

November 16, 2005

## Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 11/16/2005

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TO: FACULTY SENATE  
FROM: STUART PETERFREUND, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE  
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2005-06 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 16 NOVEMBER 2005

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Present: (Professors) Alper, Bannister, Bruns, De Ritis, Cokely, Futrelle, Glod, Hall, Hansberry, Herman, Janikian, Kane, Krishnamoorthy, Marshall, Peterfreund, Powers-Lee, Reynolds, Robinson, Sanchez, Schaffer, Sherwood, Strauss, Willey, Wiseman  
(Administrators) Abdelal, Finkelstein, Onan, Sridhar, Stellar, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Bobcean, Flym, McKnight, Melachrinoudis, Morrison, Reucroft, Ryan,  
(Administrators) Falcon, Greene, Moore, Soyster

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 12 noon.

- I. **Approval of the minutes.** The minutes of 11/2/05 were accepted as amended
- II. **SAC Report.** Professor Glod reported the following:
  - A. **Meetings.** SAC met twice in regular session.
  - B. **Announcements.**
    1. Dennis Cokely is elected to Senate from CAS.
    2. The Provost's AEOC evaluation has been released to the NU professoriate and academic administrators for review at Senate Office.
    3. School of Education Dean and Director Search Committee. Provost Abdelal has asked the Agenda Committee to initiate an external search for the position of Dean and Director, School of Education. Staffing is in progress.
  - C. **Senate Committees. The *Ad Hoc* Committee on Information Technology Policy has been staffed and charged as follows:**

Members:

Professor Anthony P. DeRitis, Chair (Music)  
Professor Joseph Ayers (BIO)  
Professor Arun Bansil (Physics)  
Professor Helen Connolly (ECN)  
Professor Carole D. Hafner (CCIS)  
Professor Yang W. Lee (CBA)  
Professor Eric L. Miller (ECE)  
Christopher E. Hopey, Vice President, SPCS  
Linda D. Allen, University Registrar  
Leslie Hitch, Director, Academic Technology Services  
Srinivas Sridhar, Vice Provost, Research  
Robert Weir, Vice President, Information Services, *ex officio*  
Christian Toczko, SGA Representative  
Graduate and Professional Student Association representative *tba*  
SAC Liaison: Professor Susan Powers-Lee

Charge:

To follow up on:

04-05-31. Ad Hoc Committee on Information Systems Policy Resolution #5.

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.

The Committee is also asked to explore and develop a plan for:

1. Student rosters that include pictures, available prior to the first class;
2. Graduate student rosters that are available electronically, similar to undergraduates;
3. Electronic grade submission;
4. Electronic grade rosters;
5. Electronic means to allow registration for students who have taken the necessary prerequisites.

Furthermore, the Committee is asked to evaluate the process of

- a. college vs. University support of classroom IT, and
- b. video streaming capabilities.

And finally, the Committee is asked to update the Senate at regular intervals on what other universities are doing concerning the homeland security mandate to change to computer systems that enable government monitoring.

### **Next Senate Meeting: Wednesday, November 30 at 450 DG**

III. **Provost Report.** Provost Abdelal's report focused on what has been done in the area of research and yielded the floor to Vice Provost for Research Sridhar to highlight major items.

Vice Provost Sridhar distributed a written report (see Appendix A) to highlight his office's major accomplishments during the last academic year. In the area of research administration, DSPA has been reorganized into two teams—a pre-award team for processing proposals and a post-award team for administering grants. Another accomplishment has been the rollout of *e-print*. In the area of technology transfer, the Office of the Provost has become involved to the extent of conducting a timely legal review of tech documents. In addition, the old PARS system has been replaced by a less labor-intensive employee auditing system.

Another major item that Vice Provost Sridhar has looked at is library journals. The Library has budgeted \$3.5 million for research journals and last year requested 10% to keep pace with inflation. Since this rate of increase was not sustainable, a process was initiated whereby five departments or areas that depend most heavily on the Library's research journals (Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Electrical Engineering, and Health Sciences) were asked to review and remove journals that were not necessary. The total savings thus far is about \$700,000—resources which will be put back into the library budget. Another nine departments are now involved in a second round of this vetting process.

The Provost's Office has implemented a policy on desk-top replacements whereby the professorial faculty and staff in the academic sector will get new desktop equipment every four years. The program began last May.

In response to Professor Marshall's question about what will become of the computers that are replaced, the Vice Provost indicated that disposal of old equipment will be left to the departments or that it will be trashed.

Professor Herman pointed out that as the University engages in ever more state-of the-art electronic and computer-based instruction, not only the professoriate, but lecturers and senior SGAs as well will need computer equipment sufficiently powerful and sophisticated to teach in this manner, as well as to download instructional materials via Blackboard or other online content media.

Professor Peterfreund added that the problem is compounded by the fact that IT no longer supports many older platforms. He also respectfully reminded the Vice Provost that the University's Asset Disposition Form, and not the trash barrel, should be used to dispose of hardware such as computers.

Vice Provost Sridhar agreed.

In response to a query from Professor De Ritis, he confirmed that the cost of the replacement program is approximately \$450,000 per year for about one-quarter of the computers.

Professor Futrelle expressed surprise that no notice of a search committee for the replacement of the director of DSPA is mentioned in the Vice Provost's report or anywhere on the web.

Vice Provost Sridhar responded that the report deals with the accomplishments of AY05, while the search is being conducted in AY06 and will be included in next year's report. Provost Abdelal indicated that the point is well taken. He confirmed that an active search is under way and that a campus-wide email will be sent. He also said that the names of the search committee members would be made available for those who might wish to contact them.

Provost Abdelal then asked that remaining questions be held until after debate and action on the resolutions pending.

**IV. Academic Policy Committee Resolution – Proposed Cooperative Education eligibility Requirement for Undergraduate Students.** Professor Herman moved the following resolution, and it was seconded.

**BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approve the cooperative Education Requirement for Undergraduate Students as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee on May 23, 2005.**

Professor Herman yielded the floor to Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Hill, who explained that the UUCC discussed this item late last spring, interacting with Coop extensively in the process. Looking at the fourth of the eligibility requirements, he noted that some discussion took place to clarify the process whereby students with unsatisfactory coop experience could work with their academic and Coop coordinators to reinstate themselves in good standing. Professor Herman added that APC dealt with the issue of students receiving no grade at all for Coop because of an inability or unwillingness of a Coop employer to respond. The committees tried to craft a flexible policy.

Professor Peterfreund asked what working with one's Coop coordinator might involve. Vice Provost Hill gave the hypothetical example of a student with an attitude problem sufficient to get his/her coop placement terminated early. The intervention by the coop coordinator might be a

discussion aimed at clearing up whatever issue there may have been with the employer, to the point that the coordinator felt confident that the student would not fall into the same situation again.

Professor Kane added that the “U” (“Unsatisfactory”) grade is rarely used. It is not generally used in a punitive sense but to encourage the student to come in for help. Matters involving illegality, immorality or unethical behavior are an entirely different matter.

Professor Peterfreund followed up by asking if the “U” effectively blocks a student from continuing with Coops in that major. Professor Kane replied that a “U” would have that effect unless the student worked out a remedial action with the coordinator. He stressed that the coordinators try to use Coop as a developmental tool that goes hand-in-hand with academic learning.

Professor Hall asked if, prior to this resolution, there was a difference in the GPA requirement for domestic and international coop students and asked for clarification after Provost Abdelal and Lynn Lyford, Vice President for Coop Education, confirmed there was not.

Vice Provost Hill explained that on the academic side, when a student applies for study abroad today, it is generally expected that he or she will have a GPA of 3.0 or better. The GPA is a rough index of academic maturity and is an appropriate filter that many institutions impose. Therefore, it could be said that the same logic should apply to overseas coop. Professor Herman added that the Academic Policy Committee had discussed this point as well. There are fewer jobs abroad than there are at home, and more preparation is required for an international coop rotation than for a domestic rotation. It was felt that establishing a minimum of 2.75 would be putting our best foot forward. Professor Kane then pointed out that many multinational employers require a minimum GPA both internationally and domestically. Previous terminology merely required that a student must be progressing satisfactorily. There was not a requirement for a 2.0 or better. Professor Herman pointed out that the use of the adverb “normally” [under Academic Requirements] allows the coordinator some flexibility.

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

Vote: PASSED, 26-0-1

**V. Financial Affairs Committee Report.** Professor Krishnamoorthy moved Resolution #1 and it was seconded.

**BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate support the recommendation of the Financial Affairs Committee for a merit raise pool of at least 4.9% for continuing faculty in fiscal year 2006-07.**

Professor Krishnamoorthy yielded the floor to Professor Kruger, who read from the report as follows:

During the last few years, based on the recommendations of the Committee On Funding Priorities, the President and the Budget Committee, progress has been made to correct the deficiencies in faculty salaries. Merit raises, equity adjustments, and the hiring of new faculty through the Academic Investment Plan have boosted the average faculty salary. This investment in faculty salaries has paid dividends. U. S. News and World Report’s ranking of our faculty resources has improved. However, the importance of faculty compensation goes beyond merely advancing toward top-100 status. It is central to recruiting, retaining, and appropriately rewarding a top-notch faculty. In this regard, one indication of our success is the

improved research productivity of our faculty. As Provost Abdelal cited in his state of the university address, our external research funding has jumped 15% in one year. Similarly, President Freeland, in his address to the university community, referred to the “stunning success” of Northeastern University’s senior researchers.

As we improve as a university, the institutions with which we are directly competing for students and faculty are also of higher caliber. For example, last year, all our principal competitors for undergraduate students were top-100 universities. As we advance toward top-100 status, we must remain competitive by paying our faculty at a level commensurate with our chief rivals.

### **Merit**

A major challenge to offering faculty a competitive level of compensation is the high cost of living in the Boston area. Northeastern University’s Barry Bluestone recently co-authored a report that indicated that Boston has become the most expensive metropolitan area in the country, even surpassing San Francisco. Indeed, during the last decade, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in the Boston region has averaged a 3% increase per year, outpacing the average increase across the country. During that same period of time, merit increases for Northeastern University faculty have averaged 3% and equity adjustments 1%. Therefore, in inflation-adjusted dollars, faculty salaries have only increased 1% a year. Now, even that 1% gain in real dollars per year is in jeopardy. From September 2004 to September 2005, the CPI in the Boston area increased 4.9%, while faculty were only given a 3% merit increase for both 2004-2005 and 2005-2006.

In addition to maintaining pace with inflation, it is necessary to reward the recognized increase in faculty productivity and outstanding merit at all levels. Such rewards would be necessary even in the absence of inflation, and would help combat the problem of salary compression. In this regard, past AAUP studies suggest a total merit pool that is 2% above the inflation rate as measured by the CPI.

While these factors indicate that a 6.9% merit raise pool for continuing faculty is justifiable, the Financial Affairs Committee is also mindful of the inflationary pressures on the university’s budget. In view of the increased energy and health care costs that the university is experiencing, a merit raise pool of at least 4.9% is reasonable. Less than this amount would be discouraging to faculty, who need to maintain their purchasing power in the most expensive metropolitan area in the country.

Professor Kruger pointed out during the reading of the above section, that although NU is not yet in the top 100 we are directly competing with them for students and faculty. He cited a *Boston Globe* article which found that in 2004, a family of four in the Boston area needed \$65,000 to cover basic needs—\$6K more than New York City and \$7K more than San Francisco. In the last decade the CPI (Consumer Price Index) in the Boston area has averaged a 3% increase per year; it is actually 3.8% from year to year. During the same period of time, merit increases for NU faculty members have averaged 3.1% and equity adjustments 1.05% from year to year. Therefore, in inflation-adjusted dollars, faculty salaries have increased only 1% per year over the last decade. Referring to the chart that is part of the report, Professor Kruger observed that the last four years have produced the highest increases. The previous six years averaged .23%, or far less than 1%, so we’ve made progress over the last four years. From Sept. 04 to Sept. 05 the CPI in the Boston area has increased 4.9%, a sharp spike in inflation. This year’s merit increase is locked in at 3%

and equity at .6%. Assuming inflation for the remaining 10 months of this year at .26% per month (the historical number over the last decade), we are at considerable risk of not maintaining our historical slim average of 1% over inflation-adjusted dollars over the Boston CPI.

Professor Hall asked if *U.S. News & World Report* adjusts for inflation overall and for inflation by region. Professor Kruger responded that *USN&WR* adjusts for inflation and for “regional cost of living.” Professor Peterfreund then explained that this had been a matter for discussion among SAC members and, as he understood from Professor Morrison [who was not able to attend the Senate meeting], *USN&WR* calculations do not adequately reflect local differences. There is some pressure for *USN&WR* to change its method of calculation.

Professor Strauss recalled that Mark Putnam had brought up the issue at his presentation to the Senate and that *USN&WR* gives full adjustment, but it is not using current figures. Provost Abdelal added that there is difficulty in that the *USN&WR* method is not fully transparent. Mark Putnam has surmised some things after discussions with the staff of that publication, but there is no formula published. Exactly how *USN&WR* comes up with its figures is unknown.

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

Vote: PASSED, 27-0-0.

Professor Krishnamoorthy moved Resolution #2 and it was seconded.

**BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate support the recommendation of the Financial Affairs Committee for an equity pool in fiscal year 2006-07 that equals the total amount of the market/equity gap between the salaries of Northeastern University faculty and those of faculty at peer institutions, as determined by the forthcoming study conducted by the Provost's Office.**

Professor Krishnamoorthy yielded the floor to Professor Kruger, who read the following from the FAC report:

**Equity**

Given the intense competition to reach top-100 status, the compensation gap between Northeastern University and matchmate institutions looms as an impediment to our progress. In September 2003, the Provost reported to the faculty that his office's analysis during the spring of 2003 identified an overall market equity deficit of \$2,600,000 for Northeastern University relative to matchmate institutions. Although \$1,000,000 was devoted to narrowing this gap in FY 2004 and \$800,000 in FY 2005, this year only \$250,000 of the university's half-a-billion dollar budget is being spent on closing the equity gap. (\$500,000 worth of salary adjustments will begin to be distributed halfway through the fiscal year.) Although it is reasonable to expect that the remaining part of the equity gap can be closed in one year, the gap will not be closed unless the sharp decline in equity funding is reversed. The Office of the Provost is currently conducting an updated study of matchmate data, which was not available prior to the writing of this report.

Professor Kruger clarified that there is equity adjustment money, \$.5M, beginning in January 2006. This adjustment will not remove that amount from the FY 07 budget.

Provost Abdelal then noted that Institutional Research is producing the matchmate data which should be ready shortly. It will be shared with FAC.

Professor Kruger added that the FAC thought it reasonable to move a resolution requesting the entire gap be closed this year for the next fiscal year.

Professor Peterfreund expressed concern about the reasoning behind the resolution. Northeastern's ranking has moved up and this may be looking at matchmates that are comparable at this time; but many senior faculty members have been here for many years and make less. They were hired into a very different NU, and the notion of full matchmate equity is troublesome in the sense that they may not have been as productive over time. Professor Peterfreund would like to see some sense of comparable schools 5-10 years ago: what they are paying today? How do we know that the designated matchmates are the right matchmates?

Provost Abdelal responded in some detail on how matchmates are determined. They are developed by each department—there is no set for the entire University. The department recommends at least 10 institutions as peers. The Dean reviews the recommendations and not infrequently debates them, as does the Provost's Office. The set of matchmates is specific for the department—an assessment of the mix of degrees offered, faculty mix, research productivity—comparing each department to a set of comparable departments which have the same mix of faculty and productivity. The results are meaningful and the methodology addresses the concerns raised by Professor Peterfreund.

Professor Strauss indicated that there are two issues: one is issue of the matchmate department and she agreed to look at it like the Provost suggests. Then there is the issue of those who have been here for many years, have been productive, and are not up to the department average within their own department. They must beg for equity money. Professor Strauss used her own experience as an example saying there were others at NU who had had their equity amount slashed. She stated that unless money is allocated to close the gap fully, the amount of each individual award will again get cut at each level, and again there will not be enough to cover the salary shortfall.

Professor Robinson expressed concurred and asked on what basis does a faculty member request equity. How does a faculty member know whether his or her salary is lower than colleagues if the data is not available?

Provost Abdelal explained that there is a memo sent to departments. The department receives a certain sum based on the gap between the average for the departments at the various ranks and the matchmate data. And the college has some funds as well. The goal is to allow for the process outlined in the memo to enable the faculty member to make the case for themselves by submitting a memo to the chair. That request would be reviewed by the department, the dean and the Provost's Office. We have a good process but need to be sure everyone is aware of and understands it. This year the matchmate information was sent to departments as well as to deans so that departments could make the case to change their peers. If a faculty member is not satisfied they have the option to make an argument.

Professor Peterfreund added that, in order to help make an informed decision about whether to apply for equity, each faculty member receives information on the mean salary by rank for the department. Matchmate information for public institutions is publicly available as well, so it can also be used to arrive at an informed decision.

Professor Krishnamoorthy reminded the Senate that this resolution does not speak to the process, but to the total amount of dollars for the equity pool. Professor Herman agreed and moved the resolution.

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

Vote: PASSED, 29-0-0.

Professor Krishnamoorthy moved Resolution #3 and it was seconded. He yielded the floor to Professor Kruger.

**BE IT RESOLVED That an additional equity pool of \$250,000, which is only half of the salary inversion amount, be funded in fiscal year 2006-2007 to begin to correct the salary inversion within the respective ranks of associate and full professors.**

Professor Kruger read the following from the FAC Report:

In addition to the need to close the salary gap between Northeastern University and its competitors, equity money is also needed to address the salary compression and, in some cases, salary inversion that is occurring within professorial ranks. The most prominent concerns are within associate and full professor levels, where salary compression has resulted in slightly higher average salaries for those persons who have been in rank for only five years as compared with those who have been in the same rank for 10 years. For example, while full professors who have been in their rank for five years earn a median salary of \$110,525, those who have been in the full professor rank for 10 years earn a median salary of \$108,114. Approximately \$500,000 in adjustments would be needed just to equalize the median salaries of the more and less experienced faculty within the respective ranks of associate and full professors. Problems associated with salary compression are compounded by the high cost of living increase this year and in Boston in particular

Professor Kruger then explained that what is happening is that people only five years in rank at the associate level are making more than those here 10 years. Resolution #3 equalizes that so that there is no inversion between people in rank five years and people in rank 10 years. Problems associated with salary compression are compounded by the high cost of living increases, particularly in Boston.

Professor Futrelle pointed out that as NU improves, we are able to attract more skilled faculty, so the inversion may be related to the quality of people brought in and may be, in fact, a proper measure in a competitive marketplace in hiring those excellent new people in competition with other good schools. It's a delicate issue.

Professor Peterfreund noted that the commentary mentions "average" salaries and the statistics presented make use of "median" figures. Professor Kruger responded that while the committee could have been more consistent with the language, there's not a lot of difference between the median and the average. He conceded that the median is probably a better measure.

Professor Peterfreund said that he'd be more comfortable seeing both figures. He also proposed, because the resolution deals partly with inversion and partly with compression, a friendly amendment to change the second mention of "inversion" to "distribution," as that change would reflect the commentary more accurately. After consulting with his colleagues on the FAC, Professor Krishnamoorthy accepted the amendment.

Professor Bruns noted that the resolution speaks only to inversion and compression within rank and asked if the FAC looked at it across ranks. She pointed out that in accounting, salaries are the

same for entering faculty with Ph.D.s in hand as they are for full professors. Professor Kruger responded that the FAC had not studied inversion and compression across ranks.

Provost Abdelal said that we are seeing this phenomenon nationally in colleges of business in general, because of the shortage of professors in accounting and finance.

Professor Robinson suggested that these differences bring about poor morale and questioned how the Provost's Office speaks to that.

Provost Abdelal indicated that high entry-level salaries are a national phenomenon at business schools, which accept the phenomenon as part of the price of remaining competitive. If we tried to do otherwise, the University would be at a competitive disadvantage. We cannot afford to pay less, nor can we afford to adjust the salaries of senior faculty upward. We have to take the state of the market into consideration.

Professor Strauss acknowledged that it is a difficult issue within the College of Business, but it does not necessarily mean it should detract from the plight of the remainder of the University, apart from CBA. In her own career, Professor Strauss indicated, she had never received a step raise when she was promoted, since such raises were not given at that time. She further stated that she would not want to jeopardize this resolution because of one college.

Professor Krishnamoorthy noted that it is important to recognize that market conditions are dynamic and changing. The number of Ph.D.s being awarded in accounting has dipped to less than 100 per year—making for a very dynamic market. But it would not be wise to take such conditions as a given or a constant. There is going to be a point at which the rising tide is going to try to lift our boats. Market conditions need to be recognized as changing, unfortunately for the worse from a recruiting standpoint.

Provost Abdelal indicated that, while he did not wish to interject too much, it is important to point out that is what we have been doing. Every year we get national data on colleges and are staying competitive for each department within the College of Business Administration. Staying with market is much safer as all other options require acting on the basis of hypotheses.

Professor Hall asked if we now have a one-time promotion increase for promotions in rank. The Provost responded that it is 10% of base salary for both assoc and asst professors. Professor Hall responded that there are faculty members here who were promoted through rank before that type of increase was enacted in 1990.

Provost Abdelal agreed with Professor Strauss's point that someone who came up through rank and received no promotional increase should not lag forever.

Professor Sherwood indicated that while he understands the market argument he is troubled by statements that people who have been here a long time are not competent or deserving. He asks people to bear in mind that long time people produced the institution that "competent ones" have now found attractive.

Dean Finkelstein asked Professor Kruger if some of the inequities in salary compression for deserving faculty could, in fact, be corrected through the market equity process. Professor Kruger responded that it is not what the other equity pool is designed to do. The market may not correct for inequities within ranks as it's based on matchmates and is market-driven. So while there have been equity adjustments over the past few years, it has not corrected and there is now a problem.

The Provost noted that compression and inversion have been partially addressed in the last three raise cycles. We have had departments and/or individual faculty members make the case as described and their salaries have been adjusted. Ultimately, if the process carries on, both problems will be resolved. Proceeding incrementally allows for mid-course corrections, since making up the salary shortfall is not an exact science.

Professor Willey expressed mixed emotions and shock at the numbers. He indicated that perhaps the only way to establish his market value is to get a job offer from another university and/or to leave the University. He expressed skepticism as to the effectiveness of equity adjustments. Deans have ways of giving raises and none of them center on equity.

Provost Abdelal responded that during the last two years the model instituted is to allocate certain sums to each department to avoid the problems Professor Willey describes. The amount allocated to the department is based on the gap between the department and the matchmates.

In response to Professor Willey's point that departmental salary averages may be high because of a few superstars, the Provost interjected that this phenomenon is taken into consideration, and the department can point out those one or two faculty who may have high salaries that are skewing the average.

Professor Strauss moved the resolution. There being no objection, the Faculty Senate turned to a vote.

Vote: PASSED, 25-0-2.

Professor Kruger acknowledged the hard work of the FAC members Professors Krishnamoorthy, Strauss, Mason, and Levendis. Provost Abdelal extended his thanks.

Adjourned: 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart Peterfreund  
Senate Secretary