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Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 10/29/2003

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TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: CHARLES H. ELLIS, Jr., SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2003-2004 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 29 OCTOBER 2003

Present: (Professors) Alper, Aroian, Bansil, Bannister, Blank, Brookins, Bruns, Bursley, Ellis, Flym, Futrelle, Hansberry, Howlett, Hunt, Khaw, Krishnamoorthy, Kruger, Lowndes, Margotta, Morrison, Ondrechen, Peterfreund, Serafim, Shafai, Sherman, Vaughn, Wray
(Administrators) Abdelal, Greene, Hill, Meservey, Onan, Soyster, Stellar, Weiss, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Alverson, Barnes, Metghalchi, Sherwood
(Administrators) Finkelstein

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

- I. **Financial Affairs Committee (FAC) Report.** Professor Vaughn moved Resolutions #1 and #2 together but suggested voting seriatim. The motion was seconded and the resolutions read as follows.

Resolution #1

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate supports the recommendation of the Financial Affairs Committee for a merit raise pool of 5% for continuing faculty in the Fiscal Year 2005.

Resolution #2

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate supports the recommendation of the Financial Affairs Committee for \$1.6 million in Fiscal Year 2005 to close the market/equity gap between the salaries of NU faculty and faculty at peer institutions.

The floor was yielded to Professor Marple, Chair of the Committee, who presented the report. He stressed the following points in terms of educational resources:

- Faculty salaries are important in a competitive market because they affect faculty morale and the image of the University, and they represent 7% of the top 100 *U.S. News* weighting.
- The merit increase recommendation was based on 3.75% increase in the Boston area consumer price index and the provision for a real increase of 2%, which together total 5.75%.
- The market rate adjustment of \$1.6M for 2004-05 represents the balance remaining after the 2003-04 adjustment to address the \$2.6M regional cost-of-living shortfall, which was identified by the Provost's Office based on 2002-03 data.

Professor Ondrechen asked whether data were available with regard to a gender gap in salaries. Professors Marple and Vaughn and Provost Abdelal responded that they had not seen any data relating to a gender gap. Vice Provost Meservey responded that this study has not been run for a couple of years but she would try to obtain the data.

Professor Margotta asked what adjustment would be needed to make our salaries commensurate with those of top 100 institutions. Professor Lowndes responded that salary is but one component of a category called "faculty resources" in which we are ranked 147th. This category also includes class size and other differential data that we do not have. Professor Vaughn pointed out that the matchmate study was done using peer institutions, many of whom are in the same range as the lower part of the top 100 or the upper half of the second tier because they are the comparable institutions. In fact, the matchmates are out of the top 100 because we were looking more at actual matchmates than institutions to which we aspire to compare ourselves.

The floor was yielded to a member of the Department of Modern Languages who expressed concern that salaries for 2.8 lecturers are 50-70% lower at Northeastern than at other institutions and urged that this issue be addressed.

Motion. Professor Alper moved to amend Resolution #2 by adding “identified” before “market/equity gap”. This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Motion. Provost Abdelal moved to add “currently” before “identified”, and this was also accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Futrelle asked whether Senate voting affects administrative action on such resolutions. Professor Marple responded that the Senate is like a collective bargaining agent for the faculty in this sphere, and its legislation traditionally has a significant effect on administrative response. Professor Lowndes added that the Committee on Funding Priorities (CFP) includes the Chair of the Agenda Committee as well as the membership of the Financial Affairs Committee, and the CFP exerts significant leverage on the recommendations that are transmitted to the Budget Committee.

There being no further discussion, the Senate turned to a vote on each of the resolutions.

Vote on Resolution #1: PASSED, 30-0-1.

Resolution #2, as amended, read as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate supports the recommendation of the Financial Affairs Committee for \$1.6 million in Fiscal Year 2005 to close the currently identified market/equity gap between the salaries of NU faculty and faculty at peer institutions.

Vote on Resolution #2: PASSED, 31-0-1.

Professor Kruger moved Resolution #3, and the motion was seconded. The resolution read as follows.

WHEREAS, by any reasonable benchmark the University has too few tenure-track and tenured faculty relative to its number of students, and the current ratio jeopardizes the instructional and research goals as well as the academic reputation of the University,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate supports the recommendation of the Financial Affairs Committee that the number of tenure-track and tenured faculty be increased each year until Northeastern achieves a ratio that is more competitive with Tier II research universities by Fiscal Year 2008.

Professor Marple noted that the tenured and tenure-track faculty play a major role in the life of the institution. The relationship between PhDs and full-time faculty is one of the major factors in determining reputation, and the teaching and research efforts of faculty are essential to achieve top 100 status. He emphasized the following points.

- The present situation is worrisome; between 1997 and 2003, the number of tenure-track faculty has decreased by 24 while the number of students has increased by 2,267. (In 1990, we had 16,239 full-time students and 775 tenured and tenure-track faculty; in 2002, we had 16,941 students and only 594 faculty.)
- The student to faculty ratio, at 24:1, is above our cohort and should be 19:1 as determined from regression analysis of ratios in our cohort..

Professor Bruns asked where redress would be made regarding numbers and other factors. Should we take the number of faculty and divide it by the number of years remaining? Professor Marple responded that there is debate on this issue, but it is important to have an objective in redressing this deficit.

Provost Abdelal stressed the importance of improving the tenure-track faculty ranks, but, as we are significantly far from what could be a reasonable target, it would not be wise to be definitive about numbers at this time.

Professor Lowndes added that the internal historical analysis indicates that the University is 150 faculty short of the number it had for a similar student population ten years ago. The data point to the need for 120-150 more faculty.

Motion. Professor Lowndes moved to add, “(U.S. News and World Report ranked institutions between 51 and 126)” after “Tier II” and this was accepted as a friendly amendment

Provost Abdelal emphasized the need to have a clear direction to make progress toward goals. In addition to increasing faculty ranks we need to enhance the quality of our academic programs and research infrastructure.

Motion. Professor Futrelle moved to delete “more” before “competitive” and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

As amended, Resolution #3 read as follows:

WHEREAS, by any reasonable benchmark the University has too few tenure-track and tenured faculty relative to its number of students, and the current ratio jeopardizes the instructional and research goals as well as the academic reputation of the University,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate supports the recommendation of the Financial Affairs Committee that the number of tenure-track and tenured faculty be increased each year until Northeastern achieves a ratio that is competitive with Tier II U.S. News and World Report ranked institutions between 51 and 126) research universities by Fiscal Year 2008.

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

Vote on Resolution #3, as amended: PASSED, 31-0-1.

Professor Kruger moved Resolution #4 and the motion was seconded. The resolution read as follows.

WHEREAS, the basic Colleges (Arts and Sciences, Bouvé College of Health Sciences, Business Administration, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, and Engineering) have received insufficient non-salary operating funds to support high quality instruction and research,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate supports the recommendation of the Financial Affairs Committee that the non-salary operating funds for the academic programs be increased by \$2 million each year during Fiscal Years 2005-08 in support of teaching, research and service.

Professor Marple considered the attainment of top 100 as a modest objective and a useful rallying cry. He expressed the hope that the University will not be content with it, however. He pointed out the following facts:

- The basic colleges have been neglected; deans have been forced to divert discretionary funds to meet instructional needs.
- Between fiscal years 1998 and 2003, total college revenues (excluding School of Law) increased by 48%, while total college budgets increased by only 26%.
- Non-salary operational funds for the academic programs have declined from 6.98% in 1998 to 3.83% in 2002.

Professor Kruger added that the problem is compounded by the increase in credit hours and the number of students. Faculty need resources in order to deliver high-quality services to students and to conduct research.

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

Vote on Resolution #4: PASSED, 31-0-1.

- II. **Library Policies and Operations Committee Report.** The floor was yielded to Dean Warro who explained that the mission of the Library is to advance academic excellence, enrich the research environment, and promote information literacy within the University community by anticipating, providing for, and fostering the effective use of information resources.

Dean Warro reported significant progress on library services. One component of the evaluation by the NEASC in 2008 will be how well we integrate library materials into instruction. Library instruction is growing rapidly, with an increase in the number of sessions (114 to 248) this fall. Peer tutoring and retention have increased 107% in 2002 and 51% in 2003, and 200 students are on the waiting list. Other areas that are improving are programming and presentations, strategic national partnerships for the institutional repository, and web development and electronic presentation software. However, the dearth of funding over the past ten years and the annual inflation rate of 10-11% have severely impacted our resources in terms of book purchases, staff, technological infrastructure, and updated software.

Professor Lowndes moved Resolution #1, and the motion was seconded. The resolution read as follows.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate supports the recommendation of the Committee on Library Policies and Operations that the University move immediately to remedy the Library's budget shortfalls so that it can fulfill its critical mission of providing access to information for the Northeastern community by increasing the annual funding for library collections by a minimum of \$1,000,000 for FY05.

Professor Futrelle recommended looking into open access journals that can be printed from desktop without restriction after the institution pays an initial fee (sometimes \$1500).

Professor Herman noted that some items do not appear on the radar screen, such as audio-visuals and materials for courses. The Center for Interdisciplinary Studies has been contributing from its own budget for vitally important materials that faculty depend upon. Some faculty make their own purchases, which is inefficient because these items then are not available to others.

Professor Peterfreund suggested leveraging external development funding. Dean Warro responded that he had made some progress in that direction but had not seen any funds as yet.

Provost Abdelal suggested that it is essential to provide the funds first and attend to the details later.

Professor Bruns asked whether it is usual for the library budget to be affected by the advising and tutoring option. Dean Warro responded that is it somewhat unusual. Although it has been going on for thirty years, he would like to see some funding toward a nice cross-fertilization.

Professor Bruns asked to what degree our location affects students. Dean Warro replied that it helps to be in an area with so many academic libraries, but not in every instance, adding that NU needs to be able to contribute much more to the Boston Library Consortium.

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

Vote on Resolution #1: PASSED, 31-0-1.

Professor Lowndes moved Resolution #2, and the motion was seconded. The resolution read as follows.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate supports the recommendation of the Committee on Library Policies and Operations that the funding for library collections and operations be increased by an additional annual amount of \$1,000,000 for FY06.

The floor was yielded to a student who explained that it is inconvenient to continually have to go to other libraries in the Consortium because NU lacks materials.

Vote on Resolution #2: PASSED, 31-0-1.

Professor Lowndes moved Resolution #3, and the motion was seconded. The resolution read as follows.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate supports the recommendation of the Committee on Library Policies and Operations that the University henceforth provide additional funds annually to cover the inflation costs of library materials.

Professor Peterfreund wondered whether the language should be clarified, since any budgetary increment takes into account inflation but deducts from the lump sum. He suggested making allowance for mingling budget lines.

Provost Abdelal recommended caution with regard to assuming *a priori* budgeting for inflation.

Professor Vaughn shared that reservation and indicated that he would like to know what journals are really necessary.

Discussion followed on how much of a mandate should be stated in the resolution.

Motion. Provost Abdelal moved to substitute “consider” for “provide” and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Motion. Professor Lowndes moved to add “as a high priority” after “consider” and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Herman noted that the library is intrinsic to the intellectual infrastructure of the University and as such should be considered for the same kind of automatic cost adjustment as physical plant expenditures, such as fuel or electricity.

Provost Abdelal cautioned against mandating automatic increases.

Professor Futrelle agreed that this would be dangerous and suggested that pressure be applied to the publishing industry.

Professor Blank suggested a motion that would include support and development of open access journals.

Motion. Professor Vaughn moved to add that the Senate urge the Committee “to investigate increasing use of open access journals and other means to reduce the inflation rate for library materials.” This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Vice Provost Meservey recommended separating this motion from Resolution #3, to make it a separate resolution. This, too, was accepted.

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

Resolution #3, as amended, read as follows:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate supports the recommendation of the Committee on Library Policies and Operations that the University henceforth consider as a high priority additional funds annually to cover the inflation costs of library materials.

Vote on Resolution #3: PASSED, 29-0-2.

Professor Vaughn moved the new Resolution #4, and the motion was accepted. The resolution read as follows:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate urges the Committee on Library Policies and Operations to investigate increasing use of open access journals and other means to reduce the inflation rate for library materials. 29-0-1.

Professor Bansil asked for clarification on what constituted open access journals. Professor Futrelle explained that the publisher on the internet provides software that opens up copyrighted materials for downloading without additional costs

Professor Ondrechen added that open access journals are part of a new movement in science and suggested that the Committee on Library Policies and Operations look further into this new concept.

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

Vote on Resolution #4: PASSED, 29-0-1.

As time for the meeting had run out, a motion was made to adjourn.

Adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles H. Ellis, Jr.
Secretary