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UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2011-12 FACULTY SENATE

MAY 9, 2011

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Akdeniz, Baldwin, Cariens, Hartter, Kalargyrou, Marx, Mellyn, Salvio, Simos, Varki, and Veal.

II. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The senate chair said that he and the past chair have recently attended a Central Budget Committee meeting and that, in view of the budget situation, there is serious discussion about re-organizing some RCM units in order to save money through administrative cost cutting. During the summer, three committees will be formed, to discern the advantages and disadvantages of the following: (1) the academic and financial advisability of combining COLSA, CEPS, EOS and cooperative extension, (2) evaluating the role and costs of the graduate school, including its relationship to the academic mission of the university and examination of particular graduate programs, and (3) evaluating all other programs and entities within UNH including the central administration. The three committees are expected to report their recommendations in December of 2011. The past senate chair said that the appropriation for fiscal year 2012, which starts on 7/1/2011, will have severe cuts. There will probably be a separation incentive program for faculty and staff, as well as a hiring freeze across the board for everyone. The university may draw on some of its reserves, but there would need to be a sustainable plan for replenishing them. Regardless of how much is in reserve, the university can only use a certain percentage without impacting its credit rating. The senate chair said that Jim Farrell will act as parliamentarian at today's senate meeting.

III. Minutes – The minutes of the previous Faculty Senate meeting were approved unanimously.

IV. Discussion on the president's remarks – The senate chair said that the Agenda Committee had unanimously agreed to present, as a motion to the senate today, the original resolution before any amendments were discussed in the last senate meeting. The resolution was as follows.

The Faculty Senate recognizes the extreme difficulty posed to New Hampshire's citizens and state government by the present economic conditions and acknowledges the challenges faced by UNH's leaders. A primary responsibility of the faculty is to maintain the university's core values in teaching and learning in all circumstances. We are concerned that President Huddleston's recent characterization of our pedagogical practices, curricular programs, degrees and students' capacities implied to the public that the faculty has failed in that responsibility. The remarks were ill-advised and the implication is false.

Teaching and learning through face-to-face interaction between professors and students remain central to a quality education at the University of New Hampshire. Therefore, in order to ensure that long-term implementation of strategic initiatives does not inadvertently pull us from our core academic values, the Faculty Senate calls for more constructive administration-faculty interactions concerning the relationship between our strategic initiatives, programs and values. Those interactions will require improved communication, wider inclusion of faculty in implementation, and copious deliberation.

A senator said that, although his department agrees that the president's legislative testimony was ill advised, this is not the time for internal disagreements. We have made our point, and it is time to move on. Senators spoke both against and in favor of the motion. A professor said that faculty should defend higher education and not permit denigration of it. Now is the time to offer the public a different view of the success of higher education. She added that the historical record shows that land grant universities and especially UNH have been key engines of democracy and economic prosperity. A former senate chair said that both January term and electronic courses were prominently mentioned in the president's testimony but that both issues have not yet had and will require deliberation by the Faculty Senate. A senator said that the proposed resolution is not a censure motion and calls for improved communication, deliberation, and wider inclusion of faculty in implementation. He added that the resolution is a reminder to the president and should go on record. Another senator said that we should seize the initiative and say that it is the faculty who have the primary responsibility for pedagogical decisions. We should say that we are ready and eager to improve the university and would like the president to start meeting with us on a regular basis for this dialogue.

After several amendments were passed, the resolution had the following wording.

The Faculty Senate recognizes the extreme difficulty posed to New Hampshire's citizens and state government by the present economic conditions and acknowledges the challenges faced by UNH's leaders. A primary responsibility of the faculty is to maintain the university's core values in teaching and learning in all circumstances. We are concerned that President Huddleston's recent characterization of the pedagogical practices, curricular programs, degrees and students' capacities in American higher education implied to the public that the UNH faculty has failed in that responsibility.

We recognize the importance of alternative learning environments. We commend members of the UNH administration and faculty who have taken the lead in their efforts to encourage new methods of instruction and affordable options in the education of our students. However, we also feel that teaching and learning through face-to-face interaction between professors and students remain central to a superior education at the University of New Hampshire. Therefore, in order to ensure that long-term implementation of strategic initiatives does not inadvertently pull us from our core academic values, the Faculty Senate calls for more constructive administration-faculty interactions concerning the relationship between our strategic initiatives, programs and values. Those interactions will require improved communication, wider inclusion of faculty in implementation, and copious deliberation.

The resolution as amended was approved with nineteen ayes, eleven nays and four abstentions.

V. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned.