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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes : 02/11/2002

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TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: JOHN G. FLYM, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2001-2002 FACULTY SENATE, 11 FEBRUARY 2002

Present: (Professors) Aroian, Baclawski, Barnes, Bobcean, Bruns, Flym, Fox, Giessen, Gilbert, Gilmore, Herman, Hope, Kane, Levine, Lowndes, Metghalchi, Platt, Powers-Lee, Rotella, Rupert, Shafai, Sullivan, Vaughn, Wallin, Wertheim, Willey, Wray
(Administrators) Hall, Greene, Mantella, Meservey, Onan, Pendergast, Putnam, Rigg, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Boisse, Hall, Kelleher, Naylor
(Administrators) Pantalone

Convened by Provost Hall at 11:59 a.m.

I. **Minutes.** The minutes of 7 January were approved.

II. **SAC Report.** Professor Lowndes gave the following report.

A. **Meetings.**

SAC has met twice since the last Senate meeting. One of these meetings was in joint session with the Financial Affairs Committee to discuss mechanisms for equity distribution. Given that the current salary shortfalls originated because of several years of no merit raises and/or partial merit raises, the consensus of both committees was for some form of broad distribution. In addition, there was a strong feeling that a focused matchmate approach was in practice not feasible in a sound comparative way both because of the inability to choose appropriate matchmates and because of the inability to acquire appropriate data. The purpose of the Senate meeting today was to solicit input from Senators on this issue.

B. **Provost Search Committee.**

Since its last meeting, SAC has received strong concerns over the recent communication concerning the Provost position description. Most of these concerns are focused on the verbiage about practice-oriented education and on the apparent removal of two line positions currently reporting to the Provost. SAC will discuss these concerns at its meeting tomorrow.

SAC will meet with Mr. Jerry Baker of Baker-Parker Associates (Atlanta), consultants to the Provost Search Committee, this Thursday, 14 February.

C. **Resolution.**

The informational Enrollment and Admissions Policy Committee Resolution on Financial Aid has been signed by President Freeland with the following comment: "On a trial basis we have allowed the Fall 2001 freshmen who have received 5 year awards to use up to 3 terms of aid during the fall through spring quarters of 2002-2003. We will want to assess the outcome of this practice and then make a decision as to whether to continue the policy and, if so, how it might work under a semester calendar."

Next Senate meeting: 25 February in 240 Egan.

III. **Provost's Report.** Provost Hall reported the following.

A. **Budget.**

The Budget Committee will present next year's budget to the university community at an open meeting on 14 February. Presentations have already been made to the SGA, and to administrators and support staff.

B. **Provost Search and Proposed Restructuring of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs.**

Following discussions with the Provost and Baker-Parker Associates, the President has proposed a change in organizational structure to create a new position, Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Life. If the Board of Trustees approves the proposal, the new senior vice president would report to the President instead of the Provost. The thinking is that this change would have a positive affect on the student experience and would be consistent with what is happening with provost positions at other universities.

C. **Distance Learning.**

The Provost's Office has been trying to develop a strategy around distance learning, particularly by improving the way we bring programs on line. Professor Patrick Plunkett, Multimedia Assistant Director Alicia Russell, and Michael Woodhead of University College are working to design a new division to enhance teaching with technology and a better platform for distance learning.

IV. **Question and Discussion Time.**

Professor Bruns asked whether the rumor that the semester conversion has been delayed were true. Provost Hall responded that we are on track. The University is bringing in peer reviewers who went through the process and will review our process to ensure it is not derailed by any matter that needs correction. He noted that he had heard rumors relating to changes that some individuals would like to make but that are not in the plan.

V. **Financial Affairs Committee Report.**

Professor Born reported that the Financial Affairs Committee (FAC) believes that the combination of a 4% merit pool and a $1.5M equity pool recommended by the Budget Committee represents a significant commitment to addressing the faculty salary issues that the FAC outlined in its preliminary report to the Senate in October. In that report, the FAC argued that the merit raise pool should be at market levels and estimated that the number would be about 5% in 2002-03. The FAC presented additional analysis that average faculty salaries at NU, compared to average salary levels for AAUP Category I private doctoral universities, were about $6M behind that yardstick and that the vast majority of that shortfall was at the full professor rank. The FAC suggested a three-year funding cycle and a $2M equity raise pool for 2002-03, which was endorsed by the Senate. The FAC gave virtually the same presentation the next day to the Committee on Funding Priorities (CFP). The CFP concluded its business by recommending to the Budget Committee a 4% merit pool and a $1.5-2M equity pool. However, since the October meetings, the economy has slowed further and caused some real fallout in university budgets. This suggests that the 4% merit raise pool may be at, or even slightly above, the market level average raises for 2002-03 when that data is available. Although it is less than the FAC recommended, it is still a competitive number, given the state of the economy, and it reflects the administration's commitment to addressing salary shortfalls.

In December, the FAC met with the President and, at his invitation, suggested methods for distributing equity funds. The FAC, in concert with the SAC, discussed a variety of themes recommended by members of the faculty and the Senate. Last week, the FAC outlined those themes to the Provost and urged him to consider a broad distribution of funds to faculty, particularly faculty who have contributed long service to the University. That recommendation was based on analysis that suggests the salary shortfall is largely due to the low or delayed merit raises that took place in the early 1990s. Faculty at the full professor level, and, to a lesser degree, the associate professor level, experienced the greatest shortfall. The FAC, therefore, suggested a simple award criterion, based on either rank or longevity.

Professor Born presented a slide showing the following response to the analysis conducted by the senior vice president's office:

Chronological Review of Equity Shortfall Estimates and Benchmarks in 2001/02
Financial Affairs Committee (FAC) and Administration (ADM)
Estimates in $million (+ indicates no shortfall)

Date	Benchmarks	Nominal or COLA	FAC Est. Shortfall	ADM Est. Shortfall
Oct '01	AAUP Private: Category I	Nominal	-6.18	
Oct '01	American, BC, Drexel, Duquesne, Fordham, Marquette, RPI, SMU, Syracuse, U. of Denver	Nominal COLA		+0.16 -2.04
Nov '01	Ten schools above, 3 different COL indices	COLA	-6.45 to -9.47	
Dec '01	Ten schools above plus George Washington, Loyola (Chicago)			none provided
Dec '01*	Twelve schools above	Nominal COLA	+0.04 -5.79	
Jan '02	U.S. News & World Report Tier 3	Nominal COLA		+1.40 +8.70
	Tier 3: Hofstra, DePaul, St. Johns, Drexel, New School	Nominal COLA		-2.02 +5.13
	Tier 2: All 27 privates	Nominal COLA		+2.38 -3.87
	Tier 2: 21 select private schools	Nominal COLA		+2.46 -2.87
	American, BC, Brandeis, Case, Drexel, Fordham, GW, Marquette, Pace, Syracuse, Tufts	Nominal COLA		-1.28 -2.17

*Response never presented because a new analysis was presented at the next meeting. Our estimates obtained using the Administrative COL deflation for New York City-area schools with the Mid-town Manhattan price index. The FAC rejects this index as appropriate for most institutions located in NYC area. Using a Long Island price index would increase the COLA estimate of the shortfall.

The FAC arrived at different numbers, partly due to a computational error in the way adjustments were handled for cost of living. The new numbers were larger than the FAC had originally estimated, and a shift in the schools occurred, prompting a suggestion to add two schools, George Washington and Loyola. Discussion on this information never took place because of the new analysis presented. The FAC continues to be concerned about matchmates.

Professor Bruns noted that the real problem is that Northeastern does not have a matchmate. There is no university that looks like it, but accurate matchmates can be found for individual colleges. She suggested having a variety of matchmates. Professor Born agreed.

Professor Born pointed out that the combined pools amount to an increase of 7.5% for 2002-2003, the highest since the late 1980s and a very positive outcome.

Provost Hall thanked the FAC for the work it had done. He noted that the University has been trying to address some of the downsizing of past years and will continue to work with faculty to address the issue of compensation, which is fundamental to the University. The focus now is distribution rather than the size of the gap. While all are in agreement that a gap exists, all do not agree on its size. Speaking for the Budget Committee, he had proposed to the President that a committee be created to try to wrestle down the issue of matchmates and how best to address the gap. The administration and the FAC agree in principle on a broad distribution. The market adjustment of last year addressed about 33% of the faculty. The difference in opinion derives from the FAC's proposal for an across-the-board distribution that does not include assistant professors and a distribution that does not involve analysis by department, by college, or even by

individuals. While he embraced the principle behind the across-the-board distribution, he felt it would create problems from an equity standpoint. He wanted an analysis that identifies where the critical problems are.

Provost Hall showed slides on the history of merit and market adjustments since 1997, which was one of the most recent years in which no market or merit adjustment was given. The following year, 5% was awarded. In 1999, $1M was set aside across two fiscal years. An analysis was done on equity by department, and monies were distributed. In 2001, the amount was $300K for market adjustment. That was the first year that the deans tried to identify faculty who might be tempted by better offers to leave the University. That effort made a difference and last year, which is a part of this budget process, a larger amount, $545K, was budgeted. Bonus dollars that were available last year will be tied in to the next distribution, in 2003, which allows the allocation of the $1.5M to be distributed.

In response to the FAC's position that all faculty have suffered to the same degree, Provost Hall showed a slide indicating that significant numbers of individuals received market equity adjustments in different years. Associate and full professors were targeted to remedy problems at those levels, and that will not change. He felt, however, that the assistant professor level should not be totally excluded from the next distribution.

Professor Fox asked whether 20% of full professors received equity. Provost Hall replied that 20% of full professors and 19% of associate professors received equity.

Provost Hall noted that we need principles for distribution as we go into the next round in a process that seeks to address those areas and individuals most adversely affected. Incidents of compression and inversion, which have developed as a product of the market and the University's bringing in a number of assistant professors at close-to-market salary, should be a focus of the distribution. Faculty morale is also important because we want to retain faculty and affirm their hard work. The basic principles that should drive us must derive from analysis rather than a broad across-the-board distribution.

Professor Platt asked whether KUPA or cost of living would be used to get to the peer mean. Provost Hall responded that the cost of living would be done in-house.

Professor Herman noted that it is important to take longevity into account and to address data on how departments rank, both on the macro (department) and micro (individual) levels.

Professor Fox expressed concern at possible pitfalls in the extent to which we get comparison data at various ranks. Provost Hall replied that analysis is just the beginning. The dean and chair would see the information and take it into account. KUPA has 110 schools on the list, and he believed that ten criminal justice schools must be included in that data, which would give a close approximation from which to make judgments. Professor Fox suggested that it would be simpler to do something about the low raise years for all ranks, including assistant professors. Provost Hall pointed out that market and equity adjustments have gone to some faculty. Some are at or above market.

Professor Vaughn thought agreement on matchmates would be possible through dialogue. This has never occurred. The current data has uncertainties in it. One does not make imprecise data more precise by cutting it into small pieces. We are trying to get to a reasonable composite of institutions for an institution-wide set of matchmates, but for particular departments and particular units it is not a good benchmark. Half of the schools named by the Provost would not make any list of matchmate institutions for the research departments in science and engineering. Most do not have colleges of criminal justice or schools of nursing or pharmacy, so they do not work on that basis. At this critical time in our history, when we are converting to a semester system, it is better to be inclusive than exclusive, unified rather than divided. Therefore, dividing the University into different pieces is a step in the wrong direction. Provost Hall replied that we keep talking about a process that does not exist; the institutions he had presented were for illustrative purposes only. For some departments these institutions would not work, but for others they would. He pointed out that, before the final analysis, agreement would be reached among the deans, the chairs, and himself. This discussion was about process and, despite imprecision, he was willing to try to come up with approximations. Therefore, if we are willing to do that when trying to decide what the gap is, we should be willing to do it when we are trying to deal with distribution.

In summary, Provost Hall stated that, with the deans and chairs, he would first engage in gathering data to determine the matchmates of each department. To do the internal analysis, he would verify the academic ages, depending on which criteria were chosen, such as highest degree or length of service. Next, the data would be analyzed as was done with the scatter charts that are, or will be, done for every department. The external data—the KUPA analysis—will also be analyzed as a way of trying to identify which departments appear to be in the worst situation. The deans and chairs will make recommendations, and engage in consultation, where appropriate, before the information flows up to the Provost's office for his decisions. Last year, he accepted 80% of the deans' recommendations.

Provost Hall assured the Senate that he will prepare a report similar to the one provided to the FAC on last year's distribution. This report will show the number of recipients, based on department and college, and the averages that were presented to the Senate, so there will be some transparency between what he does and what people actually know.

Professor Barnes asked whether any of the $1.5M would go to non-tenure-track faculty. Provost Hall replied that the intent was to distribute it to the professoriate. However, if a dean were to make a compelling case, he would consider making an exception.

Professor Aroian asked how an individual might participate in this process. Provost Hall responded that he would send a notice informing faculty about the process so they may have the opportunity to communicate with their deans or chairs about a particular circumstance or need.

Professor Fox asked how much reporting the general faculty would see. Provost Hall replied that a chair is not prevented from sharing the KUPA data. He did not think the internal analysis should be shared, however.

Professor Giessen suggested that time at the University is less meaningful than teaching and research productivity. Provost Hall replied that the deans and chairs would take contribution into account, but the standard way of looking at these issues—and not just at Northeastern—is based on rank, and on how long an individual has been in a place. That is a starting point for all employers.

Professor Wallin indicated that he was in favor of going through this process, but he noted that more information is always good. He stressed that, whether faculty were underpaid or overpaid ten years ago, everyone experienced zero raises a couple of times. Most faculty are working harder now. We are retaining more students, and they are better prepared academically and are more demanding. The point made by the FAC is that, while they like the idea of the research being conducted by the Provost, they still feel strongly that faculty who have been here over the last ten years deserve to be caught up. Provost Hall responded that the process should include individuals who have benefited and assistant professors who have not. We need to look at the facts and derive allocations from that as opposed to just picking a percentage point and giving it to everyone. He liked the spirit of what the FAC was putting forward, which was to try to reward as many people as we can. However, he did not think it should be about "How do I reward my friends?" It should be about trying to make sure we do it in a way that gets at as many people as possible, based on some analysis that he could defend to the Board of Trustees, to the President, or to anyone else who might have questions.

Professor Gilbert pointed out that the process would be time and energy intensive. It perhaps could benefit us in the long run, but we need to address the question of whether, at the end of the process, we will have a system for using the information that will be fair for all concerned. He expressed concern that, a year ago, we did an analysis that added 18-19% of the faculty to the list of those needing equity raises. To repeat that process will cause morale to decline further. It is important to be as inclusive as possible in this analysis. Provost Hall replied that his data showed that, including bonuses, 33% of the faculty benefited last year, and a larger number will benefit this year because we have the advantages of more dollars and the analysis, which was not done last year.

Dean Zoloth noted that this type of analysis is done when he hires faculty. It is helpful that median salaries in the health professions are published. In addition to the problem that was created by the zero percent raises, the market since the mid-1990s has undergone tremendous structural changes, causing some disciplines to accelerate while others remain stagnant.

Dean Greene pointed out that across-the-board distributions do not impact the long-term marketability of individuals, and they send a confusing message. Assistant professors should be included in this process because they are the folks we are trying to draw into the University.

Professor Shafai expresses support for the analysis and emphasized the importance of having matchmates that are close to NU. Provost Hall replied that the institutions selected on a department basis will be matched with NU. Professor Shafai noted that he did not see significant difference between a faculty member who publishes eight papers and one who publishes seven.

Professor Flym expressed concern about the lack of definition as to what criteria is applied to individuals and that a process that has the potential to fragment may result in a team of highly paid superstars, who, like the Red Sox, do not win.

As time had run out, the meeting adjourned.

Adjourned at 1/35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John G. Flym, Secretary
Faculty Senate