

March 10, 2004

## Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 03/10/2004

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*Northeastern University*

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TO: FACULTY SENATE  
FROM: CHARLES H. ELLIS, Jr., SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE  
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2003-2004 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 10 MARCH 2004

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Present: (Professors) Alper, Alverson, Aroian, Bannister, Blank, Brookins, Bruns, Bursey, Ellis, Flym, Futrelle, Hansberry, Hunt, Khaw, Krishnamoorthy, Kruger, Lowndes, Margotta, Morrison, Ondrechen, Serafim, Shafai, Sherman, Sherwood, Vaughn, Wray  
(Administrators) Abdelal, Hill, Meservey, Onan

Absent: (Professors) Bansil, Barnes, Howlett, Metghalchi, Peterfreund  
(Administrators) Finkelstein, Greene, Soyster, Stellar, Weiss, Zoloth

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

I. **Minutes.** The minutes of February 11 were approved.

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

**Meetings.** SAC met in regular session on February 26 and with President Freeland and Provost Abdelal on March 9.

The budget process and academic search procedures were the items on the agenda for the discussion with the President and Provost. As the discussion on the budget process took up most of the meeting time, the search procedures were not addressed. Some progress was made on how to improve transparency in the budget process and on smoothing the ripples earlier this year between the significant differences in the recommendations of the Committee on Funding Priorities and the final recommendations of the Budget Committee. Details will be announced when this discussion has been completed.

**Next Meeting.** If necessary to complete the day's agenda, the Senate will meet Thursday, March 11, at 2:50 p.m. in 308 SN. Otherwise, the next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 17, in 450 DG.

III. **Provost's Report** Provost Abdelal reported that his office was still working with numbers and market adjustments, adding that he would be happy to answer any questions. There were no questions.

IV. **Workload Policy Resolution.** The workload policy resolution was on the floor.

**Motion.** Vice Provost Meservey moved to amend by adding the following to Item 1, paragraph 3, before the sentence that read, "**At the very least, the matchmate data must identify the teaching load range and average for each matchmate unit**":

The faculty of each department, school or similar unit, in consultation with the dean of the college and the Provost, will establish matchmates for the academic unit and will establish the metrics of its own workload policy based on these matchmate comparisons.

Professor Morrison accepted this as a friendly amendment. He suggested replacing "average" in the last sentence with "typical load" because chairs know what the typical load is but not the average load.

Provost Abdelal preferred the word "average" as capturing the meaning more definitively.

Professor Vaughn noted that the average is defined only if the numbers are there.

Provost Abdelal explained that his office has been looking at national data on the average teaching load for each department in Research I and II and Doctoral I and II institutions. Although the chairs may not have the information, the offices of institutional research at these institutions do have it.

Professor Morrison pointed out that the average is not operationalized.

Professor Lowndes explained that the data on these loads would not be secured by chairs communicating with chairs but rather at the provost's or dean's level. He wanted assurance that the matchmates for teaching loads would generally be the same as those identified for salaries.

Provost Abdelal explained that the position of the Provost's Office is that faculty members or a department can always raise questions about the list of matchmates and provide a rationale for further review. He added that his office had been constrained by the list for which it had financial data, but he would be open to a department making a case for a more fitting list.

Professor Futrelle asked to what extent other institutions provide average faculty loads on a departmental basis. Provost Abdelal replied that most institutions are forthcoming with that information, either from institutional research offices or databases.

Professor Vaughn expressed concern that at some institutions faculty carry a different part of the advising burden, and these differences should be taken into account. Vice Provost Meservey reported that last year we started participating in another phase of the Delaware Study, that is, collecting information on the other activities of faculty. A number of departments provided information then, and all will be providing it this year. While it may take a few more rounds to refine the process, she expects that in the next couple of years we will have some foundation to make those kinds of comparisons.

Professor Blank recommended replacing "establish" with "designate," and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Onan asked whether matchmate institutions would be solicited on an individual basis. Provost Abdelal replied that the Provost's Office would be contacting the appropriate officials at other institutions in addition to using data from the Delaware Study as an additional reference.

Motion. Professor Alper moved to amend by adding the following to Vice Provost Meservey's amendment:

At the very least, the matchmate data must identify the mode, range, and average for the teaching load of each matchmate unit.

This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Ondrechen asked that that the record reflect that, while three semester courses per year is the statutory load, in practice, some people are released for a variety of reasons—curricular development, some particular research project, course size, etc. Thus if you divide the number of courses taught by the number of faculty, the result would be less than 3.0. She was concerned that departments might be penalized for having an average of only 2.5. Vice Provost Meservey responded that, since our source of data is the institutional research offices at these various universities, you will get what is actually happening as opposed to what might be the typical mode. Provost Abdelal added that this is why the mode is less important than the average in terms of the actual data.

Professor Morrison noted that all three statistics are measures of central tendency. His point was that if large classes, dissertation supervision, and other responsibilities reduce some individual loads, would the unit's other faculty have to teach more to maintain some mandated unit average? Provost Abdelal responded that matchmates should be designated as having a similar mix of programs and responsibilities that are already factored into their averages. What we want in a department is not just the average but rather to optimize utilization of overall faculty effort. Equity should be applied to total workload, not to teaching load alone.

Professor Lowndes urged the Senate not to go any further down a detailed statistical road. The Senate should not legislate nuance but rather look at the proposed policy as a means toward a reasonable workload. The workload policy was formulated to guarantee that each department can define the parameters of its workload and teaching load however it chooses and may then ask the Dean and Provost to fit its particular model. He pointed out that

many units would be ill-advised to work in terms of the number of courses, since we have mostly 4-credit courses based on a 65-minute hour, while most other universities have 3-credit courses based on 50-minute hours. He recommended seeking matchmate data that covered the entire range of productivity for the faculty of a department, whether that was in credit hours, students per class, or number of courses. The Delaware Study could be a secondary control mechanism but it would likely not be useful for anything about individual department loads. We will have to go directly to the matchmate institutions for that.

Provost Abdelal thought that the number of course preparations and the numbers of students also need to be considered.

Professor Bursey recommended also looking at exam types as to whether they are essay or multiple choice.

Professor Vaughn suggested including the amount of assistance that faculty members receive from graduate assistants. Provost Abdelal agreed and noted that one of the goals in the five-year investment plan is to increase the number of graduate stipends and graduate assistantships.

Professor Lowndes suggested adding to the third paragraph of the preamble, after “academic year”, “providing all resources necessary have been made available to units concerned.” This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Kruger asked how matchmates would be designated. Provost Abdelal responded that we have a list with which to begin, but changes can be made as needed from the perspective of the faculty of a department. Such a proposal would then be reviewed by the dean, who then forwards it to the Provost’s Office, with negotiation as needed throughout.

Professor Khaw asked how to reconcile matchmates for workloads with matchmates for salaries if they differ. Provost Abdelal explained that the matchmate lists for salary were selected on the basis of identifying and designating departments with a similar mix of academic programs, research, scholarly productivity, and funding. These are the same criteria used to develop a list of matchmates for workload. However, the University is constrained from obtaining financial data from institutions in certain collaborative agreements. We will start with the matchmate lists we have, with the understanding that departments can make the case for changes.

Professor Kruger called the question.

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

The resolution, as amended, read as follows:

**WHEREAS it is vital that Northeastern University establish competitive workloads and teaching loads in its quest for top-100 research university status,**

**AND WHEREAS the goal of such workloads and teaching loads must be to ensure equity while recognizing and supporting faculty members’ diverse strengths, talents and contributions to the University,**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the following Workload Policy be implemented University-wide in the 2005-06 academic year, providing all resources necessary have been made available to the units concerned:**

**1. Matchmate Workloads**

**A normal workload for faculty at research universities includes instruction, research/scholarship/creative activities, and service. An equitable workload policy must emphasize equity of total workloads, rather than equity in one or two components of the workload.**

**Academic units vary in their contributions to the University mission ranging from units that focus primarily on undergraduate education to those with substantial graduate and research programs, and so it is understood that the components of the workload policy will vary from one unit to another.**

The faculty of each department, school or similar unit, in consultation with the Dean of the College and the Provost, will designate matchmates for the academic unit and will establish the metrics of its own workload policy based on these matchmate comparisons. At the very least, the matchmate data must identify the mode, range, and average for the teaching load of each matchmate unit.

## **2. Teaching Loads**

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, supervision of doctoral theses, research/scholarship/creative activity, high service loads, and the like.

## **3. Tenure-Track Faculty Workloads**

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.

## **4. Time Purchase**

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 not normally possible 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.

## **5. Merit and Equity Raises**

The specific weighting of the components of a faculty member's workload must be followed in the determination of a merit or equity salary increase for the faculty member.

## **6. Workload Evaluation Committee**

Every department or similar unit will establish in its bylaws a performance evaluation committee consisting of at least two members of the tenured faculty plus the department chair or unit head. The committee members will be chosen by a method agreed to by the unit. On a periodic basis of no more than five years, as determined by the bylaws of the department or equivalent unit, the Workload Evaluation Committee will review the contributions and effectiveness of each faculty member in teaching, research/scholarship/creative activities and service based on the matchmate data for workloads or teaching loads from comparable units and on information for each faculty member such as annual reviews, curriculum vitae, teaching evaluations, publication records, service activities and the like. After completing these reviews, the Workload Evaluation Committee will establish workloads for the faculty within the unit with respect to research/scholarship/creative activities, teaching and service. In making these individual determinations, the committee shall also take into account the cumulative impact of the individual assignments on the ability of the unit to fulfill its responsibilities to students and to the University, and identify any additional resources needed under the proposed assignments to carry out the unit's responsibilities. Each determination shall be made after consulting with the individual faculty member involved. Normally, this assignment shall be made with the consent of the faculty member. Each unit will also establish an appeals mechanism for faculty members who disagree with the workload profile established by the committee. Although the particular workloads may vary from person to person or from time to time, each faculty member is expected to contribute to some extent to each of the three areas. The individual workload assignment

**is formally made upon approval of the unit head and/or Dean of the College or School to which the individual is assigned.**

Vote on the Workload Policy Resolution, as amended: passed, 27-0-0.

- V. **Academic Policy Committee Report on Classroom Usage Patterns.** Professor Sherman moved the following resolution, and the motion was seconded.

**BE IT RESOLVED, as an operations premise, that the administration accepts that reasonable excess capacity in the general use classroom inventory must exist so that the University can properly align classroom configuration with pedagogical objectives.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate recognizes that the ongoing shortage of appropriate classrooms, particularly in the 20-30 seat and 50-60 seat ranges, acts to inhibit curricular reform, teaching innovation, and student satisfaction. The Senate therefore encourages the University administration to identify space not currently used for instruction, and, working in close consultation with faculty, design and quickly build as many state-of-the-art general use classrooms of these sizes as is practicable.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate encourage the University to plan for further construction to ameliorate the overcrowding of the specialized classrooms and laboratories that now exist in various fields where increasing student demand cannot be met effectively due to classroom capacity limitations;**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate encourages the Administration to develop coherent multi-year replacement programs and budgets to maintain the currency and operational readiness of classrooms and related instructional facilities and that it insure that appropriate numbers of fully cross trained technical staff be available to support classrooms when ever they are being used.**

The floor was yielded to Professor Herman who explained that the Academic Policy Committee last year had been charged to look into the University's classroom usage in terms of the semester conversion and our top-100 goal. The Committee had submitted its preliminary report in February 2003 with the understanding that it would review room and utilization data on Fall 2003, and preliminary data on Spring 2004 for its final report. This report was modeled on last year's, updated, expanded, and corrected to reflect the new data and altered class size decisions made since the earlier report.

Professor Blank suggested replacing "ameliorate" with "relieve" in paragraph 3, and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Vaughn referred to the Registrar's report in the fall, which indicated that the new sequence pattern was not being fully utilized and that some sequences were overcrowded.

Vice President Meservey noted that three-day sequences are used more than two-day sequences.

Professor Bruns reported that the College of Business faculty had been told to adapt by utilizing all sequences, but all colleges seem not to have done the same. She recommended having a policy that is consistent across colleges.

Provost Abdelal recommended that the colleges work collaboratively with the Offices of the Registrar and the Provost.

Professor Herman acknowledged that it is a complicated matrix and that the classrooms gained are being offset by conversion of classrooms to administrative offices.

Professor Alper suggested following the example at a number of other universities in giving four-credit courses with three hours of contact.

Professor Lowndes urged the administration to do what it can to improve matters now and suggested that the 2004-05 Senate be encouraged to look at the whole spectrum of academic calendar issues that seem to be surfacing, including Professor Alper's suggestion.

Professor Brookins suggested that, in the last paragraph, "cross trained" be hyphenated and "when ever" be made one word. These changes were accepted.

The resolution, as amended, read as follows:

**BE IT RESOLVED, as an operations premise, that the administration accepts that reasonable excess capacity in the general use classroom inventory must exist so that the University can properly align classroom configuration with pedagogical objectives.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate recognizes that the ongoing shortage of appropriate classrooms, particularly in the 20-30 seat and 50-60 seat ranges, acts to inhibit curricular reform, teaching innovation, and student satisfaction. The Senate therefore encourages the University administration to identify space not currently used for instruction, and, working in close consultation with faculty, design and quickly build as many state-of-the-art general use classrooms of these sizes as is practicable.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate encourage the University to plan for further construction to relieve the overcrowding of the specialized classrooms and laboratories that now exist in various fields where increasing student demand cannot be met effectively due to classroom capacity limitations;**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate encourages the Administration to develop coherent multi-year replacement programs and budgets to maintain the currency and operational readiness of classrooms and related instructional facilities and that it insure that appropriate numbers of fully cross-trained technical staff be available to support classrooms whenever they are being used.**

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

Vote: PASSED, 25-0-0.

- VI. **Ad Hoc Handbook Review Committee Report – Section IV.** Professor Ellis moved Resolution #1, and the motion was seconded. The resolution read as follows.

**BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate approves Section IV.H (Conflict of Commitment and Interest) presented in the Revised Draft (2/27/04) from the *ad hoc* Committee to Review the Faculty Handbook, to go into effect when published in the revised edition of the *Faculty Handbook*.**

Following a brief discussion on the language about a faculty member's use of University resources, which is permissible with the approval of the unit head, the Senate turned to a vote.

Vote on Resolution #1: PASSED, 24-0-0.

Professor Ellis moved Resolution #2, and the motion was seconded. Resolution #2 read as follows:

**BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate approves Section IV.J.1 (Patent Policy) presented in the Revised Draft (2/27/04) 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 Blank pointed out that this section, still marked "I" in the draft, should be designated section J. Professor Ellis indicated that it will be corrected.

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

Vote on Resolution #2: PASSED, 25-0-0.

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

**BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate approves Section V.J.2 (Copyright Policy) presented in the Revised Draft (2/27/04) 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 Herman explained that the Senate's approval of this section would make explicit what heretofore has been implicit.

Professor Alper asked where the line is drawn as to ownership. Provost Abdelal replied that the parameters were stated in the text as follows: "Use of laboratory and/or computer resources beyond those provided to faculty for their normal instructional, research, or administrative use, or assistance from one or more faculty of staff to an author specifically pertaining to the work, constitutes significant use of University resources. In all cases, the Provost will make a good faith determination concerning significant use, and it will be final and binding on all parties (p. 25)."

Professor Blank suggested that "extraordinary use" replace "significant use" but this was not accepted.

Professor Bursey suggested that "substantial use" replace "significant use" and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

As time had run out, Provost Abdelal suggested a recess until the next day.

Motion. Professor Lowndes called the question and suggested that, however the vote turned out, the Senate not meet the next day given how little remained of the agenda to be completed.

Vote on cloture: FAILED, 12-9-2.

There being no objection to not meeting on March 11, it was tacitly agreed that the next meeting would be on March 17 in 450 DG.

Adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles H. Ellis, Jr.  
Secretary