

January 13, 2003

## Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 01/13/2003

John G. Flyn  
*Northeastern University*

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TO: FACULTY SENATE  
FROM: JOHN G. FLYM, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE  
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2002-2003 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 13 JANUARY 2003

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Present: (Professors) Alper, Alverson, Aroian, Baclawski, Barnes, Brookins, Bruns, Ellis, Flym, Gilmore, Hall, Herman, Hope, Kane, Khaw, Lowndes, Morrison, Ondrechen, Powers-Lee, Serafim, Shafai, Sherman, Sherwood, Vaughn, Wallin, Wertheim, Wray  
(Administrators) Abdelal, Greene, Meservey, Onan, Pantalone, Soyster, Stellar, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Bannister, Metghalchi, Platt  
(Administrators) Mantella, Putnam

Convened by Provost Abdelal at 11:57 a.m.

- I. **Minutes.** The minutes of 21 October and 18 November were approved.
- II. **SAC Report.**
  - A. **New Senator.** Professor Lowndes welcomed Professor Alison M. V. Hearn (Communication Studies), who was elected by the College of Arts and Sciences to replace Professor Rotella who is on sabbatical.
  - B. **Upcoming Items.** Professor Lowndes reported that the rest of the year will be busy, perhaps necessitating additional meetings. In addition to completing the discussion and oversight of the *Faculty Handbook* revisions, upcoming items include semester conversion issues, the budget presentation, the proposal for a School of Technological Entrepreneurship, the Institutional Management Practices Committee report, standing committee reports, and new program proposals that are in the pipeline.
  - C. **Meetings.** The Agenda Committee met three times since the last Senate meeting, once to discuss the honors program with Professors Herman and Portz, and once in a separate meeting with Provost Abdelal to discuss the honors program, also with Professors Herman and Portz, and to discuss workload policies.
  - D. **Honors Program.** Last year's Senate Academic Policy Committee report and resolutions on the Honors Program had received general support from President Freeland in its connection with the top-100 goal status, but he wanted the new Provost to review proposed changes before implementing them. Provost Abdelal is interested in significant enhancement of the Honors Program, moving away from the free overload--beginning with new students who arrive next fall--and toward full honors courses rather than the adjunct supplementary courses in the current Honors Program. The Provost is committed to providing the resources to make this happen and is also supportive of finding new quarters for the Honors Program, perhaps in the new Building F. It now seems unnecessary to bring back the remaining Academic Policy Resolutions from last year, but the Agenda Committee will decide at its next meeting.
  - E. **Workload Policy.** The Faculty Development Committee is looking at the workload policy and will report later in the year. The Agenda Committee will meet again with the Provost to discuss this issue.
  - F. **Grievance.** The Agenda Committee has staffed a grievance mediation committee.
- III. **Provost's Report.** Provost Abdelal reported the following.
  - A. **Semester Conversion Guidelines.** The final draft of the guidelines is complete and will be distributed to all interested individuals for input on any items that may still need to be revised.

Also in relation to the semester conversion, Provost Abdelal pointed out that much discussion had taken place on whether tuition provides to the student a certain number of hours or the normal academic degree requirement. The only written policy we have does not mention hours but says that students pay a flat tuition for the normal degree requirement, as determined by the college.

The focus will shift now to implementation of the semester system. A new committee, co-chaired by Executive Vice Provost Pantalone and Student Financial Services Director Seamus Harreys, has been charged to ensure that the student's experience in dealing with academic, Coop, and financial aid advisors is positive and seamless.

- B. **Budget Process.** The budget is not finished. The Committee on Funding Priorities (CFP) submitted its recommendations. The Budget Committee, co-chaired by Vice President Mucciolo and the Provost, has been working with the recommendations to nail down the revenue, the expected revenue, and our commitments in order to determine the final figures that might be fit under each topic.

Vice Provost Meservey distributed copies of the Market Adjustment Summary, which provides a report of the outcome of the market equity adjustment from last year. Either Provost Abdelal or Vice Provost Meservey would be happy to answer any questions. A task force, co-chaired by the Provost and Professor Morrison, has considered how to shape and conduct the matchmate process for the coming year. The primary difference from last year is that this group agreed that the focus should be on developing only the list of peer institutions instead of including aspirational institutions. The rationale is that by concentrating on peer comparisons we can obtain more definitive estimates of the market equity adjustments that are needed. By directing attention to every unit, we also have a fairer manner of how to distribute the overall funds available for market equity. The Provost's Office will send a memo to the deans to initiate this process. The first stage is to define peer departments and compile a list for the department, the dean, and the Provost's Office to review. Based on the final lists, the data will be gathered and the allocations determined by department. The second stage is for each department, working with the appropriate chair or dean, to come to conclusions about how to allocate the overall departmental allocations. The available dollar amount is not yet known, but it is important to begin the process even before knowing a final figure.

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

- A. Executive Vice Provost Pantalone, in response to Professor Alper's question from the previous meeting, reported that she had consulted with Professor Cipolla, who had chaired the Senate *Ad Hoc* Semester Calendar Committee, and learned that spring break under the semester system would be for all students.
- B. Professor Vaughn expressed concern that the University policy is that individuals must filter their own E-mail "spam." The floor was yielded to Leslie Hitch, Director of Academic Technology Services, who reported that she had done some research in the last few days on what other institutions do about this problem. She cited issues of academic freedom and freedom of information—one person's "spam" is another person's "roast beef." She would be happy to work with Professor Vaughn and others in the hope of solving the problem, perhaps with available software.
- C. Professor Herman reported that Audiovisual Services is in the process of developing a web-based system for reserving equipment. It will include a database that provides information about the equipment for classrooms and how to reserve it. They are seeking a small group of faculty from various units to test the website to ensure it contains what faculty want. Those who are interested should contact Dr. Hitch.
- D. Professor Ondrechen registered dismay at the Registrar's computer system and asked whether it might be updated. The 3270 mainframe operating system does not provide security in terms of passwords, and advisers of students blocked from registering in the winter quarter found it difficult to navigate the antiquated system. Provost Abdelal responded that resolving that problem is related to priorities in the use of the IS budget. He agreed to raise the question with Vice President Weir. Executive Vice Provost

Pantalone added that the issue had been discussed, but the cost of the semester conversion was so high that it was decided to wait until the conversion is completed. Provost Abdelal noted that the question is whether changes in technology can be achieved short of an entire new system costing \$15M.

- E. Professor Aroian, for the School of Nursing Academic Standing Committee, expressed concern that the Registrar's record of incoming students does not reflect the actual number of students admitted to the graduate program in spring and summer. Since budgetary decisions are made on total numbers of students, she asked if, under the semester system, that factor might be considered so that every student is counted at the point of admission and that this number be reflected in the budget allocations. Provost Abdelal responded that his office has been looking at the numbers of course offerings, graduate and undergraduate majors, and tenure-track and part-time faculty in each department. When they have developed a coherent document, they will share it and will welcome suggestions.
- F. Professor Sherman thought it would be useful to have information available on what constitutes reasonable aspirational salaries because it is part of moving toward the top 100 goal. Provost Abdelal responded that the task force was making a clear distinction between the market equity based on where we are now, and how we move toward the top 100, which is an aspirational component. The deans had been asked to submit five-year plans with their aspirations for their colleges. The aspirational component will come through this planning process, and the Provost's Office will then take action on it.
- V. ***Ad Hoc Handbook Review Committee Report***. Professor Ellis reminded the body that Resolution #9 was on the floor. It read as follows:

**BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approves Section VI.A.8 (Tenure) 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 current Handbook Review Committee had disagreed with the previous committee's process for having a University-wide advisory committee to the Provost, which would replace the existing appeal procedure. The text of Step 5.a: Tenure Appeal Procedure (p. 25) is taken from the existing Handbook. It retains the current Tenure Appeal Procedure and the potential for arbitration under limited circumstances.

Dean Soyster noted that in Engineering the tenure process begins in departments and then goes to college committees and asked where there is language regarding college advisory committees. Professor Ellis replied that the language refers to the lowest level of committee, that is, the departmental committee in colleges with departments, or the college committee in colleges that do not have departments, in which case the college committee is not just advisory to the dean. Reference to the tenure committee means the initial tenure committee.

Provost Abdelal pointed out that the language is silent (p. 24) as to how the dean arrives at his recommendation, since it does not require a college level committee. He asked whether the silence allows for the committee. Professor Herman responded that the language is reflective of the old Handbook and is general enough to accommodate colleges that have units to begin the tenure process. For colleges that are not departmentalized, the college tenure committee is the unit committee of standing. The Arts and Sciences or Engineering college committee is an advisory committee to the dean, and therefore is not listed as a committee of standing.

Professor Ellis pointed out that at the beginning of the Tenure Consideration Process (p. 21), "Unit" is defined as "the local academic unit (whether called department, school, group, or college) where the evaluation process begins."

Dean Soyster noted that his college selects representatives for consistency across all units in evaluating tenure cases. He suggested that the college level committee have status in the overall tenure process.

Professor Herman explained that enabling language is used at the bottom of page 23 with respect to successive steps. He referred to the footnote in the current Handbook (p. 29), which states, "'Advisory Committee' refers to the standing College or intercollege Committee whose function is to review the actions of Tenure Committees and make recommendations to the Dean and the Provost." The only other mentions of the words "Advisory Committee" are in the processing regulations, which require that "the dossier then goes to the dean (and the College Advisory Committee where one exists)."

Professor Onan referred to the section under "Dossier" on page 21, which mentioned but did not identify "University committees."

Motion. Professor Lowndes moved to recommit Resolution #9 to the Committee for clarification on committee advice at the college level and information the candidate may add to the dossier (p. 22). The motion was seconded.

Professor Ondrechen asked that the discussion be allowed to continue in the event the motion to recommit passed. Professor Lowndes supported that approach. Provost Abdelal asked if there was any objection to recommitting and proceeding with the overall discussion. There was no objection so the motion to recommit passed and the discussion continued.

The floor was yielded to Professor Iarrobino, who cited the "Advisory Committee" section on page 29 of the current Handbook, and asked the Senate to provide guidance on including it in the new edition.

Vice Provost Meservey recommended that only one vote be taken on tenure and promotion.

Motion. Professor Vaughn moved to delete the following sentence: "A faculty member who is denied tenure will not be promoted." The motion was seconded.

Discussion followed on the merits and disadvantages of being awarded tenure without promotion, or promotion without tenure. For example, a person with an excellent dossier may be granted promotion but denied tenure because the candidate's area is already well represented. Some felt that promotion, as a "gift," could put the person at risk in a job search. It could be awkward, and perhaps even embarrassing, to receive promotion without tenure.

Vice Provost Meservey, upon rereading the paragraph, determined that she now supported the wording, and Senators, in general, favored some degree of flexibility in cases that warrant it.

Motion. Professor Alper called the question on Professor Vaughn's motion.

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

Vote on Professor Vaughn's motion: FAILED, 3-28-2.

Motion. Professor Vaughn moved to remove "normally" from the paragraph on page 18, which read, "A recommendation for tenure of a candidate holding the rank of assistant professor normally carries with it a recommendation for promotion to associate professor. In the School of Law a recommendation for tenure of a candidate holding the rank of associate professor normally carries with it the recommendation for promotion to full professor. A faculty member who is denied tenure will not be promoted." The motion was seconded.

Professor Herman pointed out that Northeastern is a somewhat unorthodox institution because of its need for individuals to carry on practice-oriented education as part of our educational mission. Some individuals who do not have orthodox credentials are essential to the operation of certain units. They may have come from

industry, for example, and do not have a publication record that would qualify them for tenure, so that promotion would be the next step in their career path.

Vice Provost Meservey supported the deletion of "normally" only in the first instance, because Law faculty usually enter at the full professor level.

Professor Flym explained that Law faculty normally enter at the assistant professor level and, when granted tenure, are promoted to full professor.

Professor Vaughn agreed to retain the second "normally".

There being no further discussion, the Senate turned to a vote.

Vote on Professor Vaughn's motion to delete the first "normally": PASSED, 28-2-2.

Adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John G. Flym  
Secretary, Faculty Senate