

November 18, 2002

## Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 11/18/2002

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TO: FACULTY SENATE  
FROM: DEE VIGEANT, for the SENATE AGENDA COMMITTEE  
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2002-2003 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 18 NOVEMBER 2002

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Present: (Professors) Alper, Alverson, Baclawski, Barnes, Bruns, Ellis, Gilmore, Herman, Hope, Kane, Lowndes, Platt, Powers-Lee, Serafim, Shafai, Sherman, Vaughn, Wallin, Wertheim, Wray  
(Administrators) Abdelal, Greene, Mantella, Meservey, Onan, Pantalone, Putnam, Stellar, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Aroian, Bannister, Brookins, Flym, Hall, Khaw, Metghalchi, Morrison, Ondrechen, Rotella, Sherwood  
(Administrators) Soyster

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

- I. **Minutes.** The minutes of 21 October were sent to the President for review, and the minutes of 4 November are in progress.
- II. **SAC Report.** Professor Lowndes reported the following.
  - A. **Meetings.** SAC met twice since the last Senate meeting, and once with the Financial Affairs Committee in preparation for the Committee on Funding Priorities meeting next week, at which Professor Wallin will present faculty merit raise and equity issues.
  - B. **Website.** The Senate Website can be accessed from the NU Home Page Quick Links by selecting "Faculty Senate" or at the website address [www.facultysenate.neu.edu](http://www.facultysenate.neu.edu). Materials and reports of this year and archives from last year are available on the website. The goal is to use this year as a transition to go non-hardcopy when we become comfortable with the electronic process. SAC would welcome comments on this initiative.
  - C. **Today's Business.** The Handbook draft resolutions will be discussed and voted *seriatim*, followed at the conclusion by an overall vote. Additional discussion and changes may take place at that time. After final approval by the Senate, a faculty referendum will likely be conducted, given the enormity of the changes involved.
  - D. **Next Meeting:** 25 November in 308 Snell Engineering.
- III. **Provost's Report.** Provost Abdelal reported the following.
  - A. **Semester Conversion.** The semester conversion process is continuing. Departments are working to review electives. The transformation of credit from quarter to semester for current students is translating into so many credit hours that the courses themselves can frequently be satisfied in new course requirements. This would mean that students could satisfy their degree requirements with substantially fewer credit hour courses. Therefore, departments need to review their electives to make sure what the intent is with the new curriculum, and what happens with the proportion of credit hours in various areas. The Provost's Office is working with deans and departments on this and to see whether it would be appropriate to consider 132 credits instead of 138 as a minimum for the transition students.

It is important to recognize that, as we have transitional curricula, we need also to consider transitional Co-op factors.

- B. **Matchmate Refinement Committee.** Provost Abdelal and Professor Morrison, co-chairs of the Matchmate Refinement Committee, have started with the work done last year in the hope of refining that analysis further within the next two months.

#### IV. **Question and Discussion Time.**

- A. Professor Alper referred to an incident that arose during a recent visit by Executive Vice Provost Pantalone to his department to present the calendar for the spring term. She highlighted the fact that there is a spring break scheduled only for undergraduate students, with the expectation that graduate classes would continue during that week. Provost Abdelal indicated that he was not aware of any discussion on this topic. Executive Vice Provost Pantalone answered that this issue dated back to the Report of the Senate Ad Hoc Semester Calendar Committee, which was chaired by Professor Cipolla. In response to Provost Abdelal's query as to where the calendar originated, Executive Vice Provost Pantalone replied that it came from that committee's report, which the faculty had voted to approve.

Professor Ellis expressed surprise and noted that the matter had not been discussed by the steering committee. He asked whether graduate students would have an extra week of instruction. Executive Vice Provost Pantalone responded that the feeling in the Cipolla Committee was that full-time and part-time graduate and UC students would be here, and their work would not be disrupted. Provost Abdelal noted that this all comes under what he would call integration of the various recommendations and decisions coming from various committees. The semester conversion is an ongoing process in which issues need to be addressed as they arise, and either affirmed or revised.

- B. Professor Herman reported that the new supplementary life insurance policy for faculty at good rates had been the subject of an exposé on *60 Minutes*, which disclosed that the company was unwilling to pay claims. Provost Abdelal replied that HRM should be made aware of this.
- C. Professor Sherman asked the rationale for the spring break issue. Executive Vice Provost Pantalone responded that, since part-time students do not go on break anyway, why disrupt their learning by time off in the middle of the term, whereas, throughout the country undergraduates go on spring break. The committee's focus had been on undergraduate issues. She added that, nationwide, that seems to be the norm.
- D. Professor Vaughn recommended elimination of Monday holidays, which also disrupt schedules. Provost Abdelal pointed out that he would like to have the opportunity to review these issues from his perspective and then see what the timeline is. A number of issues relating to the calendar need to be put in place, and he would review the committee's report in order to make a determination on the next steps.
- E. Professor Shafai asked whether undergraduate and graduate students would start classes at different times. Executive Vice Provost Pantalone replied that, depending on the terms, the goal was to have all classes begin on Mondays.
- F. Professor Hope reported that colleagues were concerned about the matchmate configuration and asked what the group would be looking at. Provost Abdelal responded that the premise behind the matchmate analysis is to match each academic department with a group of peer administration departments in the country. His understanding was that last year each chair made a recommendation of the peer administration group and then held a discussion with the Provost's Office, which often required some revision of the initial recommendation. The result was that we now have ten matchmates for each department; the recommendation from the department is reviewed by the dean and then the Provost's Office. That analysis was done last year under pressure of time, but this year we have the benefit of starting with a base that can be refined.

Dr. Putnam added that the study was done on the basis of college and university personnel association data from fiscal 2000-2001, so the salaries were reported in the fall of 2000. Although the matchmates were selected at the department level, there are mixed feelings about them. The committee was limited in the first level to those that participated in the study. The resulting concern was that too much aspiration had been attached

to the institutions selected, and therefore unevenness occurred across departments. The matchmate committee then suggested continuing to look at the department level but at two comparative groups for each department, one that would be defined as a peer group and another defined as an aspirational group, in the hope that the committee would be able to calculate what gaps may exist. The matchmate committee study was completed over the summer and early fall. It relied on available data and calculated a new gap in the salary pool university-wide, then applied a cost-of-living adjustment based on the analysis that incorporated a portion of the difference in the original cost of living. The matchmate committee is to be reconvened, and it will review that analysis as set out in the next steps for proceeding.

G. Professor Vaughn suggested that winter closings be announced on the University's web page as well as in the usual ways.

V. **Ad Hoc Handbook Review Committee Report.** Resolution #3 was on the floor. It read as follows:

**BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approves the Section VI.A preamble paragraphs and Sections VI.A.1 and VI.A.2 presented in the Revised Draft (4/30/02) from the *ad hoc* Committee to Review the Faculty Handbook, to go into effect when published in the revised edition of the *Faculty Handbook*.**

Professor Ellis reminded the body that Professor Alper's amendment was on the floor. The amendment was to delete the following text from the first paragraph of VI.A.2 about faculty utterances: deleting the sentence, "**Faculty should at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and distinguish their own independent judgments and opinions from those of their institution.**"

Professor Herman distributed copies of the AAUP's "1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure." He pointed out that the language under discussion was in fact from the text of the Statement. He added that the AAUP does not suggest that an institution has its own positions; it just says that one is not speaking for the institution, but that is not the same as saying one is distinguishing one's own judgments from those of the institution.

Motion. Professor Onan suggested a friendly amendment, to substitute the following for "**and distinguish their own independent judgments and opinions from those of their institution**": "**and make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.**"

Professor Alper responded that he would accept the substitution as a friendly amendment if the whole paragraph could be replaced.

Professor Herman pointed out that paragraphs (a) and (b) of the Statement pertain to what faculty do within the classroom; paragraph (c) pertains to what they do outside the classroom. The wording is an attempt to combine the three paragraphs. He added that there are issues on which the University does have an opinion, such as federal or financial aid and real estate utilization policy. Faculty whose opinions are at variance with the institution's should simply make that difference clear.

Motion. Professor Vaughn suggested, after "**With the right of academic freedom**", deletion of the text to the end of the paragraph and substitution of the language of item (c) from the AAUP Statement. Professor Alper accepted this as a friendly amendment.

Professor Ellis pointed out that the deletion should not include the last sentence of the paragraph.

Professor Vaughn agreed that the following text should be retained: "**Faculty should, at all times, adhere to professional standards of conduct.**"

Professor Vaughn pointed out that this change would necessitate a footnote. Professor Ellis assured him that this could be handled editorially.

Vote on Professor Alper's amendment: PASSED, 23-0.

As amended, the entire paragraph reads:

**From the beginning of their careers, faculty enjoy academic freedom – the right to teach, study, and engage in research toward the end of transmitting, evaluating and extending knowledge, under conditions permitting independence of thought and expression. In the words of the United States Supreme Court, "Teachers and students must always remain free to inquire, to study, to evaluate, to gain new maturity and understanding; otherwise our civilization will stagnate and die." With the right of academic freedom, faculty members also assume its responsibilities. The AAUP 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure says of faculty, "When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution."**

Professor Ellis noted that the paragraph following the one being discussed derives from the current *Academic Operations Manual* but was originally placed in the old *Faculty Handbook* before it was reconfigured into two documents. The committee thought this the best place for it. In the following paragraph, the committee deleted, "**As a student centered research university,**" as unnecessary and to make the Handbook more timeless.

Vote on Resolution #3, with amendments to the section: PASSED, 23-0-1.

Professor Ellis moved Resolution #4, and the motion was seconded. The resolution read as follows:

**BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approves Section VIA.3 (Performance Expectations) presented in the Revised Draft (4/30/02) from the *ad hoc* Committee to Review the Faculty Handbook, to go into effect when published in the revised edition of the *Faculty Handbook*.**

Professor Ellis explained that the committee had reordered the items in this section, primarily for linguistic reasons, using some language from the earlier Handbook and some from the draft of the previous committee.

Professor Onan suggested keeping the order of teaching and service consistent with the workload policy (p. 11, section 6, paragraph 2, line 1).

Professor Lowndes questioned the placement of "**Teaching**" after "**Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity**" (item a, p. 3) since this was a change from the original Handbook, and he wondered whether this sent out a wrong message. Professor Ellis explained that the committee felt it would be consistent with the top-100 goal and with the actuality that scholarship, research, and creative activity tend to weigh heavily in tenure and promotion decisions.

Professor Alper expressed concern that the sentence, "**Good teaching includes, as applicable, the following indications of teaching effectiveness**" (p.4, item b, paragraph 1) was followed by "**Appropriateness of subject matter, approach and evaluation methods**" (item b.3). Professor Vaughn responded that the exercise of academic freedom with regard to appropriateness of material would not, for example, include teaching thermodynamics in a course on electromagnetic theory. Professor Ellis added that items 1-6 came from the existing Handbook and replace what the previous committee proposed.

Professor Herman noted that the appropriateness of issues does not always hinge on teaching the course as advertised. There have been situations in which teachers have dealt graphically with personal issues instead of

presenting course material. While some issues are subject to interpretation and/or inquiry, he did not think academic freedom would suffer from that or from peer evaluations.

Professor Wertheim referred to item 5 (p. 4) and asked what the "**independent mechanisms**" were for evaluation of teaching. Professor Herman replied that no unit should rely on a single evaluative input. Different courses may require different kinds of evaluations, so that it seemed better to be as general as possible and thus encompass a broad spectrum of courses.

Motion. Professor Vaughn moved to transpose items 1) and 2) on page 4. This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Motion. Professor Wallin moved to transpose sections a and b as they appear in the draft. The two sections had been transposed previously to denote "**Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity**" before "**Teaching**." The motion was seconded. Professor Ellis pointed out that, while he could accept the change, a vote would put the Senate's position clearly on the record.

There being no objection, the Senate turned to a vote.

Vote on Professor Wallin's amendment: PASSED, 21-3-1.

Vote on Resolution #4, with amendments to the section: PASSED, 24-0-0.

Professor Ellis moved Resolution #5, and the motion was seconded. The resolution read as follows:

**BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approves Section VI.A.4 (Appointment and Review) presented in the Revised Draft (4/30/02) from the *ad hoc* Committee to Review the Faculty Handbook, to go into effect when published in the revised edition of the *Faculty Handbook*.**

Professor Ellis explained that this section covers a number of areas from the beginning of one's career at Northeastern, rules about joint appointments, and the annual merit review process. Section e is the statement on discipline, which has been modified from the previous committee's version, with the current Handbook's language returned: "The University has the inherent right to discipline a faculty member for just cause."

Executive Vice Provost Pantalone asked whether, in paragraph 2 of section 4.a (p. 6), the committee had covered a unit that had terms running from the fall to the spring. Professor Herman pointed out that the Law School was on a different schedule, which was the reason for including the word "normally."

Motion. Executive Vice Provost Pantalone moved to replace "**the fall and spring semesters**" with "**terms running from the fall through the spring**". This was accepted as a friendly amendment. Professor Herman pointed out that this change would necessitate modifying the footnote.

Professor Alper expressed concern about the next paragraph, which stated, "**Offers to join the tenure-track or tenured faculty are made by the Provost in writing . . . but are for one academic year only.**" Professor Herman responded that the trustees will not countenance more than a single-year contract for any purpose (employment is but one area), and they are very firm about it. Provost Abdelal added that one-year faculty contracts are a common custom.

Professor Wertheim asked whether, in the next sentence, the wording, "**With the approval of their unit head and dean, faculty may elect to adjust their academic year to encompass a period outside fall through spring**", meant that faculty could teach fall and summer and not the spring. Professor Ellis replied in the affirmative.

Professor Wertheim then asked the meaning of the following sentence, which read, "**They may also elect to teach in the summer for additional compensation**". Professor Ellis explained that the first sentence Professor Wertheim

referenced meant that faculty could have their regular loads encompass a period like the summer, for which there would not be extra compensation. The following sentence meant that a faculty member could elect to teach in the summer, in addition to the teaching load, for extra compensation.

Provost Abdelal interjected that the language should be reconsidered because, under the semester system, the summer will no longer be equivalent to a semester. Professor Herman noted that the steering committee believed that someone could elect to teach in summer as part of a teaching load and teach both summer terms to create equivalency. Provost Abdelal thought that the language should make this clear.

Professor Onan expressed concern that, with the semester calendar, the two minimesters in a summer lie in different fiscal years, which would be a problem for budgeting within a unit.

Provost Abdelal suggested sending Section VI.A.4 back to the committee for clarification.

Motion. Professor Herman suggested replacing the last sentence in paragraph 2 with the following: **"With the approval of the unit head and dean, faculty may also elect to teach in an additional term for additional compensation."** He added that this change would mean a change in the footnote. The motion was accepted as a friendly amendment.

In response to several questions about summer options, Professor Herman pointed out that this is all subject to approval by the unit head and the dean, so there will be flexibility within the system. What it is really meant to do is establish parameters such that a faculty member can be required to do something beyond the regular load, but it also defines what a minimum load is for equivalency's sake. If a dean or group coordinator were to say a faculty member is needed to teach three of these sections or two of those sections in the second half of the summer, and none in the first, they would simply establish the load, but the point is that two courses in one half of the summer would be the equivalent of one course in each half of the summer.

Provost Abdelal added that the difficulty is that teaching is only one of the responsibilities of faculty members. If we shift the teaching responsibility to one summer term, because it is a term, it is half as long as a semester, and the service and research expectations would be reduced.

Motion. Professor Vaughn thought the language awkward and suggested, instead of repeating the phrase, simply saying, **"with the approval of the department head . . . fall through spring"**. This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Motion. Professor Herman suggested combining the penultimate and last sentences to read: **"With the approval of their unit head and dean, faculty may elect to adjust their academic year to encompass a period outside fall through spring and/or they may elect to teach in an additional term for additional compensation."**

Professor Alverson asked whether faculty could hold an appointment at another institution. Professor Herman replied that a faculty member is not precluded from teaching at another institution but is prohibited from holding a full-time position, with or without tenure, simultaneously at another institution.

Professor Sherman asked what would happen if no faculty want to teach a summer course. Professor Herman responded that this replaces a section in the current salary policy that prohibits faculty from teaching more than seven quarters in a row. Both committees decided that the rule need not be as proprietary as that. It is better to simply allow faculty to decide whether they want to teach more and then leave it to the units to decide what is appropriate.

Motion. Professor Sherman, for consistency, suggested adding **"Instructor"** in paragraph 1, sentence 2, to read: **"All full-time faculty appointments at rank of Instructor, Assistant Professor, or higher are either tenure-track, tenured, or terminal appointments for an academic year."** This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Ellis pointed out that "**tenure-track or tenured faculty**" replaces the old term "**Teaching Faculty**" throughout the Handbook.

Professor Lowndes revisited the question asked earlier by Professor Sherman, which was, what happens if faculty decline to teach during the summer. Provost Abdelal responded that, normally, summer appointments are optional for faculty. He was not aware of any institution at which faculty are required to teach in summer. It is usually decided by mutual interest and budgetary considerations, and most often budgetary consideration is what actually determines how much teaching is done by the regular faculty and how much by adjunct faculty. He would try to discourage deans from agreeing to faculty replacing a regular semester with summer because he believed that faculty are needed during the academic year doing the teaching, research, and service, and it is difficult to compensate for that with summer.

Professor Gilmore expressed concern that engineering students who need a course such as differential equations would be seriously challenged in a six-week term, and ordinary students even more so. Provost Abdelal noted that the answers will be difficult because all universities struggle with what courses to offer in the summer and how to staff them. The practice of using adjunct faculty or lecturers is more widespread in the summer.

Professor Vaughn suggested that, as students want as much of regular faculty in summer as in regular terms, those faculty might be induced to teach in summer if they could have non-summer time off. Provost Abdelal responded that more money would be a partial answer. If sufficient revenue were generated in summer, the summer budget could be augmented.

Professor Ellis pointed out that at the top of page 8 and, wherever "**TCEP evaluations**" appears, it is replaced by "**University's student evaluations**", to allow for whatever the forthcoming new evaluation system is to be called. Also, on the same page, the last sentence of item **c** has been deleted in response to the Senate's earlier action to eliminate any "post-tenure review" language.

Professor Onan referred to the last sentence on page 8, in which the word "**will**" was replaced by **may**" before "**result in discipline**", and asked what kind of failure to fulfill contractual obligations would prevent disciplinary action. Professor Ellis responded that the infraction might be deemed minor and could be resolved without formal disciplinary measures; it is discretionary.

Motion. Executive Vice Provost Pantalone called the question.

Vote on cloture: PASSED, 24-0-1.

Vote on Resolution #5, with amendments to the section: PASSED, 24-0-2.

Adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee Vigeant  
For the Senate Agenda Committee