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Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 10/08/2003

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TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: CHARLES H. ELLIS, Jr., SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2003-2004 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 8 OCTOBER 2003

Present: (Professors) Alper, Aroian, Bannister, Bansil, Barnes, Blank, Brookins, Bruns, Bursey, Ellis, Hansberry, Howlett, Hunt, Khaw, Krishnamoorthy, Kruger, Lowndes, Margotta, Metghalchi, Morrison, Ondrechen, Peterfreund, Sherman, Vaughn, Wray
(Administrators) Abdelal, Finkelstein, Meservey, Onan, Soyster, Stellar, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Alverson, Flym, Futrelle, Serafim, Shafai, Sherwood
(Administrators) Greene, Hill, Weiss

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 12:02 p.m.

I. **Minutes.** The minutes of the June 2 organizational meeting were approved.

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

A. **Senate Meetings.** Most Senate meetings will be held in Raytheon Amphitheater, 240 Egan; two will be held in 450 Dodge (November 19 and March 17); and one will be in the McLeod Suite in the Curry Student Center (April 14).

B. **Parliamentarian.** Professor Barnes has agreed to serve again as Parliamentarian.

C. **Grievance Coordinator.** Professor Ellis has agreed to serve as Grievance Coordinator.

D. **SAC Meetings.** Since its election last June, the Agenda Committee has met six times, one of which was an all-day meeting. The Agenda Committee met with the President and Provost on September 22.

E. **President's Response to 2002-2003 Senate Resolutions.** President Freeland has responded to a number of 2002-03 Senate resolutions over the summer. These responses will appear in the Annual Report, which will be distributed shortly.

F. **Administrator Evaluations.** The evaluation reports on Professors Harkins (Psychology) and Lombardi (ECE) have been released for reading by the faculty of their respective departments.

G. **Name changes.** SAC approved the following certificate name changes:

From Interactive Design to Accessible Web Design
From Perfusion Technology to Cardiovascular Perfusion

H. **Searches.** The Provost has asked the Agenda Committee to initiate chair searches for the following departments: Music; Philosophy & Religion; Political Science; and Mechanical, Industrial, and Manufacturing Engineering.

Music (internal).

The committee is staffed and the search under way. Members are:

Professor John Casey (Computer and Information Science)
Professor Allen G. Feinstein (Music)
Professor Leon C. Janikian (Music)
Professor Del Lewis (Director, Center for the Arts)
Professor Judith Tick (Music)

Philosophy and Religion (internal)

The Committee is yet to be staffed

Political Science (internal)

The Committee is yet to be staffed

Mechanical, Industrial, and Manufacturing Engineering (external)

Elected members are:

Professor George G. Adams
 Professor Thomas P. Cullinane
 Professor Hamid Nayeb Hashemi
 Two others to be appointed

- I. **2002-03 Senate Unfinished Business.** There is a substantial amount of unfinished business from last year that will be brought before the Senate this year: the reports of the *Ad Hoc* Faculty Handbook Review Committee, the Standing Committee on Enrollment and Admissions Policy (retention management), and the Standing Committee on Faculty Development (faculty workloads). In addition, SAC hopes to bring revised search procedures to the Senate once discussions are completed between SAC and the President and Provost.
- J. **Focus for the 2003-04 Faculty Senate.** During the last several years, the university has pursued a bold strategy of investment at levels unparalleled in its history to support its top-100 quest. The results are extraordinarily impressive with a wonderful expansion of the campus and a significant increase in the caliber of student matriculants. In turn, these changes have provided upward momentum as we have moved from the bottom of the third tier in the national rankings ten years ago to the very top of the third tier this year.

The ultimate goal is for top-100 status. The move to top-100 from 127th will be much harder than the journey to 127th from the bottom part of the third quartile. We are beginning to engage competitively with other institutions with impressive academic reputations, and we are beginning to engage competitively in student applicant pools where the student aspirations and expectations are far different from those of our earlier and current student cohorts.

This year, consistent with our further advance towards top-100 status, the Senate Agenda Committee is therefore presenting charges to its committees with a special focus on investments enhancing our academic reputation and on enhancing our academic endeavors to attract still higher caliber students, two critical elements for our progress towards top-100 status.

- K. **Life on the Edge.** The attached report provides a brief update on some factors relevant to the University's goal to attain top-100 status, as well as background information for some of the charges to the Standing Committees of the 2003-04 Faculty Senate. The report looks at: the latest rankings in the *US News and World Report: 2004 America's Best Colleges*; sponsored research and doctoral program activities and rankings; financial and budgetary issues; and, again, the reduced size of the professoriate.
- L. **Special Committees.** This year, in response to a request from Provost Abdelal and the Council of Deans, the Senate Agenda Committee is instituting a pilot initiative that creates "Special Committees". The Special Committees will consist of a regular Standing Committee of the Senate and additional members, some drawn from the academic deans. The effort is intended to draw a broader expertise and viewpoint into the consideration of certain academic initiatives.
- M. **Committees of the Senate.** With the above focus, therefore, the staffing and charges for following the committees of the Senate have been completed as follows:

Special Committee on Academic Policy

Membership:

Professor Gerald H. Herman, Chair, (History)
 Professor Arvin Grabel (ECE)
 Professor Nancy Kindelan (Theatre)
 Professor Thomas O. Sherman (Mathematics)
 Professor Edward G. Wertheim (Human Resources Management)
 Professor William E. Wray (Coop)

Vice Provost Malcolm D. Hill, *ex officio*
 Dean Jack R. Greene
 Dean Stephen R. Zoloth

Background:

The focus for the 2003-04 Special Committee on Academic Policy will be whether and how Northeastern can establish an innovative university-wide general education component for the undergraduate curricula.

Fostered in part by serious concerns raised by leaders from both the public and private sectors about the need for a more broadly educated citizenry and workforce to address the challenges of the 21st century, there has been an intensive national effort during the last decade to develop new innovative general education programs that address these challenges. The outcomes are programs that integrate the formerly separate components of core curricula, electives, and the majors. They provide subject matter breadth and depth as well as embracing educational innovations such as interdisciplinary team teaching, learning communities, experiential education, and student-team problem solving.

Over the years, Northeastern has several times contemplated the task of creating a university-wide general education program but the scheduling constraints imposed by cooperative education and, for some colleges, a very tight curriculum, have prevented this. To many, the Academic Common Experience (ACE), which is to some extent a modified form of Ernest Boyer's "enriched major", achieved the lowest common denominator approach to general education. ACE is not generally viewed as providing any competitive advantage and there is a question as to whether it will satisfy the 2008 decennial accreditation review by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

Charge:

1. Taking into account the needs of students for general, interdisciplinary and contextual education in preparation for life and work in the twenty-first century, the Committee is asked to recommend an innovative template for a general education component for Northeastern students that will satisfy these, that will provide competitive advantage to recruit and retain still higher caliber students to the University, and that will provide enhancement for the University's academic reputation. The Committee should generate such a program for all students even if it appears that constraints facing some units would preclude all students from participating. The Committee may, if it chooses, suggest ways in which its proposal might be modified or adapted to fit programmatic limitations.
2. Included in the recommendations should be a delineation of the specific goals of the general education requirements; how those goals will be achieved; the approval process for courses to be included in the general education requirements; a management process to oversee the administration of the requirements; a review process to monitor the effectiveness of the requirements and to recommend and approve change; and an estimate of the one-time and continuing costs of the general education requirements scheme proposed.

The Committee is asked to present its report on this charge to the Senate Agenda Committee by no later than 15 March 2004.

Special Committee on Enrollment and Admissions Policy

Membership:

Professor Dennis R. Cokely, Chair, (Modern Languages)
 Professor Brendan Bannister (Human Resources Management)
 Professor T. Anthony Jones (Sociology and Anthropology)
 Professor John H. Portz (Political Science)
 Professor Bahram Shafai (ECE)
 Senior Vice President Philomena Mantella
 Dean Larry A. Finkelstein (Computer Science)
 Dean James R. Stellar (Arts and Sciences)

Background:

There is no question that the higher caliber students that we now seek to recruit place a greater emphasis on the academic offerings beyond just their intended major. Considerations are often made of teaching and advising standards, of the quality of the general education program, of the honors program, of the ability to do dual or double majors, of the ease of changing major, of the study abroad programs, of undergraduate research opportunities, and of the experiential education opportunities beyond coop.

In addition, it is important to develop improved protocols that maximize the strength of the incoming class while being consistent with available unit resources.

Charge:

1. Beyond teaching and general education, what enhancements in academic programs will further strengthen our attractiveness to the still higher caliber students that we seek to attract and retain at Northeastern?
2. The Committee is asked to make recommendations on how current protocols to develop the magnitude and distributions of freshman admissions' targets can be strengthened to maximize the caliber of the incoming class while being consistent with available college resources.

The Committee is asked to present its report on this charge to the Senate Agenda Committee by no later than 15 March 2004.

Special Committee on Faculty Development

Membership:

Professor Carol A. Glod, Chair, (Nursing)
 Professor Anthony P. De Ritis (Music)
 Professor Thomas R. Gilbert (Education, Chemistry)
 Professor Ganesh Krishnamoorthy (Accounting)
 Professor Philip E. Serafim (ECE)
 Dean Allen L. Soyster (Engineering)
 Dean Ira R. Weiss (Business)

Background:

The focus for the 2003-04 Special Committee on Faculty Development will be the support of enhanced teaching. Classroom teaching is the most important activity for any institution of higher education. Excellence in teaching can shape an institution's academic reputation and can serve as a strong magnet for recruiting the highest caliber students.

Charge:

1. Excellence in teaching is influenced by a wide range of parameters embracing such aspects as high-level recognition of and rewards for excellence in teaching in merit raises, tenure and promotion, and awards of university chairs and professorships; an appropriate array of special awards for excellence in teaching; appropriate levels of faculty development funding for instructional development; the highest-quality technology-enabled classrooms and teaching laboratories; the highest-quality support for classroom demonstrations, laboratory experiments, and field experiences; the highest quality instructor and course evaluations; appropriate class sizes; excellence in support centers such as the Center for Effective Teaching and the Ed Tech Center; and well managed protocols that place the best teachers in the most appropriate courses for the University's best strategic interests.
2. Based on, but not confined to, the above components that may influence excellence in teaching, the Committee is asked prepare a detailed report on what strategic steps should be taken, and by when, to achieve a still greater commitment to, and environment of, teaching excellence at Northeastern.

The Committee is asked to present its report on this charge to the Senate Agenda Committee by no later than 1 March 2004.

Financial Affairs Committee

Membership:

Professor Wesley W. Marple Jr., Chair, (Finance and Insurance)
 Professor Louis J. Kruger (Counseling and Applied Psychology)
 Professor Mohamad Metghalchi (MIME)
 Professor Michael T. Vaughn (Physics)
 Professor Bruce A. Wallin (Political Science)

Background:

The focus for the 2003-04 Standing Committee on Financial Affairs will be faculty salaries, enhanced investment in the basic colleges, improvements to the budget process, and investments in new buildings and facilities.

A key area for improvement that will support our top-100 goal continues to be faculty salaries. Two major factors in the *US News and World Report: 2004 America's Best Colleges* rankings are directly related to salaries: academic reputation (25% of the total ranking) and faculty resources (20% of the total ranking).

Academic reputation depends on the quality, commitment and successes of the professoriate. Faculty salaries play a vital role to this end. Competitive faculty salaries are essential for both the retention of existing faculty and recruitment of new faculty. Last year, Northeastern's 2003 ranking for academic reputation slipped somewhat to 125th, down from 105th in the 2001 rankings. The 2004 rankings for academic reputation show us at 112th.

Thirty-five percent of the faculty resources factor in the *US News* rankings is determined by faculty salaries and benefits adjusted for regional differences in cost of living from indices from Runzheimer International. According to the *US News*, Northeastern's ranking for faculty resources has declined steadily over the past several years. In 1996, for example, Northeastern's overall national ranking was 138th but its ranking for faculty resources was 96th, this latter then being Northeastern's best ranking of any of the factors used (i.e. academic reputation, retention, faculty resources, selectivity, financial resources, alumni giving, and graduation rate). Since 1996, Northeastern's ranking for faculty resources deteriorated markedly from being its best component to its worst component at 195th in 2003. In 2004, Northeastern's overall ranking is 127th, but its ranking for faculty resources, although notably improved from 2003, was 147th - still its worst ranking of any of the components used.

A second key area for change concerns investments in the Colleges. During the five-year period from fiscal 1998 to fiscal 2002 (the most recent data available to SAC) the total budgets for the six Colleges (i.e. not including University College) increased by 16.8% compared to the 38.9% increase for all other budget areas. As a result, the College budgets slipped from 35.1% to 31.2% of the total operating budget during fiscal 1998-2002. While this reflects important investments in the University infrastructure, SAC believes that investment in the Colleges must become a special priority this year. A particular component of this need, though not the only one, concerns the declining size of the professoriate. During the last two years, reports to the Senate have described a significant decline in the size of the professoriate since 1990-91 despite a sharp increase in recent years in the full-time student headcount to above the headcount levels in 1990-91. A similar report to the Senate this year will show these trends essentially unchanged. In the fall of 2002, the basic colleges had a total of 594 tenured and tenure-track faculty compared to 590 (2000), 635 (1996), and 775 (1990). The full-time student headcount (i.e. the total of full-time undergraduates and graduates including those from the School of Law) in the fall of 2002 was 16,941, compared to 16,456 (2000), 14,135 (1996), and 16,239 (1990). What is further troubling is that this decline in the professoriate appears to have been compensated for via a sharp increase in full-time lecturers and the like.

A third key area for change is the University budget process. The President has accepted recommendations from the 2002-03 Faculty Senate for improvement in the budget process, especially the operations of the Funding Priorities Committee. This year, therefore, there will be enhanced faculty representation on the Funding Priorities Committee (FPC), more detailed information about the University budget will be presented to the FPC, and the FPC will now also be aware of and involved in the so-called contingency budget allocations. This is good progress, but still more changes may be needed.

A fourth key area concerns investments in new buildings and facilities. During the last five years, there has been a more than a \$300 million investment in new facilities with the major focus being on improving the dormitories. There has been little transparency or involvement of the academic deans or the faculty in this investment. There is a growing concern that increased investments are needed for classroom facilities and new research facilities.

Charge:

1. Based on current information and any other analyses that it may wish to undertake, the Committee is asked to make recommendations on appropriate merit raises and equity adjustments for 2004-05, with a particular emphasis on restoring Northeastern's earlier competitive advantage. The recommendation for equity/market adjustment raises should include consideration of matchmate data collected by the Office of University Planning and Research, appropriately adjusted for cost of living factors if possible. The Committee should present its recommendations on these matters to the Faculty Senate Agenda Committee by October 20, 2003.
2. In close collaboration with the Provost and academic deans, the Committee should assess carefully the needs for new investment in the colleges with a special focus on increasing the size of the professoriate in the basic colleges. The Committee should present its recommendations on these matters to the Faculty Senate in its meeting scheduled for November 12, 2003. The Committee should also work constructively to achieve these goals within the Funding Priorities Committee.
3. This year, all members of the Financial Affairs Committee will serve on the Committee on Funding Priorities. The Committee members should consider all appropriate issues as they relate to the well being and success of the University. The Committee members should report back on the progress of the Committee on Funding Priorities in a timely and appropriate manner. Along with the Chair of the Senate Agenda Committee, the Financial Affairs Committee should carefully consider and report back to the Senate by no later than 1 March 2004 any suggestions for further improving the annual budget process.
4. The Committee is asked to present recommendations on how to establish a meaningful participation and involvement by the academic sector in establishing priorities for investments in new buildings and facilities, and to present its report on this matter to the Faculty Senate by no later than 1 March 2004.

Ad Hoc Committee on Library Policies and Operations

Membership:

Professor John Casey, Chair (Computer and Information Science)
 Professor Mansoor M. Amiji (Pharmaceutical Sciences)
 Professor Arun Bansil (Physics)
 Professor Donna M. Bishop (Criminal Justice)
 Professor L. Gerald Bursey (Political Science)
 Professor Harlow L. Robinson (Modern Languages)
 Professor Ronald Willey (Chemical Engineering)
 Dean Edward Warro, *ex officio* (Libraries)

Background:

Last year, the Faculty Senate approved the creation of a new standing committee of the Senate – the Committee on Library Policies and Operations. While the President has approved this action, such a change also requires a vote of the faculty at large and this is planned for later this academic year when all relevant changes to the Faculty Handbook are completed. In the interim, therefore, the Senate Agenda Committee has decided to establish this Committee as an *ad hoc* committee of the Senate.

In recent years, investments in our academic operations, especially in the basic colleges, have been limited. For example, the total operating budget (excluding certain auxiliary operations) for the University rose by 39% from \$282 million in fiscal 1998 to \$393 million in fiscal 2003. During this period, though, the library budget increased by just 9%, the total basic college budgets rose by only 27.5%, but the total of all other budgets rose by 45%.

This limited investment in the Library is not consistent with top-100 libraries. If the Library were to apply for admission in the Boston Consortium now, it would not meet the threshold criteria for admission.

Charge:

1. The Committee will advise the Dean of Libraries on policies, strategic plans and operations of the Libraries.
2. The Committee will assess the state of the University Libraries, and prepare a report with recommendations on how they should be strengthened to better provide for the information resources and information literacy needs of faculty and students for their teaching, learning and research, consistent with our top-100 institutional goal. This report may include recommendations in the areas of space, facilities, staff, collections, services and technology and should be submitted to the Senate Agenda Committee by no later than 1 November 2003 in order that any recommendations might be considered within this year's budget process.

R. **Next Meeting.** President Freeland will attend the next Senate meeting, on 22 October. Faculty are invited to submit written questions for the President to the Faculty Senate Office (442 Ryder) by 4:30 on Thursday, 16 October.

III. **Provost's Report.** Provost Abdelal thanked the Agenda Committee for its collaborative and collegial spirit in including deans on this year's expanded standing committees. Consensus can be reached more quickly than when issues are discussed separately by the Deans Council and the Senate's standing committees. The Provost's Coordinating Council is another forum for discussion and includes the members of both the Deans Council and the Agenda Committee. He reported the following.

- A. **Resources and the Budget.** This is the season to discuss resources and the budget. The Committee on Funding Priorities (CFP) has begun its work. He expressed appreciation to Professor Lowndes for highlighting budgetary issues. The President's charge this year included a request that the CFP consider our critical needs and recommend investment strategies for the University to pursue over the next five years. Constructive discussions should help in resolving key questions about building on and sustaining the strong market position the University now enjoys.
- B. **Academic Reputation.** We want to offer high quality undergraduate programs and also to advance in terms of the strengths of graduate programs and sponsored research. They are important indicators in national rankings, and they eventually drive the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings, 25% of which are based on academic reputation. We can reach the top 100 by focusing on the academic values that enrich academic life and by producing the highest quality academic programs for undergraduates, as we simultaneously advance in other national rankings.

IV. **Question and Discussion Time**

- A. Professor Vaughn expressed concern that sequences 2, 3, 4, and 6 were overbooked. He asked how much of this crunch was due to lack of balance in the sequencing and whether the 100-minute classes were unusually light. He wondered if a committee might be created to explore this issue on an ongoing basis. Provost Abdelal replied that when a student's attempt to register is unsuccessful because a course is full, the University tries to see if departments can meet the demand by scheduling additional sections or expanding existing sections. A task force will be looking at ways to deal with unforeseen consequences of the semester conversion, new curricular requirements, and other factors that arise.

Registrar Allen was recognized and explained that some pressure points have not yet been analyzed, such as the majority of freshman classes being taught in 65-minute blocks, and the fact that increased retention has provided 700 more upperclass students than in previous fall terms. She added that some departments have moved from 65 minute to 100 minute class sequences, while others have shifted the other way. The impact of all this is still being studied.

Professor Herman pointed out that last spring the Academic Policy Committee presented a preliminary report and will try this year to present a more comprehensive report to deal with these concerns and further refine the system to alleviate student frustration. One possibility would be to develop functional waitlists within the registration system.

- B. Professor Burse commended the good news reported by Professor Lowndes and asked whether some of the student frustration might be attributed to the unexpectedly large freshman class, inevitably increasing the burden on existing facilities. Vice President Mantella responded that this year's high admissions yield was unlike the past and unlike that at other universities, in spite of a significant tuition increase and the soft economy. We accepted 300 fewer students and ended up with more incoming students, a group whose average SAT scores were 50 points higher than a year before. We did curtail the number of incoming transfer students. We have a very good market position. We are happy about the admissions results, but not about some of the consequences.
- C. Professor Alper expressed concern that the Provost has established lengths of appointment for department chairs that seem inconsistent with the policy established some time ago by the Senate and approved by the administration. This allowed the departments to determine term lengths of three to five years. Provost Abdelal responded that it makes sense to have a uniform term of three years.
- V. **Proposed Department Name Change – Mechanical, Industrial, and Manufacturing Engineering to Mechanical and Industrial Engineering.** Professor Metghalchi moved the following resolution, and the motion was seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approve the proposal to change the name of the Department of Mechanical, Industrial, and Manufacturing Engineering to Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, as approved by the Department and the College of Engineering.

Professor Metghalchi explained that in 1995 the Departments of Mechanical Engineering and Industrial Engineering had merged and had added "Manufacturing" to the name of the new department. The number of faculty is now smaller and, with no present manufacturing engineering component, it seems appropriate to remove "Manufacturing" from the department's name.

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

Vote: PASSED by unanimous voice vote, 31-0-0.

- VI. **2002-03 Enrollment and Admissions Policy Committee Report.** Professor Bannister moved Resolution #1, and the motion was seconded. The resolution read as follows.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate accept the report of the 2002-03 Enrollment and Admissions Policy Committee.

The floor was yielded to Professor Strauss, who reported that the committee had met at length with the Enrollment Management Office about what is being done and what is needed. For the 2002-03 Enrollment and Admissions Policy Committee, she expressed support for Vice President Mantella and her staff.

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

Vote: PASSED by unanimous voice vote, 31-0-0.

Professor Bannister moved Resolution #2, and the motion was seconded. Professor Peterfreund offered some editorial changes, which were accepted. The resolution then read as follows.

WHEREAS university data necessary for reporting and analysis is currently stored in separate administrative systems (i.e., Registrar, Human Resources, Admissions, etc.), making the integration of data across systems time consuming and inconsistent, and

WHEREAS the availability of data to the colleges and schools of the university for the purposes of reporting and analysis is limited due to the diffuse structure of our existing administrative systems,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate endorses the current Enterprise Reporting Project and the implementation of the first release of the system related to Registrar and Human Resource data scheduled for Fall of 2003. The Senate further encourages the administration to continue development of this project to include data from other key systems within the university and to enable the colleges

and schools of the university to have access to reporting data that will inform academic planning and resource allocation.

In response to questions, Vice President Mantella explained that the database has been created and will be ready later in the fall. She pointed out that the new system would not change our transactional system and that she would give an update at a later time about making the system fit our needs under the semester configuration. In response to a question about whether this system would impact the activities of advisors, she responded that this system merges databases for institutional research purposes, but does not change the transactional systems now used by students and faculty.

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

Vote: PASSED, 31-0-0.

Professor Bannister moved Resolution #3, and the motion was seconded. Professor Peterfreund suggested several changes, which were accepted. The resolution then read as follows.

WHEREAS, the decision of an individual student to leave the University is a multi-step process typically originating in dissatisfaction, proceeding through intentions to search for acceptable alternatives (in this case other institutions), and actual search behavior,

WHEREAS, the active management of retention depends on the quality of timely individual-level intervention to identify indicators of distress, at the individual level, and

WHEREAS, the importance of the individual student is of primary importance regarding retention rates,

BE IT RESOLVED that the following recommendations be accepted to implement a proactive approach to retention management:

- 1) Develop a personal intervention system in which distress is identified at the individual level. Although transactional systems to improve student ease of use and interface with major systems like the registrar are useful, it is the face-to-face problem definition and solving system that can turn around a decision to leave.**
- 2) Continue with exit interviews and develop a rapid feedback loop (using information obtained in the exit interviews) to identify and intervene with other at-risk students.**
- 3) Develop a one-stop problem-solving center, with representatives of major university offices.**
- 4) Develop a consistent and dependable key advocacy system in which each student has an advocate who through contact management provides accurate data-based feedback and timely intervention.**

Dean Zoloth expressed concern about allocations of resources to the Colleges for this initiative. Professor Bannister responded that to quickly identify students at risk of leaving, the intent is to create the data infrastructure, not to prescribe exactly how and where it will be established. Dean Zoloth suggested including a statement about resources in the resolution.

Vice President Mantella explained that the focus is on students from a retention standpoint. Her office is looking at English and Math classes as places to identify difficulties, and there is general support in the Colleges to build a resource base around the right paradigm. Whether intervention should be a factor or even what kind would be helpful is not yet clear.

Professor Blank pointed out that this is aimed at detecting individual cases and suggested that broader structural problems also need to be addressed.

Provost Abdelal pointed out that this resolution focuses on dealing with specific types of individual problems that affect retention, and that Colleges are now working on group retention initiatives. EdTech is looking at ways to enhance learning in “gateway courses” that have high failure or withdrawal rates.

Professor Alper asked why these retention efforts seem to focus only on struggling students, suggesting that the focus be extended to identify and retain strong students who may be thinking of transferring to other schools.

Professor Strauss responded that in the past most students leaving Northeastern were academically either at the top or the bottom of the class. We have stemmed the loss from the top, but there is still great concern about the lower level students. The housing of freshmen in lesser dormitories might be seen as suggesting an incentive to stay – the aspiration to move up to the finer housing available to upperclass students.

Professor Aroian emphasized the importance of comprehensive efforts to assure that all campus offices are friendly and helpful to students who come with questions or concerns.

Professor Onan expressed some concern about who would pay for the initiative and suggested identifying specific sources.

As time for the meeting had run out, Professor Ellis moved to adjourn.

Adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles H. Ellis, Jr.
Secretary