

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes Feb. 27

Minutes from the February meeting

Monday, March 20, 2017



Meeting called to order at 3:42 p.m. on Feb. 27, 2017

I. Roll – The following senators were absent: Carr, Celikkol, R. Collins, Edwards, Herold, Krzanowski, Sample, and Simos. Chirila, Curran-Celentano, Innis, and Wake were excused. Victoria Dutcher was a guest.

II. Remarks by and questions to the Senate chair – The Senate chair reported that Provost Targett sends her regrets; she is in Concord this afternoon in meetings. Dante also announced that next year, the Senate meetings will be held in the newly renovated Hamilton-Smith building, room 205. He reminded the group that with the completion of Hamilton-Smith, the common exam time will revert to its previous schedule, and our Senate meeting schedule will also revert back to 3:10-5 p.m.

III. Discussion with the Vice President for Enrollment Management – Dante introduced Victoria Dutcher, Vice President for Enrollment Management. Victoria shared a PowerPoint presentation about enrollments at UNH. She began by comparing enrollments from 2014-2016, noting that enrollments have been relatively level for the last three falls. She attributed this to fewer high school students applying to college in general and to the decline in birth rates in this region. She asserted that we need to position the

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university to maintain a robust institution down the road five, ten, or twenty years. She said that if we make no changes to how we're handling enrollments now, we should expect a significant decline in our enrollments. However, her office's plan is to make appropriate changes to prevent that decline. The university intends to continue to enroll the best and brightest students in New Hampshire, and Victoria noted that the number of students in the top 25% of their graduating New Hampshire high school class, which was dropping from 2011-2015, increased in 2016.

Another opportunity is to seek top-notch students outside our region. Data analyses can identify growth markets that fit the UNH model, and seeking the support of UNH alumni in these regions may prove fruitful.

Victoria announced two recent opportunities for our students. New Hampshire students enrolling for this fall will have their application fee waived. She noted that after this was announced, applications from NH residents increased by 34%. That initial jump has slowed somewhat, and we are seeing about 12% more applications than in the past.

The Granite Guarantee is another plan to provide tuition-free education for Pell-eligible, full-time, first year students from New Hampshire, beginning in fall 2017. The program fills the gap between Pell grants, any other federal or state grants, and actual tuition levels for qualifying students. She noted that some students who do not qualify for the Granite Guarantee have expressed disappointment, and that she regrets we couldn't do it for everyone up front, although she is looking for ways to extend the opportunity to other populations besides NH students. Many donors have called to see how they can contribute to this program, and Victoria said that she is hoping that Concord will get on board to provide some state funding for the program as well.

Victoria acknowledged that with declining populations of high

school students in the state, it is a challenge to grow our enrollments without reducing academic standards, asserting that we want to bring in students who are ready to be here and who will have a successful experience. She said that “our ability to keep the students we recruit and graduate them with the skills they need to flourish in life is the ultimate measure of our success.

The following strategies aim to that end:

- Manage Durham freshman class size
- Seek out NH best and brightest
- Seek out new out of state markets
- More international students
- More transfers from New Hampshire community colleges
- Grow UNH-Manchester
- Grow graduate enrollments, including the School of Law
- Assure financial aid support for first-generation and low-income NH students
- Continue to improve retention rates

Regarding the status of applications for 2017, Victoria said that the numbers are down slightly but not sharply. The number of deposits is up, and the average SAT score is up four points. The number of transfer applications (not counting Navitas students) is down 6%, but that usually increases in March and April.

Manchester freshmen enrollments are down slightly, and their transfer applications are also down. The School of Law has seen a 32% increase in applications for the Juris Doctor (JD) program, its first increase in applications in at least 5 years, with Masters applications static. Graduate school applications are also down right now. Victoria noted that the programs seeing a decline in applications are the very competitive programs, so this decline is unlikely to translate into enrollment issues.

All in all, she said that current declines are a result of the current market. She stressed that everything we do from this point

forward will be critical, speaking to all members of the UNH community. She urged the faculty to engage with students, attend yield events (events for students who have applied to and enrolled at UNH), participate in outreach campaigns by volunteering, and to promote UNH to neighbors, family, and friends.

She said that the first awards night for Hamel Scholar recipients was held last night. These students are the best of the best students from New Hampshire. Last year, eleven students were enrolled as Hamel Scholars. This year, sixty-nine scholarships were awarded. Forty-four of those students registered to attend the awards night, and forty-three actually attended. She said that all indications are that students are excited about UNH this year, largely due to changes in federal aid award processing which have made it easier to file FAFSA documents sooner, and thus receive notice of financial aid packages much sooner. Right now, 6,600 freshmen applicants already know their financial aid status.

She said that students should commit by May 1, and that between now and then, all members of the UNH community have a role to play. She said that the associate deans in each college are linked into all of the enrollment programs and events. Faculty should reach out to their associate deans to learn where their energies might be well spent. She noted that once students have been accepted to UNH, the most effective promotion comes from faculty.

A senator asked what we can do to attract more non-traditional students. Victoria said that they have no specific plans to do this, but that making ourselves more adult-student friendly would be effective and desirable. Another senator expressed concern about the increasing acceptance rate, noting a correlation to declining academic ability, and comparing our acceptance rates with those of other New England institutions. Victoria acknowledged that selectivity has dropped with the market, but

asserted that our enrollments are congruent with the University of Rhode Island, and only slightly behind the University of Vermont. She said that the institutions she would like to parallel are the University of Connecticut and UMass-Amherst. She said that last year our acceptance rate dropped 2%, and she would like to nudge it down another 2% this year.

Another senator asked what the target numbers for in-state versus out-of-state enrollments. Is there a particular plan to appeal to more international students? Victoria said that last year there was an increase in the percentage of in-state students enrolling (39% 2015 - 41% 2016), and she hopes to increase that number to 42% for this year. With the Granite Guarantee, she is hopeful to exceed even that. Each college has data to show their numbers for in-state and out-of-state students. For the most competitive programs, there is a general preference given to in-state over out-of-state students. Regarding the international student question, Victoria reported that her office has hired Ian Little as the new International Recruitment Consultant to bring in students (primarily undergraduates for the coming year) from a diverse range of countries.

A senator asked what percentage of NH high school students leave the state for higher education, and asked what other educational pipelines exist, such as online education. Victoria responded that students are coming to us from high school already familiar with online education and said that we should probably be providing more online educational opportunities. She said that the provost may be better suited to identifying areas where we could provide such opportunities.

A senator noted that nationally, enrollments in the Humanities are down, and she asked what UNH is doing about that issue here. Victoria said that our recruitment marketing campaigns are specific to the enrollment needs of each college, and said that her

office works with each college to identify the right number of prospects we need to identify in order to build the desired pool of students. She said that she and the provost work together to align efforts to expand our career and success programs and improve minors and cognates, all to determine the ways we can help liberal arts majors identify tangible steps that will help them apply their degree to a career interest.

Victoria invited faculty to stop by her office on the first floor in Thompson Hall any time. The chair thanked her for today's visit.

IV. Minutes – It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes from the February 20, 2017 meeting. Two corrections were suggested to the minutes, in Items VI and VIII. Thus adjusted, the minutes were approved unanimously, with 2 abstentions.

V. Discussion and vote on AAC motion on Thanksgiving break 2017 – Academic Affairs Committee chair Scott Smith reported that the registrar was supportive of the Senate's suggested amendment to the motion, changing the date of the Tuesday with a Friday schedule to November 7th. The amended motion reads:

Motion: the Senate Academic Affairs Committee moves that the Faculty Senate adjust the calendar for AY 2017-18 as follows: 1) that classes be cancelled on Nov. 22, 2017 (the Wednesday before Thanksgiving), providing that the dorms remain open until 10 a.m. on that Wednesday; 2) that Fall Break, currently scheduled for Oct. 9, 2017, be eliminated; 3) that Tuesday, October 10 revert to a Tuesday schedule; and 4) that Tuesday, Nov. 7 follow a Friday schedule.

A senator asked if Residential Life needs to weigh in on this decision. Scott replied that the Senate may make this call, and that we will then inform Residential Life about the plan. Another senator asked why 10 a.m. was selected as the time to close the dormitories, and it was noted that the motion's suggestion is just to keep the dorms open until morning on Wednesday. Students

are free to leave before then if they want, and Residential Life is welcome to keep the dorms open longer if they would like. This time simply avoids the closing of the dorms on Tuesday evening, which might force some students into the potentially hazardous situation of being on the roads late at night.

The motion was put to a vote and passed with 60 in favor, 3 against, and 0 abstentions.

VI. Discussion and vote on Agenda Committee motion on right-to-know requests – Allison Wilder, representing the Agenda Committee, said that the Senate discussion on this motion, as presented in the last meeting, prompted the Agenda Committee to make the following amendments to bring the motion more in line with the will of the Senate. Note the struck wording and the highlighted wording that had been added.

Motion:

1) *While some e-mails sent by university employees are demonstrably reflective of the conduct of the university's business, some are demonstrably not and some fall in between. The Senate encourages the administration to take utmost care in ensuring that the release of any information is tailored to protect individuals' rights to free speech and scientific inquiry, whether they be faculty, staff, or students. ~~The Senate encourages the narrowest possible release of information based on the university's paramount concern to protect free speech and scientific inquiry.~~*

2) *The Senate encourages faculty leadership and administrators to work together to educate the UNH community about the potential for public disclosure of electronic communications transmitted via the university's network.*

3) *Academic departments and programs, in particular, must be cautioned against ~~eognizant~~ aware that the improper use of*

university resources to advocate a partisan political position, i.e. to advocate on behalf of a political party or candidate. ~~is one circumstance that makes public disclosure a more likely outcome.~~

A senator moved to make additional changes to the wording of the motion to include stronger language, saying that “encourages” is too mild an injunction. There was discussion regarding the Senate’s purpose in presenting this motion. Some senators felt that stronger language is needed to stress the importance of the administration supporting the faculty members’ academic freedoms, and to avoid being too accommodating. Others suggested wording less adversarial in nature, noting that language that is particularly demanding could draw more attention than desired to the Senate’s statement. After several suggestions, the group agreed upon replacing the word “encourages” in the first clause with “expects.”

There was additional discussion regarding the use of the phrase “narrowest possible release of information.” A senator from the School of Law pointed out that this phrase is a term of art, recognizable by legal professionals, and that removing it could actually confuse the meaning. Concern was expressed that such language might appear, to non-legal professionals, as an effort by the Senate to encourage the UNH administration to skirt compliance with the right-to-know laws.

It was moved to vote on the aforementioned changes to the motion, with the wording of the first clause thus amended:

1) While some e-mails sent by university employees are demonstrably reflective of the conduct of the university’s business, some are demonstrably not and some fall in between. The Senate expects the administration to take utmost care in ensuring the narrowest possible release of information based on the university’s paramount concern to protect free speech and scientific inquiry, whether it

concerns faculty, staff, or students.

The motion to amend was voted on and passed with 54 votes in favor, 3 opposed, and 3 abstentions.

The discussion of the motion itself resumed. A senator asked what the consequence of non-compliance is to the university. A senator from the School of Law said that the consequence could be substantial litigation, which could be lengthy and tie up university resources. It was suggested that wording could be added to make it clear that the Senate would not urge the administration to non-compliance. A senator said that the current wording does imply the Senate's desire to comply with federal laws.

The senate chose to make no changes to the second clause of the motion. In the third clause, it was suggested to remove "improper" from the first phrase. This was accepted by the Agenda Committee as a friendly amendment.

A senator asked how the right-to-know laws apply to active politicians within our campus community. Dante clarified that these rules apply to departments and programs and the use of university resources, but not to individuals who may be within our community and using personal resources to promote political objectives. It was reiterated that UNH computers and email servers are susceptible to right-to-know requests, and that even personal electronic devices used while on the university's system server could be subject to scrutiny. It was also reiterated that there is no problem with writing a political letter or email, or promoting a political event, even if stating one's credentials, as long as one makes it clear that he or she does not represent the university.

A senator moved the previous question, which was voted on and carried. The motion, amended as noted, was put to a vote and passed, with 59 in favor, 4 against, and 0 abstentions.

Several senators expressed a desire to invite Ron Rodgers to speak to the Senate to clarify some of the questions raised in today's discussion. Mr. Rodgers will visit the Senate in April.

VII. SAC report on Title IX/mandated reporting – Due to time constraints, this report was postponed until the next Senate meeting.

VIII. SAC report on student mental health issues – Nena Stracuzzi, representing the Student Affairs Committee, reported regarding issues of student mental health, and establishing a policy to deal with the way these issues affect classroom performance, particularly in requests from students for incomplete grades in courses. The committee proposed the following statement be included in course syllabi.

Sample Syllabi Statement on Emotional or Mental Health Distress

“Your academic success in this course is very important to me. If, during the semester, you find emotional or mental health issues are affecting that success, please contact the University’s [Counseling Center](#) (3rd fl, Smith Hall; 603 862-2090/TTY: 7-1-1) which provides counseling appointments and other mental health services.”

The committee feels that this language provides latitude for faculty to use their best judgment in making decisions about incompletes. Nena noted that the SAC was anxious to find the best approach to this issue. She also referred to the Dean of Student's encouragement to faculty to not give incompletes casually, but rather to encourage students to complete their work.

Another member of the SAC pointed out that the “I” grade does not trigger the same kind of referral for academic services as an “AF” (Academic Fail) would, and that these services are designed to help students build the skills they need to succeed. This

recommended statement gives the widest window of action to faculty.

The committee has no plans to bring forward a motion on this.

IX. CPC report on SAARC and annual space needs - Due to time constraints, this report was postponed until the next Senate meeting.

X. CPC report on transportation issues - Due to time constraints, this report was postponed until the next Senate meeting.

XI. AAC update on the Honors College – Scott Smith, chair of the Senate Academic Affairs Committee, reminded the group of [Senate Motion XIX-M6](#) □, which moved to support the restructuring of the Honors Program curriculum in 2014 and called for a review of that program in 2017-18. He also referred to last year's reports from the AAC and the Finance and Administration Committee regarding the proposal to transform the Honors Program into an Honors College. A more robust Honors experience would be valuable to our students, both generally and as a way to stay competitive with other institutions. Scott reported that the Honors College would appear much like our current Honors Program, with the addition of slightly increased administrative staffing and a residential component. Last year the Senate approved a feasibility study to examine the cost of creating an Honors College, with no commitment to implement the plan without further review. The original plans called for a \$7.5 million project, but with the first draft of the study completed, a more modest plan is being proposed. This would include a single-story wing addition to Hubbard Hall which would serve as the administrative and academic center of the Honors College, at the cost of \$1.2 million. The Faculty Senate has been asked to bring forward a motion authorizing a transition from Honors Program to Honors College, contingent on the funding for the residential space. Additionally, the Senate has been asked to pass a

resolution backing the residential model to help with fundraising. It will be important to find a donor.

A senator said that she would like to see an academic upgrade comparable to the brick-and- mortar upgrade, noting that the beauty of the current program is the co-existence of Honors and regular students in the same classes. She asked if the college model would remove honors students from regular classes, and Scott said that it would not. He said that the shift to the symposium model should be successful. Scott said that there will be more discussion on this in the future, and invited the senators to share ideas with him in order to shape that discussion.

XII. New Business – There was no new business

IX. Adjournment - Upon a motion and second to adjourn, the group voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:29 p.m.

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