

October 29, 2003

## Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 10/29/2003

Charles H. Ellis Jr.  
*Northeastern University*

---

### Recommended Citation

Ellis Jr., Charles H., "Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 10/29/2003" (2003). *Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes*. Paper 34.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d10005031>

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

TO: FACULTY SENATE  
FROM: CHARLES H. ELLIS, Jr., SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE  
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2003-2004 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 12 NOVEMBER 2003

---

Present: (Professors) Alper, Alverson, Aroian, Bannister, Bansil, Blank, Brookins, Bruns, Burse, Ellis, Flym, Futrelle, Hansberry, Howlett, Hunt, Krishnamoorthy, Kruger, Lowndes, Margotta, Metghalchi, Morrison, Ondrechen, Peterfreund, Serafim, Sherman, Sherwood, Vaughn, Wray  
(Administrators) Abdelal, Finkelstein, Hill, Meservey, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Barnes, Khaw, Shafai  
(Administrators) Greene, Onan, Soyster, Stellar, Weiss

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 11:57 a.m.

- I. **Minutes.** The minutes of the 22 October meeting were approved.
- II. **SAC Report.** Professor Lowndes reported the following.
  - A. **Meetings.** The Agenda Committee met once in regular session since the last Senate meeting and will meet on 14 November with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees.
  - B. **Committee on Information Systems Policy.** Members are:

Professor Arun Bansil, Chair (Physics)  
Professor Joseph Ayers (Biology)  
Professor Helen Connolly (Economics)  
Professor Anthony P. De Ritis (Music)  
Professor Robert P. Futrelle (Computer and Information Science)  
Professor Graham Jones (Chemistry)  
Professor Eric L. Miller (ECE)  
Professor Carey M. Rappaport (ECE)  
Professor Mustafa R Yilmaz (Management Science)  
John W. Cipolla, Vice Provost, Graduate Education  
Leslie Hitch, Director, Academic Technology Services  
Linda D. Allen, University Registrar  
Robert Weir, Vice President, Information Services, *ex officio*  
John Guilfoil, SGA representative  
Bahar Bilgen, Graduate and Professional Student Association representative

The Senate Agenda Committee has asked the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Information Systems Policy to prepare a report on the following charge:

1. To recommend the appropriate level of IT support for teaching in general, and for college-based teaching and support laboratories in particular.
2. To recommend the appropriate level of IT support for computational research and research training infrastructure on campus.
3. To review and make recommendations regarding convergent and emerging technologies including those on Campus and those in support of distance and mobile computing needs.

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

3. **Searches.** SAC has been asked to establish search committees for the Chairs of the Departments of Political Science and Visual Arts, and for Dean of the College of Business Administration.
4. **Next Meeting: 19 November in 450 DG.** Please note the room change.

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

- A. **CBA Dean Search.** Dean Weiss has decided to return to the faculty at the end of this academic year. Provost Abdelal expressed appreciation to Dean Weiss for his service to the College of Business Administration and for his, and the College's contributions to the goals of the University, particularly in the area of international business. A national search will be conducted for the new dean.
- B. **Budget.** The budget process is proceeding. The Committee on Funding Priorities (CFP) has heard presentations from the various areas and is making progress in its deliberations. After CFP reports in late November, the Budget Committee will prepare the budget and will make its recommendations to the President.
- C. **Enrollment.** The University was very successful in attracting highly qualified students in the last cycle. The Deans Council is working with the Provost's Office to establish enrollment/recruitment targets and to propose mechanisms to better align recruitment with existing resources in potential majors.

IV. **Question and Discussion Time**

- A. Professor Peterfreund asked whether the new chair searches would be internal. Professor Lowndes responded that only the Political Science search would be internal.
- B. The floor was yielded to Leslie Hitch, Director of Academic Technology Services, who apologized for the Office of Information Systems regarding the recent e-mail slowdown and losses of incoming messages. She explained that the worms and viruses of last September had generated others that began to creep into the system again. The overload was caused, in part, by the time it takes for IS's software to scan all incoming e-mail and then determine if a message is indeed infected. A glitch in the software was another contributing factor; some of this e-mail was incorrectly deemed infected and was deleted. Logs of e-mail header information are kept. Individual faculty and staff were informed of date and sender for messages that were deleted so that they may inform the senders of not having received messages. She promised to help anyone who contacts her about problems with e-mail.

- V. **Enrollment and Admissions Policy Committee.** Professor Bannister moved to substitute the following for Resolution #3, which had been moved at a previous meeting, and the motion was seconded. The substitute motion read as follows:

**WHEREAS, despite the fact that the University's retention efforts have effectively focused on systemic improvements like financial aid that drive improved University performance, individual students may still leave the University due to adjustment issues, academic support needs or dissatisfaction, and**

**WHEREAS, for these students active management of retention depends on the quality of timely identification of indicators of distress and individual-level intervention,**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the following recommendations be accepted to further the University's current retention efforts:**

- 1) **Develop a system to identify individuals in distress early in their academic program;**
- 2) **Develop a clear and rapid intervention system to support students in distress to avoid student dropout where appropriate and possible;**
- 3) **Continue and expand exit interviews to develop a rapid feedback loop (using information obtained in the exit interviews) to identify and intervene with other at-risk students.**

The floor was yielded to Professor Strauss who explained that the substitute motion was clearer than the original motion, which had caused some confusion in the previous discussion.

Professor Peterfreund suggested adding, after “RESOLVED that”, “the day colleges acting in concert with the Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management implement the following recommendations”. Professor Strauss preferred that it say, “the Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management in concert with the day colleges”.

Motion. Vice Provost Hill suggested that the text read, “the day colleges in concert with the Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management” thus deleting “acting”, and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Strauss suggested substituting “and” for “in concert with”.

Professor Alper expressed concern that the resolution seemed to focus more on students who are “distressed” than on top students who are not doing poorly academically but are dissatisfied for other reasons.

Professor Futrelle noted that faculty are the ones who have domain expertise in their day-to-day contact with students. He recommended that solving students’ academic problems not be passed off to administrators.

Professor Bannister said that the spirit of the resolution is to get help and advising to the individual student, and that development of the database is to facilitate identifying the individuals. Professor Strauss added that this year early warning reports from faculty to departments have improved outreach to students in academic distress.

Provost Abdelal stressed the importance of gateway courses in improving retention. Vice Provost Hill outlined the process, begun last year, for early warnings about freshmen in distress to go to deans’ offices from the freshman English and mathematics courses.

Vice Provost Meservey asked whether the addition of “day colleges in concert with” was a friendly amendment, but Professor Strauss preferred to have a vote.

Motion. Professor Peterfreund moved to amend by adding, after “BE IT RESOLVED that”, “the day colleges in concert with the Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management implement the following recommendations”, and the motion was seconded.

Vote on Professor Peterfreund’s amendment: PASSED, 30-0-3.

Professor Alper suggested that the word “distressed” leaves out academically strong students who are dissatisfied with Northeastern and might be considering transferring out.

Motion. Professor Alper moved to amend by substituting the following for item 1, after “develop”: “systems to identify individuals who are dissatisfied with Northeastern University or who are in distress early in their academic program”, and to item 2, after “develop”: “rapid intervention systems to support students who are dissatisfied or distressed to avoid students transferring to another university”. This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Motion. Professor Peterfreund suggested making a comprehensive generalization as opposed to specifying various instances in which a student may leave, such as “identify individuals at risk for leaving Northeastern University” in item 1. Professor Strauss accepted this as a friendly amendment.

Professor Ondrechen pointed out that some students may experience dissatisfaction because they are insufficiently challenged and recommended challenging them not with more work but with more challenging programs.

Professor Blank noted that, under the semester system, a course's Honors section no longer has a different course number from the standard offering and wondered how the additional challenge is noted in a student's record.

Professor Flym asked if a process exists to ascertain why people leave. Provost Abdelal replied that we have exit interviews, but it is not always easy to obtain data.

Professor Blank suggested making the requirement more specific, to develop information from the exit interviews to identify whatever problems remain.

Professor Peterfreund thought too much weight was placed on exit interviews and wondered how we can get the necessary information earlier.

Provost Abdelal emphasized the importance of systemic efforts to enhance the academic experience for students in gateway courses.

Vice Provost Hill noted that failure rates in gateway courses vary widely among universities, but are usually higher than in other courses. He said that grade analysis at some institutions shows a rate of D,F,I and W grades as high as 60%, but that an important issue is differential DFIW grade distribution among different sections of the same gateway course. An important question is: are we providing faculty with sufficient resources to support their students' needs in such courses?

Professor Aroian asked if we have units at Northeastern with better retention rates than others that we could learn from, and whether we have looked at retention processes at top-100 universities.

Dean Finkelstein noted that exit interviews are often unreliable, that we are already gathering data, that advisers are more likely to elicit the real reasons a student is leaving, and that systemic changes may be needed.

Professor Bruns called the question on substitution for Resolution #3, and the motion was seconded.

Vote on cloture: PASSED, 17-7-4.

Vote to substitute: PASSED, 27-0-3.

Motion. Professor Lowndes moved to delete "other", and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Resolution #3, as amended, then read as follows:

**WHEREAS, despite the fact that the University's retention efforts have effectively focused on systemic improvements like financial aid that drive improved University performance, individual students may still leave the University due to adjustment issues, academic support needs or dissatisfaction, and**

**WHEREAS, for these students active management of retention depends on the quality of timely identification of indicators of distress and individual-level intervention,**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the day colleges in concert with the Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management implement the following recommendations to further the University's current retention efforts:**

- 1) **Develop systems to identify students at risk for leaving Northeastern University, early in their academic program;**
- 2) **Develop rapid intervention systems to support students who are dissatisfied or distressed to avoid students transferring to another university;**

**3) Continue and expand exit interviews to develop a rapid feedback loop (using information obtained in the exit interviews) to identify and intervene with at-risk students.**

Vote on Resolution #3: PASSED, 26-2-1.

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

**WHEREAS, the Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management is to continue to refine and implement the long term admission and enrollment strategy that Northeastern University has formulated to allow Northeastern to achieve a ranking of “top 100” national research universities, and**

**WHEREAS, the Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management reviews, on an ongoing basis, those issues identified as affecting student enrollment and refines Northeastern strategies, in a timely manner as necessary, in order to enroll the most qualified student population,**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the Vice President report findings to the Faculty Senate on a yearly basis prior to the last scheduled Senate meeting of the spring semester.**

Professor Peterfreund suggested hyphenating “long term” and this housekeeping change was accepted.

Discussion followed on the reporting date, as the general consensus was that spring was not the optimum time.

Motion. Professor Vaughn moved to substitute “an annual basis early in the fall quarter” for “a yearly basis prior to the last scheduled Senate meeting of the spring semester”, and the motion was seconded.

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

Vote on Professor Vaughn’s amendment: PASSED, 30-0-0.

Motion. Professor Lowndes moved to add “the Provost and” before “the Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management” in the third paragraph of the motion, and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Ellis did not think the addition of “the Provost” needed to be in the “WHEREAS” paragraphs.

Provost Abdelal noted that the Deans Council is significantly involved in defining enrollment targets and strategies for their colleges.

Professor Peterfreund thought the language should reflect the process and suggested adding “in concert with the deans of the colleges”.

Dean Zoloth thought it would be better to omit the “WHEREAS” paragraphs and simply say, after “RESOLVED that”, “on an annual basis the Vice President will be called before the Senate to report the results of the enrollment process of the previous year”.

Professor Lowndes expressed concern about the language in the “WHEREAS” paragraphs that focused solely on actions by the Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management, because he believed the faculty, the colleges, and the Provost should have a shared if not dominant voice in the admission and enrollment strategy for the University, and the Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management should implement that rather than deciding what it is and then implementing it.

Motion. Professor Lowndes moved to insert “the Provost and” before "the Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management" in the "Whereas" paragraphs, with appropriate grammatical changes to reflect the plural subject.

Professor Strauss suggested deleting the “WHEREAS” paragraphs.

Motion. Professor Vaughn moved to postpone discussion of the resolution until the next meeting, and the motion was seconded.

Vote to postpone: FAILED by voice vote.

Professor Peterfreund noted that the “WHEREAS” paragraphs provide a rationale for the report and that it would be neither prudent nor politic to eliminate them.

Professor Bannister accepted Professor Lowndes’ motion as a friendly amendment.

Resolution #4, as amended, read as follows:

**WHEREAS, the Provost and the Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management are to continue to refine and implement the long-term admission and enrollment strategy that Northeastern University has formulated to allow Northeastern to achieve a ranking of “top 100” national research universities, and**

**WHEREAS, the Provost and the Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management review, on an ongoing basis, those issues identified as affecting student enrollment and refine Northeastern’s strategies, in a timely manner as necessary, in order to enroll the most qualified student population,**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the Provost and the Vice President of Enrollment Management report their findings to the Faculty Senate on an annual basis early in the fall semester.**

Vote on Resolution #4: PASSED 28-0-1.

- VI. ***Ad Hoc Faculty Handbook Committee Report.*** Provost Abdelal recognized Professor Ellis to move the first of the Resolutions on Section V of the revised *Faculty Handbook*. Professor Ellis noted that time for the meeting had nearly run out, and moved to adjourn.

Adjourned at 1:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles H. Ellis, Jr.  
Secretary