction, to put it mildly. We grant that on rare occasions administrators representing the university as a legal entity may be justified in overruling an instructor. However, we make the following motion in order to make the procedure explicit.

The motion was stated as follows.

When the administration changes a grade or status of a student without the concurrence of the instructor, an explanation must be given in writing to the instructor and to the chair of the Academic Affairs Committee. The instructor has the right to appeal to the Academic Standards and Advising Committee and, if not satisfied, to the provost.

A senator said that, in her department, one or more grades were changed when a faculty member left the university. Another senator suggested that many faculty may have had a grade changed without knowing the final decision. He added that, although the petition form states that the petition will only be granted for non-academic reasons, some petitions are actually granted for academic reasons. In addition, he said that the majority of ASAC members may be associate deans rather than teaching faculty members and also that faculty would have to appeal to the same body which made the original decision. He added that at UNH-Manchester the faculty member does not see the form but only receives an email from the advisor and, if the faculty member asks to see the reason for the requested grade change, he is usually refused on the grounds of confidentiality. The Agenda Committee will consider a new charge for the Academic Affairs Committee, to review and compare the policies and practices at UNH-Manchester and UNH-Durham, regarding grade and course status changes.

After discussion, friendly amendments were accepted to change the motion to the following.

Before the administration changes a grade or status of a student in a course without the concurrence of the instructor, an explanation must be given in writing to the instructor or to the department chair if the instructor cannot be reached and to the chair of the Academic

Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate. The instructor has the right to appeal to the Academic Standards and Advising Committee and, if not satisfied, to the provost.

The AAC will review the motion's wording. The matter was postponed until the next senate meeting.

VII. Report from the senate's University Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee, on RCM inter-unit problems – The UCAPC will report on this matter after its report on the proposal for a new marine school.

VIII. Report from the senate's Information Technology Committee, on IT campus infrastructure and services – The committee met with university CIO Joanna Young on 12/10/2012. There was general discussion of productive ways of maintaining open communication channels between her office and the Faculty Senate, as well as discussion of the specific charges. The committee's charge was to investigate and report to the Faculty Senate on any plans regarding the IT campus infrastructure and/or services that might affect the academic mission of the university. This charge was seen as a task of potentially immense scope. CIO Young indicated that over two hundred IT initiatives are underway or in planning, at any given time, and that identifying interactions with the academic mission would be best done with faculty input. She and the committee discussed an approach by which the senate's Information Technology Committee would establish direct and regular contact with faculty representatives on major relevant committees, such as those on e-UNH, FAR, Classroom Technology Upgrade, Learning Management System (i.e., Blackboard), etc. The thinking was that such a 'distributed' approach would allow the senate to identify plans and on-going projects of academic importance as judged by faculty, while retaining the ability to pursue further information by other means. This plan would also provide the senate with a channel to send communications to faculty representatives on those committees when appropriate to do so. The IT Committee proposes to engage these faculty representatives at the beginning of this semester, to develop the network, and to determine whether such a system is sufficiently effective as a means of carrying out what is clearly an on-going standing charge for the IT Committee each year. Since work remains to be done on this charge, the above constitutes an interim report.

IX. Report from the Information Technology Committee, on IT privacy concerns – The Information Technology Committee was charged to seek endorsement from the administration regarding the IT privacy and other concerns expressed in the final report of the Network Security Task Force and to review the report of the Network Security Task Force and the extent of implementation of its recommendations or to update the report for a new decade. The chair of the senate's IT Committee said that the referenced report dates from 2004 and includes the following potential privacy issues: (1) ensuring that email messages are read only by the intended recipient, (2) preventing users' files stored on networked computers from being read by anyone not authorized by the file owner, and (3) not having web-browsing destinations monitored.

CIO Joanna Young did not offer an endorsement of these concerns as such, but she indicated how UNH supports each of them through policy and specific practice, to the degree allowed by state and federal law. Regarding (1) and (2), she indicated that the software packages involved

(operating systems, mail systems, etc.) are now sufficiently advanced that accidental disclosures are almost non-existent. Of course, hacking can and does occur; but UNH aggressively promotes strong security software and practices. Regarding (3), web log information that is retained is done so by IP address and not by individual user. Regarding (1), (2) and (3), adverse situations such as malicious attacks and comprehensive system breakdown can occur, in which situations UNH IT personnel must be able to access individual file systems, logs, etc., in order to diagnose the problem and/or effect repairs. Such persons are carefully trained to respect the privacy of the affected users to the greatest extent possible. A second aspect of issues (1), (2) and (3) is how the email, files and web logs generated by users live on. In this question, the right-to-know laws of New Hampshire and other jurisdictions come into strong play. Those files and emails whose retention is mandated by law are managed by the university counsel, and no access to that material is authorized without the approval of that custodian.

The IT Committee chair concluded that it seems that the administration is doing what it can to insure IT privacy. A senator asked if the university's IT main frame purges email after five years if the user wants the email kept. The IT Committee chair said that this was not part of his discussion with CIO Joanna Young and that her statement on privacy issues was independent of the mode of email used. The senator said that it would be better if the university would consult both the university counsel and the AAUP counsel before authorizing access to electronic materials.

X. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned.