

March 09, 2005

## Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 03/09/2005

Charles H. Ellis Jr.  
*Northeastern University*

---

### Recommended Citation

Ellis Jr., Charles H., "Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 03/09/2005" (2005). *Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes*. Paper 64.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d10004580>

This work is available open access, hosted by Northeastern University.

TO: FACULTY SENATE  
FROM: CHARLES H. ELLIS, Jr., SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE  
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2004-05 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 9 MARCH 2005

---

Present: (Professors) Alper, Bannister, Blank, Bobcean, De Ritis, Ellis, Glod, Hansberry, Heiman, Herman, Krishnamoorthy, Kruger, Lowndes, Marshall, McKnight, Melachrinoudis, Morrison, Peterfreund, Reynolds, Robinson, Schaffer, Shafai, Sherman, Sherwood, Vaughn, Wiseman, Wray  
(Administrators) Abdelal, Finkelstein, Hill, Moore, Onan, Soyster, Spieler, Stellar, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Bansil, Futrelle, Margotta, Powers-Lee  
(Administrators) Falcon

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 11:58 a.m.

I. **Minutes.** The minutes of 9 February were approved.

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

A. **Meetings.** SAC met once in regular session since the last Senate meeting, and once with President Freeland and Provost Abdelal. In a separate meeting, members of the Financial Affairs Committee and the SAC Chair also met with President Freeland and Provost Abdelal.

1. SAC expressed concern to the President that there seemed to be a heightened risk-aversion by the administration in dealing with agreements and contracts with collaborating institutions and corporations. Our agreements and contracts are overly long and restrictive in comparison to those used by MIT and Harvard, for example, and this is putting our faculty in a non-competitive situation and creating barriers for research support. Some corporations were becoming impatient with this. The President and Provost were concerned. It was agreed that SAC would ask the Research Policy Oversight Committee to look into this post haste.
2. In their meeting with the President and Provost Abdelal, the FAC members and the SAC Chair expressed concern with the operations of the Committee on Funding Priorities (CFP), with the financial aid overrun fiasco from last year, with the continuing refusal to share the full operating budget details for the University, and with the significant difference again between the recommendations of the CFP and the more final recommendations of the Budget Committee. In the end, a lot of people spent a large amount of time dealing with a very small net amount of incremental money.

The focus of the FAC was twofold.

First, FAC appealed to the President to fully fund the health benefits for graduate students, which had been a high priority of the CFP but was lowered by the Budget Committee, and to fully fund rather than to annualize the faculty equity increment in the 2006 budget. The FAC stressed that, of these two issues, its top priority in this budget was support for the graduate students' health benefits. The President said he would look into this.

Second, FAC explored with the President how the current budget consideration process could be improved, possibly by eliminating the CFP and creating a single new Budget Committee with appropriate representation. The President was both concerned and supportive of seeking ways to significantly improve the process. It was agreed that FAC would consider ways to achieve a more meaningful process and present this in a report later this semester.

B. **Workload Resolution.** President Freeland and the Trustees have approved the Workload Policy Resolution (passed 3/10/04) with the following commentary: "Subject to commitment by Provost and

Deans that, in implementing this policy, course coverage by full-time faculty in any department will not be reduced. Rather, in any department, where match-mate data and review of offerings indicate a need to reduce the average teaching load, that such reduction will occur only through the addition of full-time faculty, contingent on budgetary availability and priorities. Furthermore, implementation of this policy should not negatively impact progress toward achieving agreed-upon percentage of overall section coverage by full-time faculty as part of implementing Academic Investment Plan.”

- C. **Additional Charge to the Research Policy Oversight Committee (RPOC).** SAC sent the following charge to the committee.

“As a result of concerns raised with SAC about certain legal processes affecting research activities at Northeastern, and subsequent discussions initiated with President Freeland and Provost Abdelal, the Senate Agenda Committee asks that the Research Policy Oversight Committee (RPOC) address the following additional charge:

SAC charges the RPOC to study the impact of Northeastern's legal processes on the speed and efficiency with which principal investigators are able to propose and conduct research. The RPOC should concern itself particularly with the timeliness of the processes governing the development of agreements covering intellectual property and indemnification from liability in research contracts with industry, as well as the substance of the agreements themselves. The RPOC should compare, as much as possible, Northeastern's legal policies with those in force at other universities, and compare the timeliness of the drafting of research-related contracts elsewhere with the timeliness at Northeastern.

SAC charges the committee to make recommendations for modification of the legal processes to facilitate the development of industry support for research. The timeline for these recommendations should be commensurate with the importance that the committee attaches to this issue, but the report and recommendations should be received no later than 1 April 2005.

We understand that this is late in the year to add to your charge, but the matter is pressing and important for the University as well as for our researchers. We will appreciate whatever recommendations you may be able to make on this matter.”

- D. **Next Senate Meeting: Wednesday, March 23 at 11:45 a.m. in Raytheon Amphitheater (240 EC).**

- III. **Provost's Report.** Provost Abdelal, in reference to item A.1 of the SAC Report, noted that the Provost Office also considers research agreements an issue of high priority. He and Vice Provost Sridhar are working with University Counsel and the President to develop a more streamlined process to make us more competitive in working with other institutions and industry on research agreements and materials transfer. He then reported the following.

- A. **Admissions.** The Provost Office and Deans Council have heard from the Dean of Admissions about where we are in the admissions cycle and will work closely with her and the Financial Aid Office to ensure that our academic goals and the admitted student yield are realized to the extent possible.
- B. **Information Technology.** The budget for computer equipment has been transferred to the Provost Office which has asked the colleges and the Library for requests, with justifications, for upgrading computers or related equipment. Provost Abdelal hopes to be able to distribute funds by April.
- C. **Library.** Vice Provost Sridhar, in conjunction with the Library, has been working with departments and colleges to review existing periodicals. The goal is not to reduce what we are spending on periodicals but to have an opportunity for departments to review the Library's titles in their fields and to determine their priorities. The Library will get \$315K in the next budget cycle to complement the collection. Inflation costs in print and digital serials are sufficiently high that, in order to make headway for adding high priority items, this review is important to determine if some should be discontinued.

- D. **International Partnerships.** We are continuing the effort to establish partnerships with international institutions. The framework to be put in place will have four “virtual centers” (which means no space is attached to them) that would recognize our international connections with Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East and Mediterranean area. NU has conducted visits to other institutions and recently received a delegation from Ben Gurion University with whom our deans and faculty compiled a list of collaborative projects to construct that partnership. A delegation from Dublin City University has also visited, and the University has initiated discussions with Turkey. Each virtual center will have a steering committee, and interested faculty are encouraged to participate. We are well-positioned to have a strong portfolio of international partnerships.

#### IV. **Question and Discussion Time**

- A. Professor Alper asked for interpretation of the seemingly contradictory wording in section 6 of the Workload Policy resolution. One sentence reads: “. . . the Workload Evaluation Committee will establish workloads for the faculty within the unit with respect to research/scholarship/creative activities, teaching and service.” The last sentence in the same section reads, “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.” He asked who is supposed to make the decisions, and whether a chair can overrule the committee in establishing teaching loads.

Provost Abdelal responded that the process has to be collaborative. The chair is expected to work with the dean, and the dean has the responsibility to make sure the policy is applied consistently across departments and to approve the assignment.

- B. Professor Morrison asked whether funds will be available for summer teaching by full-time faculty and, if so, when. Provost Abdelal responded that, if a college's new budget has last year's amount plus 3%, then no new resources have been added. The college units must negotiate with the dean, and/or the dean with the Provost Office.

Professor De Ritis noted that there would be a problem if departments wish to have tenured faculty teach in the summer. Provost Abdelal replied that the policy adopted by the Senate states the compensation for four credit hours and, since it says 1/6 of academic salary, this should be followed. He has asked the deans to address that resolution. Unless a new resolution is adopted, we must adhere to the existing policy.

- C. Professor Melachrinoudis asked whether the budget can support the international partnership initiative. Provost Abdelal explained that a modest budget is in place for collaborating to determine what is most promising with regard to the partnerships. He envisions a combination of department resources, whether University funds or research grants, and college and Provost Office resources. He would like to see a model with semester faculty exchanges with other institutions, which would be more cost-effective.
- D. Professor Vaughn asked whether the budgeted funds for computer acquisitions include student labs and faculty and departmental offices. Provost Abdelal replied that this was correct, adding that a certain amount went to IT to deal with regular student labs. The money in the Provost Office is simply to deal with specific requests for college-based labs or equipment for faculty and departments.

Professor Vaughn asked what area is responsible for Info Commons. Provost Abdelal responded that Info Commons is still the responsibility of Information Services.

Professor Vaughn asked whether software for student lab computers is available. Provost Abdelal replied that IS takes responsibility, but the Provost Office is open to requests from colleges for specialized software.

- E. Dean Zoloth, returning to the subject of summer teaching, explained that the unintended consequences of the mandated 1/6 salary without a budget expansion means the Bouvé faculty, who are willing to teach for less but cannot because of the Senate resolution, will go to other institutions to teach in the summer at

their rates. NU will also have fewer faculty teaching this summer than in past years because people had been teaching at a different rate across the college. While he respected the resolution and its intent, he was concerned that, without funding, the college will be without a robust summer program and in a serious financial bind.

Professor Lowndes emphasized that, while he sympathized with the plight of Bouvé and other colleges in similar straits, he would be against any change to the summer compensation policy. The 1/6 salary is what a faculty member would earn per course in a regular semester with a three course load. The answer is not to shortchange faculty because, once you do that, you are going to have different people throughout the campus working at different rates. The real answer is for the administration and the Provost to find the appropriate funding and get it into the budget to solve the "summer problem." It cannot be reallocated from within college budgets. It must be treated as a priority.

Professor De Ritis expressed concern that the Music department is getting shortchanged. Because the college had told the department that more of the two-semester day school program should be taught over the summer, a course was designed by a regular faculty member, specifically to be taught in the summer as part of the department's curriculum. The department had built its curriculum in part around this course. He is now in the position of having to find someone else to teach the class.

Provost Abdelal responded that this is a complex issue. He would send a proposal to the Agenda Committee for consideration by the appropriate standing committee and the Senate. Otherwise, we are constrained by the policy we have and will have to do our best within it.

Professor Lowndes pointed out that, even if Professor De Ritis were to go to his dean, the dean does not have the money in his budget to accommodate the Music department's need. This is a new situation. With the semester change the President and the then-Provost indicated to the faculty that we were guaranteed new, not reallocated, money for the summer. What must happen is for the money to be fed into the budget by a) the President and b) the Provost. That is yet to happen. It is unfortunate, but the pressure should not be on the deans, but on the President and the Provost to set the high priority, to find the money, and thus to do what is right for the summer term.

Provost Abdelal countered that the Provost is under enough pressure. While he recognized that this is a high priority, it is also competing with other areas that faculty also set as high priorities, such as new faculty positions, graduate assistants, and other items that have been discussed. He is committed to seek funding for the summer. The difficulty is that the summer term was not budgeted when the semester conversion was planned, so the resources were not part of the transition.

Professor Blank asked how much money was involved. Provost Abdelal replied that it is a lot.

Professor Herman pointed out that the President had assured both the Senate and the students that, notwithstanding the approval of semesterization, the President's Office would undertake to solve the summer problem, and we are still waiting for that.

V. ***Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Faculty Handbook.*** Resolution #1 was on the floor and read as follows.

**BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approves Section VLB (Term Faculty Appointments: Academic and Clinical Specialists, Cooperative Education Coordinators, In-Residence Faculty) presented in the Revised Draft (11/10/04) 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 Ellis explained that this resolution was coming back to the floor after being interrupted by adjournment several meetings ago. He described the changes that the committee had made, notated in balloons on the revised draft of 1/10/05. Although there is a reference in the Non-reappointment or Termination section on the last page to associate or senior specialists/coordinators with three-year terms, there was no place in the text under Appointment or Promotion defining the possibility of such faculty even having three-year appointments. In fact, the Law School's accreditation regulations require that people in

those ranks have longer than one-year appointments, and such term faculty currently exist. The solution is the insertion on page 4, paragraph 2 under Appointments, where “single-year” was added before “appointments” in line 2, and the following sentence was added, “Upon promotion to the associate or senior rank, such faculty members become eligible for three-year appointments, defined as the right to receive an annual contract in each year of the appointment.” He noted that the Trustees’ policy is that the University cannot make a contract of more than one year for anything. Even faculty with tenure do not have an open-ended contract, but have the continuing right to receive annual contracts.

Dean Spieler noted that this change is clearly in compliance with the current ABA accreditation standards but, if these standards change, what would happen to the way nontenure-track appointments are made, and how would the School of Law amend its policies to be in compliance with the new accreditation standards in case this language does not comply? Would there be a lengthy process, or should there be an addendum in the rule itself that allows for amending the School’s rules to comply with external accreditation standards? Professor Ellis responded that he did not think that making changes to the Handbook once it is adopted would be particularly onerous.

Professor Ellis reported that the second area of evolution came from a moderately lengthy list of suggestions from the Provost about changes in language regarding the coop coordinators. The committee dealt with some of these by changing the language, but the committee did not wish to put others into the Handbook. For example, the committee felt that the job description of a coordinator should more aptly be part of the appointment letter. He pointed out the sentence of the first paragraph on page 1 that read: “Alternative or additional responsibilities and privileges may be negotiated in individual appointment letters.” The committee did not want to remove portions that would effectively eliminate teaching as one of the responsibilities of a coop coordinator. Most of the details about coordinators and clinical specialists are handled together in the same paragraph and are in fact quite alike. As we integrate cooperative education with academics a number of coop coordinators now teach, appropriately, certain required courses in each college’s curriculum. The committee did not want to see integration disintegrate by eliminating teaching from the possible duties of cooperative education coordinators. If an individual is appointed never to teach nor do scholarship or research, that should be covered in the individual letter of appointment.

He pointed out that the committee had modified the language in places where it says reviews of coop coordinators are by a dean, to say, “appropriate college dean, the Vice president for Cooperative Education and the Provost” because the intent of the integration plan was that the cooperative education coordinators be co-supervised by the appropriate dean and the Vice President.

Professor Peterfreund suggested the following friendly amendments: page 1, item a, line 2, change “to individuals” to “of individuals”; page 1, item b, change “and may seek” to “or may seek”; page 14, item d, change “to restrain faculty members” to “to restrain any faculty members”. These were accepted as friendly amendments.

Professor Herman suggested, on page 4, changing “three-year” before “appointments” to “multi-year” and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Reynolds suggested, on page 4, item a, paragraph 2, sentence 2, adding “appointment or” before “promotion” and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Alper expressed concern that the phrase on page 2, item 2, paragraph 1, that read, “[Faculty] ... should exercise appropriate restraint” sounded like the potential for censorship and suggested, as a friendly amendment, deleting it.

Professor Ellis responded that the same language had been passed in section VI.A.

Professor Reynolds noted that the wording was referenced on page 2 of the AAUP 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure document.

Motion. Professor Alper moved to delete the phrase “should exercise appropriate restraint” and the motion was seconded.

Professor Sherwood supported the motion and explained that the clause requiring faculty “to distinguish their own independent judgments and opinions from those of the institution” rendered the phrase unnecessary.

Professor Vaughn noted that times have changed since the AAUP Statement of 1940 and recommended that it be revisited. Also, the language should be the same for all three academic sections. He thought the amendment was too narrow and suggested that the whole issue be reviewed separately rather than trying to do it piecemeal.

Professor Peterfreund was also opposed to the amendment because we have to assume a certain amount of intelligence with regard to what one can or cannot say. He added that the University has never acted in a punitive manner toward faculty who speak out.

Professor Herman pointed out that the AAUP Statement, which has been amended many times, is endorsed by the American Association of Colleges and Universities and by our Trustees. It is important to have as the bedrock on which the Handbook rests, as it gives us a stronger position from which to defend the whole of academic freedom.

Dean Soyster expressed concern that the amendment, if quoted out of context, might appear ludicrous.

Dean Zoloth suggested having the same references as the other Handbook sections from the 1940 document. Professor Herman replied that the committee in fact had voted to restore such footnotes, and this reference would be included therein.

Professor Marshall did not think the Senate had enough information on how the notion of restraint is handled at other institutions to decide whether to include or delete the language in question.

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

Vote on Professor Alper’s amendment: FAILED, 3-31-1

Discussion continued on the main motion.

Professor Wray suggested, on page 13, for consistency, changing “three-year” to “multi-year” and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Dean Soyster asked what would happen if someone asked for a ten-year appointment.

Provost Abdelal voiced concern about a situation that might entail lengthy negotiation over the term of a contract when someone is promoted.

Professor Peterfreund pointed out that the college can set the parameters for multi-year appointments. It is simply a matter of making sure each unit has a policy that is accessible to all.

Professor Herman added that a number of policies in the Handbook are for a general purpose, to allow individual colleges to set parameters that are appropriate for their external accreditations, the market, or whatever. It would be up to the Provost in the instance where the language is general, or if the Provost delegates that authority to the college.

Vice Provost Hill suggested that the second sentence on page 1, item b, read, “Such appointments are made of individuals who have special skills, education, and/or work experience which qualify them to fulfill the goals of the cooperative education program.” This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Provost Abdelal discussed his proposals to the committee, some of which were not accepted. He was concerned about the language in the Teaching section on pages 2 and 3 with regard to definition. The reason he had made the proposal was that teaching is not the primary function of cooperative education coordinators. They do teach courses but, in the regular curriculum of departments, this is limited to about 10-20% of their effort. Their actual responsibilities in the coop division involve working with students to prepare them for coop, and working with them after their coops to reflect on what they have learned. Coordinators also work with the academic faculty to integrate the learning from the workplace and the curriculum. He saw a disparity between the Handbook's language and what the sixty people in the coop division actually do.

Professor Ellis responded that items 1-6 in that section should properly be indented because they define the previous paragraph about teaching, which included the items noted by Provost Abdelal. It read, "Cooperative coordinators are also expected to work with students, other faculty members, and employers on the development of positions commensurate with student skills and interests and on the integration of cooperative education experience with the academic experience." Any significant details about what a coop coordinator does would more appropriately be contained in position descriptions and appointment letters than as part of the general rules in the Handbook.

Professor Herman pointed out that item 1) on page 2 mentions, "presentation in the classroom or other learning environment". Cooperative education coordinators do in fact teach, not in the classroom but in the preparation of students for the workplace experience, the debriefing once the students return, and the ongoing connection that is maintained while the students are on coop. Problems often arise in these situations, and this is in the arena of trying to integrate the external experience with what goes on in the classroom. It was the considered feeling of the committee that this is all a part of teaching, and to separate out the coordinators removes them to some extent from the educational experience that exists between faculty and students, and that was the justification for leaving the language as it is.

Professor Peterfreund suggested that the problem identified by Provost Abdelal was not so much that coordinators are not separated out but that they are in a sense thrust into a group in which they do not belong as stated in the preamble to the Teaching section, (first paragraph under item a, sentence 2) which read: "In their roles as teachers, faculty members are expected to maintain and reflect currency in their discipline and to enable students to understand and appreciate the materials of the course." If you expand that to account for alternate modalities of learning, much of the perceived problem disappears in terms of the dissonance between the coordinator, who is not a classroom teacher under most circumstances, and the business of teaching, broadly conceived.

Professor Herman suggested replacing "course" with "educational experience" in that sentence, and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Alper suggested amending, on page 3, the sentence beginning "Cooperative education coordinators are also expected", by substituting "primarily" for "also" and this was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Dean Zoloth suggested that some of the language in section b was redundant. Professor Ellis liked it the way it stood.

Professor Lowndes expressed concern about term appointments (page 4, item 4, paragraph 2, sentence 2) and who should be approving multi-year appointments. He suggested adding "as approved by the Provost" after "multi-year" because he did not think approval should be at the local level.

Professor Ellis suggested adding the following sentence instead: "The length of a multi-year appointment is subject to approval by the Provost."

Professor Wray expressed concern about the wording being too general because someone might make an appointment for less than the basic three- or four-year appointments.

Professor Herman explained that the reason the language about coop was in the section on teaching was the long-standing colloquy among the faculty of the Senate and the faculty at large about whether coop faculty

are even faculty. When you work with students—and teach, train, and prepare them—you are teaching. When we argue about what are the parameters for instruction, we run the risk of excluding people who should be included, with respect to both academic freedom and/or the inherent set of responsibilities. It is appropriate that, however much the venue may vary, the duties of cooperative education coordinators be in the category of activities that define faculty; to remove them would damage the very integration we are trying to promote in the University.

Professor Alper asked why, on page 12, item 9a, sentence 2, the chair was left out of the approval process. Professor Herman responded that the problem was with co-location in that a coordinator might work with several departments and their chairs. Moreover, it is unlikely that the dean would grant a leave without consulting the chair or chairs.

Professor Lowndes suggested adding, “and department chair, where appropriate.”

Professor Ellis suggested adding “, through the unit head,” after “A faculty member may request” in the first sentence.

Professor Reynolds informed the Senate that Bouvé has been discussing clinical specialist titles and special academic appointments and plans to submit proposed changes for Senate action.

There being no objection, the Senate turned to a vote on Resolution #1.

Vote: PASSED, 32-0-0.

Adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles H. Ellis, Jr.  
Secretary