

April 14, 2004

Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 04/14/2004

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Recommended Citation

Ellis Jr., Charles H., "Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 04/14/2004" (2004). *Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes*. Paper 50.
<http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d10004993>

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TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: CHARLES H. ELLIS, Jr., SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2003-2004 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 14 APRIL 2004

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

Absent: (Professors) Blank, Flym, Hansberry, Howlett, Metghalchi, Shafai
(Administrators) Weiss, Zoloth

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 12:08 p.m.

- I. **Minutes.** The minutes of March 24 were approved.
- II. **SAC Report.** Professor Lowndes reported the following.
 - A. **Meetings.** SAC met once since last week's Senate meeting.
 - B. **Administrator Evaluation.** The evaluation report on Edward Warro, Dean of University Libraries, has been released for review in the Senate Office by the faculty and approved staff of the Libraries.
 - C. **NU Press.** SAC has been asked for input in the establishment of a faculty advisory group to discuss options for the NU Press.
 - D. **Next Meeting:** Next Wednesday, the last meeting of the 2003-04 Senate will be held from 11:45 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. in 240 Egan (Raytheon). An organizational meeting of the 2004-05 Senate will take place immediately before that meeting, at 11:00 a.m. to elect next year's Senators. If your term is continuing, please plan to attend both meetings. If you are not on next year's Senate, you need not attend the organizational meeting.
- III. **Provost Report.** In the interest of time, Provost Abdelal did not give a report.
- IV. **Question and Discussion Time**
 - A. Professor Peterfreund expressed concern that the change in RSDF policy, made in mid-competition, would prevent faculty in the humanities and social sciences from getting release time and this, in turn, would create two distinct classes of faculty—those who can buy out and those who cannot. Provost Abdelal responded that he would be happy to reconsider the decision. He explained that he had not meant that faculty in the social sciences and humanities did not need release time to do research projects. He thought that the best mechanism for release for research is not for faculty to be applying to the Provost's Office for an award primarily to get release time for their effort, but that grants of release time would best be effected at the department or college level rather than by the university-wide RSDF committee.

Professor Peterfreund asked whether the Provost were making a commitment to redirect the funds so that, once the Provost's Office has approved sponsoring the research, the funds for release time will not disappear and the colleges can make wise choices regarding buyouts. Provost Abdelal replied that he would have no problem giving those small amounts that were traditionally used by the colleges. However, he thought that the decision as to who teaches what in a department should be deliberated at the department level by the faculty and chair rather than having a committee decide what is meritorious in terms of release time. Workloads

need to be assessed locally.

Professor Peterfreund asked whether the Provost's Office would make this RSDF funding, which everyone thinks has been removed from the process, available to the local units so that at unit discretion RSDF awardees can get release time. Provost Abdelal noted that this would be for next year, not this year, adding that more than the traditional amount would be allocated to the colleges.

Vice Provost Meservey offered to consult with Vice Provost Hedlund, who oversees RSDFs and knows the particulars, and report back to the Senate about where the dollars go.

Provost Abdelal pointed out that the Provost's Office has not taken away any of the money previously allocated to RSDF. It is still available, and his intent is to provide more to the colleges in operational budgets, trusting that they will provide more operational funds to the departments, by July 1.

- B. Professor Ondrechen agreed that centers and institutes should be funded by competitive proposals instead of automatically. She asked what is the Provost's intent, over the next fiscal year, for centers and institutes with regard to five-year grants. Provost Abdelal replied that each center would start at a certain level of University support and that amount would diminish over each of the five years to get to a base level, which would be about \$50K.

- V. **Academic Search Procedures.** Professor Lowndes moved the following resolution, and the motion was seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate adopt the search procedures described in the 23 March 2004 document entitled *Academic Search Procedures*, and that these replace the search procedures for key academic administrators in Section VI.D of the current Faculty Handbook.

Preliminary to Senate deliberation, Professor Lowndes had distributed a memorandum containing the following text.

"The following endeavors to provide some background information and an overview for the Senate discussion tomorrow on Academic Search Procedures.

Over the past thirty plus years or so, the University has benefited from an enlightened set of search procedures for key academic administrator positions. These procedures have productively and effectively balanced the diverse interests of shared governance. Search committees have always been *ad hoc* committees of the Faculty Senate. The faculty have had the dominant say in determining the composition of a committee, and the administrators have had the dominant say in defining the caliber, values and characteristics needed for a successful applicant (i.e., via the charge to the committee and the job description). The committee has defined the short list of candidates, and the administrator has selected from this list (or extended the search).

Though not receiving as much attention as the ill-fated post-tenure review proposal, these existing academic search procedures were dramatically changed in the draft of a new Faculty Handbook proposed by the 1999 Faculty Handbook Revision Committee (replaced now by the *Ad Hoc* Faculty Handbook Review Committee chaired by Professor Ellis). The 2002-03 SAC did not agree with these changes and rejected them. About 18 months ago, President Freeland expressed a desire to work with the SAC to change the search procedures to facilitate more speedy searches and to provide the President and/or administrators with greater input and say over the composition of search committees. While not necessarily agreeing that the former was

a problem or with the goal of the latter, the SAC did believe that the existing procedures needed more clarification and/or amplification to embrace, or not, many informal practices that had developed over the years.

Since that time, the SAC and the President and Provost have worked collegially, with respective advocacy, to develop a draft of a new set of search procedures. The attached *23 March 2004 Academic Search Procedures* document has substantial, but not necessarily full, agreement by all participants. Nevertheless, SAC voted unanimously to bring the document to the Senate for its full consideration.

Throughout the discussions to develop new search procedures, SAC has been concerned to maintain the balance of interests that has been a vital element of our search procedures to date. While the proposed new procedures have considerably more detail, much of this has either been in practice or reflects changes in the university's operations and/or structure over the years. There are, though, four substantive areas of change:

1. There would now be two types of committees to fill academic administrator positions: search committees and selection committees. Search committees would be constituted for positions in which the faculty has a primary interest (such as for the positions of Department Chair, College and School Deans, Provost etc). Selection committees would be constituted for positions for which the faculty shares interest to a significant degree with other parts of the Northeastern community (such as for Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Vice President for Information Services, Vice President for Co-operative Education etc). The fundamental difference between the two is that a search committee would have primary responsibility for developing the pool of candidates and recommending a list of finalists, whereas a selection committee would recommend a list of finalists based on a review of a group of candidates, developed usually by a search firm, and presented to it by the appointing authority.
2. Appointed members of search and selection committees would now be handled by slates. For example, for a given number of appointed members from the faculty, SAC would provide a slate of twice that number from which the administrator involved would select the appointed members, and *viceversa* for administrator member appointments. Current procedures have each appointing entity selecting the appropriate number of appointed members, though SAC can and has declined on occasions to accept suggested administrator selections.
3. The administrator concerned now would select the chair of the committee. Where elected members are involved, the administrator must select from the elected members unless SAC approves otherwise. Where search committees are entirely appointed, the administrator must select the chair from one of the appointed faculty members. For selection committees, the administrator must select one of the appointed members as the committee chair. Under the existing search procedures, search committee chairs are either elected by and from the committee membership, or are appointed by SAC.
4. Where a search or selection committee would use a search consultant firm, the committee would be given a slate of three firms from which it would select the firm to be retained. In the past, the practice has generally been for the administrator to select the search firm to be used by a committee."

Provost Abdelpointed out that the Academic Search Procedures document contained significant points of agreement but, from the administration perspective, the process was not complete. While he understood SAC's desire to have the Senate's views, he also wanted the input of the administrators on the Senate, since they had not been involved in the negotiations. He urged that the

document in its final form reflect three key criteria—collegiality, efficiency, and transparency.

Professor Peterfreund suggested the following changes:

- p. 1 – second paragraph, fourth sentence, add after “firm”, to fill a position at the decanal level or above”
- p. 2 – penultimate paragraph, change “where” to “when”
- p. 3, and throughout, for consistency – insert in last paragraph, first sentence of item 2, after “If” and before “used”, “consultants are to be”
- p. 5 – third paragraph, add commas to set off nonrestrictive clause, “each with two full-time tenured or tenure-track professional members (which may include Department Chairs or their equivalent)”
- Mention should be made of current procedures in the *Faculty Handbook* VI.D.1.c.1-3

Professor Peterfreund was pleased to note that the current “stealth” clause, VI.D.1.f, had been eliminated; however, he was not sure he agreed with the omission of VI.D.1.g, as he felt a search committee should go on record in issuing a brief written statement on its actions.

Professor Lowndes recalled that search committees rarely if ever report on the searches beyond their recommendations, and he pointed out that the notion of “stealth” candidates should not be part of a shared process. He added that the Affirmative Action Director should have the option to attend search committee meetings and this should be included. Other items were consciously left out.

Professor Vaughn suggested that slates would be cumbersome and expensive. He also expressed concern about the omission of the position list included in the current VI.D.1.a because faculty have a strong interest in the selection of key administrators.

Professor Lowndes explained that slates had been used in broader form with the CBA dean search with some success. He added that the eight faculty proposed had not been consulted in advance, which had caused some complications. The intent is to be cooperative and to share in the process of staffing the committee. A consulting firm, if any, would be selected by the committee. The dean decides whether a department chair search will be internal or external; often it is a budget issue.

Professor Vaughn expressed concern about the length of interim or acting chairs' terms. Professor Lowndes responded that interim positions should not continue beyond one academic year.

Dean Greene noted that putting together search committees requires a level of trust and interaction to produce the kind of committee for a useful result. Flexibility is also needed. He viewed the draft as complicated, time-consuming, and labor-intensive. He suggested that the document start with a philosophical statement about shared governance, efficiency, and transparency.

Motion. Professor Ondrechen moved to amend the third paragraph, first sentence, on page 2 by substituting, “The search committee members will elect the Chair of the Committee.” The motion was seconded.

Dean Greene objected to selective editing of a complex document.

Professor Barnes recommended voting on the amendment in order to give some direction when the document is sent to a committee.

Provost Abdelal advocated having the dean appoint the committee chair on the grounds of administrative capability, adding that it is common across the country for the administrator to select the committee chair.

Professor Futrelle countered that some faculty would feel qualified to assess the skills of a candidate.

Professor Vaughn favored the option of electing a chair from outside the unit.

Professor Ellis read, "The Chair of the Committee will be chosen from its members by vote of the Committee."

Professor Peterfreund expressed concern that piecemeal amendments would create asymmetry in its coherence. He did not see a distinction between determining the chairperson of a chair search committee and that of a dean search committee.

Professor Lowndes declared himself willing to abide by the will of the Senate, as the point of the discussion was to hear all views at all levels. He suggested that the Senate focus on the four issues in his memorandum. Without this discussion, to send the document to a committee would not be helpful.

Provost Abdelal pointed out that, although faculty might conclude that some things have been surrendered, the document also eliminates certain elements of discretion that the administration previously had. He thought the document was fairly balanced with regard to collegiality, efficiency, and transparency.

Motion. Professor Onan called the question.

Professor Ondrechen withdrew her amendment, since the Senate was discussing the document in more global terms.

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

Adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles H. Ellis, Jr.
Secretary