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Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 11/02/2005

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TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: STUART PETERFREUND, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2005-06 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 2 NOVEMBER 2005

Present: (Professors) Alper, Bannister, Bruns, De Ritis, Futrell, Glod, Hansberry, Herman, Janikian, Kane, Marshall, McKnight, Melachrinoudis, Morrison, Peterfreund, Powers-Lee, Reucroft, Reynolds, Robin son, Ryan, Sanchez, Schaffer, Sherwood, Strauss, Willey, Wiseman
(Administrators) Abdelal, Falcon, Finkelstein, Soyster, Sridhar, Stellar, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Bobcean, Flym, Hall, Krishnamoorthy
(Administrators) Greene, Moore, Onan

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 11:55 and welcomed Mark Putnam, Director, University Planning and Research.

I. **Presentation by Mark Putnam: *Assessing Our Strategic Position***. Mr. Putnam recalled serving on the Senate several years ago. In speaking with Professor Lowndes last year and with Professor Glod this year, they thought it appropriate to bring a brief presentation on how we look at our progress strategically, especially in light of the upcoming presidential transition. The intent is to give a benchmark of two areas. One is the Action and Assessment Plan from the University Planning Council which was distributed and which Mr. Putnam noted is also available on-line. The second is our top 100 aspirations. The discussion today is essentially an assessment of where we are with our planning to get to the top 100.

The first graph gives context, showing high school graduates since 1988 and projected to 2018. Numbers will continue to a peak of 660,000 nationally in 2009 when there will be a contraction and then a downturn in 2013. This is the best time to reposition an institution. NU needs to achieve its goals and aspirations to effectively sustain itself when contraction occurs throughout the country.

When addressing this there is a value equation which is the relationship between perceived quality and net price. NU has been building quality over time as prices have increased for the students. Mr. Putnam indicated at this point that his presentation will be oriented a bit more toward issues surrounding faculty resources and where NU stands with respect to other institutions. The rankings discussed are primarily from the fall of 2004; were issued in 2005; and were shown in the 2006 *US News* rankings.

The categories for assessing our progress are selectivity, student success, resources and reputation. NU uses the "lucky 13" private institutions that are ranked where we wish to be as comparison. They are not compared for faculty salaries or for research funding but the enrollment indices, student selectivity indices and retention measures are good comparisons. These other institutions are moving over time as is NU. In looking at student selectivity, applications have increased dramatically from 2000-2005, improving by over 10,000 applicants. There is more cross-application activity meaning that students have applied to more schools. Just as importantly, NU's quality has increased within the applicant pool which contributes to the higher numbers and the higher quality of students applying. NU's acceptance rate is at 46.9%, which is higher because the Northeast is the most competitive arena but is where we ought to be.

In answer to a question from Professor Strauss, Mr. Putnam confirmed that the 46.9% is NU's acceptance rate of students. The goal is a yield rate above 27% while increasing the quality of the incoming class. Combined SAT scores have been building. We increased 50 points during 2002-

03 and have seen progress since that time. The goal is 1250 by 2008. Another comparator [to the “lucky 13”] is that NU attracted 35-36% of the students ranked at the top 10% of their graduating high school class in 2002-03.

Professor Bannister questioned whether the number of incoming students is admitted or matriculated. Mr. Putnam responded that it represents actual enrolled students. In response to several observances, Mr. Putnam explained that when considering the quality of high school students there are two measures: the SAT and position in class. NU uses both.

In looking at freshman to sophomore retention, NU is as strong as we would want to be at 89.3% which exceeds the goal of 87.0% for 2008 and the comparative mean of 89.0%. The six year graduation rate lags at 61%. We need to get to 70% and are tracking toward that.

In moving to the topic of resources, Mr. Putnam spoke about class size measure. The semester conversion created a pattern change; however, the Provost has led an effort to ensure we build sufficient sections with lower enrollments, particularly in key areas where it makes pedagogical sense. The percent of classes under 20 is 41%; the goal for 2008 is 48%; the comparative mean is 48%. This impacts the rankings very solidly. The percent of classes over 50 is down to 9%.

Faculty salaries are a big part of the measure of resources. Mr. Putnam showed the 5 year increase and the annual average. Intent has been to lift the ceiling of the full professor and associate professor ranks due to concerns about compression and salary inversion. The intent is to create greater incentive from rank to rank so that promotion means something substantial and creates greater opportunity for success and increased salaries. This is done using the AAUP definition which is a pool of faculty salaries at a particular rank divided by the number of people in the rank.

Professor Bruns queried whether comparative numbers from the “lucky 13” are available. Mr. Putnam indicated that while they could be obtained they have been deemed inappropriate for comparison. Comparisons have been done at the department level between different matchmate institutions with the intent of comparing salaries by discipline and rank whether or not they are appropriate to the local market.

Mr. Putnam proceeded to dollar expenditures per student in comparison to the “lucky 13” noting that some schools listed have medical schools and those dollars cannot be separated. The important area is where NU adjusts for co-op. Moody’s has determined that it is inappropriate to include co-op students in the denominator. We are working with *US News* — lobbying along with a national commission on coop education — to have this changed. If adjusted, the expenditures per FTE student become \$28K rather than the current \$24K.

Another aspect of resources is alumni participation. There are many initiatives currently forming to address this issue. But, moving to the NSF rankings, there was some dip in funded research around 2003 which is what is showing in the current rankings. It takes time to show increases but they will appear.

There are several measures to benchmark the Academic Investment Plan. On the screen is the student FTE population compared to tenure and tenure-track faculty which is 26 students for each faculty. If we compare student FTE to full-time faculty it is 18-19. So the questions are: How are we deployed compared to other institutions?; Are we the right size faculty?; Are we deployed based on faculty type, that is tenure and tenure-track, part time, or non-tenure-track, etc. in the same kind of space? We found we were not. We were lean on tenure and tenure-track faculty compared to the “lucky 13”. The Academic Investment Plan’s intent is to bring about change but

note that if enrollment increases it changes the measure. So size matters. How big as compared to how many faculty. And looking at the differences among our peer group on how faculty are deployed you can see that we are very different in our composition across these types which suggests fewer tenure and tenure-track coverage of course sections. NU also has fewer teaching assistants covering classes than at those institutions. This type of analysis informed the Academic Investment Plan and is a way of measuring its progress over time, enrollment changes not withstanding.

In response to Professor Robinson's questions, Mr. Putnam explained that the supplemental category data is from a national study of instructional costs and productivity produced by the University of Delaware. It is a generic category for part-time faculty to encompass all who are not full-time non-tenure-track because of different terminologies. NU uses the term 'supplemental'.

In looking at the *US News Rankings*, this is the first year for the release of rankings through the top half, or 120 positions. Tier 3 begins at 125; last year it was 130. We had been positioned at 120, the last position, which would have dropped us into the third tier had we not moved to improve our ranking. The line changes but NU's trajectory has gone from 162, our lowest, to 115.

Prof. Morrison queried why we see big jumps - 162 to 138 in 1995 to 1996. Mr. Putnam explained that several methodological changes had occurred such as a change in statistical procedures and in the way data was collected and reported.

The breakdown of rankings is in seven categories: Reputation (peer assessment) 25%; retention 20%; faculty resources 20%; selectivity 15%; financial resources 10%; graduation rate performance 5%; and alumni giving 5%. In comparing last year to this year the reputation ranking fell by 1/10 which moved us from 97 to 104. Retention and faculty resources show improvement. Selectivity is very strong. Areas with the highest weights are improving: faculty resources, retention, and selectivity. Financial is holding steady. Areas where progress is needed are graduate rate performance and alumni giving. Looking at the sub-categories where institutions are at the same position provides more understanding of how the overall ranking is affected. Faculty compensation is a two-year average for which applied cost-of-living data is pre-2000 which requires some guessing about impact. Class size has seen improvement, as has number of faculty members with terminal degrees because we updated our records. The latter influenced our improvement in the faculty resources category. Mr. Putnam explained that movement in the sub-categories can have significant impact on the overall rankings.

Peer assessment is rated on a 5-point scale. The response rate is about half; the institutions that do the ranking are responding to the survey. Provost Abdelal pointed out that if we look at just the Massachusetts institutions, 9 of the 12 dropped by 1/10 which caused us to look at the bigger picture and observe some significant changes among the raters. It is a grumpier group of respondents overall. *US News* predicts what the graduation rate should be by using SAT scores and expenditures per student. Based on what they say our input characteristics should be, we have moved 52 positions. The higher the SAT scores or the more we are able to expend per student, the higher the bar for expected performance.

In talking about alumni giving, Mr. Putnam pointed out that it is no surprise that the institutions in the top 24 are those where the giving rate is substantial. Looking at the categories of public and private institutions, the privates carry the bulk of giving. We are about where the "lucky 13" colleges are but this has been a downward trajectory for NU which should be operating at a higher level. Tracking this over several years, it is concerning that NU has dropped as compared to the 13.

Professor Bruns pointed out that for ranking purposes it doesn't matter what is given and described a marketing strategy from University of North Carolina which says that even giving a dollar will improve the rankings. She asked if NU was doing anything similar. Mr. Putnam replied that we'd not gone that far but asked Professor Bruns to send him a copy.

Some discussion took place regarding giving in the 80's and studies involving predictors. Mr. Putnam said what we're seeing now in terms of some affinity or connection between students and NU is more akin to what was happening in the 60's. The lack of affiliation in the huge middle area exacerbates the giving issue.

Professor Peterfreund asked if, in order to normalize data on expenditures per student we should consider the dollar impact of co-op. Should we be debiting the amount that we spend? Mr. Putnam responded that the students who are receiving the service from co-op are the ones who are enrolled and paying tuition as opposed to the students who are actually on the co-op. Prof. Peterfreund pointed out that if we consider co-op a zero-sum proposition, and NU has those resources at its disposal, if it were not spending the resources to deliver co-op it would be spending them on something else.

Professor Alper asked how transfer students fit into these numbers. Mr. Putnam responded that they do not fit into any of the selectivity or retention indices but they do fit into the overall enrollment. In some ways it's an incentive for having them.

Professor Strauss asked for clarification of the distribution of who is teaching whom shown on the 'Teaching Coverage of Student Credit Hours by Faculty Type' slide. Does Mr. Putnam interpret that to mean that we don't have enough TAs? Mr. Putnam responded that we are penalized for having a higher percentage of part-time faculty members, but TAs are not even counted. They are invisible.

Professor Futrelle indicated that he had learned a lot from this presentation.

Professor McKnight suggested that the bottom-line important items appear to be the retention rate and resources. Reputation is important, but difficult to affect. Alumni giving is somewhat important in itself, in addition to its potential contribution to available resources.

Provost Abdelal thanked Mark Putnam for his presentation.

II. **Approval of Minutes.** Prof. Peterfreund apologized for an unedited version of the minutes being sent inadvertently. The minutes were accepted as posted.

III. **SAC Report.** Professor Glod reported the following:

A. **Meetings.** SAC met once in regular session.

B. **Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology Chair Search Committee.** The committee is staffed. From the department are Professors Epstein, Patel and Schlosser and from outside the department Professors Gauthier and Ayers. The first organizational meeting is scheduled. Professor Glod is the SAC liaison.

C. **University Planning Committee.** SAC has appointed Professors Bosso, Cipolla, Platt and Powers-Lee to serve on this committee.

D. **Resolutions.** President Freeland has responded to another 2004-05 Senate resolution:

#33. Spring Break Calendar Change: Approved. "Decisions concerning the calendar will be made in consultation with relevant administrators."

Next Senate Meeting: Wednesday, November 16 at 11:45 in 450 DG.

IV. **Provost Report.** Provost Abdelal provided responses to two prior questions. The first is concerning preparedness for influenza. There are vaccines available now for those needing it. In addition, there are two clinics planned for students and staff during November on the 2nd and the 16th. Questions may be directed to Pamela Harris or Roberta Berrien at UHCS. The second question, previously asked by Professor Alper is in regards taking advantage of a new IRS ruling regarding use of flexible spending accounts. Provost Abdelal reported that the period to file for medical account reimbursement from unused contributions is extended by 2-1/2 months after the end of the calendar year. This will be announced to all faculty and staff shortly and applies only to the medical reimbursement account. Professor Alper indicated that the IRS ruling includes dependent care spending and asked why it is not included here. Provost Abdelal will follow up on that question.

The Provost briefed the Senate on a project that his office has been working on with the deans called academic learning communities. It organizes students early on who are interested in certain thematic areas of study, not necessarily majors, into groups that would take classes together and be assigned a faculty member as mentor. The goal is to provide a group learning environment, connect them early on with a faculty member, and provide early opportunities for counseling for students who have not yet declared a major. This spring there are several learning communities. It's a significant enhancement for incoming freshmen.

The Provost opened the floor to questions.

Professor Futrelle indicated that the federal government wants to run grants from all 29 grant-giving agencies through www.grants.gov via electronic submission. It is causing problems throughout the country for which few are prepared. The process will be a huge burden on administrative staff.

The following was provided by Vice Provost Sri Sridhar after the Senate Meeting by request of the Faculty Senate for a written summary of the discussion at the meeting.

To: Faculty Senate

From : Sri Sridhar, Vice Provost for Research.

Date: November 05, 2005

Re: RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION DEVELOPMENTS IN AY 05

Dear Senators:

The following is a brief summary of some of the major developments related to the research enterprise at Northeastern University during AY 05. Major items are highlighted.

RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

1. **Major Reorganization of DSPA** into Pre-Award and Post-Award teams to provide clarity of function and improve customer service. This major transition has been going along very smoothly.
2. Roll-out of **ePrint** to budget personnel in collaboration with Finance and Administration. (ePrint is an electronic budget reporting tool that budget personnel have found to be very useful).
3. Faculty Research Incentive Plan is now implemented and continuing.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

4. **Legal review of tech transfer contracts** This #1 problem has been vastly improved, in cooperation with office of Legal Counsel, by moving the legal review to the Provost office. Wait

times for processing by NU have been reduced to manageable and absolutely minimum levels. For FY05, 216 agreements negotiated – up by 40% from FY04.

5. Established new and simplified procedures for **PARS** or **Effort Reporting**, in collaboration with Finance and Administration. Certification will now be required annually and not monthly. A greatly simplified electronic system will be available soon.

LIBRARY RESEARCH JOURNALS

6. **Reallocation of periodicals (\$800K)**: Review of 2610 journals costing \$2.7M involving 14 departments in cooperation with the Library and Departments. Phase I resulting in reallocation of \$500K completed, Phase II initiated, expected total \$800K. Dynamic reallocation process will establish a large digital (electronic, e-journal) collection.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (\$1.3M)

7. **Faculty-staff desktop replacement policy (\$450K)** Every faculty or staff member in the academic sector will get a new desktop every 4 years.

8. **New 65-node research cluster (\$150K)** operational Oct, 05. Computational facility for Science, Social Sciences, Engineering, Health Science researchers.

9. Funding of **software licenses (\$107K)**

10. Interface to registrar's database for unit administrators (in cooperation with Registrar, Institutional Research, IS).

11. Funding for **research training** (eg. SPSS, upon faculty request, session was oversubscribed). *Above IT items were implemented in cooperation with Information Systems.*

SPACE AND START-UP

12. **\$1M Animal care facilities upgrade**. Phase I (~ \$300K) is complete. Phase II is a major footprint expansion and equipment upgrade expected completion July 2006. Phase III will be necessary subsequently. Implemented in cooperation with Facilities.

13. **Start-up packages (more than \$3.8M for AY06)** for new and recently hired faculty during AY06.

14. **New Space** We are exploring an interdisciplinary facility in a proposed biotech corridor on Melnea Cass Blvd.

RESEARCH PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

15. Significant expansion of promotion and publicity of research internally and externally:

- a. New research website (www.research.neu.edu)
- b. Rapid web promotion of research grants with Ann Comer
- c. Corporate Outreach: NU Innovations, Nanotech Day, Nanomedicine dinner,
- d. Synthesis magazine (which has won 3 awards) and AIP thrust brochures
- e. Promotion of research to Donors and Alumni, with Development Office
- f. Corporate Outreach, with Corporate Relations Office
- g. Town Hall meetings with Departments and Colleges

16. **International** Activities with Pat Plunkett : Established collaborations with U. of Naples & Sannio, Ben Gurion, Wroclaw, Turkey, Dublin

17. **Research Expo 2005** : 110 posters, wide University participation. Two new innovations for Expo2005:

- a. Undergraduate Research program (will be significantly expanded)
- b. Award for grad and undergrad posters

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

18. Proposals and visits to DC for meetings of President Freeland with Sen. Kennedy and Congressman Capuano, in collaboration with Govt Relns at NU.

19. Developed interactions with quasi-State govt organizations: MassTech Collaborative (MTC), John Adams Innovation Institute.

RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

20. Established **Safety** procedures in cooperation with OEHS. Setup a Chemical Hygiene Committee.

21. **Research Integrity** Continuing review of human and animal subjects' research and presentations to BoT.

Professor Futrelle commented that the Vice Provost's report was very reassuring. He added that www.grants.com only works for Windows.

Professor Willey mentioned a grant that has been frozen for months because a grad student may have been charged to the wrong account. He asked if this is a financial system problem. The Vice Provost said that the numbering system for grants is a problem but it is what we have with the current financial system. There are any number of glitches that may occur including entering incorrect numbers.

Professor Powers-Lee reported that undergraduates email accounts are set up before they arrive on campus and asked if graduate students' email accounts can be set up in the same manner.

Ms. Leslie Hitch indicated that she wasn't sure why the process isn't as seamless as for undergrads but that she would look into it.

Professor Melachrinoudis asked if there was a framework for departments to follow for dual degree students.

Provost Abdelal responded that he is presently looking into this issue as there's no clear policy regarding dual degrees. There's been no impediment to departments setting up these dual degrees so the concern is more that we have clear policies that everyone will follow and that the Senate will approve. We need a survey of what's out there and a discussion by appropriate committees of the Senate. It's an important topic and the Provost said that he will work with the Chair of the SAC towards policy development.

Adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart S. Peterfreund
Senate Secretary