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2006/07 FACULTY SENATE - April 30, 2007 Minutes Summary

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UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2006/07 FACULTY SENATE

APRIL 30, 2007

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Brown, Burger, Ferber, Morgan, Quigley, Reid, Schiller, Tenczar, and Thomas. Excused was Senator Haskins.

II. Remarks by and questions to the chair – The senate chair said that, at the request of the senate, he had asked the senior vice provost and the Office of Institutional Research for information on student grade point averages relating to minority and non-minority students, general education and non-general-education courses, and writing intensive and non-writing-intensive courses, as well as a comparison among the colleges and schools. Some of the information arrived two weeks ago; and the senate chair asked again for the remaining data, some of which has now been received. The senate chair will pass the information on to next year's chair of the Academic Affairs Committee.

The Faculty Senate planned to hold a potluck supper for the student senators on April 16, but the university closed due to flooding. The Agenda Committee recommends rescheduling this dinner for the fall. The senate chair congratulated the senators for the balanced and carefully considered positions they have taken this year, in a climate affected by the continuing lack of a faculty contract.

In the wake of the recent events at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, the vice president for student and academic services convened a response team; and the senate chair has brought to him a number of issues put forth by senators. Such issues include how to respond if students exhibit behavior that causes concern; what services and referrals are available to troubled students; under what circumstances should the administration notify faculty, staff, and/or students about unusual behavior; and should classroom doors be lockable. The Agenda Committee recommends inviting the campus police chief to speak to the Faculty Senate early in the fall.

III. Minutes – The senate unanimously except for one abstention approved the minutes of the last Faculty Senate meeting.

IV. Recommendation on proposed motion of censure – Dale Barkey and Curt Givan, who had moved and seconded the original motion on 3/19/07, withdrew that motion today. Senator Barkey thanked the Professional Standards Committee for its thorough job of reviewing the issue of censuring the dean of the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences. **Professor Barkey moved and Curt Givan seconded the following motion to supersede the motion of censure proposed on March 19.**

In an exchange of emails with the Chair of the Chemical Engineering Department on February 15, 2007, Dean Klewicki of the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences concluded a message with the declaration “Your argument is cause for me to question your competence, not only as a Chair, but as a rational human being. In this matter, I have made my expectations clear. This discussion is now concluded.”

We the Faculty Senate register our strongest disapproval of the Dean's response to a Chair defending the interest of his department. We find the response unacceptable.

The dean has apologized but in words that some consider insufficient. A letter was sent from the Mechanical Engineering Department and a second letter from eight CEPS department chairs, protesting against the original motion. Some or all of the department chairs did not consult their departmental faculty before signing the letter.

The chair of the Professional Standards Committee said that the PSC has representation from each school and college, and he thanked the PSC members for their quick and thorough response. The committee met eleven hours in one week and interviewed the provost, the CEPS dean, and Professors Fan and Barkey. The provost stated that administrative action had been initiated concerning the tone of the dean's communication to Professor Fan. The provost and the dean gave confidential communications to the committee, but the PSC believes that confidential information had no material impact on the decisions made by the committee. The PSC chair said that the committee strongly believes that today's motion is the best solution. The PSC deeply regrets the tone of the email from Dean Klewicki to Professor Fan and finds that the language violates the respect required for the proper working relationship between faculty and administrators. The concern goes beyond tone and includes a chair's right and responsibility to be a forceful advocate for the interests of the department and also the right to be respected in fulfilling that role. The PSC affirms those rights and responsibilities.

A senator said that the Faculty Senate Constitution states that the "Faculty Senate will be the legislative body that reviews and develops policies concerned with the academic mission of the university". He said that the senate should not deal with a personnel matter and that article 4.5 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement states that the university and the bargaining unit members will make every effort to maintain a professional academic environment that is free of intimidation and harassment of members of the university community. He added that the agreement says that any disciplinary action resulting from this process may be appealed through the grievance procedure.

Another senator replied that faculty have a right to express disapproval of behavior they deem unacceptable. Other professors stated that the relationship between a dean and a department chair could have an effect on the academic mission and that they recommend approval of the latest motion with its revised wording. A senator pointed out that the letter from the Mechanical Engineering Department and the letter from the eight CEPS department chairs express support of the dean's efforts to lead the college but still express disapproval of the dean's personalized comments. Some senators were concerned about their lack of knowledge about the discussion which may have preceded the exchange of emails. However, the emails showed the tenor of the communication over a period of several days. A motion passed nearly unanimously to close debate. **The main motion passed with twenty-eight ayes, eight nays and two abstentions.**

Then the Agenda Committee proposed the following motion: that the Faculty Senate affirms "the right and responsibility for a chair to advocate forcefully for the interests of the department and the right to be respected in fulfilling that role". After extensive discussion of the meaning

and wording of this motion, a senator suggested that the motion might have unintended consequences and only speaks to rights which department chairs have already. The Agenda Committee withdrew the motion.

V. Presidential search – The senate vice chair said that a new university president has been appointed and that the selection committee had unanimously recommended him. In the previous round of the selection process, he had been one of the three finalists but had not been willing to become a public candidate when there were two other finalists. Later, during the final round but prior to the public fora, extra interviews were set up with persons not on the search committee. The new president has had extensive experience as a faculty member, department chair, senate president, faculty bargaining team member, dean, associate provost, and university president.

VI. Other business – An outgoing senator said that the basic essence of a university is the interaction of students and faculty and that faculty have the important opportunity to shape the future by teaching students. He asked that faculty get involved in students' lives by becoming advisors of student groups.

The senate vice chair thanked the senate chair for all his work and wisdom in dealing with the issues of shared governance, especially in a year made difficult by the lack of a faculty contract, and presented him with two mementos: an engraved gavel and a shovel painted gold and inscribed with a Latin translation of "They also serve who only stand and shovel". This shovel had been signed by many of the senators.

VII. Adjournment – Today's meeting of the 2006/07 Faculty Senate was adjourned.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
2007/08 FACULTY SENATE

APRIL 30, 2007

MINUTES SUMMARY

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Barcelona, Echt, Ferber, Graham, Hinson, Klein, Lieber, Nimmo, Onosko, Shiller, Tenczar, White, and Zunz. Excused were Senators Caramihalis and Haskins.

II. Elections – The 2007/08 Faculty Senate unanimously elected Bill Stine as Faculty Senate chair, Marco Dorfsman as vice chair, Jeffrey Salloway as past chair, and at-large Agenda Committee members Mimi Becker, Karen Graham, David Richman, and Ruth Sample.

III. Remarks by the chair – The new senate chair said that the Agenda Committee will meet throughout the summer, in order to stay abreast of issues which arise and to form senate committees, select committee chairs, and prepare the charges which the senate committees will work on next year if work to rule is over. Normally there are two planning meetings for senators during the summer. If a contract is signed, there will be many issues to consider this coming academic year, including the Discovery Program implementation, security on campus, university institutes policy, a faculty club, and course evaluations. The meeting was adjourned.