

January 19, 2005

## Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 01/19/2005

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*Northeastern University*

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TO: FACULTY SENATE  
FROM: CHARLES H. ELLIS, Jr., SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE  
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2004-05 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 19 JANUARY 2005

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Present: (Professors) Alper, Blank, Ellis, Futrelle, Glod, Hansberry, Herman, Krishnamoorthy, Kruger, Lowndes, Margotta, McKnight, Morrison, Peterfreund, Powers-Lee, Reynolds, Robinson, Shafai, Sherman, Sherwood, Vaughn, Wiseman  
(Administrators) Abdelal, Finkelstein, Hill, Onan, Stellar

Absent: (Professors) Bannister, Bansil, Bobcean, De Ritis, Heiman, Marshall, Melachrinoudis, Schaffer, Wray  
(Administrators) Falcon, Moore, Soyster, Spieler, Zoloth

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

- I. **Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of 1 December, 15 December, and 12 January were not ready for distribution.
- II. **SAC Report.** Professor Lowndes reported the following.
  - A. **Proposal from Registrar Allen.** The following is the proposal from Registrar Linda Allen for a calendar change. The proposal seeks to extend the intersession break between the Fall and Spring semesters by one week. The proposal has been sent to the Senate's Academic Policy Committee for their review and recommendation. We anticipate bringing this to the 9 February Senate meeting.

"Bob, I am proposing the following calendar for the 2005-06 academic year. I would like to recommend that we start the spring semester a week (I'm assuming that the quarter calendar would continue the earlier week for SPCS and the Law school, since they both would have started the winter quarter in November) later and give more time between the fall and spring semesters to review academic records and enroll our new students for the spring. This would also move commencement a week later into May. One tight spot in the calendar is the time between summer 2 and fall commencement. Grades would need to be due within 48 hours after the final to ensure proper clearance for the graduates.

Could you please review this and let me know your thoughts? There are many requests for the information for the dates for that year. Could you please give me a timetable when we might be able to move ahead with this. If we don't make this change we will also be impacted by an additional spring Monday holiday because of January 1 celebrated on January 2.

Thanks. Linda"

Proposed Academic Calendar 2005-2006

|                        |                              |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| September 3 and 4      | Residence Hall Move-in       |
| September 5 and 6      | Fall semester registration   |
| September 7            | Fall classes begin           |
| December 9 thru 16     | Final exams                  |
| December 17 thru Jan 8 | Vacation                     |
| January 9 and 10       | Spring semester registration |
| January 11             | Spring classes begin         |
| March 6                | Spring break                 |
| April 21 thru 28       | Final exam week              |
| April 29               | Vacation/Senior week         |
| May 6                  | Commencement                 |

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| May 8                 | Summer I registration                    |
| May 9                 | Summer I classes begin                   |
| June 22               | Summer I classes end                     |
| June 26 and 27        | Final exams                              |
| June 28 thru July 4   | Summer I break                           |
| July 5                | Summer II registration and classes begin |
| August 17             | Summer II classes end                    |
| August 21 and 22      | Final exams                              |
| August 23 thru Sept 1 | Vacation                                 |
| August 31             | Fall Commencement                        |

B. **Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology Chair Search Committee.** Professor Chieh Li has been elected to replace Professor Armengol on this committee.

C. **Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 26, in Raytheon.**

Discussion ensued on the calendar and related issues.

Professor Herman asked for e-mails with comments, concerns, or suggestions in time for the Academic Policy Committee meeting on Friday, the 21<sup>st</sup>. The committee will try to frame a resolution at that meeting. As publications are beginning their cycles for next year, we need to know what the calendar is as quickly as possible.

Professor Alper wondered whether the fall term might be brought forth for discussion as well. He objected to having registration on Labor Day, when many faculty are not on campus. Professor Lowndes responded that there would be ways to introduce concerns about the fall term into the discussion at some point. He added that the new university-wide committee on the calendar will not be able to report back this academic year.

Professor Vaughn asked whether comments on reading day issues would be welcome. Professor Herman replied that the committee would take under consideration anything that would impact the calendar for next year.

Professor Robinson reported that a number of faculty and students were concerned about the loss of class time due to Monday holidays and asked whether this would be appropriate for the committee to address. Professor Herman responded that this issue had already been raised with the Registrar and the Provost, and one suggestion was to go back to the old system of turning a Friday to a Monday schedule to compensate.

Professor Robinson expressed puzzlement because her understanding was that the Senate sets the calendar. Provost Abdelal explained that, while the Senate does set the calendar, a contradiction had developed between what the Senate approved and what was announced in the fall. As a stopgap measure for this year, Vice Provost Hill had sent a memo to what he believed to be the interested departments. The university-wide committee will consider any matters relating to the calendar and, if it wishes, bring them to the Senate.

Professor Lowndes noted that the problem is operational and that the lost Mondays should be retrievable on other days.

Provost Abdelal suggested that Professor Robinson e-mail him or Vice Provost Hill with her thoughts, and she agreed to do so.

Professor Blank suggested that, instead of having classes begin on 11 January, they begin on the 9<sup>th</sup>, which would gain a Monday.

Professor Powers-Lee expressed concern for lab courses that meet once a week, on Mondays, because in multi-section courses this would affect the flow of work in the other sections. Provost Abdelal suggested that Vice Provost Hill work with Registrar Allen to find some operational flexibility.

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

- A. **Center for Drug Discovery.** Provost Abdelal reported that the ribbon-cutting ceremony had taken place the previous day for the new chemistry and biochemistry facilities in Mugar and in the formerly debilitated basement of Hurtig. The eight state-of-the-art laboratories were constructed at a cost of \$5.5M. The facility has the only 700 megahertz capacity for nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) in Boston, which is a significant addition in terms of capacity for NU. A total of thirty graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, scientists, and other faculty will be participating in the research.

Dean Stellar noted, as a point of information, that the "debilitated space" in Hurtig actually had been a research laboratory used by several faculty. He added, however, that the gorgeous new facility was a great morale boost to the institution in general.

IV. **Question and Discussion Time**

- A. Professor Herman reported that a concern that has been raised in the Senate before has now reached crisis proportions. A number of five-year freshman-to-master's degree programs in Arts and Sciences and Bouvé have had an ongoing problem registering these students for their final year. At the beginning of this term some fourteen students, who were listed in the Registrar's database as undergraduates, tried to register for student teaching (their only spring course), which is a graduate level course. Much to their chagrin, they learned that they had been withdrawn from the University because they did not have graduate records, and therefore could not register for graduate courses. Their Husky cards and library privileges had also been terminated. Provost Abdelal responded that he had not known about the situation.

Professor Herman explained that the problem is due to how records are coded, without indicating an automatic point at which the students cease being undergraduates and are considered graduate students. It appears that some administrators are worried about the tuition differentials between graduate and undergraduate programs. Another major problem is that when the Registrar's Office re-codes students it changes their financial aid status. The Offices of the Dean, the Provost, the Registrar, and the Bursar have been working to resolve the matter but without effect so far. He asked whether the methods that seem to be working for the BS/MS programs in Engineering might be applied to these programs in Arts and Sciences.

Provost Abdelal promised to look into the matter. He was particularly interested in clear designations being made when a student moves from undergraduate to graduate in order not to underestimate the graduate component of University offerings, and to represent correctly the percentage of programs that end in graduate degrees.

- B. Professor Morrison urged that the policy issues relating to designations of undergraduate and graduate in the joint bachelor's and master's programs in Economics, which are now being reviewed in the Provost's Office, be resolved so that the programs can be offered to students.

Provost Abdelal replied that they might actually be with the Graduate Council but he would look into it. The only issue in which he had been involved was that of making sure we correctly capture our undergraduate and graduate credit hours in order to represent the University accurately in comparison with our peer institutions.

V. **2003-04 Faculty Development Committee Report.** Professor Glod moved Resolution #2, and the motion was seconded. The resolution read as follows:

**BE IT RESOLVED That Northeastern University establish a Distinguished Teaching Fellows Program as described in the committee report. The duties and responsibilities of Distinguished Teaching Fellows shall include:**

- a. **Collaborating with the staff of the Center for Effective University Teaching in developing projects that enrich learning and teaching at the University;**

- b. Peer-assessing untenured faculty members in other academic units to promote effective teaching across the university;**
- c. Helping organize and participating in workshops, seminars and/or symposia in which the results of teaching enhancement projects will be shared with others in the Northeastern community;**
- d. Publishing the results of their scholarly work on teaching in peer-reviewed journals;**
- e. Seeking extramural funding to support their scholarship of teaching activities.**

Professor Glod explained that the committee had spent a fair amount of time reviewing practices at other universities and developing the resolution, and had agreed that that a stipend also be attached.

Professor Futrelle expressed concern at the notion that a great teacher does scholarly research on teaching. He had known great teachers who never even looked at a piece of scholarship on teaching.

Professor Peterfreund was also troubled by the resolution and suggested substituting “may” for “shall” in the first paragraph. In his view, the best teachers use their research to drive their teaching rather than the reverse. He was also concerned about peer assessment of untenured faculty, especially if there were any possibility of cognitive dissonance as to goals and methods in a particular discipline.

Professor Powers-Lee was concerned at the lack of definition, just saying the program is described in the report. She would like more information such as on what basis they are selected, who does the selecting, the length of the term, some specifics as to an award, and whether the work becomes part of the standard workload.

Professor Glod pointed out that the committee saw the resolution as a first step in developing the program as a recognition. Fifteen teaching fellows would be appointed each year with a \$10K stipend for each, which would not be in terms of release time but as a reward for teaching and to promote teaching across units. In response to Professor Peterfreund’s concern, she explained that committee had found that cross-disciplinary assessment of faculty at other universities works quite well.

Professor Alper asked whether the Senate would be voting on spending \$150K a year on the teaching fellows.

Professor Sherwood expressed concern about the widely-held view that good teaching must be legitimized by scholarship. He was also concerned about peer assessment as an unnecessary layer in a system that already contains a broad range of evaluations.

Motion. Professor Vaughn moved to delete item b, and the motion was seconded.

The floor was yielded to Donna Qualters, CEUT Director, who explained that the purpose of the program was for senior faculty or others who wish to explore it to help junior faculty in a formative way. It would be more about development than scoring, formative assessment rather than summatively good or bad. Those doing the assessment would be trained to find out the goals of the person teaching the class, the function of the department, and the objectives of the course. The intent is not to change people but to give them information to help them meet their goals. To take out the formative function that gives junior faculty help from their senior colleagues would dilute the program and its intent.

Professor Herman favored retaining item b because it is an important part of what these programs across the country actually do. The intent of item b was clearly to assist faculty to develop into better teachers and had nothing to do with the value of the processes. His assumption was that none of it would appear in a third-year review dossier or a tenure dossier.

Professor Sherman asked why the term “other” was in the sentence. Professor Glod replied that the committee's review of other such programs had suggested that stimulation across disciplines was of significant benefit.

Professor Robinson asked why the focus was on untenured faculty, since senior faculty might also want help with their teaching. Professor Glod responded that the program could certainly be expanded to include senior faculty.

Provost Abdelal pointed out that effective teaching is very important. We have two major resource units available to provide assistance to all faculty, whether tenured or untenured. One resource unit is the CEUT, whose goal is to work with faculty to enhance teaching effectiveness in a formative way. The other resource unit is EdTech, which has a high caliber professional staff of six, to assist in incorporating educational technology for the classroom with Blackboard, hybrid, web, or whatever faculty are interested in pursuing.

Professor Robinson asked where tenured faculty enter into the discussion regarding the benefit of peer assessment for their teaching. Professor Glod responded that the intent was primarily directed to untenured faculty, as a cross-fertilization of ideas and an award to recognize good teaching, but it could be expanded to include tenured faculty.

Professor Vaughn pointed out that, historically, formative assessment has quickly turned into summative assessment. He cited the student teaching evaluations that were introduced as formative and not to be used in assessing merit for purposes of promotion and tenure. Most faculty are involved in trying to improve their own teaching or that of others in their discipline as the right thing to do. Discipline-oriented teaching conferences tend to be focused on teaching introductory courses. He did not think outside department assessment would have any positive influence.

Professor Alper expressed concern about requiring colleagues to participate in the process of having untenured faculty reviewed by faculty of other units of the University and asked what would happen if not enough faculty wanted to participate.

Professor Sherwood recalled the promise of the administration at the time student evaluations were introduced. He expressed concern that the resolution would abrogate one of the critical and central responsibilities of faculty—the assessment and development of teaching. While services such as CEUT and EdTech can serve in a supportive or consultative way, the proposal moves out of that role into a watchdog function.

Professor Herman responded that historically the student evaluation legislation was created in such a way that faculty could, if they wished, submit the evaluations for summative purposes. The Senate then passed additional legislation that expanded the scope and made those evaluations required, so it was not imposed on the faculty by anyone but the faculty. Also, as he is responsible for overseeing a good deal of interdisciplinary teaching across the University, he has had the opportunity to observe many attempts at the creation of a more integrated educational program. He was not reading the proposal as the same kind of threat seen by some of his colleagues because it would take further legislation to turn it into what is worrying people. He liked the aspect, for example, of senior faculty assisting in the development of a more integrated freshman year for students. The proposal was calling for a broader view of the educational experiences of students and assisting teachers to help students achieve that more integrated experience. Since some amendments might make the language less threatening, he urged that item b be retained.

Professor Morrison asked whether, if item b were deleted, faculty would be precluded from asking for help with their teaching for formative purposes. Professor Herman replied that it would not.

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

Vote on the motion to delete item b: PASSED, 13-8-1.

Professor Blank suggested replacing “shall” with “may” and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Onan, as a point of information, asked whether a vote in favor of the resolution would be saying that \$150K is best spent in that way. Would the Senate be voting for fifteen faculty or fellows at \$10K each?

Provost Abdelal explained that a resolution that asks for funding at a certain level does not consider all the competing needs. He asked that the body avoid making the recommendations in isolation about significant budgetary commitments.

Professor Lowndes pointed out that the Senate in its wisdom passes legislation that it believes to hold good ideas without trying to prioritize them, except in the case of salary raise recommendations. He reminded the body that the Faculty Development Committee of two or three years ago had made recommendations in favor of professional support for faculty development programs within the colleges and the Provost's Office. To date, those recommendations have not been funded in any real sense. The Senate does not know all the issues that are before the Administration and so should not say its recommendations necessarily deserve the greatest weight.

Provost Abdelal asked whether Professor Lowndes meant that the spirit of the resolution did not mean the Senate was saying it is a high priority for funding. Professor Lowndes responded that, although voting for the resolution would put the program in the bin for serious consideration, the Senate did not necessarily know what else is in the bin.

Professor McKnight suggested deleting "as described in the report" and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Glod noted that the intent of the committee, whose membership included two deans who had advocated for the proposal, was to strengthen teaching in the University.

Provost Abdelal explained that, while he would like his office to be responsive to Senate actions, he encouraged the body to indicate prioritization when addressing matters of funding.

Professor Sherman favored broadening the recommendations to include experiential or coop-related issues. He suggested adding, after "Center for Effective University Teaching," in item a, "the Center for Work and Learning, or other academic units" and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Blank suggested adding "the Educational Technology Center" and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Onan suggested deleting "academic" before "units" and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Herman urged a positive vote because faculty involvement in this enterprise, aside from whatever mentoring goes on in departments, would be wholly voluntary at this point. It is important to create a formal group of faculty who not only are rewarded but are also making the commitment to teaching.

Professor Peterfreund suggested replacing "staff" with "staffs" and this was accepted as friendly amendment.

Professor Shafai asked what other universities awarded in similar programs. Professor Glod replied that the average was between \$10K and \$15K.

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

As amended, the resolution read as follows:

**BE IT RESOLVED That Northeastern University establish a Distinguished Teaching Fellows Program. The duties and responsibilities of Distinguished Teaching Fellows may include:**

- a. Collaborating with the staffs of the Center for Effective University Teaching, the Educational Technology Center, the Center for Work and Learning, or other units in developing projects that enrich learning and teaching at the University;**
- b. Helping organize and participating in workshops, seminars and/or symposia in which the results of teaching enhancement projects will be shared with others in the Northeastern community;**
- c. Publishing the results of their scholarly work on teaching in peer-reviewed journals;**
- d. Seeking extramural funding to support their scholarship of teaching activities.**

Vote on Resolution #2, as amended: PASSED, 16-4-3.

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

**BE IT RESOLVED That tenure and promotion procedures will include a comprehensive system for evaluating teaching effectiveness. The components the system will include:**

- a. Teaching portfolios developed from the time of faculty members' initial appointments,
- b. Sample syllabi containing clearly defined learning goals and measurable learning outcomes reflecting levels of cognition and skill sets commensurate with course goals,
- c. Peer-reviewed publications and other works on the scholarship of teaching,
- d. Results of peer assessments and responses to them that show significant growth in teaching proficiency over time,
- e. Development of innovative teaching methods and materials,
- f. Results of standardized tests and other evaluation instruments that indicate exemplary student learning,
- g. A sophisticated, research-based teaching philosophy,
- h. Awards for teaching excellence.

Professor Sherman explained that, some years ago, the Excellence in Teaching Awards Judging Committee had put forward a recommendation based on its experience of young, untenured faculty who, having been nominated for teaching awards, were handicapped by inexperience. The intent of the separate award was to level the playing field by presenting a teaching award to a “promising newcomer.” The recommendation had been rejected on the basis of what he called an institutional schizophrenia that does not want junior faculty to get sidetracked by teaching issues when it is their research record that earns them tenure. New faculty should be encouraged not only to publish at a high rate but also to teach effectively.

Provost Abdelal indicated that his perspective was that it is essential to be an effective teacher and a productive scholar, with equal importance on both.

Professor Peterfreund said he would prefer “may” to “will” in the first line of the resolution. He was discouraged by the resolution for several reasons. Aside from the question of intent, it pathologized probationary faculty members' teaching and took high-stakes teaching to a new level, neither of which is desirable. Item b drifted into one-size-fits-all statements that are not appropriate for some disciplines. He questioned the use of the word “measurable” in item b because levels of cognition and skill sets commensurate with course goals may fit well with some skill or practice-oriented courses but not with others. He did not think item c reasonable because it sent a mixed message. Item d assumed that people come here unable to teach. What if they are good teachers but do not grow? In item e, it may not be important that the methods of good teachers are innovative. He was opposed to standardized tests as “toxic,” and as for teaching excellence, he asked whether we live in Lake Wobegon.

Professor Blank moved all Professor Peterfreund’s suggestions as friendly amendments and to change “will” to “may”. This motion was not accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Glod explained that when the committee reviewed the Provost’s Office documents on expectations for tenure and promotion the focus seemed basically to be on one score on a teacher course evaluation. The intent of the resolution is to say that there should be much more. If we value teaching, we should say what components should be in the portfolios, and that was the rationale for using the word “will.”

Professor Herman pointed out that the current Handbook, under Promotion Criteria, has a range of even broader items than those in the resolution, such as curriculum development and technical innovations. The new Handbook will also have a broad range of items, and in fact demands more than one kind of evaluation; and the Provost’s Office gives probationary faculty pamphlets with suggestions, so much of what is in this resolution also exists elsewhere. To the extent that it needs to be enhanced pending the outcomes of the studies the Senate has requested, he suggested postponing consideration of the resolution.

Motion. Professor Herman moved to postpone, and the motion was seconded.

In response to a question from Professor Peterfreund as to why he made the motion to postpone rather than table the resolution, Professor Herman explained that tabling requires a two-thirds vote to remove an item from the table, while postponement requires only a majority to bring the item back to the floor. He also noted that a motion to postpone is debatable.

Professor Vaughn was opposed to postponement; he advocated voting down the resolution.

Professor Kruger's view was that the current procedures are overly reliant on TCEs. He shared the view that "will" should be changed to "may" and suggested that multiple indicators of teaching effectiveness would be another source of information.

Provost Abdelal interposed that the practice has been to rely too much on the TCEP scores instead of on syllabi, course content, and peer assessment.

Professor Futrelle called the question on postponement, and the motion was seconded.

Vote on cloture: PASSED, 14-5-3.

Vote to postpone Resolution #3: FAILED, 10-12-1.

Professor Herman moved to adjourn, and the motion was seconded.

Vote to adjourn: FAILED, 7-9.

Professor Vaughn called the question on the main motion, and the motion was seconded.

Vote on cloture: PASSED, 12-6-2.

Vote on Resolution #3: FAILED, 3-14-3.

Adjourned at 1:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles H. Ellis, Jr.  
Secretary