

November 04, 2002

## Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 11/04/2002

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### Recommended Citation

Flyn, John G., "Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 11/04/2002" (2002). *Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes*. Paper 15.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d10005419>

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TO: FACULTY SENATE  
FROM: JOHN G. FLYM, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE  
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2002-2003 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 4 NOVEMBER 2002

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Present: (Professors) Alper, Aroian, Bannister, Barnes, Bruns, Ellis, Flym, Hall, Herman, Hope, Kane, Khaw, Lowndes, Metghalchi, Morrison, Ondrechen, Platt, Powers-Lee, Serafim, Shafai, Sherman, Vaughn, Wallin, Wertheim, Wray  
(Administrators) Abdelal, Greene, Mantella, Meservey, Onan, Pantalone, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Alverson, Baclawski, Brookins, Gilmore, Rotella, Sherwood  
(Administrators) Putnam, Soyster, Stellar

Convened by Provost Abdelal at 11:58 a.m.

- I. **Minutes.** The minutes of 30 September were approved with the understanding that the text of Professor Sherwood's motion (p.10) would be clarified.
- II. **SAC Report.** Because the SAC report could not be given due to time limitations in the 21 October meeting, Professor Lowndes' SAC report covered the period from the 30 September Senate meeting.
  - A. **Meetings.** SAC has met five times since the 30 September Senate meeting. One of these meetings was with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees in which SAC presented an overview of the agenda for the Senate for 2002-03. Another of these meetings was a joint meeting with the Financial Affairs Committee to discuss their report on the agenda for today.
  - B. **Committee on Funding Priorities.** President Freeland has selected Professor Morrison as Chair and three members of the Financial Affairs Committee to serve as faculty representatives on the Committee on Funding Priorities: Professors Wallin, Levendis, and Wertheim. Professor Lowndes also serves automatically on the Committee. The Committee has met twice to date and expects to complete its business by early December.
  - C. **University College Semester Conversion Postponement.** The Provost consulted with SAC concerning University College postponing its conversion to a semester calendar. The primary reason presented was to delay an expected revenue decline from UC operations to cushion other potential revenue declines arising from the calendar change. Because this was presented as a temporary postponement, SAC had no objection.
  - D. **Search Committees.**

**Visual Arts Chair (External) Search Committee.** Members are:

Elected Members:

Professor Mira Cantor, Chair (Visual Arts)  
Professor Edwin C. Andrews (Visual Arts)  
Professor Thomas Starr (Visual Arts)

Appointed Members:

Professor Janet L. Bobcean (Theatre)  
Professor Margaret Y. Woo (Law)

**Chemistry Chair (Internal) Search Committee.** Members are:

Elected Members:

Professor Philip W. LeQuesne (Chemistry)  
 Professor May Jo Ondrechen (Chemistry)  
 Professor Paul Vouros (Chemistry)

Appointed Members:

Professor Srinivas Sridhar (Physics)  
 Professor Ronald J. Willey (Chemical Engineering)

- E. **Klein University Lecture.** The Klein University Lecture will take place on 6 March 2003. A memo and nomination form is being sent to faculty. Responses must be in by 25 November. The Klein Committee consists of Professor Joanne Miller (Provost's representative), Professor Arun Bansil (2002 Klein Lecturer), and Professor Lowndes (SAC Chair).
- F. **Senate Meeting Changes.** Please note that the November 25 Senate meeting will be held in 308 Snell Engineering instead of the Raytheon Amphitheater, and that the tentatively scheduled December 9 meeting will not take place
- G. **Next Meeting:** November 18 in the Raytheon Amphitheater, 240 Egan.

Professor Sherman asked whether University College's postponement in converting to semesters would affect students who take evening courses and transfer them in. Vice Provost Meservey responded that the School of General Studies would go to the semester model along with the part-time evening and weekend courses that University College offers. The only area that will be out of alignment is the spring quarter for UC, which will overlap over the spring semester and the first summer session. That will allow for flexibility in being able to offer courses to students who need a trailer to keep their curriculum on track.

Provost Abdelal, in response to a question as to how long the postponement would be, indicated that he would like to see stabilization following semester conversion for all our programs. The experience of many institutions is that that takes longer than a year.

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

- A. **Presentations to the Board.** The Provost's Office made two presentations to the Board of Trustees last month. Both were well-received. The first presentation focused on graduate programs, to review where we are and to talk about the role of graduate programs in achieving our goal of being in the top 100. Also discussed was the strategy to strengthen graduate programs. A key point was the significance and great overlap between graduate programs and research. Whenever we talk about strengthening one, it usually has to be in synergy with the other.

The second presentation focused on where we are at NU in terms of our research programs and research centers, and our strategy for strengthening research.

- B. **Semester Transition.** One of the major challenges in implementing the plans for semester transition has been in finding that graduating seniors in certain colleges, particularly those that have structured curricula, are going to graduate faster than had been anticipated. This means that the enrollments during the coming year would suffer as a consequence, as students take only one semester in their senior year. Therefore, we will have to accept certain losses in revenue, particularly in Business and Engineering, and to some extent in Bouvé. We also need to consider what changes we might apply or implement in terms of the transition years. Transition years are defined as those years in which students who were accepted under the quarter system proceed to graduation under the semester system. The transition years will extend to 3-4 years beyond next year, and the Deans Council has been discussing ideas for changes that might apply during those years.

A second wrinkle in terms of implementation of the conversion is that a significant number of the 4-credit-hour quarter courses will satisfy the requirements of 4-credit-hour semester courses. This means that students will satisfy their degree requirements with fewer credit hours but more hours that they can take as electives. Each department needs to make sure that the electives are sufficiently defined in order to protect the academic integrity of the program.

Part-time programs frequently suffer enrollment decline simply because students look at the calendar and are not sure how they want to register. Provost Abdelal urged all departments and graduate directors to be rigorous in terms of recruitment in the part-time graduate and professional programs. He noted that other problems might arise that also must be actively managed in order to protect the academic integrity of our programs and our total enrollments, as well as our revenue base, during the transition years.

C. **Budget.** Provost Abdelal noted that, from the perspective of his office, four areas of the budget need attention. These are salaries, new faculty lines, operational budgets for departments, and allocation for managing enrollment.

1. **Faculty Salaries.** Provost Abdelal reported that he was starting with the departmental matchmate study that was developed last year and would work to refine those matchmates.
2. **Faculty Lines.** While he did not know how much money would be available this year, Provost Abdelal indicated that it is clear that we need to invest resources in faculty lines in order to enhance our academic programs.
3. **Operational Budget.** The only way to improve the operational budget is to invest in some resources every year. In order to protect against loss of enrollment during the semester conversion, Provost Abdelal would like his office to work very actively with enrollment services and with the deans. Once we identify a major that is of interest to students and have determined that the applicant pool has sufficiently qualified students, we can respond to that student interest.
4. **Allocation for Managing Enrollment.** The ideal way to ask a department to add courses is to tell them beforehand what you will provide in terms of resources. Accordingly, Provost Abdelal will argue for an "unmet demand budget" in order to respond to student interest and needs. Information Services is modifying the registration software so that we can respond to registration bottlenecks in which students attempt unsuccessfully to register for courses.

#### IV. Question and Discussion Time.

- A. Professor Bruns asked where the money would come from for faculty lines and how they would be chosen. Provost Abdelal replied that this idea is open for discussion and revision. He will listen to the university community and work with deans in developing departmental workloads to get an understanding of workloads in each department. The sizing report can be useful at the departmental level rather than at the college level. The University needs a shared vision between university leadership and the leadership of the colleges in terms of workloads so that we will not have to argue about priorities every year. The elements include the general responsibility toward education, undergraduate majors, and graduate programs. While it is obvious that more relevant academic standards will have to come into the mix, he hoped to get the departmental profile established and agreed upon by the dean of each college and the Provost's Office.
- B. Professor Vaughn asked whether the trustees might be persuaded that the one-time semester conversion costs should not come out of the operating budget. Provost Abdelal responded that the trustees are concerned because the endowment, which would be the source of the one-time cost, has gone down because of the stock market. A discussion with the financial planning committee was illuminating because of the concern about our endowment to debt ratio. They would like the debt to endowment ratio to be less than one, and they are concerned that it is higher than that now. Other than a benefactor contributing several millions of dollars, we have a significant problem with the drop in the endowment. Less money will be available in the coming year, but hopefully this will not be the case in the following two years of transition.

Professor Vaughn suggested focusing on the demand for transfer students. Vice President Mantella noted that this merits consideration. Her office has started to compile winter renewals, which can become effective in a semester when we align more with community colleges and four-year transfers. We are sensitive to demographic change and have been discussing that with the freshman enrollment number and the re-pricing of the semester, along with other issues.

- C. Professor Ellis asked what thought was being given to the part-time programs at the Lowell Institute and courses that are also taken in University College. Vice Provost Meservey replied that she had spoken with SET Director Walter Buchanan and Dean Soyster and that core courses like Physics would be offered on a semester model for the Lowell students. Students would be able to take their electives in the spring and winter quarters so that they would be more readily transferable to semesters. Every effort will be made to accommodate the Lowell Institute and to maintain as much flexibility as possible.

Provost Abdelal pointed out that, while the University's enrollment has been stable, UC enrollments have been declining. Understandably, the concern was in introducing a new, and possibly destabilizing, element into a situation that already was not stable. The postponement will allow time to stabilize UC before its shift to semesters.

- D. Professor Herman asked whether UC classes would begin at the same time as the classes in the semester-based part of the University. Vice Provost Meservey responded that UC students might prefer starting class right after Labor Day and finishing by Thanksgiving, but this possibility will be explored further.
- E. Professor Ondrechen reported that janitors had erased all the whiteboards and blackboards in her building, and this had caused much consternation among faculty. She had lost valuable data and work in progress. She expressed concern that certain areas of the University not under the Provost's Office are not responsive to faculty. She asked that individuals in areas that affect faculty be advised that they should be accountable and respectful to faculty. Provost Abdelal responded that he was not sure to whom those contractors report but, if she would send an E-mail to his office, he would direct it to the appropriate person.

- V. **Financial Affairs Committee Report.** Professor Wallin, Chair of the Financial Affairs Committee (FAC), corrected Resolution #2, last line, to read "two academic years" instead of "three academic years". He then moved all three resolutions, and the motion was seconded. The resolutions read as follows:

**Resolution #1**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate supports the recommendation of the Financial Affairs Committee to seek a 4% merit raise for the 2003-2004 academic year based of the expectation of 2% inflation, plus the need for an extra 2% to provide real salary increases for faculty.**

**Resolution #2**

**BE IT RESOLVED that, given the significant salary shortfall that has developed over the last decade between Northeastern and the average of national category I private universities, the Faculty Senate supports the recommendation of the Financial Affairs Committee to urge the President and Board of Trustees to adopt a compensation policy that will move the University to average salary levels at or above those of national category I private universities. To this end we propose that there be an equity/market adjustment raise pool of at least \$2.25 million for each of the next two academic years.**

**Resolution #3**

**BE IT RESOLVED that, given the university's use of department level matchmates for purposes of equity/market adjustments, the Office of the Provost report to the Faculty Senate on the process that was followed for determining matchmates, the resultant equity/market adjustment distributions at an appropriate level of detail, and any implications for salary adjustments in the future.**

Professor Wallin thanked the members of the committee for their diligent work. The theme that runs through the report is the attainment of top-100 status, which sometimes gets lost in the discussions of pre-selectivity, financial aid matters, improved campus environment, and general marketing of universities. Improvement of academic reputation, both generally and in the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings, rely heavily on faculty productivity and visibility, and improved retention in graduation rates, all of which can best be achieved by having faculty who care about, and are involved with, students. As faculty, we accept President Freeland's challenge to achieve excellence in all we do, and, as faculty are the main work force, compensation must be commensurate to the task in order to attract, develop, and retain highly qualified faculty.

Last year's Financial Affairs Committee undertook a detailed study of resources according to faculty compensation. A series of meetings were held and, in order to foster agreement, lists exchanged of institutions with which to compare ourselves in terms of salaries. Near the end of the year the process was put in place to develop a list of department-level matchmate institutions, which hopefully determined both a relatively accurate amount of shortfall and the proper distribution.

Table 1 (p. 2) shows the overall share of university resources dedicated to tenure and tenure-track faculty salaries. Faculty salaries went from 18% of the University's operating budget in fiscal year 1991 to 11.8% in fiscal year 2001. Although the budget was increasing, faculty salaries were declining in terms of percentage. On average, it appears that other universities were not following suit, so that the decline in the relative share of these resources, according to the faculty salaries, has produced salary shortfalls in comparison to similar institutions.

Table 2 (p. 3) shows our standing relative to Category I private institutions. The committee calculated shortfalls by rank. The cumulative shortfall grew dramatically from \$754,650 in fiscal 1991 to over \$6M in fiscal 2001. Professor Wallin pointed out that the salary data in the report were not adjusted for cost-of-living increases, which would substantially increase the size of the deficit. The reason for the decline was documented last year by the Financial Affairs Committee, and our relative position is that merit and equity raises for tenure and tenure-track faculty lag behind the market drops in 1990.

Table 3 (pp. 3-4) shows the yearly percentage change in average salary by rank in 1990-2000. Faculty who were here in the 1990s recall that faculty were asked to accept 0% pay increases, and in one year a delayed salary increase, first in response to the enrollment crisis of the early '90s, and then as part of the "smaller but better" plan. The University became more selective and reduced the size of the entering class, and then faculty agreed that it was important to increase financial aid. Again, faculty agreed, with the understanding that their sacrifices would be rewarded when the financial picture of the University brightened. Resolution #1 merely seeks to ensure that we do not fall further behind.

Last year's FAC agreed, because of the \$6M shortfall, not to ask for compensation all at once but rather, to ask for at least \$2M over a period of three years. The University took a significant step toward closing the gap by funding the 4% merit increase and by allocating \$1.5M for faculty market adjustment. While the FAC applauded that effort, only \$1.5M of the roughly \$6M shortfall was actually funded, and \$4.5M remains, without any cost-of-living increase. Resolution #2 seeks to raise faculty morale and reward faculty for the increasing amount of work they are doing to take better care of students and improve Northeastern's position in the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings. Our ranking in the category of faculty resources has fallen from 96th in 1996 to 195th in 2003.

The FAC is very encouraged and appreciative of the steps that were taken last year by the administration. However, the committee believes strongly that a 4% merit pool and equity market adjustment of \$2.25M for a fiscal pool would move us closer to our goal. Resolution #3 seeks a report on the process for determining matchmates during 2002, to include an explanation of any procedure proposed to take into account the effect of cost-of-living differences on salary adjustments.

Discussion followed.

Professor Platt noted that the salary numbers in Table 1 did not add up to total salaries. Provost Abdelal replied that the instructional salaries add lecturers, part-time instructors, summer compensation, and administrative compensation to the regular faculty. Professor Platt asked where Co-op salaries fit into the mix.

Professor Kane asked for clarification. His primary concern was that the report and resolutions would, by implication, impact only the professoriate. The 2.2T Co-op faculty professoriate would be included in the resolutions; however, if not specifically included, a large segment of the teaching faculty, i.e., the 2.7 non-tenured education specialists (39-week contracts) and the 2.9 coordinators (52-week contracts) would be disenfranchised. Individuals in these categories have traditionally been included in the merit and equity pools, and this should not change with passage of the resolutions. Provost Abdelal responded that only those in tenured or tenure-track positions would be included. Lecturers and 2.7 or 2.9 positions would be included in the Instructional Salaries category and would be part of the pool.

Professor Kane took a broader view, that not only Co-op but a whole group of people, including educational specialists in Engineering and Arts and Sciences, who might be excluded. Professor Lowndes responded that Senate resolutions on faculty salaries have traditionally related only to the professoriate. Professor Wray confirmed that in recent years the Co-op faculty have partaken equally of both the merit and equity pools. He hoped this would continue in the future.

Vice Provost Meservey's perception was that parallel activities were conducted between the FAC and the Matchmate Committee, and she asked for an update. Professor Morrison, who co-chaired the Committee on Funding Priorities (CFP) last year, reported that the Matchmate Committee met in the spring, much the same as was done in this round, but time had run out in the spring and the committee did not have time to address the cost-of-living issue or how to adjust for cost of living. During the summer, Mark Putnam had developed an analysis of the relation between salaries and cost of living. That report was issued a month ago but has not come back to the Matchmate Committee because that committee was adjourned and needs to be re-formed.

Vice Provost Meservey noted that what was appropriate might vary by department. She suggested exploring appropriate matchmates for a department and getting a sense of the salary goal from that process rather than the analysis that was done by the FAC. Professor Wallin responded that the FAC had been working with the data available and had received Mr. Putnam's analysis only a week ago. He expressed concern that time had been lost in obtaining data from University Planning and the Budget Office and that we might have the same problem as last year. If, on the other hand, agreement is reached next year on the department-level matchmates and it shows significant change in the equity shortfall, perhaps a resolution could be presented that would temper the \$2.25M recommendation.

Professor Bruns asked whether the FAC had any information from last year's matchmate study. Professor Vaughn responded that the FAC had received a distribution with 125 categories, from which 35-40% were a bit ahead and the remaining 60% were seriously behind.

Professor Lowndes believed that the best way to determine the equity needs was by using departmental matchmate data, but he did not think a satisfactory process was yet in place to do this. Neither the cost of living analysis nor the matchmate data were in sufficiently final form to calculate the total equity needed. As a member of the Matchmate Committee, he had recommended a closer review on the matchmates used last year and noted the need for improved criteria by which appropriate matchmates are selected. In any event, the departmental matchmate data had not been available to FAC in a timely fashion and so FAC had properly proceeded with institutional comparisons. Since the FAC resolutions for equity for this year were less than the preliminary departmental equity calculations, there was no need to argue about methodology for this year's equity round and the FAC's numbers based on institutional comparisons could reasonably be used.

Professor Ondrechen pointed out that, as we are a Category II school with a Category IV size professoriate and a Category IV size faculty compensation, it is difficult to envision how we might make the top 100 if we stay in the bottom quartile in the faculty resources category. She urged the Senate to act and not wait for additional data.

Vice Provost Meservey thought that, while in all likelihood there is a gap, we should look for a balanced goal in future expectations. We want to provide a market adjustment for faculty to the extent that the budget will allow, but the report inflates to some degree what our final number would be because not every department will fall into the highest category. Professor Lowndes corrected earlier comments by pointing out that the committee's data did not refer to Research Category I, which was an earlier Carnegie classification describing the top 90 research institutions, but rather to the new Carnegie Category 1 classification which now includes most doctoral graduate granting institutions, and hence is a much larger group of institutions and a reasonable comparison group. Professor Ellis added that Category I institutions now are doctoral intensive and doctoral extensive, that is, all the institutions that confer doctorates.

Professor Herman pointed out that the discussion was about average salaries, which means it will be differential on the basis of department quality and other factors. He urged passage of the resolutions because it is clear that the shortfall at least equals what the resolutions request in the coming year. If it turns out that some adjustment is needed, that can be effected in the following year.

Vice President Mantella, referring to Table 1, asked if an actual or budget basis of the next two cycles had been considered. Professor Wallin replied that he had not had a chance to discuss that data with the Budget Director, who had taken self-sustaining activities, such as dormitories, out of the budget, so he did not have new numbers and could not compare them.

Vice President Mantella indicated that she assumed the numbers were not cumulative and asked whether it was reasonable to forget about trying to make up for what had been lost in the past decade. Professor Flym responded that he did not consider that a rhetorical question because a large amount of money was under discussion, and none of it was on the table. He thought that the discussion was really about catching up, to some extent. It would help faculty morale and would help to get faculty harnessed to the task of reaching for the top 100. Professor Wallin added that the FAC did not calculate the lost benefits, which would further inflate the numbers.

Dean Greene suggested, as a friendly amendment to Resolution #2, to insert, "based on comparisons conducted by both the Senate and the University." He also suggested modifying the language to suggest that the comparisons could be larger, with the dollar amount relatively agreed upon by both studies, to be extended into the next year and revisited, if necessary, to correct any errors. Professor Wallin responded that the committee was working with the data at hand, since it did not have anything officially approved by the Matchmate Committee. Also, the committee was not actually budgeting. Last year the FAC asked for \$2M and received \$1.5M, so the figures are not locked in. Decisions will be made by the CFP and the Budget Committee. He would prefer to go forward with the recommendations on the floor and make any adjustments next year, after the other processes have played out.

Professor Bruns called the question.

Vote on cloture: PASSED, 30-1.

Vote on Resolution #1: PASSED, 31-0.

Vote on Resolution #2: PASSED, 24-5-1.

Vote on Resolution #3: PASSED, 31-0.

Adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John G. Flym  
Secretary, Faculty Senate