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Northeastern University

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes : 02/16/2005

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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, 16 FEBRUARY 2005

Present: (Professors) Alper, Bannister, De Ritis, Ellis, Futrelle, Glod, Hansberry, Herman, Krishnamoorthy, Kruger, Lowndes, Margotta, Marshall, McKnight, Melachrinoudis, Morrison, Peterfreund, Powers-Lee, Reynolds, Robinson, Sherman, Sherwood, Vaughn, Wiseman
(Administrators) Abdelal, Finkelstein, Hill, Moore, Onan, Soyster, Stellar, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Bansil, Blank, Bobcean, Heiman, Schaffer, Shafai, Wray
(Administrators) Falcon, Spieler

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

I. **Approval of Minutes**. The minutes of 19 January were approved.

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

A. **Meetings**. SAC met once since last week's Senate meeting. Due to the volume of material and reports still to be brought to the Senate for action, SAC has added a meeting on Thursday, 7 April, from 2:50 to 4:25 p.m. in 308 SN. The long final meeting of the Senate scheduled for 20 April has been extended: the 2005-06 Senate's organizational meeting will now meet from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m., and then the 2004-05 Senate will meet from 11:00 am until 4:00 pm.

B. **Handbook Approval Process**. The final two sections of the Handbook will be ready for consideration after Spring Break and may dominate the next several meetings. After the Senate's final action the document will go back to the committee for fine tuning. At that point it will not be open to further substantive changes but just to address any inconsistencies within the document. With these changes in hand, it will then come back for a final vote of the Senate.

C. **Resolution**. President Freeland has approved the Academic Policy Committee Resolution on the 2005-06 Academic Calendar (passed 2/09/05).

D. **Next Meeting: Wednesday, 9 March at 11:45 a.m. in Raytheon Amphitheater (240 EC)**.

III. **Question and Discussion Time**

A. Professor Futrelle asked what form checking for Faculty Handbook inconsistencies would take. Professor Lowndes responded that, once the Senate has approved the remaining sections, the Handbook will be posted on the Senate website so that faculty can review it for any final editorial changes.

B. Professor Alper expressed concern that the current form for students' change of major does not allow for double majors in different colleges. Vice Provost Hill explained that changes were brought to a meeting of associate deans last month but he did not recall such a stipulation. Professor Alper read from the form that a second major must be in the same college as the first. Professor Lowndes emphasized that the policy has always been to allow double majors across college lines and added that if a proposal to limit this policy did come to the Senate he believed it would be voted down.

Vice Provost Hill pointed out that a student who wanted to major in economics and business might expect to get two diplomas without taking 32 extra credits. The transcript would show that the requirements for both majors were met, but the student would have to select which major should appear on the diploma. He asked what kinds of issues should be handled by the Office of the Provost, the Dean, and the Senate.

Provost Abdelal stated that these are technical issues that can be resolved. He favored encouraging students to enrich interdisciplinary learning. The student data system needs to become more user-friendly, and

perhaps some matters might be sent to SAC without having to come to the Senate.

Vice Provost Hill reported that he would be meeting with department chairs later in the week and would discuss ways to make institutional changes that would ensure seamless transitions for students.

IV. **Budget Presentation by Senior Vice President Laurence F. Mucciolo and Provost Ahmed T. Abdelal**

(Copies of the presentation graphics are reproduced in Appendix A to these minutes)

Professor Lowndes assumed the gavel for this section of the agenda.

Vice President Mucciolo reported that constructing the budget for next year entailed more of a balancing act with regard to current and future needs than in previous years.

Overarching Goals. In addition to balancing institutional needs, it is important that this budget maintain the momentum in advancing University goals such as the Academic Investment Plan and our national standing. A sound financial plan is always essential to sustain our long-term fiscal stability.

Enrollments. This budget is based on continuing the freshman class size at 2800 students and on enrolling 700 transfer students. The percentage of students in the top 10% of their high school class has more than doubled in the last four years while SAT scores have increased by 100 points, and are projected this year to be 1220. We hope for continued improvement. Class rank probably correlates better to college academic success than does the SAT, and this success should improve retention. The acceptance rate continues to improve as the application numbers climb. From a financial point of view, we will be in a stronger position should demographics or certain local conditions turn against us. The yield rate, probably the most important differentiator of financially sound and academically strong institutions, has been modest and is more difficult to maintain because better students have more institutions from which to choose.

Financial Aid. The level of aid awarded by Northeastern has increased significantly over the past six or seven years. What happens from year to year can be a function of circumstances that do not necessarily reflect policy. Our aid rate was higher in 2003 because the freshman class came in greater numbers than planned, and with higher academic quality. One objective is to continue to improve financial aid. Another goal we wish to pursue with this budget is to maintain salary pools for faculty and staff that are reasonable in terms of the marketplace. We are on schedule as to our position in the market and do not want to lose any of that momentum.

Retention. Retention is closely related to the investments we have made. The budget has been crafted around continuation of the retention effort. Our graduation rate of 60% has increased 20% over the past decade. The projected rate for the class entering in 2003 shows a dramatic improvement at 70%.

Operating Budget. Operating expenses will grow by $20M. The increases are as follows ($ millions):

Faculty Positions (net of conversions)	$2.3
Faculty Market Adjustments	0.3
Other Academic Allocations	1.9
	4.5
University-wide 3% Merit Pool & All Benefits	9.2
Staff Market Adjustments	0.1
New Building Debt and Operating Costs	1.4
Utilities and Contract Cleaning	2.1
Advancement and Athletics	0.3
	13.1
SPCS Expenses	2.0
Law School Expenses	0.3
Investment Oversight Fees	0.4

2.7

Salary and Benefit Cost Increases. The merit pool for faculty and staff will be 3%, and an allocation of $500K (0.6%) will be made on an annualized basis to continue the effort to adjust salaries in ranks and departments that have market imbalances. Annualized staff salaries will increase by 3.2%. The increase in total salary budget is $6.6M. Benefits for faculty and staff will increase by 6.5%, mainly due to increased health care costs. Thus, for tenured and tenure-track faculty, total compensation will rise by 4.5%, while for staff the increase will be 3.9%.

Building F. The academic space in Building F, a $54.5M project, includes eleven classrooms which will be supported out of the operating budget, while the 229-bed residential component will receive support from the auxiliary budget. The classrooms will seat 606 students and include a 300-seat lecture hall. The building will house the John D. O'Bryant African American Institute and the Honors Program.

Tuition. Over eighty percent of our operating revenue comes from tuition and fees. What we do in a tuition increase relates to the fact that tuition is effectively discounted by financial aid provided from the operating budget. The numbers of full-time students enrolled and retained are key to projecting our revenue. Beyond that are student credit hours in part-time programs, and indirect cost recovery from research programs. Performance and revenue goals have been established with regard to the allocations being made, and are monitored annually. Our traditional philosophy has been to be a private research university with affordable tuition. Relative to competitor private institutions with which we overlap in shared applicants, our fall 2004 tuition was slightly below the median. At $27K, we are at the high end of college tuitions nationally, but, in the class of private institutions and the market in which we operate, we are essentially in the middle, and more modest than some. Based on recommendations from the SGA, which recommended a modest percentage increase in the activity fee, overall mandatory fees will rise 1.2%, while tuition will increase 6.2%. The annual room and board rate will increase by 3.45%. For incoming freshmen the overall price, excluding books and other educational costs, will cost about 5.4% more. These recommendations were intended to balance the need for revenue while maintaining affordability within our framework. SPCS and part-time Engineering rates will increase by 7% and 6.5% respectively.

Discount rates (on-budget financial aid) for undergraduate, graduate (including SPCS), and other programs will go to 26.8% from this year's 24.9%. Factors that affect the discount rate and net tuition include retention, attendance patterns, accelerated graduation, semester conversion, market factors, selectivity, and SAT yield. By institutional peer groups, our freshman discount is positioned in the middle of *U.S. News and World Report* national doctoral universities or the Lucky 13 group, which seems reasonable.

School of Professional and Continuing Studies. SPCS contributions are expected to total $8.7M this year, and, due to the change in strategy, is projected to be $9.2M next year, still less than the amount of a couple of years ago. Of the expected increased contribution, $300K will be earmarked for library acquisitions and improvements.

Indirect Cost Recovery. The upward push for faculty hires and investments in labs and equipment will strengthen undergraduate education, elevate professional graduate programs, and build strategic research areas across the University. With the Academic Investment Plan we can continue to grow the amounts we recover from our funded research and provide opportunities for students to do research.

Provost Ahmed T. Abdelal reported the following.

Academic Investment Plan. A key component of the Academic Investment Plan is $2M for the year's twenty tenured or tenure-track faculty hires for the following tentatively targeted areas: Biology; Chemistry; Communication; English; Music; Physics; Psychology; Sociology; Pharmaceutical Sciences; Pharmacy Practice; Counseling; ECE; MIE; Computer Science; Marketing; Finance; Management; and SOTE. These areas have experienced significant increases in enrollments in recent years, and we want to enhance our competitiveness with both regional and national graduate programs as well as build strategic research areas. The resources will come from phasing out lecturer positions. Another $350K is being made available for the dean of the School of Technological Entrepreneurship (SOTE) and for regularization of one tenured professor position. The new faculty will contribute undergraduate and graduate teaching, scholarship, and research.

Other Academic Budget. The following items and amounts are planned for additional important investments in the quality of our academic programs:

Enhance CBA Operational Budget	$500K
Library Digital and Print Collection	$315K
Extend Library Hours	$ 35K
Reduce Class Size in General Education Courses	$200K
Enhance Research Centers	$350K
SOTE Operational Budget	$350K

These improvements are in response to expressed needs and must be balanced by management of resources and consultation with departments, deans, and faculty. Student leaders requested more quiet spaces for studying on campus and it seemed appropriate to extend the library hours. The General Education class size reduction will be to enhance learning in the advanced writing course ("middler writing requirement") and in science laboratories. This would be done through either graduate teaching assistants or visiting post docs. The operational budget for SOTE comes from the revenue we anticipate starting next fall.

Market Adjustment for the Professoriate. While the actual market adjustment allocation is $250K, effective at the beginning of the spring semester in January, it is $500K when annualized. This money will be allocated according to matchmate comparisons of all academic departments' salary averages. While there will be emphasis on the departments that the data show to be behind, the policy the Provost has distributed to the colleges clearly articulates that we are talking about averages. A department that does not show a deficit in its salary average may still have faculty members whose salaries need to be adjusted. Thus the recommendations are best determined by the departments and deans, with emphasis on deficits relative to the matchmates. Provost Abdelal would like to see the allocations based on the assessment of merit, market, and gap for individuals as well as departments.

Health Insurance for Graduate Assistants. This is the first year in which we will be contributing to health insurance for graduate assistants, at an estimated cost of $100K. A majority of institutions—75%—share in paying health insurance costs for graduate assistants. We will pay 20% for single graduate students in 2005-06, and we hope to be able to supplement that amount in future years.

The floor was opened to questions.

Professor Futrelle wondered whether the push toward retention was due to the perceived quality and desirability of the University and not just calculation. Hypothetically, if the University were to admit more students and retain fewer, over five years the number of dollars would be the same. Vice President Mucciolo responded that, not to be facetious, a university is actually in business to educate people, which would be hard to do by admitting them and then replacing them the following term.

Professor Futrelle asked whether students are making more Coop income and if this is being tracked. Vice President Mucciolo replied that the Coop Department does track it. Most students live on campus while in class and still live away from home while on Coop, so they have living expenses. In past years, Coop could be treated as a form of financial aid if students were living at home. He pointed out that the percentage of students on Coop has declined over the past three or four years.

Professor Herman referred to the Information Services resolution that would be considered later in the meeting and asked about improvements to technical equipment in classrooms and laboratories where depreciation is a major factor. Vice President Mucciolo responded that this budget would not produce any surplus or debt. We will invest in planned infrastructure improvements but will make those decisions after determining the facilities improvements related to new faculty hires. Provost Abdelal added that in April the annual requests from the colleges regarding technology would be addressed.

Professor Kruger applauded the Budget Committee for its efforts to accomplish the difficult task of trying to balance fiscal responsibility with continued investment in academic improvements. He was pleased to see continuation of Senate-proposed investments in support of the academic initiative, including the hiring of tenure-track faculty. He expressed concern, however, about the budget for faculty merit raises and the equity pool

distribution. Last fall, the Senate strongly supported the Financial Affairs Committee proposals for a 4.9% merit increase and for an $800K equity adjustment pool. The Budget Committee set 3% for the merit increase, but the problem is that the Boston inflation rate is about 3%, so in real dollars this does not reflect a raise adjusted for inflation. Since the market adjustment will be distributed halfway through the year, those faculty will not get that raise amount for the first half of the year. He was troubled by the resistance to spending $500K in a budget of more than $500M, less than 0.1% of the total budget. The Committee on Funding Priorities (CFP), of which he was a member, did not recommend or endorse any delay in the equity pool adjustment. This decision was made by the Budget Committee without faculty being heard, since the Budget Committee does not have any representatives from the faculty.

Vice President Mucciolo responded that the Budget Committee had struggled with that issue and, based on the financial plan now on the table, half of the increase could be made at the beginning of the fiscal year rather than larger increases in the middle of the year. He was sympathetic to Professor Kruger's point of view, but had thought that providing larger, permanent salary increases, even if partway through the year, would in effect provide greater support. He was willing to reconsider, in order to provide a more significant level of support, at least at the margins. Going forward it is not neutral if you consider the requirement that $250K for faculty has to come off the top before we start the process.

Professor Peterfreund recalled that, during the discussion of the calendar transition, in response to the question of whether the transition would enable us to fix the summer teaching problem, the President and Provost had assured the Senate that the summer would be taken care of. He pointed out that this budget makes no provision to enhance funding for summer teaching that would bring the professorial faculty into summer classrooms in numbers approaching what was once the case. What, he asked, are the prospects for funding this priority at a level that will bring the professoriate back into summer teaching, because it impacts both summer tuition revenue and retention at time of graduation.

Provost Abdelal responded that he had presented this request to the CFP as an important priority, but once he moved to the Budget Committee and wore a different hat, he saw that the dollars available to us this year did not permit addressing important priorities such as increasing the representation of the professoriate during the summer, particularly in the colleges that just do not have the resources. While it remains a goal, whatever is done in the next cycle will have to be done by redirection within the colleges rather than finding new resources. He hoped to be able to address it in future years.

Professor Ellis asked Vice President Mucciolo whether the budget includes raises for those officers of the University whose salaries are set by the compensation committee of the Board of Trustees. He mentioned the years in the past when there were very low or zero increases for faculty and staff, yet the compensation Committee gave significant raises to the President and other high officers. He asked whether there is any likelihood that the compensation committee of the Board will stick to something near 3% for the group of officers whose salaries they set.

Vice President Mucciolo responded that he did not know what the compensation committee ultimately would do. They are informed by what is being done for the rest of the staff and faculty. They look at the overall cost of living and market forces, including officers' compensation elsewhere, and are very conscientious in having it done by an outside firm.

Professor Ellis asked Provost Abdelal if the budget would permit startup funds for the twenty new faculty hires in addition to the $2M budgeted for them. This total averages $100K per hire and would just cover salary and benefits, not startup. Provost Abdelal replied that the startup funds are discussed separately and arrived at independent of the recurring budget because they are one-time expenses. He works out the arrangements with Vice President Mucciolo.

Professor Robinson asked whether faculty would be compensated for summer teaching. Provost Abdelal replied that faculty who work outside their academic contracts are reasonably compensated. He would work collaboratively with the deans to figure out where to find the money.

Professor Marshall expressed concern that large numbers of transfer students are difficult to fit into the high-

enrollment programs that attracted them to the University. This produces difficulties from a pedagogical perspective. He asked what budgetary implications explain the split of 2800 freshmen and 700 transfers. Vice President Mucciolo explained that there was nothing magical about the numbers, but there are issues of retention and graduation rates. Some transfers are also coming in as advanced-standing freshmen, but the numbers in both cases have gotten larger relative to our competition. Of the Lucky 13 institutions, only two enroll a larger class. The interesting enrollment question is, why is the ratio of undergraduate to graduate students what it is, rather than the question of how you trade off 200 transfers for 200 freshmen.

Provost Abdelal added that the 2800 plus 700 total 3500, which is probably the minimum we need to sustain the operations of the University, and we have the capacity to do so. The question is, what is the right number, and 2800 does have some "magical" properties. The right balance between freshmen and transfers and the total numbers are important questions on which to reflect. It is important to have a dynamic process when looking at assumptions. Since the semester conversion, a significant number of related issues have needed to be addressed, and some are still being settled.

Professor Lowndes thanked Vice President Mucciolo and Provost Abdelal for their presentation.

As a point of information, Professor Lowndes announced that further discussion on the state of the budget will be presented later in the report of the Financial Affairs Committee. He believed it might be a robust report resulting from considerable unhappiness with many aspects of the deliberations of the Committee on Funding Priorities and the subsequent mismatch with many of the Budget Committee's recommendations. Many facts of interest and concern to faculty were not shared today.

V. ***Ad Hoc* Senate Committee on Information Systems (IS) Policy Resolution #5**. Professor Peterfreund moved the following resolution and the motion was seconded. The resolution read as follows.

WHEREAS technology has become an indispensable tool in teaching,

BE IT RESOLVED That the Information Systems Policy Committee (ISPC), in consultation with the University Classroom Advisory Committee (UCAC), formulate a multi-year plan to equip and support 100% of the registrar-scheduled classrooms on the campus and its satellites with appropriate audio-visual instructional technology. The plan should include a suitable review, maintenance, replacement and upgrade cycle, and should be submitted by the Office of the Provost to the Committee on Funding Priorities as part of the budget-building cycle. Furthermore, ISPC, in consultation with the UCAC, will develop a similar plan for non-registrar-scheduled classrooms and specialty labs. Both plans should be transmitted to the Senate at the beginning of the academic year, at least fifteen business days prior to being transmitted to the Committee on Funding Priorities.

Professor Peterfreund explained that this resolution (which had been withdrawn on 15 September for revision to make it more specific) was built on the IS resolutions passed earlier and was intended to regularize the implementation of a workable support system.

Professor De Ritis asked what was meant by the term "appropriate audio-visual technology" and how decisions are made on equipping classrooms, since more efficiency and faculty input are needed.

Professor Morrison expressed concern about the apparent automatic pass-through from the Office of the Provost to the Committee on Funding Priorities. The CFP conducted a survey this year on what people think of the process and suggested that millions rather than thousands be considered.

Professor Alper asked what was meant by audio-visual, and why PCs and laptops were not included. Professor De Ritis replied that, while PCs and laptops are also important, the goal of the resolution was to address classroom technology such as overhead video projectors, DVDs, and CD players.

Professor Herman pointed out that the resolution did not refer to an appropriately equipped standard, but we are moving toward higher levels of regularization; while PCs are not precluded, they would be at the third level. We are trying to replace the current process in order to address depreciation of instructional facilities and

accommodate rising student expectations.

Professor Peterfreund stressed that the resolution proposed a framework and was not meant to legislate all contingencies.

Provost Abdelal explained that Academic Technology Services Director Hitch and his office had done a survey to ascertain space and maintenance needs on campus. He had not yet contacted the colleges with the results.

Professor Onan suggested, in sentence 2, deletion of "Committee on Funding Priorities" and substituting "to" for "by" after "submitted". She also suggested substitution of "Office of the Provost" for "Committee on Funding Priorities" in the last sentence. These changes were accepted as friendly amendments.

Professor Herman called the question.

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

As amended, the resolution read as follows:

WHEREAS technology has become an indispensable tool in teaching,

BE IT RESOLVED That the Information Systems Policy Committee (ISPC), in consultation with the University Classroom Advisory Committee (UCAC), formulate a multi-year plan to equip and support 100% of the registrar-scheduled classrooms on the campus and its satellites with appropriate audio-visual instructional technology. The plan should include a suitable review, maintenance, replacement and upgrade cycle, and should be submitted to the Office of the Provost for review as part of the budget-building cycle. Furthermore, ISPC, in consultation with the UCAC, will develop a similar plan for non-registrar-scheduled classrooms and specialty labs. Both plans should be transmitted to the Senate at the beginning of the academic year, at least fifteen business days prior to being transmitted to the Office of the Provost.

Vote: PASSED, 25-0-0.

Adjourned at 1:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles H. Ellis, Jr.
Secretary