

Northeastern University

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

January 28, 2002

Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 01/28/2002

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TO: **FACULTY SENATE**

FROM: JOHN G. FLYM, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE

SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2001-2002 FACULTY SENATE, 28 JANUARY 2002

Present: (Professors) Aroian, Baclawski, Barnes, Bobcean, Boisse, Bruns, Flym, Fox, Giessen, Gilbert, Herman, Hope, Kane, Kelleher, Lowndes, Metghalchi, Naylor, Platt, Powers-Lee, Rotella, Rupert, Shafai, Vaughn,

Wallin, Wertheim, Willey, Wray

(Administrators) Hall, Greene, Mantella, Onan, Pantalone, Pendergast, Putnam, Rigg, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Gilmore, Hall, Levine, Sullivan

(Administrators) Meservey

Convened by Provost Hall at 11:55 a.m.

- I. **Minutes.** The minutes of 22 October and 10 December were approved.
- II. **SAC Report.** Professor Lowndes gave the following report.

A. Meetings.

SAC has met three times since the last Senate meeting. In addition, SAC met once in joint session with the Financial Affairs Committee.

B. Klein University Lecture.

Professor Arun Bansil of the Physics Department has been selected as this year's Robert D. Klein University Lecturer. The Lectureship Selection Committee consisted of Executive Vice Provost Pantalone, former Klein Lecturer Professor Roger W. Giese, and myself. The title of Professor Bansil's lecture is The Brave New World of Scientific Simulations: Mr. Data in the Holodeck Wonderland. The lecture will be given at noon on Monday, March 4, in the Raytheon Amphitheater.

C. Committees.

School of Nursing Dean Search Committee.

Professor Rhonda Board has replaced Professor Barbara Kelley on the School of Nursing Dean Search Committee. Professor Elizabeth Howard has been elected chair.

D. Library Advisory Committee.

Professor Harlow L. Robinson (Modern Languages) has replaced Professor William Kirtz on the Library Advisory Committee.

E. Excellence in Teaching Awards Judging Committee.

Please note that the deadline for Teaching Award nominations is January 31.

F. Resolution.

The resolution on the addition to the Conflict and Commitment Policy has been approved by President Freeland. Trustee approval is not required.

G. Next Senate meeting: 11 February in 240 Egan.

III. **Provost's Report.** Provost Hall deferred a report in the interest of time.

IV. Question and Discussion Time. There were no questions.

V. Action and Assessment Plan.

Mark Putnam, Director of University Planning and Research, reported that the current Action and Assessment Plan grew out of a 1998 self-study of our mantra and aspirations. The University Planning Council (UPC) last year outlined a process for reviewing the Plan on an annual basis. The Plan is currently under review by representatives of the administration, faculty, and students. The UPC will review input and expects to issue its findings in March.

Since the Plan was first crafted, we have come quite a distance in activating its original enrollment goals in the areas of SAT scores, selectivity indices, and student quality indices. The UPC has been working with Vice President Mantella to identify targets for revision, such as SAT scores and retention rates.

Another aspect of the review is the way in which our diversity goals are represented in the Action and Assessment Plan, unit plans, and the Affirmative Action and Diversity Plan.

A third aspect relates to rankings. The notion of Top 100 has become a more concrete part of our thinking in the last year or so. Most obvious in everyone's mind is the undergraduate rankings in *U. S. News and World Report*, but other rankings also appear in a variety of ways, such as the National Science Foundation ranking for research productivity. Several colleges have set goals within their unit plans of where they would like to be ranked over the next several years and, while it is not the purview of the UPC to examine or comment on unit plans, it would be appropriate to look at key areas to ascertain whether there is conflict or discontinuity.

Some have expressed concern about the extent of our research goals and whether the current infrastructure is sufficient to support our aspirations. Vice Provost Hedlund is working with the UPC to develop recommendations for extended increases in infrastructure and support.

In conclusion, Mr. Putnam said he would welcome comments or concerns that might further our aspirations to attain top-100 status.

Professor Giessen asked if a conceptual way could be found to motivate students to go to graduate school, when their experience with Coop and practice-oriented education lures them away from academia. Mr. Putnam responded that more students are undecided about where are heading, but they are also more ambitious academically and professionally. Coop and practice-oriented education are more than preparation for jobs; they are also opportunities for research.

Professor Bruns asked when the Plan would be finalized, whether it would be specific in its objectives and courses of action, how it would be transmitted to faculty, and whether it would drive future budget decisions. Mr. Putnam responded that the Plan will provide clarification with regard to specific goals, the articulation and measuring of progress, and targets for accomplishment so that we do not do too many things simultaneously. We need to draw a line between what our aspirations are and where resources should be committed, and to align student housing, financial aid, retention, and other activities more effectively.

Provost Hall added that the Action and Assessment Plan is conducted at the university level, but the unit goals and unit plans developed by the colleges and departments connect to it and have been incorporated into the budgeting process. He will bring the items that support unit goals to the Committee on Funding Priorities.

VI. Budget Presentation.

Provost Hall explained that the budget process begins with the Committee on Funding Priorities (CFP), chaired this year by Professor Steven Morrison. The CFP receives requests from the various academic and administrative units and then makes a recommendation to the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee is an administrative committee, co-chaired by Vice President Mucciolo and the Provost. The Budget Committee then tries to develop a budget to recommend to the President. A number of open meetings are

scheduled for discussion of the proposed budget before it is sent to the Board of Trustees. This year's budget has been shared with the deans and will be presented to the students on Thursday. The final open forum for the university community will take place on 14 February.

Provost Hall yielded the floor to Professor Morrison, who reported that the CFP had been meeting on a regular basis since October and had solicited input from a number of individuals about tuition, financial aid, salaries, and information technology. The CRP then crafted a set of priorities that did not have to balance, and indeed did not balance; that is the task of the Budget Committee. The budget being proposed, however, is very closely aligned with the priorities set by the CFP.

Vice President Mucciolo reported that the Board of Trustees will meet to vote on the budget on 1 March. Any modifications that result from discussions with various groups will be incorporated in the budget prior to that meeting.

Vice President Mucciolo presented the following budget planning principles.

- 1) <u>Enrollments</u>. The budget is built on a foundation of 2800 freshmen. That class size, along with other factors, has led to an increasingly better prepared student body and ultimately to improved retention.
- 2) Financial Aid. The use of financial aid is a significant portion of the budget. Historically, NU was a relatively low-tuition, low-aid, private institution. In the past ten years we have moved to a relatively high-tuition, high-aid school. In the 1980s, the aid discount rate was about 10%. Today, it is about 25%, so we have already changed the way financial aid affects the budget and are now like increasingly large, research private universities that have high tuition and relatively high discount rates. We are at about 30% in terms of the freshman discount rate. Also, we are providing five-year awards to students when the are admitted in order to ensure more stability with respect to their aid. Next year's sophomores will be able to use aid on a per-term basis, but this will change when we make the transition to semesters and can ascertain what overall revenue projected and discount rate we can manage. With this budget we are fine-tuning the aid program, as well as using financial aid to more aggressively recruit minority students.
- 3) <u>Salaries</u>. To remain competitive, an important element in every budget is annual salary increases for faculty and staff, both for overall merit and for additional funding for faculty.
- 4) <u>Information Technology</u>. Information technology has become an increasingly important part of the University. It has become much like a utility in recent years, certainly from the perspective of students. The ability to support various kinds of applications, whether academic or social, is an important determinant for potential students. Unfortunately, NU was using borrowing as a way to deal with information systems five or six years ago. We are now trying to avoids borrowing by building up the base budget.
- 5) <u>Plant Depreciation</u>. Funded depreciation provides the means by which to support maintenance. It has been augmented to address deferred maintenance across the University. This is an issue that touches all aspects of university life.
- 6) <u>Budget Reallocation</u>. Of this budget, reallocation is the largest item, and it has been used effectively to support maintenance of the campus, such as the building construction this year, the cost of University College, and other areas that need support. The overall budget is increasing by almost 6% a year.

Financial aid has increased from \$76M last year to \$83M. In the fall of 2002, we will have 100 more students, including 20 transfers, and the bulge class shows 83.5% retention. Part-time enrollments are down somewhat—6% in UC and 2% in other part-time enrollments. Graduate enrollments are stable. Bouvé is below the planned enrollment level, and this will not turn around quickly. Computer Science enrollments surpassed the 5% target. Retention rates in Criminal Justice, Business, and Engineering are at nearly 90%. The School of Law and the other colleges are stable, overall. The goal, which would have tremendous consequences for the budget, is to hold the current rate for the colleges with near 90% retention rates and raise the rates in the remaining colleges.

Professor Herman asked where the School of General Studies students fit into the profile. Vice President Mucciolo responded that we had 434 SGS students in 1999, and 295 in 2001. He added that the academic quality of these students has improved in recent years. The combined SAT scores are 1139 with SGS, and 1157 without, a big improvement over ten years ago. He expected that at some point the number would be adjusted downward or that SGS would be reconstituted in some way, due to the quality of the students.

Vice President Mucciolo pointed out that the University is actually not budgeting the full effect of the improved retention. For the past two years, when retention has exceeded the budget model, the proceeds have been shared with the colleges. It is hoped that by the end of this year additional allocations from stronger enrollments will be possible. That is one of the ways to align the budget. Additional admissions also help to generate revenue in the winter quarter, when a number of residence spaces become available. The challenge in sustaining retention as students move through the system may be due to lack of housing or to the tension that Coop contributes in this kind of environment, or some combination of these with other factors.

The enrollment rate multiplied by the tuition rate gives the revenue. The proposed increase for freshman tuition is 9.9%. This amount is calibrated to accommodate the tolerance of the market and how the tuition structure will work in a semester environment. The basic tuition increase is in the 5% to 10% range.

Professor Platt asked the cost of freshman tuition. Vice President Mucciolo responded that tuition plus fees right now is about \$20,730 for three terms, with \$22,770, assuming Board approval, proposed for next year. Then, depending on housing and meal plan, the cost is about \$32,000.

Vice President Mucciolo reported that, on the expense side, the Budget Committee is proposing a merit pool of 4%. In the case of market adjustments, the so-called "second budget," amounts to \$1.8M in revenue terms. Of that, \$1.5M is designated for faculty, which translates to a 7.7% package, although not a 7% merit pool. In the case of staff, the amount is more modest. Also, \$300,000 is being set aside for selected market adjustments for some staff and to augment the bonus pool for administrative and professional staff, \$100,000 for the staff market adjustments, and \$200,000 for the staff bonus pool. The Budget Committee is also recommending an increase in stipends for graduate students. Ten new tenure-track faculty positions and ten lecturer positions have been approved, for a total of \$1.2M. Expenses have increased in a number of areas, and revenue has fallen by \$3M. Annual giving has decreased by 18.2%.

Vice President Mucciolo presented slides of some comparison data gathered by the Budget Committee on faculty salaries in Tier II and III institutions and stated that there is no right answer, no proof that says what the right number is. What we have to do to get to Tier II, in *U.S. News and World Report* terms, is to improve our student performance and graduation rates. We pay more than Tier III average faculty salaries by rank, given our particular mix of faculty and salaries by rank.

Professor Vaughn asked why the Budget Committee took cost of living for New York City schools to be based only on Manhattan rather than a larger part of the New York metropolitan area. Mr. Putnam responded that they took essentially what was available. Professor Vaughn suggested that Queens, Long Island, and Westchester County are quite different and that the data is available.

Vice President Mucciolo explained that the New York problem goes away if you look at Tier II. If you adjust for cost of living, there is a gap of \$3.8M. One might argue that we are not a Tier II institution and that we should take a group of institutions that are near our score (2.8), which is clearly in and of itself Tier II. The answer is that our student performance and graduation numbers are weak, and that is why we are not on the list. When you look at Tier II and adjust for cost of living, there is a shortfall of \$3.8M, so the Budget Committee is putting \$1.5M into the salary base. He pointed out that the data are a year old. Various discussions have taken place about determining a peer group, but it is difficult. With regard to Tier II institutions, we pay more. Our aspirational peer institutions are Boston College, Brandeis, Tufts, Case, Drexel, Fordham, Marquette, Pace, American University, and George Washington University; and evidence shows that a shortfall exists and that we should pay more; however, the budget can support only so much this year. Expenses are up in several areas. Residence hall and parking expenses have increased by \$7.1M, largely due to the new Behrakis Complex.

Provost Hall pointed out that the Budget Committee had tried to come up with a definitive group of benchmark matchmates and had suggested creating a new committee, made up of representatives from the Senate, the CFP, and the Provost's Office, to look at the charts and come up with a final comparative group. Also, a small amount--\$100,000--has been budgeted as a way of trying to move in the direction of mirroring the academic year in summer salary ratios.

Professor Wallin, who is on both the Financial Affairs Committee (FAC) and the CFP, pointed out that these committees had had an interactive process with the administration in putting together a comparative group. The administration came back with another group that the committees then took and adjusted for cost of living, and the equity or market adjustment gap grew. The administration came back with another list, which included the New York City schools, but that group was not discussed by the CFP or the FAC, although the FAC had been under the impression it would be involved in the distribution process as it relates to the equity, or market adjustment, portion. He urged that the new committee include people who had been working on this issue. Provost Hall responded that the President will decide who will constitute the new committee, but he expected that members of the FAC would be included. Also, he was scheduled to meet with the FAC to discuss the distribution. Professor Wallin explained that the FAC had tried to find institutions that reflected Northeastern in research reputation and external funding, institutions that balanced the research interests that NU embraces but also reflect our student retention and graduation rates.

Professor Gilbert asked whether the ten tenure-track positions and the ten lecturer positions were budgeted differently. Vice President Mucciolo replied that that ratio would not guide any other ratio, such as salaries.

Professor Platt asked the rationale for the tuition increase, particularly at the freshman level. Vice President Mucciolo replied that, although it is not a science, we are comparing favorably in the market with other private institutions in that tuition range. Our students have better SATs, and we are more selective. We are also an increasingly attractive destination. Another issue to be faced is the semester conversion and the anomaly in our basic tuition structure. Over the next two years, we will bring the numbers into line so that tuition is leveled for freshmen and upperclass students

Professor Giessen expressed concern at the apparent inconsistency in the fact that if a 7.7% merit increase corresponds to 4%, the \$1.5M for market adjustment would cost more than 8%. Vice President Mucciolo replied that the 7.7% is the merit pool for all levels of staff, including administrators, part-time faculty, and graduate students. Benefits are also included.

Professor Fox asked how far NU had to go to top-100 status. Vice President Mucciolo replied that U. S. News and World Report has three variables—freshman retention, graduation rate, and so-called graduation performance. We need to have a retention rate of better than 80% for freshmen, and at least 70% graduation rate. Coop may create slippage in retention due to additional requirements for students and because students are always coming and going.

Professor Lowndes referred to the 11-quarter to 8-semester transition and indicated that this does not pro rate without increased teaching loads or additional faculty. How was this being factored in to the budget. Vice President Mucciolo responded that class size is a way of taking up additional slack. No position has been taken with respect to teaching loads.

Professor Lowndes asked whether the classroom inventory therefore would be able to satisfactorily address the changed demands resulting from the conversion to the semester calendar. Vice President Mucciolo replied that, while we do have a high degree of classroom utilization, other opportunities are available in the new buildings coming on line in the next year or two and in ways of better utilizing distance learning capabilities.

Adjourned at 1:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John G. Flym Secretary, Faculty Senate