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### 2010-11 FACULTY SENATE - March 21, 2011 Minutes Summary

Faculty Senate

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UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
2010-11 FACULTY SENATE

MARCH 21, 2011

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Baldwin, Carr, Morgan, Nardone, Simos, Smith, Veal and Woodward. Excused were Boulton, Laird, Salvio and Tuttle. Guests were Mark Huddleston and Lisa MacFarlane.

II. Remarks by and questions to the president – The president expressed concern about the recent murder of a UNH student in Colorado and asked faculty senators to remind their departmental colleagues about university services which they might suggest to students feeling the effects of this loss. The president said that the university is in a particularly trying budget situation now, and he described the process which is occurring in the New Hampshire house and senate. The president said that his office is doing very active communication efforts to try to ameliorate the proposed budget reduction. The UNH president has recently hosted a luncheon for legislators to discuss these matters. The president said that the university's activities benefit the state at about 1.3 billion dollars per year, which is far more than the state's contribution to the university. In response to a question in today's meeting about what options might be on the table regarding separation of the university and the state, the president mentioned reasons why UNH would probably not become a private university. The Central Budget Committee at UNH is now working on a response to the state about how UNH might respond to a budget cut.

III. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The senate chair said that the Central Budget Committee at UNH is tasked with discovering efficiencies and other adjustments to help mitigate the budget problems and that the senate's Finance and Administration Committee is concentrating on that process. The CBC membership includes two faculty members in addition to the Faculty Senate chair and the chair of the senate's Finance and Administration Committee. The CBC is operating as a task force, including faculty, to look for savings and to get input from all the campus constituencies. In order to get input from faculty, that task force will meet this week with the senate's Agenda Committee and FAC; and the faculty senators should give their information to the senate chair at the end of this meeting or via email. The senate chair welcomed two new senators and asked all senators to vote if they receive ballots in the current senate and Professional Standards Committee elections.

The senate chair said that a motion to censure the dean of COLSA was tabled at the 1/31/2011 senate meeting, in compliance with a procedure established by the senate on 9/10/2007. The Agenda Committee of the Faculty Senate has discussed the case with appropriate administrators and faculty on both sides of the issue. Because of the complexity of the matter, the Agenda Committee has referred the case without prejudice, to the senate's Professional Standards Committee. The Professional Standards Committee will inquire into the situation, attempt to mediate a mutually agreeable resolution and, if no resolution is reached, make a recommendation concerning censure to the Faculty Senate Agenda Committee and the Faculty Senate. The motion of censure will then be debated and voted upon by the Faculty Senate.

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

V. NEASC accreditation process preview – Lisa MacFarlane described the upcoming accreditation process which the university will undergo in conjunction with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. She said that accreditation is a peer review process with colleagues at peer institutions and is very necessary to have. Accreditation is how higher education holds itself to high standards so that others will not be tempted to try to oversee higher education standards. Accreditation is also a pre-requisite for federal and state financial aid and other funding. NEASC is sensitive to the particular mission of the institution and requires transparency, candor and documentation. Accreditation occurs every ten years, with a mid-point review every five years. The university must show that it complies with the eleven NEASC standards and will collect data for that this summer and look for any gaps. During the last accreditation cycle, UNH named three areas of emphasis, and that worked well. The president's cabinet will make a decision as to whether it wishes to do that again and will clear the plan with NEASC. In the fall and winter of 2011/12, the university will continue to collect data and will set up a committee structure and the charges on which those committees will work for about a year. In the summer of 2012, the writing will be done on the self study. Lisa MacFarlane will look at what the committees write and will prepare a unified document. In the winter of 2013, the draft will be circulated generally for input. In the summer of 2013, the document will go to NEASC for a preliminary read, and then UNH will make revisions. Site visits will occur that October; and in the summer of 2014, the final report will go to NEASC. That report will include both goals and accomplishments; and the goals will form the basis of the next report to NEASC.

Lisa MacFarlane said that, since UNH's last review, NEASC is putting more emphasis on the learning outcomes; and therefore UNH has tried to do a full inventory on the ways faculty evaluate students. UNH listed all the academic programs and what they do for assessment. NEASC will also look more into governance at the level of the Board of Trustees and the state, and the university's financial situation will be checked. UNH can design the terms of the stated issues and make a case for how they have been accomplished. A faculty fellow will coordinate this. A committee will be formed to work on each of the standards, and faculty will be asked to help in this effort. By starting now and having two and one half years before the site visit, the process should be done in a deliberative fashion. Data will be collected continuously and changes made as needed until the final report is finished. The academic departments will have to provide a lot of information, and Victor Benassi is conducting a massive inventory for this. NEASC gives several options on how to assess student learning, and one is a combination of methods and can be done differently across the colleges. Lisa MacFarlane said that accreditation is very important for both students and faculty and is well worth the time and effort required.

VI. Report on the percent of the graduating class receiving honors – The chair of the Academic Affairs Committee proposed and Kent Chamberlin seconded a motion on Latin honors criteria. The rationale is that graduating students now receive Latin honors such as summa cum laude, magna cum laude and cum laude, based upon a grade point average of 3.7 or above, 3.5 or above and 3.2 or above respectively. These criteria currently award over fifty percent of the UNH graduates with Latin honors. Because the intention of honors is to award recognition to those students who achieve academic distinction, a policy change may be necessary. **The motion by the Academic Affairs Committee is to change the granting of honors away from a fixed GPA formula to a percentage formula of the graduating class. Summa cum laude would be awarded to the top five percent of the graduating class, by college. Magna cum laude**

would be awarded to the next ten percent of the graduating class, by college. Cum laude would be awarded to the next ten percent of the graduating class, by college. This proposal would ensure that the top twenty-five percent of a graduating class would receive Latin honors and help ensure Latin honors as a mark of distinction, as intended. Each college would be responsible for recommending the top twenty-five percent of students for honors to the graduation office. Colleges may choose to take the top twenty-five percent based upon GPA at the college level or alternatively could choose the top twenty-five percent of students at the department level. The Academic Affairs Committee recognizes that awarding Latin Honors may vary structurally by college, but the committee believes the intention of Latin honors is best met by awarding honors to approximately twenty-five percent of a graduating class.

The committee chair said that, although many faculty have seemed positive about the motion, the associate deans thought that the motion should state a specific GPA which is higher than the currently-required GPA. The committee chair suggested that today's motion might be passed and then every year the resulting GPA could be calculated and made public. He said that, although many other institutions are giving lots of Latin honors, about half are not. A professor said that some departments give their majors a very high GPA and that there is a great disparity by department. A senator suggested having a minimum GPA required for Latin honors but awarding the honors only to the top twenty-five percent by department in colleges which choose that method. Other faculty said that the source of the problem is grade inflation and that this has occurred more in certain departments. The faculty added that students need a specific goal for Latin honors and that the motion should state a specific but higher GPA. Another professor pointed out that the high schools rank by percentages and that therefore the UNH students do not need a fixed GPA target for Latin honors. After a number of senators expressed support for various options suggested above, the committee chair said that he had asked the registrar what the GPA level is now for the top five, fifteen and twenty-five percent of the students but has not yet received an answer.

The committee chair moved and Kent Chamberlin seconded an amendment to delete the last two sentences of the motion, saying that this would mean that Latin honors would be by percentage at the college level. A senator said that in this case seventy percent of the students in departments with grade inflation and high GPAs could get Latin honors and that this would not be fair to the students in other departments. Also, reducing the number of Latin honors awarded might make it harder for UNH students to get into medical school. This motion will affect UNH students who compete for jobs and graduate school with students from other universities that may not have made such a change. The motion would cut in half the UNH students who get Latin honors. How will that affect the number of admission applications to UNH? A senator said that it is the obligation of faculty to be more rigorous in grading, in order to combat grade inflation; but he expressed concern that today's motion would do harm to students. The motion would only go into effect for incoming students after the catalog is changed and thus would cover the graduating class of 2015. The amendment to delete the last two sentences of the motion passed with twenty-two ayes, seven nays, and five abstentions. Willem deVries moved and Marco Dorfsman seconded that the amended motion should be tabled until the next senate meeting. The committee chair should find out the current GPA for the top five, fifteen and twenty-five percent of the UNH students and also should find out what percent of students

nationally receive Latin honors. He should also gather opinion from students and administrators. The senate chair said that the committee could assess the feasibility of a vote at the next senate meeting. The motion to table passed with thirty-two ayes, no nays, and two abstentions.

VII. Budget concerns – A senator said that the athletics budget should be on the table for budget cuts. Another professor said that mid-level administrators should be considered for cuts. A faculty member suggested reducing energy costs by mandating better energy systems. The senate chair asked faculty to send further input to him.

VIII. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned.