

March 31, 2003

Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 03/31/2003

John G. Flyn
Northeastern University

Recommended Citation

Flyn, John G., "Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 03/31/2003" (2003). *Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes*. Paper 24.
<http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d10005316>

This work is available open access, hosted by Northeastern University.

TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: JOHN G. FLYM, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2002-2003 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 31 MARCH 2003

Present: (Professors) Alper, Alverson, Aroian, Baclawski, Brookins, Bruns, Ellis, Flym, Gilmore, Hall, Hearn, Herman, Hope, Khaw, Metghalchi, Morrison, Ondrechen, Platt, Powers-Lee, Serafim, Sherman, Vaughn, Wertheim, Wray
(Administrators) Abdelal, Meservey, Onan, Pantalone, Putnam, Soyster, Stellar, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Bannister, Barnes, Kane, Lowndes, Shafai, Sherwood, Wallin
(Administrators) Greene, Mantella

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

- I. **Minutes.** The minutes of 10 February, 24 February, and 3 March were approved.
- II. **SAC Report.** In a written report distributed to Senators, Professor Lowndes reported the following.
 - A. **Meetings.** SAC has met twice since the last Senate meeting. At the 4 March meeting, some time was devoted to discussion with Marian Stanley, Vice President for Corporate Relations, who is working to strengthen NU's corporate relationships and thereby enhance student placement and recruiting.
 - B. **Coop Vice President Search.** The committee met on 17 March. Members are

Elected Members:

Professor Pamela W. Goodale (Coop, Arts & Sciences)
Professor Stephen M. Kane (Coop, Engineering)
Professor Linda M. O'Connor (Coop, Business Administration)

Appointed Members:

Dean Jack R. Greene, Chair (Criminal Justice)
Mr. Michael Cronin (Trustee)
Vice Provost Malcolm D. Hill (Undergraduate Education)
Professor Susan G. Powers-Lee (Biology)
Vice President Marian J. Stanley (Corporate Relations)
Dean Ira R. Weiss (Business Administration)
Professor Mishac K. Yegian (Civil & Environmental Engineering)
Mr. Sharif Zeid (CBA student appointed by the SGA)

- C. **History Chair Search Committee.** This will be an internal search. Members are

Elected Members:

Professor Ballard C. Campbell (History)
Professor Patrick Manning (History)
Professor Clay McShane (History)

Appointed Members:

Professor Thomas H. Koenig (Sociology)
Professor Heidi Vernon (CBA, General Management)

- D. **New Program.** SAC approved the proposed UC Graduate Certificate in Forensic Accounting.

- E. **Additional Senate Meeting.** Because of the workload facing the Senate, including timing issues in order to send new programs etc to the Trustees, an additional Senate meeting has been scheduled for Monday, April 21 at 11:45 a.m. in Raytheon. A summary of actual and/or potential items on the Senate workload includes but is not confined to: Faculty Handbook; Institutional Management Committee report on Information Systems and separately on Research; Faculty Development Committee report on Workloads; Financial Affairs Committee report on an Improved Budget Process; creation of a School and Graduate program in Technological Entrepreneurship; Graduate Program in Biotechnology; plus other issues.
- F. **Next Senate Meeting:** Monday, April 14, at 11:45 a.m. in Raytheon.

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

- A. **Matchmate Process.** The matchmate process has been completed. The department proposal lists were reviewed by the deans and discussed in the colleges and are now with Institutional Research. Data expected in the next week will identify where available funds should be allocated across departments.
- B. **Cooperative Education.** Placement rates in Business and Computer Science have been at only 50% as compared with the nearly 100% rate in other colleges. Meetings of Coop and college leaders have elicited some common issues as well as issues specific to each college. Our aspirations for quality coop experience for students include ways to enhance job development. Two job development consultants have been hired to work with the Coop coordinators in Business to improve placement in the next cycle, and additional resources have been provided to Computer Science to remedy the problem there. Additional resources are being allocated to correct the problems that have been identified, including more student-friendly services and improved opportunities beyond the 495 and 128 corridor, and a task force from across colleges will be reporting soon with its recommendations.
- C. **Coop Vice President Search.** The search committee has met and the search is under way. The goal is to have this position filled by early September with a strong person who will take Coop to the next level of development.

IV. **Question and Discussion Time.**

- A. Professor Hall referred to the meeting between the Agenda Committee and Vice President Stanley in which the topic was enhanced student placement and recruiting, and he asked whether such placement might also occur for graduating seniors and alumni. Provost Abdelal responded that the focus was on development of Coop opportunities, but the Division of Cooperative Education has within it the career counseling unit for the University, and so it is hoped that this is another area that can become seamless in its operation. We are working with students to place them on Coop but at the same time building on that experience to place them later in regular positions. Vice President Stanley, who joined the University three months ago, is working to make contacts at high levels in the corporate community in the city and the state and thus help align these large corporate entities in their relations with Northeastern. These relationships are largely with Coop, but they also assist in connecting the University with applied research projects in which our faculty might have expertise and interest. The incoming vice president will be responsible primarily for developing high quality Coop opportunities but also will work in concert with Vice President Stanley.
- B. Professor Hall referred to a recent newspaper report that Northeastern is not highly rated in its dormitory sprinkler system. He added that state regulations are ambiguous. Provost Abdelal was not aware of the report but agreed to look into it, as any safety issue should be addressed promptly.
- C. Professor Hall asked what had motivated the 20 February memo to deans regarding a library serial review. Provost Abdelal responded that the purpose of the review is to get a streamlined sense of

priorities for each academic unit in terms of what is being collected and to make recommendations about what should be collected. The intent of the memo was to have a departmental center of responsibility whose collective wisdom rather than individual judgments would shape decisions.

Brief discussion followed on access to library materials and the Boston consortium (of which Harvard is not a member), which allows sharing among member institutions. Tufts, for example, has an extensive biomedical collection, which it shares with the consortium.

- V. **Ad Hoc Faculty Handbook Review Committee Report.** Resolution #9 was still on the floor and 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 summarized the changes that had been made previously, which appear in the 1/22/03 revised draft.

Professor Alper expressed concern about the section entitled Confidential Material (p. 5), which states: "Documents developed in the tenure procedure involving the understanding and expectation that they are confidential do not have to be made available to the candidate. Included in such documents are letters of recommendation, evaluation forms, and minutes of tenure or promotion committees." He asked who decides whether documents may be made available and suggested that the section be made more clear. Professor Ellis responded that when a unit tenure committee solicits outside referees for confidential letters they do not have to be made available to the candidate.

Professor Alper asked who would make the decision. Professor Herman explained that some units keep minutes of proceedings from which the report is written and that candidates have sought those minutes in arbitration but were refused. In general, they are not available unless the evaluator who wrote the letter agrees. In that instance, the committee can make them available. The only case in which the University can order that confidential material be made available would be a federal lawsuit having to do with discrimination.

Professor Ellis cited footnote 21 in the current Handbook (p. 21), which contains the language in question and cites a 1974 arbitration decision as its source.

Professor Vaughn asked whether a department chair, dean, or provost could make an evaluator's letter available, even though it was solicited with the understanding of confidentiality, or whether the department could vote to release the minutes of meetings. Professor Herman replied that under any circumstances only the University Counsel or the Provost can make them available.

Professor Onan urged that the definition be made absolutely clear because it is essential that confidentiality not be breached.

Professor Ellis indicated that he would be open to a friendly amendment.

Motion. Professor Vaughn moved to replace "do not have to be made available" with "shall not be made available." The motion was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Motion. In the sentence on page 4 that read, "As used in this section, Advisory Committee refers to a standing college or intercollege committee whose function is to review the actions of unit tenure committees and make recommendations to the dean or deans", Professor Vaughn moved to delete "or intercollege" and "or deans". The motion was seconded.

Discussion of the amendment focused on joint appointments and the increasing interaction among colleges. Vice Provost Meservey pointed out that this trend will continue.

Professor Hall suggested that, for joint or interdisciplinary appointments, representatives from the relevant departments or colleges be appointed to the tenure committees.

Professor Vaughn noted that a unit's procedures could be modified to allow for ad hoc cases.

Professor Ellis pointed out that for tenure consideration it is clear that there is only one locus, but flexibility may occur after tenure.

Vote on Professor Vaughn's amendment: FAILED, 10-18.

Provost Abdelal recommended that deans be involved in determining outside reviewers. Because departments are at different levels of maturity, engaging the dean in the process can ensure common standards across the college.

Professor Herman pointed out that in non-departmentalized colleges the dean is not considered a member of the tenure committee in the way that a department chair in a departmentalized college is so considered because the dean does a separate evaluation. The danger in regarding a dean as the equivalent of a department chair is that the dean could get to make his judgment about tenure more than once, and the extent to which the dean becomes integrated into the unit consideration is the extent to which we run that risk.

Professor Hall asked what kind of distinction exists between schools and colleges. Professor Ellis replied that the College of Arts and Sciences has both schools and colleges. Provost Abdelal added that Bouvé's schools have deans, but the School of Journalism in Arts and Sciences has a director, so it seems that directors and chairs are interchangeable in an undefined prerogative.

Professor Ellis explained that the school issue was moot within the tenure consideration process because the definition of a unit, in this section, refers to the local academic unit, whether it is called a department, a school, or a college, because it is where the evaluation process begins.

Professor Bruns noted that a dean might not have the knowledge of an individual area to provide input in selecting the best reviewers. She added that, based on their institutional affiliations, some reviewers are held in higher regard than others.

Professor Powers-Lee added that some units make unfortunate choices with regard to the stature of their reviewers, and the dean must accept what is sent forward.

Provost Abdelal advocated having tenured outside reviewers from peer departments.

Executive Vice Provost Pantalone recommended putting the standard in the model tenure document rather than the Handbook.

Professor Ondrechen noted that some outside reviewers do not contribute a strong enough impression of the candidate to make a positive recommendation. The committee needs to be able to ask for a more substantive evaluation.

Professor Herman pointed out that in Arts and Sciences it is the advisory committee that has the authority to send dossiers back for additional work by the units. Also, it would be difficult to craft guidelines that would apply to everybody because a great deal of variability exists between units.

Professor Ellis referred to the last sentence in Step 3 (p. 7), which read: "The Advisory Committee, on its own initiative, or at the request of the candidate, may rule that a case has not been properly processed by the unit tenure committee and, at its discretion, may send the case back for reconsideration by the unit tenure committee."

Professor Vaughn noted that, because outside reviewers are often asked to write many letters, it is difficult to create a general guideline for the Handbook. He added that a dean who sees inappropriate letters going out from a department can say so and ask for a better product.

Vice Provost Meservey thought that a proactive aspect to what Provost Abdelal was suggesting would increase the likelihood that everyone would be comfortable with the letters as they come through the process.

Professor Ellis asked if the body had other issues to discuss before voting on the section.

Vice Provost Meservey thought that the pre-tenure review (p. 2) should always take place in the third rather than the fourth year. Professor Herman explained that funding for research startups is sometimes delayed, which can make review in the third year difficult.

Discussion followed on the merits of third- and fourth-year reviews, and there was general agreement that enough flexibility should be allowed to protect the candidate.

Executive Vice Provost Pantalone called the question, but then withdrew the motion.

Vice Provost Meservey recommended postponing the vote.

Professor Hope moved to adjourn, and the motion was seconded.

Adjourned at 1:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John G. Flym, Secretary
Faculty Senate