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Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 02/25/2004

Charles H. Ellis Jr.
Northeastern University

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TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: CHARLES H. ELLIS, Jr., SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2003-2004 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 25 FEBRUARY 2004

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

Absent: (Professors) Bansil, Flym, Margotta, Metghalchi
(Administrators) Finkelstein, Weiss

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 11:56 a.m.

- I. **Minutes.** The minutes of January 28 were approved as amended.
- II. **SAC Report.** Professor Lowndes reported the following.
 - A. **Meetings.** SAC has met twice since the last meeting, once in regular session and once with President Freeland and Provost Abdelal on February 19th.

SAC had three agenda items for the meeting with the President and Provost: concerns about tuition fringe benefits, the budget process, and the search procedures.

In terms of the tuition fringe benefits, SAC has recently received several complaints, and now a grievance, concerning online and study abroad courses where family members of NU employees were being charged full tuition. In the past users of the tuition fringe benefit on, say, study abroad programs have been charged for any significant out of pocket cost to Northeastern. What appears to have changed is that NU now is charging the full NU tuition and thereby making a profit. A second concern is the lack of appropriate communication about changes to this and other fringe benefits. SAC suggested that a) there be no exclusions to the tuition fringe benefit but that the user pay any significant NU out of pocket cost; b) that changes to any fringe benefit be communicated to the SAC prior to any implementation; and c) that the communication of any change of policy, or interpretation of policy, be handled in a significantly improved manner. The President revealed that there had been a significant review of fringe benefits a while ago and that the assessment was that our tuition fringe benefits were significantly beyond other comparable universities. He agreed to look into SAC's concerns.

On the budget item, SAC was seeking the release of the recent report of the Committee on Funding Priorities with its recommendations to the Budget Committee. SAC views this as a significant part of the improved transparency about the budget process that the Senate recommended last year and that the President embraced. The release of the report was also voted unanimously by the CFP and initially the President had seemed supportive but preferred to delay the release of the report until the Budget Committee had completed its work. The President now seems more hesitant to allow the release of the report.

We also discussed in a preliminary way how the budget process might be further improved. Ideas were aired, but further discussion was postponed until the forthcoming FAC report on this matter was available.

The discussion on search procedures was also postponed until our next meeting with the President and Provost shortly after the Spring Break. Our goal is to bring these procedures for the Senate this year.

- B. **Searches.** Two new search committees have been established. Both searches will be internal.

Law, Policy and Society Director. Committee members areElected:

Professor Ballard C. Campbell (History)
 Professor Richard A. Daynard (Law)
 Professor Robert L. Hall, Chair (African American Studies)

Appointed:

Professor James A. Fox (Criminal Justice)
 Professor Heidi Vernon (CBA, General Management)

Physics Chair. Committee members areElected:

Professor Jeffrey B. Sokoloff (Physics)
 Professor Mark C. Williams (Physics)
 Professor Darien Wood, Chair (Physics)

Appointed:

Professor Stephen M. McKnight (ECE)
 Professor Susan Powers-Lee (Biology)

- C. **RSDF Panels.** This year, with the demise of the Research Council, the SAC was invited to help staff the various Research and Scholarship Development Fund panels. The panels are:

Arts & Humanities:

Professor Janet L. Bobcean (Theatre)
 Professor Elizabeth C. Cromley (Architecture)
 Professor Harlow Robinson (Modern Languages)

Professional & Clinical:

Professor Judith Barr (Pharmacy Practice)
 Professor Carol Glod (Nursing)
 Professor Barbara R. Kelley (Nursing)

Social & Behavioral:

Professor Jeffrey Burds (History)
 Professor Robert Gilbert (Political Science)
 Professor Peter Manning (Criminal Justice)
 Professor Kamran M. Dadkhah (Economics)

Science & Engineering:

Professor Dana H. Brooks (ECE)
 Professor Roger W. Giese (Pharmaceutical Sciences)
 Professor Clive H. Perry (Physics)
 Professor Wendy A. Smith (Biology)

- D. **Matthews Professor Selection Committee.** The SAC was also invited this year to recommend three members to the Matthews Distinguished Professor Selection Committee. The SAC appointees are:

Professor Mardges Bacon (Architecture)
 Professor Jean C. Bedard (Accounting)
 Professor Philip W. Le Quesne (Chemistry)

- E. **Meeting Cancellation.** Because of the conflict with the Provost's previously scheduled meeting with the faculty at the same time, the Senate meeting on Thursday, March 18 is cancelled.
- F. **Next Meeting.** If necessary in order to complete today's agenda, the Senate will meet tomorrow, February 26, at 2:50 p.m. in 308 SN. Otherwise, the next meeting is on Wednesday March 10 in 308 Snell.

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

- A. **Faculty Meeting.** Another faculty meeting is scheduled for March 18. The Town Meeting format generated good participation from faculty across colleges at the earlier meeting.
- B. **Academic Initiative.** Provost Abdelal is pleased with the academic initiative for the next fiscal year. He has held extensive discussions with the deans and a number of constituencies with regard to implementing the process in the most effective way.

IV. **Question and Discussion Time.** There were no questions.

- V. **Workload Policy Resolution.** Provost Abdelal reminded Senators that they would be discussing and voting on the items *seriatim*, and that #2 was on the floor. Item #2, as amended, read as follows:

Each academic unit may define its teaching loads based upon the number of courses, the number of credit hours taught, or classroom contact time, as appropriate. Either way, academic units should allow for adjustments in teaching load for very large classes, writing-intensive courses, and supervision of doctoral theses, research/scholarship/creative activity, high service loads, and the like.

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

Vote on item #2: PASSED, 34-0-0.

Item #3 read as follows:

Tenure-track faculty must meet the expectations of teaching, research, and service as articulated in the policy on promotion and tenure in the Faculty Handbook. Therefore, newly hired tenure-track faculty will be assigned a teaching load reduced by at least one four-credit course (or its equivalent in the unit) in each of their first two years at the University to provide the opportunity for developing their teaching and scholarly efforts. Furthermore, service expectations will be more limited than for tenured faculty.

Professor Alper asked whether all new faculty would have the same reduction and suggested replacing "faculty" with "assistant professors" after "newly hired tenure-track." This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

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

Vote on item #3: PASSED 33-0-1.

As passed, item #3 read as follows:

Tenure-track faculty must meet the expectations of teaching, research, and service as articulated in the policy on promotion and tenure in the Faculty Handbook. Therefore, newly hired tenure-track assistant professors will be assigned a teaching load reduced by at least one four-credit course (or its equivalent in the unit) in each of their first two years at the University to provide the opportunity for developing their teaching and scholarly efforts. Furthermore, service expectations will be more limited than for tenured faculty.

Item #4 read as follows:

The course buyout rate for faculty seeking to reduce their teaching load using funds from external sources (i.e. grants, contracts, etc.), will be 1/6 of the faculty member's academic year base salary (including benefits) for each four credit-hour course bought out. The funds used by a faculty member for course buyout will remain in the faculty member's department or equivalent unit. All course buyouts are subject to the approval of the Dean of the School or College.

Motion. Professor Alper moved to amend by substituting the following (from the Faculty Development Committee Report, p. 4), and the motion was seconded.

Faculty members with grants or contracts may purchase course or credit hour releases. The buyout, whether in terms of courses or credit hours, will be proportional to the normal teaching load of the unit and the weight placed on teaching relative to service and research/scholarship/creative activities and will be based on the faculty member's salary (including fringe benefits). This rate of purchase assumes that the faculty member will carry his/her normal service responsibilities. The rate of purchase will be set at a proportionately higher level for faculty seeking to purchase released time from both teaching and service. A complete buyout of teaching responsibilities is possible but normally it should not be for more than two consecutive academic years.

The floor was yielded to Professor Herman who expressed concern that externally funded research could cause interdisciplinary faculty to be treated like second-class citizens, as departments would be less inclined to release them to interdisciplinary teaching since no external funds would be involved.

Dean Zoloth noted that external agencies do not consider teaching, advising, or other faculty responsibilities when reviewing grants. If they rate proposals worthy, they replace salaries by certain formulaic percentages.

Dean Stellar agreed with Professor Herman that some interdisciplinary programs look less expensive than they actually are and suggested addressing the matter by stages.

Provost Abdelal pointed out that there are other models to support interdisciplinary work. He wants to move away from replacing full-time faculty effort with effort by part-time faculty members. He also thought the honors and interdisciplinary programs should be supported as part of our basic mission rather than as separate entities.

Professor Ellis favored the substitute motion as consistent with the Senate's elimination of a fixed salary fraction in the previous section. He reminded the body that this language does not include the footnote, so there is no formula in this language. He also noted that most NSF programs do not buy out salaries during the academic year, but only in the summer.

Dean Soyster noted that when negotiating percentages of a faculty member's time he tries to build in as much flexibility as possible.

Dean Greene recommended an algorithm-free proposal, adding that he had never known faculty to buy out of research time.

Professor Lowndes supported the substitute motion. He disagreed that internal buyouts create a second class group of faculty. He expressed concern about how to distribute the resources from granting agencies and suggested that the part-time cost be included. In that way, for many agencies, the researcher would have more money for research.

Vice Provost Meservey suggested that the last sentence of Professor Alper's amendment specify "one academic year at a time" instead of "two consecutive academic years", and that "time purchase" replace "course buyout". She also suggested that the last two sentences of the original resolution be retained. These suggestions were accepted as friendly amendments.

Provost Abdelal noted that it is important not to have part time faculty replace full-time faculty. It is important to have funded research, and a chair can replace tenured or tenure-track faculty with full-time non-tenure-track faculty when a steady state percent is coming to the department.

Dean Soyster pointed out that one-year time purchase would not be in the interest of his college because many grants anticipate four or five years of research.

Professor Aroian asked whether the projected budget would support replacement of tenured faculty, particularly as many of the new hires will be “stars.” Provost Abdelal responded that only 5-10% of the new faculty will be “stars”; the goal is to ramp up the ratio of senior faculty positions in areas of need.

Professor Futrelle noted that it is difficult to replace faculty who teach in specialized fields.

Motion. Professor Bruns called the question.

Vote on cloture: PASSED by majority voice vote.

Vote on Professor Alper’s motion to substitute, as amended: 30-1-1.

Professor Lowndes suggested adding “external” before “grants or contracts” and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

As substituted and with Professor Lowndes’ friendly amendment, the motion on the floor now read:

Faculty members with external grants or contracts may purchase course or credit hour releases. The buyout, whether in terms of courses or credit hours, will be proportional to the normal teaching load of the unit and the weight placed on teaching relative to service and research/scholarship/creative activities and will be based on the faculty member's salary (including fringe benefits). This rate of purchase assumes that the faculty member will carry his/her normal service responsibilities. The rate of purchase will be set at a proportionately higher level for faculty seeking to purchase released time from both teaching and service. A complete buyout of teaching responsibilities is possible but normally it should not be for more than one academic year at a time. The funds used by a faculty member for time purchase will remain in the faculty member’s department or equivalent unit. All time purchases are subject to the approval of the Dean of the School or College.

Professor Herman suggested that grants might be offset without exchange of cash. He was still concerned that faculty with external funding would be more likely to be able to buy out of responsibilities than those gaining new responsibilities without external funding.

Motion. Professor Peterfreund moved to amend by substituting the following for Professor Alper’s motion:

“Colleges shall establish their own time-purchase policies, subject to approval by the Provost. Policies for staffing interdisciplinary programs and other programs, such as the Honors Program, shall be established by the Colleges, subject to approval of the Provost. The funds used by a faculty member for time purchase will remain in the faculty member’s department or equivalent unit. All time purchases are subject to the approval of the Dean of the School or College.”

In response to a query, Provost Abdelal declared himself comfortable with either motion, since they both protected the interest of the Provost’s Office.

Dean Soyster recommended that issues of negotiation should be at the college level, and said that he was taking a market-side rather than a supply-side view.

As time had run out, the Senate recessed until Thursday afternoon at 2:50 p.m.

Recessed at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles H. Ellis, Jr.
Secretary