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Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 10/22/2001

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TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: JOHN G. FLYM, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2001-2002 FACULTY SENATE, 22 OCTOBER 2001

Present: (Professors) Aroian, Baclawski, Barnes, Boisse, Flym, Giessen, Gilbert, Gilmore, Hope, Kane, Kelleher, Levine, Lowndes, Platt, Powers-Lee, Rotella, Rupert, Shafai, Vaughn, Wallin, Wertheim, Wray
(Administrators) Hall, Meservey, Onan, Pantalone, Rigg

Absent: (Professors) Bobcean, Bruns, Fox, Hall, Herman, Metghalchi, Naylor, Sullivan, Willey
(Administrators) Greene, Mantella, Pendergast, Putnam, Zoloth

Convened by Provost Hall at 11:52 a.m.

- I. **Minutes.** Consideration of the minutes of the 1 October meeting, having just been distributed, was postponed to the next meeting.
- II. **SAC Report.** In order to preserve time for President Freeland's visit, Professor Lowndes distributed the following report.

A. **Meetings.**

SAC has met three times in regular session. The primary business has involved the staffing of committees and the development of charges. Part of one SAC meeting was devoted to the first of a series of periodic updates concerning the semester conversion with Executive Vice Provost Pantalone. The issue of classrooms was raised in this meeting.

In addition to its regular meetings, SAC also met with last year's Ad Hoc Handbook Revision Committee. The purpose of this meeting was to explain SAC's plans for the further discussion of their report. The Handbook Revision Committee was supportive of SAC's proposal to send the report to a new Ad Hoc Handbook Review Committee to prepare the way for further Senate deliberation on the draft for a new Faculty Handbook.

B. **Searches:**

- **African-American Studies Chair (internal)**

Staffing is in progress.

- **Philosophy and Religion Chair (internal)**

The committee is staffed. Members are:

Professor William DeAngelis (Philosophy & Religion)
Professor Michael Lipton (Philosophy & Religion)
Professor Susan Setta (Philosophy & Religion)
Professor Stephen Harkins (Psychology)

Professor Jane Scarborough (Law)

▪ **Pharmacy Practice Chair (external)**

This committee is being reinstated. The following faculty have agreed to continue:

Professor Robert Cersosimo, Chair (Pharmacy Practice)
Professor Judith Barr (Pharmacy Practice)
Professor Robert Sikes (Physical Therapy)
Professor Marcia Lynch (Nursing)
Professor Mansoor Amiji (Pharmaceutical Sciences)
Asst. Clinical Specialist Jennifer Sickels (Pharmacy Practice)

C. University Technology Council.

The following faculty will serve on the University Technology Council:

Professor Joseph Ayers (Biology)
Professor Gerald H. Herman (History)
Professor A. Bruce McDonald (Electrical & Computer Engineering)
Professor Richard Rasala (Computer Science)
Professor Marius M. Solomon (Management Science)

D. Committee on the Student Honor Code.

Along with student representatives, this committee has been staffed with the following faculty and administrators:

Professor Brook Baker (Law)
Professor John Casey (Computer Science)
Vice President Karen Rigg
Vice Provost Gilda Barabino
Vice Provost Patricia Meservey

E. AEOC Evaluation.

The evaluation report of Dean Jack Greene has been released for reading in the Senate Office by the faculty of the College of Criminal Justice.

F. Standing Committee on Athletics.

President Freeland has approved the following membership and charge to the Standing Committee on Athletics:

Membership:

Professor Arvin Grabel, Chair (Electrical and Computer Engineering)
Professor Robert Curtin (Physical Education and Dance)
Professor Joseph Meador (Finance and Insurance)
Professor Wallace Sherwood (Criminal Justice)(Enrollment and Admissions Policy)
David Thornton (Certification Officer)

Vice Provost Gilda Barabino (Undergraduate Education)

Charge:

The Committee is asked to address the following charge:

- 1) To investigate the differences between GPAs for NCAA eligibility and GPAs for progress towards a degree at Northeastern.
- 2) To examine the impact of Academic Probation on student participation.
- 3) To suggest remedies, if needed, for the above, keeping in mind that student athletes cannot be treated differently than the rest of the student body.

The Committee is asked to present its report on this charge to the Senate Agenda Committee by no later than February 15, 2002.

G. 2001-02 Faculty Senate *Ad Hoc* Committee on Institutional Management Practices.

Membership:

Professor Gerald Herman, Chair (History)
Professor Jane Aroian (Nursing)
Professor Paul Champion (Physics)
Professor Clare Dalton (Law)
Professor Stephen McKnight (Electrical & Computer Engineering)
SAC Liaison: Professor Robert Lowndes

Background:

Over the past four years, Northeastern has instituted a number of management practices and reorganized a number of administrative units in order to better serve the university community. In many cases these changes have directly affected the working environment for faculty and staff, and the educational environment for students. An environment that supports the creative and productive activities of the faculty and that maximizes the duty cycle for these activities is essential for a University aspiring to top-100 status. Similarly, an environment that supports students needs and minimizes bureaucratic downtime is essential to securing retention and graduation rates consistent with a top-100 status.

Charge:

The *Ad Hoc* Committee on Institutional Management Practices is asked to investigate the impact of these institutional changes from the point of view of the University's client populations, particularly faculty and students, to determine the efficacy of these changes and, where necessary, recommend change for improvement.

The Committee is asked to present its report, in hard copy and electronic form, to the Senate Agenda Committee by no later than March 15, 2002.

H. 2001-02 Faculty Senate *Ad Hoc* Handbook Review Committee.

Membership:

Professor Charles H. Ellis, Jr., Chair (Biology)
Professor Thomas A. Barnes (Cardiopulmonary Sciences)
Professor William F. Crittenden (CBA General Management.)
Professor Arvin Grabel (Electrical & Computer Engineering)
Professor Anthony Iarrobino (Mathematics)
Professor Stephen M. Kane (Engineering, Coop.)
Professor Wallace W. Sherwood (Criminal Justice)
Professor Michael T. Vaughn (Physics)
SAC Liaison: Professor John Flym
Non-voting liaison from Handbook Revision Committee: Professor Gerald Herman

Background:

Last year, the *Ad Hoc* Faculty Handbook Revision Committee delivered a draft of a new Faculty Handbook to the Faculty Senate. The draft was significantly different in format and content from the current operating Faculty Handbook. The 2000-01 Faculty Senate began deliberations on the new draft in the Spring quarter.

The Faculty Handbook is an extremely important document addressing many legal issues, contractual obligations, property rights, and due processes. It is vital for the faculty that these not be compromised, eroded, or unwittingly changed in any way. Given the importance and complexity of the draft, and the extensive concerns raised with it, the 2001-02 SAC has decided to suspend the Faculty Senate discussions and to proceed in the interim by referring the draft to a new *Ad Hoc* Faculty Handbook Review Committee. The purpose of this Committee is to prepare a report that will facilitate an eventual Faculty Senate deliberation on the draft.

Charge:

The Committee is asked to carefully evaluate the draft of the new Faculty Handbook (excluding the sections already acted on by the Senate) to ensure that the integrity and substance of the current operating Handbook and Operations Manual, including any related changes subsequently approved by the Faculty Senate, is maintained, and to present a report that will facilitate a productive discussion in the Faculty Senate on this issue. The report should address, but is not confined to the following issues:

- 1) The identification of all substantive changes in material, either by addition or by deletion, not covered in the current Faculty and Operations Manual, but which has been approved by the Faculty Senate or promulgated by the Administration (with dates and details of these actions where possible).
- 2) The identification of all other changes in material, either by additions or deletion, not covered in the current Faculty Handbook and Operations Manual.

- 3) Within the items covered in (b), the identification of all material that might impact the collective faculty interests, and/or the integrity of the current operating Faculty Handbook and Operations Manual.
- 4) Make recommendations for Faculty Senate action on any or all of the above.
- 5) Make a recommendation on whether or not the current practice should be continued of having material germane to faculty interest contained in a separate Faculty Handbook and Operations Manual.

The Committee should present its recommendations on these matters by no later than January 25, 2002.

I. Responsibility Center Management.

SAC has accepted a proposal from President Freeland for the Senate and the administration to form a joint committee on Responsibility Center Management. The University-wide Committee will likely be co-chaired by RPL and Senior Vice President Mucciolo and will include the Financial Affairs Committee and administrators to be named.

J. Matchmate Institutions.

SAC has concerns with the list of matchmate institutions mentioned recently by President Freeland and will be proposing changes.

K. Other Committees.

SAC is finalizing details for two additional ad hoc committees to undertake a cost-benefit analysis on certain athletic programs, and to address issues concerning the graduate programs.

- L. Next Senate Meeting:** 29 October, in 308 SN. The agenda has been distributed at this meeting and will be mailed to absent Senators. Supporting materials will be sent shortly.

III. President Richard M. Freeland. President Freeland apologized for having cancelled his appearance at the 15 October Senate meeting. He had been called unexpectedly to a meeting with the Board of Trustees. He then reported the following.

Enrollments. President Freeland commended the people in Enrollment Management and Admissions for their fine job in recruiting an excellent freshman class. The class is somewhat larger than the 2800 ideal number, but their average SATs are up by about 30 points, to 1155, and GPAs are in the top 10%. Diversity numbers are also good. Fewer students come from Massachusetts and more from other parts of the country.

On the returning upper class student front, the highest freshman-to-sophomore retention rate, 83%, occurred this year. This is the “bulge” class, about whom we worried. Overall enrollments look strong, particularly with undergraduate day students. Although final numbers are not in yet on UC and graduate programs, it is quite clear that fundamentally the budgetary picture is healthy if not lavish.

New Faculty. The President welcomed about thirty talented new faculty during orientation. In addition, we have three named chairs, among them the Finnegan Chair.

New Facilities. Students have given positive reviews about the Davenport Commons residential complex. The renovation of South End Auto has been a big success and will probably open in September. The glass exterior is being installed in the Behrakis building, which will be a splendid addition to our campus. The Ruggles housing will extend the West Village to Leon Street and will form a six-to-eight-story wall of housing by this time next year. Additional construction is planned for the corner of Huntington and Parker Streets. If the Board approves the financial challenge, we will build a sixteen-story residential tower, to open in 2004, and a four-story home for the College of Computer Science. The next site to be developed is the one occupied by the O'Bryant Institute and parking lots.

Goals. Getting into the top-100 category of universities is a realistic aspiration and an absolute imperative. We are now one of eighty private research universities in the top tier of national universities. Almost all those institutions are well within the top 100, along with some public institutions. In order to be competitive, we need to provide value commensurate with tuition revenue. We are making good progress in academic reputation, student quality, student success, and resources, the four dimensions in which we are evaluated. Northeastern is well regarded nationally. Student quality has improved dramatically, but we would like to get the average SAT score up to 1200 to be solidly competitive when the next economic downturn comes. Since the early 90s, we have gone from 1020 to 1155. That is most of the distance, but we still have work to do. Graduation rates have gone from 43% to 56% in the past ten years. That is very encouraging, but we would like to see the number closer to 70%.

With regard to resources, although we do not have enough dollars to spend on an annual basis, we have succeeded in becoming less dependent on tuition and are receiving more from endowments and sponsored research. As the demographics go soft again at the end of the decade, we need to be re-positioned. In the next year we should focus on short-term and long-term issues. In the short run is the student success issue, which has a number of dimensions, such as more financial aid, continued investment in housing, enhancement of the student experience, and additional sources of non-tuition revenue. However, the most important priority is to raise graduation rates. At some point it might be useful to present to the Senate the work being done on a five-year budgetary prediction, manipulating variables like graduation rates and enrollment. What those projections show is that, if we can get our graduation rates to 65-70%, what is now a very tight budgetary situation would become a surplus budgetary situation. He had used a factoid in his State of the University address, that a one percent increase in graduation rates represents one million dollars

In terms of sponsored projects, we are well ahead of competing institutions. We brought in more than \$40M last year, the highest ever. We have had something like double the productivity in sponsored research.

We have raised more than \$90M toward our \$200M Capital Campaign goal, primarily from trustees and overseers. The faculty and staff campaign is ongoing, and 100% participation is hoped for to show that this is an institution that believes in itself.

Hiring good faculty and linking classroom, Coop, Practice-Oriented Education, Arts and Sciences, and professional education into well-integrated packages will assure the

University of preeminence in its particular form of education. President Freeland saw no reason why we should not be able to legitimately say we are the best place in North America for an institution that offers this form of education. The work of faculty this year in redesigning curricula as part of the semester change is pivotal to our being able to make that claim. Last year, every college developed an integrated learning model, which put these pieces together and showed particularly how, within the context of colleges and departments, we could really link workplace and classroom experience as we translate the general models into actual curricula, department by department and course by course. If we do that well, we will have a solid underpinning, which will support the claim that we are doing this better than anyone else in the country. The demographics are on our side until 2007-2008, so we have a window of opportunity in which to accomplish these goals.

The floor was opened to questions.

Professor Gilbert asked what role faculty play in retention rates. President Freeland responded that, overwhelmingly, the largest factors are financial aid and housing, which are beyond the capability of any individual faculty member or even the faculty collectively to control. The first order of business, he suggested, is to get the basic conditions of life solid enough for our students so that the quality of the classroom experience becomes a key area, and we are making headway. The average family supporting a student at NU these days can afford only a third of the \$30,000 that it costs to be here. The rest has to be made up by financial aid, loans, or other means. Because our financial aid does not close the gap, our student body is vulnerable to financial pressure as they try to stay in school. We therefore must align financial aid with students' real needs. Other variables that invite faculty participation are the academic capabilities of students at both ends of the spectrum--the intellectually gifted and the ones who are struggling. Of the 500 students we lose in any given year, about 350 are in the lower two quintiles. If we can identify the students at risk, we will be able to direct them to appropriate support services and help them succeed. At the upper end, we need to be attentive to our most talented students. While the honors program and the efforts made to strengthen it are important, in the end, the data suggest that it is not as effective as it might be. The quality of students' educational experience must be in line with what they are paying for it.

Professor Wallin expressed concern about conflicting incentives with regard to being selective to help our ranking but also needing additional revenue. He recalled that the large number of freshmen accepted last year put a heavy burden on faculty teaching sections and had a negative impact on students who could not take certain courses. He asked how committed the administration is to holding enrollments at 2800. President Freeland replied that the University is strongly committed to 2800, but we have to get the yield rate right. The yield rate jumped from 25% to 35% last year but is expected to remain steady this year. Although distribution is a bit of a problem this year, as some colleges are over enrolled, while others lack students, some fine-tuning should resolve it for next year's class.

Professor Kelleher reported that more students with higher GPAs and SATs are entering as undeclared majors and asked how this group fits into the overall picture in terms of linking Arts and Sciences, professional education, and workplace experience and how to retain these students. President Freeland replied that there is a correlation between the level of academic preparation and the propensity for being undecided, and as you get a more selective student body you are going to get more students who are undecided. That's good news, but our present structure is not set up for it, partly because of Coop, which is major-based. We have instituted the LAMP (Liberal Arts

Major Preference) program. In addition, we need to focus on large-scale intercollege transfers and ensure that this option becomes more available.

Professor Rotella asked about the fit of Ph.D. programs in terms of the top-100 goal, from the perspectives of those granting top-100 status and of NU. President Freeland responded that Ph.D. programs are important in accomplishing the top-100 goal in terms of the quality of undergraduate experience. Carefully selected Ph.D. programs—despite the fact that they drain resources, burden the faculty, and are expensive—are important because they help attract top faculty and contribute to our scholarly reputation. They also add value to the undergraduate experience and the intellectual atmosphere.

Professor Wertheim asked what proportion of classes are covered by full-time faculty, and what might acceptable limits be to the trend of reliance upon adjunct faculty. President Freeland responded that the proportion of adjunct faculty is far too high. We cannot document a negative influence on graduation rates. That is, it does not show on TCEPs or surveys. He suggested that management at the college level needs to ensure that resources are not diverted and to avoid excessively low teaching loads. The sizing report recommended a 14.5:1 ratio for Arts and Sciences. The “bulge class” affected some of the numbers, but, university-wide, we are not far off in terms of faculty-student ratios that are incorporated in the sizing report. The University Planning Council will revisit the issue to reduce the number and better understand why it is so high.

Professor Vaughn suggested there is a connection between the issues of graduate programs and so called “part-time faculty.” At a large university, a fair amount of what is done by part-time teachers who are adjunct professors is actually done by doctoral students. These students enhance the graduate programs. They make it easier to manage the people involved in the life of the university for the next several years, and they have more commitment than part-time faculty. The focus traditionally has been on faculty salaries, and graduate student stipends have not come in time to be useful in recruiting students. He asked whether these issues might be melded together. President Freeland pointed out that some part-time faculty are also very committed so that it would be difficult to ascertain from a qualitative perspective which would be a stronger candidate for teaching. He agreed that we rely too much on both part-time faculty and graduate students. He also agreed that stipends are on the low side. He would like to get the combination of reliance on adjunct faculty and doctoral students into a better full-time/part-time ratio so that it is equivalent to the rest of the year and, in the context of the semester conversion, is investing the dollars to do that.

Professor Aroian asked how to engage faculty early in the budgetary discussion. For some faculty, this would be a radical change. Provost Hall replied that the matter would be brought first to the Committee on Funding Priorities, where discussion has already taken place with the senior vice presidents with regard to the amount of funding that will be necessary. Discussions with faculty have been delayed due to lack of data. The next step is to try to ensure that it is budgeted for the coming year, and then more people will be able to participate in making it happen.

Professor Aroian noted that some people would prefer to teach in the summer and have the winter quarter off. President Freeland suggested that the best solution would be to engage people in conversation about summer teaching in the context of the semester conversion.

Professor Powers-Lee recommended adding library resources to the priority list, especially now when there are enormous online resources that we are not accessing.

President Freeland responded that, like many other institutions, marginal revenue is under pressure from salary increases, financial aid, and technology. The library is different because building a first-rate collection can be accomplished with a series of one-time allocations that are made toward the end of the year when some dollar flexibility is ascertained. To be able to do better and make the library a hard budget item devolves back to the issue of graduation rates and the quality of the experience we offer our students. NU is no longer cheap in relation to other institutions. By working hard on the development campaign we may raise \$200M and that will help. If we continue to accept only 2800 each year, the only way to increase revenue is graduation rates. We would have plenty of money for the library if we could achieve a 65% graduation rate.

Professor Giessen expressed concern at the lack of internal communication channels for faculty interested in Research Council or Senate or other reports. The quality of our research and scholarship should be more widely publicized. He suggested a column in the *Voice*. President Freeland agreed that the need for internal communication and discussion is quite urgent with regard to what is going on and where the University is going.

Professor Giessen noted that there is a false perception that research and scholarship detract from the value of the undergraduate programs. He recommended a mindset change over the years, which must come from the top down, that research, while not a money maker, is a coequal concern, that we do research and scholarship at the highest level, not just because it is important to the undergraduate programs but because that is what professors do. The Research Council is presently debating the issue of graduate student tuition being borne by researchers, and it will be highly controversial because there is a downsize potential which would result in fewer doctoral students. President Freeland responded that the Research Council has been discussing whether to ask people to provide a high level of support for graduate students and grant proposals. He had made a proposal with the Provost's Office and the Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance to increase support from grants. It has not been met with enthusiasm by the Research Council. While he shared the view that scholarship and research strongly enrich the whole university, including the undergraduate experience, in some areas the emphasis on research detracts from the undergraduate experience. From a social standpoint it is a question of management in the context of what the world needs from NU, and what framework will provide the greatest value in a larger sense. There is room for an absolutely first-rate research and graduate enterprise, but it needs to be managed in that context.

President Freeland asked for input on faculty morale. He had been informed by a committee of the Board of Trustees, which has been interviewing faculty for the past six months in the context of his work, that morale among faculty is low, and the President is anxious to address it. He was a bit perplexed by this report because the University currently is operating as a strong and healthy institution; salaries averaged over a period of time are competitive; and we are moving forward with important programs, although classroom issues remain. He asked to what Senators attribute the observation that faculty morale is low, given so many positive elements within the institution.

Professor Levine reported that faculty feel underpaid and overworked, some offices in Lake and Nightingale are crumbling, and we have fewer faculty to teach more students. Also, colleges need to make adjustments to take care of the part-time faculty. President Freeland was apologetic with regard to any faculty resentment. He viewed the situation as a puzzle rather than a conclusion. He pointed out that when he arrived

in 1996 student numbers were declining more rapidly than faculty numbers. If the faculty-student ratio is not appropriate, then workloads should be managed. There is variation, of course, college by college, possibly department by department, so that some colleges and departments are overburdened. He acknowledged that the bulge class presented a challenge last year. It is difficult to move resources around in sync with changes in student interests, which is a management issue for the colleges.

Concerning salaries, President Freeland acknowledged there is work to be done. He noted that last year the Financial Affairs Committee did an analysis that showed, if you looked at all Category I institutions, either in New England or nationally, our salaries are actually better than average at the associate and assistant levels. He indicated he is not complacent but that we need to have the right comparison group. Fundamentally, we need to put more money into faculty salaries. That is a function of revenue, and revenue is a function of graduation rates. Most of our resources go to salaries, financial aid, and technology. Improved graduation rates will cover these needs and provide more dollars for the library and for graduate stipends. As for faculty offices, he assured the Senate that the situation will be addressed.

Professor Barnes declared that he is relatively happy. As a member of the College of Health Sciences, he has been working with physicians and clinicians in hospitals and medical centers who donate their time. He would like to give them honorary appointments to recognize their contribution. Vice Provost Meservey noted that we do have a policy that permits an appointment for only one year, but the issue has come to her attention and she is trying to resolve it. She agreed to report on her progress.

Professor Aroian suggested that part of the morale problem is that we are in a cultural evolution. We are changing dramatically in terms of what our aspirations need to be for the future, and this sometimes feels uncomfortable because we experience the constraints from lack of resources as we struggle to achieve our goals. President Freeland responded that he, too, has felt the pressure of trying to make progress on so many fronts, but he was appreciative of the optimism expressed.

Professor Wallin suggested that, in addition to the revenue problem, the increase in the number of senior vice presidents and the additional buildings under construction contribute significantly to the increase in expenditures. The wellbeing of faculty does not appear to compare favorably to other priorities on campus. President Freeland expressed his appreciation of the candor of the Financial Affairs Committee members and welcomed their advice. He noted that the marginal dollars in the past four or five years have gone to three places—salary increases, financial aid, and technology. He did not believe we have any more senior vice presidents than we did five or six years ago. We have three at present, and a couple of individuals have been promoted to vice president positions. Administrative staff has increased somewhat. However, keeping faculty salaries competitive is a higher priority, and if we are not competitive now, then we need to correct that. He did not agree that the issue is one of revenue because it is a problem to keep faculty salaries competitive and at the same time take care of student needs and do some of the other things that are essential to the University. He stressed that neither he nor the administration is indifferent, but we need to strike the right balance. Faculty salaries are and will continue to be one of his highest priorities.

Professor Vaughn noted that faculty morale does not depend entirely on money. Collegiality is crucial, with faculty and administration really working together, as it was under the leadership of former President Kenneth Ryder. In the past ten years, faculty have become marginalized and disenfranchised by a former provost who established many committees outside the Senate's purview. Admittedly, the situation has been

reversed somewhat in the last few years, but outreach is critical in making faculty feel essential. President Freeland replied that this was consistent with other things he had heard.

Adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John G. Flym, Secretary
Faculty Senate