

November 25, 2002

## Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 11/25/2002

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TO: FACULTY SENATE  
FROM: JOHN G. FLYM, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE  
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2002-2003 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 25 NOVEMBER 2002

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Present: (Professors) Alper, Alverson, Aroian, Bannister, Barnes, Bruns, Ellis, Flym, Gilmore, Hall, Herman, Hope, Kane, Lowndes, Metghalchi, Morrison, Ondrechen, Platt, Powers-Lee, Rotella, Serafim, Shafai, Sherman, Vaughn, Wallin, Wertheim, Wray  
(Administrators) Abdelal, Meservey, Onan, Putnam, Soyster

Absent: (Professors) Baclawski, Brookins, Khaw, Sherwood  
(Administrators) Greene, Mantella, Pantalone, Stellar, Zoloth

Convened by Provost Abdelal at 11:50 a.m.

I. **Minutes.** The minutes of 4 and 18 November were in progress.

II. **SAC Report.** Professor Lowndes reported the following.

A. **Meetings.** SAC has met once since the last Senate meeting. This meeting was with President Freeland, Provost Abdelal, and Special Assistant Kay Onan. The meeting focused exclusively on seventeen resolutions adopted by the 2001-02 Faculty Senate that had either not been approved or for which no action had yet been taken by the President. As a result of the meeting, thirteen of these have been approved or approved with modifications. Of the remaining four resolutions, three or possibly four will come back to the Senate in revised form. The four resolutions concerned and the responses by the President are:

4/15/02 0102-20. Semester Conversion Resolution #7:

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

**For the purpose of tenure consideration, faculty who join the University on or after January 1 will not have that current academic year counted in the time toward tenure. (21-0-1)**

Action by President: Received Senate Office 11/22/02. Not approved 11/21/02: "I have discussed resolution 0102-20 with the Senate Agenda Committee and Provost Abdelal. I am concerned that this resolution, as stated, would potentially give an unfair advantage to a tenure-track person hired after the normal start of the year since he or she would have, by the time of tenure consideration, more time at Northeastern to produce scholarship than someone hired at the beginning of the Fall term. I would like to suggest language that would be more in keeping with the language used when leaves are proposed by tenure-track faculty members, e.g., *"When a faculty member joins the University later than the start of the Fall term, there will be a determination by the Provost, with input from the Dean, as to whether or not that academic year will count toward tenure consideration. This determination will be made on an individual basis."* Per Board Secretary, Trustee approval not required.

4/15/02 0102-21. Semester Conversion Resolution #8:

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

**In section IV.D.2.b on p. 70 of the *Faculty Handbook*, replace**

No faculty member, however, can be employed to teach for four academic quarters in successive years, except under extraordinary circumstances, and then only if such employment is approved in advance by the Provost.

with

Faculty cannot be required to teach extra terms beyond those in their basic appointments. (21-0-1)

Action by President: No response as of 11/22/02.

4/22/02 0101-24. Semester Conversion Resolution #11: Summer Teaching Compensation:

**WHEREAS**

**Our goal as a University is to have comparable teaching throughout the year,**

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**BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

**In section IV.D.2.b on p. 70 of the *Faculty Handbook*, replace**

**If members of this group (Teaching Faculty) accept appointment for an additional six weeks they receive an extra payment of up to a maximum of 1/6 of their base salary. If employment is for the full summer term, the payment is equal to 1/3 of base salary.**

with

**Faculty on academic-year appointments who accept additional appointments for a summer term will receive payment at the rate of a minimum of 1/5 of their base salary for the first course, and 1/6 for each additional course. Faculty are expected to deliver the course and complete necessary advising and faculty service. (20-10)**

Action by President: "Not Approved" 5/21/02 (received Senate Office 7/08/02).

6/03/02 0102-37. Academic Policy Committee Resolution #1 – Honors Program:

**BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approves the recommendation of the 2001-2002 Academic Policy Committee to structure the Honors Program with two levels of activity whereby (a) Honors Course Distinction requires completion of six 4-sh courses, two of which must be HNR courses that also provide release from college and/or major requirements and (b) College Honors Project Distinction requires completion of a college-specific 8-sh thesis, project or course-based option.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate recommends that the Provost work with the Honors Program Director and the Deans of the six Day Colleges to ensure that each of those units is able to provide sufficient compensation for faculty and departments for their participation in the Honors Program to support the level of commitment and delivery of services required to operate an optimal Honors Program. (27-1-4)**

Action by President: Received Senate Office 11/22/02. Not approved 11/21/02. "I feel that Provost Abdelal should have an opportunity to study and make recommendations about the Honors program." Per Board Secretary, Trustee approval not required.

**B. The next Senate meeting is next Monday, 2 December 2002, in the Raytheon Amphitheater.**

III. **Provost's Report.** Provost Abdelal reported that he had been working for the past two weeks on budget requests from the various units that report to the Provost's Office. He wanted to share his perspective on five critical areas in the academic sector, all of which need to be addressed.

- A. Faculty market adjustments. We need to offer competitive salaries based on market comparisons and merit.
- B. Faculty positions. We have significant understaffing of faculty in numerous academic units, and we are seriously understaffed in terms of faculty size. This is a situation that we need to correct every year, as needed.
- C. Critical staff positions. We need to improve staff support in a number of academic areas in order to provide assistance to faculty who are engaged in high-quality academic programs, whether they be instructional or research.
- D. Operating funds. Many units have operational budgets that are inadequate to support teaching and research programs. We need to regularize prior commitments and to have discretion at each level.
- E. Regularizing prior budget commitments. We have a number of one-time floating budget commitments. These are essential activities that are not regularly budgeted, such as the annual teaching evaluations and faculty awards.

Provost Abdelal invited Senators and faculty to contact him about their thoughts and said he would be willing to have open discussion on what is being done.

IV. **Question and Discussion Time.**

- A. Professor Herman referred to the President's responses to Senate resolutions and explained that, in terms of the various handbooks, the pagination does not correspond. However, Resolution #0102-20, regarding faculty who join the University after January 1, can be found in the current Handbook, section II.A.1, footnote 25. Resolution #0102-21, regarding salary arrangements, is in section IV.E.1.b.
- B. Professor Alper asked whether it is appropriate for the Agenda Committee to accept modifications to resolutions passed by the Senate without bringing them back for a revote. Professor Lowndes explained that the Agenda Committee did not formally accept anything. He thought it reasonable that, when the President approves a resolution "with modifications" that involve relatively minor changes, the Agenda Committee could decide to accept it. However, the Agenda Committee is beholden to the Senate, which elected its membership, if issues arise that merit further Senate action. If there is such an issue, it can be brought back to the Senate.
- C. Professor Wallin recalled that a year ago the *Voice* had reported a total of fifteen vice presidents. He asked whether that number had changed. Vice Provost Meservey explained that Daniel Bourque has been appointed Vice President of Facilities and will also take on the responsibilities of the former Vice President of Business. Professor Onan said that she would look into the matter and report back on whether the number of vice presidents has increased.
- D. Professor Wertheim reported that Vice President Pendergast is investigating the matter of the insurance company that had been profiled on *60 Minutes* and will report her findings to the Senate.

V. **Ad Hoc Handbook Review Committee Report.** Professor Ellis moved Resolution #6, and the motion was seconded. The resolution read as follows:

**BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approves Section VI.A.5 (Salary Adjustments) 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 noted that this section was written by the previous handbook committee, based on the section to which Professor Herman had just referred, and that committee had added two sections, one on market adjustments and one on bonus distributions.

Professor Onan, referring to page 10, paragraph 4, asked why the following sentence was deleted: "**Matchmates will be chosen by the Provost in consultation with the appropriate faculty, unit head, and dean.**" Professor Herman responded that, since changes occur over the years, it would be less limiting for matchmates to be determined by discussion at a particular point in time.

Professor Alper asked the difference between equity and market adjustment. Professor Vaughn replied that equity refers to comparisons within a unit in terms of salaries that fell behind those of people who came later. Market adjustment refers to comparisons of external sources.

Professor Ellis noted that the "market adjustments" category was devised by a previous provost to be able to distribute part of the raise outside the equity rules.

Provost Abdelal wondered whether it would be desirable to have that reference to matchmates be part of market adjustments rather than equity.

Professor Ondrechen wondered whether the market adjustment process had been designed to be separate from the equity process in the event of emergency situations, such as adjusting salary in order to retain a faculty member. Provost Abdelal explained that for the past two years the process has been that a certain amount of money was allocated and then, based on the matchmate analysis, the units made recommendations to the dean and the provost, without focusing on the fact that somebody had an offer from somewhere else.

Motion. Professor Alper moved to amend by deleting "**and market adjustment**" from page 9, section 5, paragraph 1, and section c from pages 10-11. There being no second, the discussion continued.

Professor Herman noted that, in creating a category for market adjustments two years ago, the scope of equity was narrowed.

Motion. Professor Herman moved to delete, "**adjusting salaries to those of similar units in comparable institutions**" at the end of paragraph 2 on page 10 because it is covered in section c on Market Adjustments. This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Provost Abdelal noted that his former institution had dealt with merit equity and market equity, merit being internal and market being external. Professor Herman concurred with the logic of this and added that a category might be created for equity, with subheadings for internal equity, or merit equity, and market adjustments, so that it would be clear that both were forms of equity.

Professor Lowndes pointed out that, since the terms under discussion had not actually been defined, perhaps market adjustments should not be included here.

Motion. Professor Vaughn moved to refer the resolution back to committee, to be rewritten so that it reflects this discussion. The motion was seconded.

Professor Herman responded to Professor Lowndes that market adjustments and bonuses were included because the previous handbook committee had been trying to fit them into the framework of the salary processes in effect at that time.

Vice Provost Meservey supported the motion to recommit and suggested that at some point bonuses be reconsidered.

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

Vote to recommit Resolution #6: PASSED, 31-0-0.

Professor Ellis moved Resolution #7, and the motion was seconded. The resolution read as follows:

**BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approves Section VI.A.6 (Workload Policies) 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 was a compilation of policies from both the Handbook and the Academic Operations Manual.

Professor Bruns asked the rationale for the new wording, "**Faculty teaching a regular course load should schedule a minimum of three one-hour conference periods per week.**" Professor Herman replied that the intent was to encourage faculty to be available at different times of the week to accommodate students with difficult schedules.

Professor Lowndes asked why the number of conference periods was not linked to the number of courses being taught. Professor Ellis responded that the old rules--one hour for each course--did not distinguish between faculty with teaching loads and faculty without teaching loads.

Professor Vaughn noted that, while it is clear that faculty should schedule enough conference hours to take care of their students, what constitutes a regular course load is ambiguous.

Dean Soyster disagreed with the notion of linking one conference hour with each course as too conservative in terms of outreach. If one is teaching three courses and holds conference hours at three different times of the week, it is possible that some students would not be able to meet at any of the three times. He would not like to have to explain that policy to the parents of prospective students.

Vice Provost Meservey also voiced concern. If one were not teaching in a particular term, one would not be required to have conference hours at all. Some of the richness in having a broad professoriate is that faculty are available, whether teaching a course or not, as a resource for all levels of teaching.

In response, Professor Ellis referred to the wording in section c on page 12, which read, "**During the contract period, all faculty will hold conference hours to meet the instructional and advising needs of their students.**"

Professor Ondrechen noted that she meets most of her students by appointment outside her posted conference hours.

Motion. Professor Vaughn suggested, "**In addition, faculty should be prepared to meet with students by appointment outside their regular conference hours.**" This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Alper thought the following language in section d (p. 12) too general: "**Faculty advisors are required to be knowledgeable about unit programs, and College and University requirements and policies.**" Professor Herman replied that faculty may not advise students to do anything counter to accepted institutional policies, so it needs either to be stated as an admonition or to say faculty should become knowledgeable. The denotation is that faculty should know where to send students for information and advice so that they are aware of changes in curriculum and do not find out at graduation time that they are missing a required course. The Academic Operations Manual is consistent with this in its statement, "No faculty member, administrator, or other representative of the University shall make any representations to, or enter into any agreements with, or act toward any student or other person in any manner which is not in conformity with established University policies, practices and procedures expressed in the *Faculty Handbook* . . ." (p. 19).

Professor Sherman thought the language in this section ran counter to the spirit of suggesting that faculty should not give advice on matters about which they are not cognizant. Professor Vaughn thought faculty should find answers for students and not send them on the "NU shuffle."

Motion. Vice Provost Meservey moved to add, in 6.a on page 11, "**and the University**" at the end of the following sentence: "**Temporary absence for faculty members during the period when their contract requires them to be in attendance shall be arranged in accordance with the policies of the unit.**" This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Motion. Professor Barnes called the question on Resolution #7, and the motion was seconded.

Vote on cloture: PASSED, 26-3-2.

Vote on Resolution #7, as amended: PASSED, 30-2-0.

Professor Ellis moved Resolution #8, and the motion was seconded. The resolution read as follows:

**BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approves Section VI.A.7 (Grievance Process) 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 Meservey asked whether, at the end of the approval process, a final review for editorial changes would be possible. Professor Ellis replied that the committee would do that review. Professor Lowndes added that at the end of the review process, Senators will get a clean copy and take its final vote for the record and for history.

Professor Herman pointed out that the changes in this section were developed to address or prevent problems that had occurred in previous grievance cases. The role of the Senate Grievance Officer, after many years of actual performance, has been given juridical visibility.

Vice Provost Meservey asked for clarification about the exclusion of promotion in this section. Professor Ellis responded that promotion was excluded because a promotion candidate can only grieve a procedural issue, and one cannot grieve the judgment calls of a promotion process if there is no procedural flaw. Professor Herman added that the substance of promotion is subject to a mechanism that the promotion procedure is not. The substance of promotion has never been grievable.

Professor Onan expressed concern about access to confidential documents as stated on page 13. Professor Herman responded that the new text was the result of what had happened with a particularly difficult case. A neutral party, in the person of the Grievance Officer, had been essential in resolving the grievance, although it meant breaking the seal of confidentiality in that particular case. Ultimately, the grievance was settled by agreement of the grievant, the Agenda Committee, and the administration.

Professor Hall asked whether that grievance had set any precedent for changing the Handbook's position on salaries. Professor Herman said that it did not.

Vice Provost Meservey announced that she had a number of procedural suggestions to present. The first concerned the timeline for exchanging information. Professor Herman replied that, while extensions are possible, timelines are arbitrary in order to bring grievances to timely resolution. He noted that most grievances are not between faculty and administration but between faculty members and department chairs or committees of various kinds. The grievance procedure tries to accommodate the needs of the parties concerned without creating undue burdens. Vice Provost Meservey suggested tightening the process by which documents are received and honored.

Motion. Vice Provost Meservey suggested the following language: "**The Provost's designee and/or Grievance Officer, depending on who is appropriate, would review the materials provided to the grievant and the respondent.**" This was not accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Herman pointed out that the Grievance Officer is not usually involved with documents, and the documents do not usually come from the central administration. In many instances it is only the members of the mediation committee who have knowledge of what documents have been exchanged in an accelerated procedure. It is the Provost's Office that directly convenes the accelerated procedure, and therefore it would be possible to keep such records there, but it would create an additional burden for the Agenda Committee to do it. He added that the process seems to work, as most grievances are resolved either at the informal level or in the early stages of the Formal Grievance Procedure.

Motion. Vice Provost Meservey suggested changing the first sentence in Step 2 on page 14 to read, "**If the grievance involves an alleged violation of a published university unit and/or college policy or procedure . . .**" Professor Ellis was reluctant to accept the amendment as friendly because the word "**published**" would severely limit the procedure. Professor Herman agreed and added that many of the grievances that are settled in the Early Provostial Review have to do with unpublished rules, which are otherwise known as "arbitrary positions."

Motion. Vice Provost Meservey suggested changing "**five (5) business days**" to "**ten (10) business days**" in paragraph 3 on page 15. This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Motion. Vice Provost Meservey referred to Step 3 and suggested, for speed and convenience, having a pool of faculty available to serve on mediation committees. Professor Ellis pointed out that the Senate's annual Committee Volunteer Memo includes service on grievance mediation committees as an option, but the Agenda Committee still has to structure the individual committees to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest.

Professor Vaughn asked whether the number of grievances were reported by the Agenda Committee. Professor Herman replied that it is the practice to report the number and type of grievances in the Senate's annual report.

Motion. Professor Herman called the question, and the motion was seconded.

Vote on cloture: FAILED, 8-22.

Adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John G. Flym, Secretary  
Faculty Senate