

Chair's Report  
March 2021  
Submitted by John Smith

**Covid:** For the first time in a year, almost to the date, I do not feel like it is Groundhog Day writing this report. The availability of vaccines and the declining infection rates are encouraging to me. Here's what we need to remember though. We are starting to win the fight against this virus but we have not done so yet. It is vitally important to continue to do the right things and protect each other until we get to that point. The CDC released some new, more relaxed, guidelines today. Those are more than welcome but let's not take them as more than what they are. We need to be vigilant in protecting each other for the immediate future. We often talk about our mantra being "take care of each other" and it certainly applies here.

**Provost:** Our next Provost, Dr. Lori Gonzalez, is on campus shadowing Dr. Boehm for the month of March and starting in the post April 1. Dr. Gonzalez will be attending the Executive Committee meeting on March 16. In her interviews, Dr. Gonzalez spoke strongly to her commitment to shared governance and involvement with all constituency groups.

**Miller Hall:** I had the good fortune of being able to tour the "new Miller Hall" as it is being called around campus. It is going to be a tremendous addition to our university in many ways. Foremost to me is it will be a "traditional hall" meaning a lower price point for students. I think it is critically important for us to provide quality living spaces for students who want/need that option. Traditional hall though, does not begin to describe the place. Every room has a ceiling fan and individually controlled thermostat. They each have a high ceiling, which makes the room feel bigger. The floors and walls are constructed from concrete blocks resembling Legos. Those have an incredible sound dampening quality. A number of airliners flew over during our tour and we could not hear them. You will not be able to hear the people living above or below you. Those of us who spent some time in traditional halls will no doubt remember the communal bath rooms and showers. Each pod of 32 beds in the new residence will have 8 private restrooms resembling a restroom in a hotel room. There is an open area on each floor. That area will encourage community development and social gathering. The location, next to the SAC, Red Barn and the BAB will be one of the best living locations on

campus, right next to food service and student activities. I am excited not only for this residence hall, but for the next phase of the project that will re-build Threlkeld Hall in very close proximity. The combination of those two are going to create a new and exciting synergy on the Belknap campus.

**Tuition and Fees:** We are in some extremely interesting discussions revolving around lower tuition and market driven tuition. The Nursing School lowered tuition in their BSN program and enrollment went up dramatically, more than enough to cover the cost of the lower tuition. We are looking at this in different scenarios, most notably in online education and in our out-of-state markets we traditionally recruit from.

### **Meetings Attended:**

**Wednesday, Feb. 10, Covid Advisory Committee, 3:00**

**Monday, Feb. 15, Provost Planning Committee, 1:00**

**Tuesday, Feb. 16, Senate EC, 3:00**

**Wednesday, Feb. 17, BOT Miller Hall Tour, 3:30**

**Thursday, Feb. 18, Tuition and Fees, 3:00**

**Friday, Feb. 19, Tuition and Fees Cost and Affordability, Noon**

**Monday, Feb. 22, Provost Planning Committee, 2:00**

**Thursday, Feb. 25, Miller Hall, 11:00**

**Thursday, Feb. 25, Senate Software Meeting, 1:30**

**Monday, March 1, Budget Model Workgroup, 10:30**

**Monday, March 1, Spring Forward 2:00**

**Tuesday, March 2, Neeli Senior Leadership, 9:00**

**Wednesday, March 3, Mark Watkins Meeting, 1:00**

**Thursday, March 4, Tuition and Fees, 1:00**

**Friday, March 5, Tuition and Fees Cost and Affordability, Noon**

**Monday, March 8, Spring Forward, 2:00**