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Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 12/07/2005

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TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: STUART A. PETERFREUND, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2005-06 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 7 DECEMBER 2005

Present: (Professors) Alper, Bannister, Bruns, De Ritis, Cokely, Futrelle, Glod, Hansberry, Herman, Janikian, Kane, McKnight, Melachrinoudis, Morrison, Peterfreund, Powers-Lee, Reucroft, Reynolds, Robinson, Sanchez, Schaffer, Sherwood, Willey
(Administrators) Abdelal, Falcon, Finkelstein, Moore, Onan, Sridhar, Stellar, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Bobcean, Flym, Hall, Krishnamoorthy, Marshall, Ryan, Strauss, Wiseman
(Administrators) Greene, Soyster

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

I. **Approval of the minutes.** The minutes of 11/16/05 were accepted as amended.

II. **SAC report.** Professor Glod reported the following:

A. Meetings. SAC met twice in regular session and once with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. Two issues, in particular, were brought to the attention of the Board — the need for academic facilities and for faculty participation in the master plan and the need for timely processing of contracts, including the clinical placement contracts, research contracts, software licensing, and others that are yearly contracts. Overall there was a good deal of discussion and a number of possible solutions. Regarding the first item, SAC agreed to work with the Provost and other constituencies to gather answers to the questions concerning academic space that were posed by the Board members. SAC will submit an additional charge to Calendar Committee to gather the information. Regarding contracts, there was much discussion and the possibility of templates was discussed but it's not a new idea and problems arise as other constituencies use their own language. SAC pointed out that contract delays speak to the reputation of the University. The Trustees voiced concern that past audits have shown "faculty carelessness" in signing contracts. There was also discussion around other institutions and practices. University counsel reported that, on average, there is a 10-day turnaround for processing clinical placement contracts. SAC has since contacted President Freeland about this issue as it was discussed at the Senate last year. He assured us that an attorney to review contracts will be in place by mid-January.

B. Senate Committees. The School of Education Dean & Director Search Committee has been staffed as follows: Professors Joan Fitzgerald, (Law Policy & Society Program), Peter Murrell (SOE), Kostia Bergman (Biology), Stuart Peterfreund (English), and Michael Silevitch (Elec. & Computer Eng.)

The *Ad hoc* Committee on Library Policies and Operation has been staffed and charged (*thank you to Ron Willey for agreeing to chair*). The first meeting is scheduled on 15 December 2005.

Committee Members: Professor Ronald Willey, Chair
Professor Mansoor M. Amiji
Professor Arun Bansil
Professor Laura Green
Professor Harlow L. Robinson
Professor Wallace W. Sherwood

Professor David Schmitt
Dean Edward Warro, *ex officio*
Stuart A. Peterfreund, SAC Liaison

Charges:

1. Last April 6, by a unanimous vote of 31-0, the Faculty Senate passed legislation to increase funding for library monograph acquisitions during the period FY 07-09 to at least the median amount for the universities ranked 50-100. A second resolution “urge[d] the provision of one-time and development funding to bring the print and electronic serials and monograph collection to a level comparable with said institutions.” A third and final resolution “urge[d] the immediate upgrading of technology to ensure full electronic access from library facilities as well as from remote stations in the academic units.” The *Ad Hoc* Committee on Library Policies and Operations is hereby charged to report on the status of the funding and the upgrade proposed in the second and third resolutions and to detail the progress made to date in upgrading the quality of Northeastern’s library system.
2. For some time Snell Library has operated a peer-tutoring system, under the auspices of which students who are struggling in the courses can receive tips, practical assistance, and one-on-one tutoring from their more successful fellow students. Tutors themselves are students who apply for the positions available. While laudable in its fulfillment of the University’s commitment to being a student-centered and practice-oriented institution, the peer-tutoring system’s relationship to the rest of the University’s undergraduate academic operations seems relatively undefined. The Faculty Senate should be better informed about this program than it currently is

The *Ad Hoc* Committee on Library Policies and Operations is hereby charged to report on the status of the peer-tutoring system. In addressing the operation of this program, the report should be both descriptive and evaluative. Among the questions that the report should address are the following. What are the criteria for selecting tutor trainees? What does the tutors’ training consist of? What sorts of quality-control and supervision mechanisms are in place? What is the complaint-resolution process for students unhappy with the services they have received? What is the program’s success rate as measured by user evaluations, outcomes, or both? The report should also address the issue of resources. What is the annual operating budget for this program? How is this budget structured? Given the niche filled by the program, the number of people served by it, and the program’s success rate is this a wise investment of scarce resources, given the options?

C. Next Senate Meeting: Wednesday, December 14 at Raytheon, 240 EC, Meeting with Presidential Search Committee. Professor Glod reported that the Presidential Search Committee met with students about a week ago. They were very articulate and expressed many of the same concerns that faculty have raised. Professor Glod also reported that the Presidential Search Committee has scheduled an Open Meeting with faculty on 15 December from 3:00-4:30 p.m. in **305 Shillman Hall**.

Provost Abdelal opened the floor to questions.

Professor Futrelle suggested that faculty carelessness with regard to contracts was most likely due to frustration and hoped that with new processes that would fade away.

Professor Peterfreund urged the senators to keep in mind that the President’s position is that of President of the University and not merely President of the faculty and to try to keep this in mind when presenting comments and thoughts at next week’s Senate meeting. The Senate might be aware that the Trustees hold a slightly distorted view of how the faculty sees itself; to show faculty as honest brokers and honest stewards of the university will improve faculty credibility.

III. Provost report. Provost Abdelal reported that the SAC meeting with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees was very constructive and brought issues from the faculty

perspective that had probably never been heard. The classroom discussion is on-going, as it needs to be. The quality of teaching facilities impacts what we do here.

The President is working on having a plan for conversations and discussions about the next master plan. It is important to have all university constituencies involved in the process.

The Provost said that, as regards academic facilities, he has been raising the issue all along in various venues. For instance, the deans, through the special committee on graduate education, have been working for the past three years with the Trustees on graduate education goals and visions. This has given the Board a higher degree of understanding and appreciation. Every dean has met with them several times to discuss goals including academic facilities. There is a synergy that can be achieved by raising issues in various and appropriate forums. The master plan process will be the first organized forum to talk about facilities issues impacting the next 10 years.

The contracts issue has become a key challenge, not just in the research area. Many contracts are related to our basic education's mission at the undergraduate level as well. We were able to come to the agreement that the university needs to increase office capacity to have one person specializing in and dedicated to contracts. Another issue is a process for differentiating routine contracts from those needing to be negotiated. In discussing solutions with the President and with legal counsel, three points were discussed: 1) recruit a specialized contract legal person as soon as possible (projected for January); 2) a need to have a contract administrator in the legal office; and 3) a need to simplify the signature process. Presently contracts must go from the legal office to financial administration regardless of whether there are financial obligations. This would require Board approval. It is a critical issue which the Provost will continue to monitor.

Provost Abdelal reported that after three years of work, the Special Committee on Graduate Education has defined the goals for each program and the metrics needed to define progress. The report will be shared with chairs tomorrow who, with graduate directors, are urged to provide input.

The University is currently in the critical phase of planning the budget for the next fiscal year. It is as tight as it was last year due, in part, to an increased financial aid obligation. Two years ago our financial aid obligations exceeded the budget projection by \$15m or so, on a recurring basis. Last year we were able to absorb about \$10m but are now left with just under \$6m. Meeting financial aid obligations is a major constraint on what we are able to do this year. Another issue is utilities. The Provost reminded the Senate that the more NU pays for utilities, the less in the budget for raises. A draft of the budget will be ready in mid January and will be presented to the senate at that time.

The Provost opened the floor to questions.

Professor Herman reported that the first meeting of the Classroom Committee is Friday, 16 December and asked Senate members to submit any input about the state of current classrooms. Upon the Provost's urging, he explained that the Committee is composed of the Chair, Jim Brand, a faculty representative, 2 representatives from the registrar's office, 3 from physical plant, and 1 or 2 from IT. The Committee brings together the physical, electronic and teaching aspects of the classroom and tries to deal with them in a coherent manner. On the issue of contracts, there are several limitations — only two people at the University are able to sign contracts. We don't want simplifying the process to mean there will be only one. Secondly, those contracts covering more than one year must have the approval of the BOT. We need to keep track of both of these.

Professor Sanchez indicated that the Department of Counseling and Applied Psychology relies heavily on contracts for student placements and those students suffer when contracts are held up.

Professor Peterfreund added that many of these issues were discussed during the SAC meeting with Trustees, including the issue of student placements. It should be noted that some contracts NU is asked to sign requests unreasonable things that no amount of extra staffing will resolve. For instance, to warrant that a medical placement in Florida have no record of drug abuse, or another clinical placement have no arrest record, is impossible for NU to verify. The roadblock is not always of our own making.

Provost Abdelal said that just three to four months ago there was ½ a person to do contracts and technical transfer agreements which created a bottleneck. The Provost's Office was able to remedy that by agreeing to assign a person in Provost's Office to handle the technical transfer agreements under the supervision of legal counsel. Also, a contract lawyer is being added and a contract administrator is being discussed which will triple capacity. We need to see how it works out and need to hear if it is not.

Professor McKnight reported being somewhat embarrassed when asked by the chair of the 2004-05 Senate Committee for Research Policy Oversight what happened to the resolution submitted last year asking University Counsel to report on specific steps to be taken to address these contract issues. It turns out that the resolution was tabled because President Freeland assured SAC the problem was being remedied. It was embarrassing to be nine months beyond that and find that nothing has happened. University Counsel says that someone will be hired early next year and so SAC is waiting until that time to consider removing that resolution from the table.

Provost Abdelal said that the Board would be receptive to streamlining the process involving contracts of more than one year.

Professor Herman said that 15 years ago templates were developed but over time it has become more difficult to impose them on others for many reasons – homeland security issues, human subject and hazardous materials issues. Difficulties arise when contracts are not of our own making, which is what Professor Peterfreund said previously.

Professor Reynolds added that the Department of Pharmacy Practice still uses many templates. While there is increasing pressure to provide criminal reports in some environments, they have successfully deflected many of those requests back as being the responsibility of the hiring party.

The Provost said that it seems the 10-day turn-around for contracts spoken of by the Vice President and University Counsel at the SAC/Trustees meeting applies only when the lawyers do not have to talk to each other. When they must, delays are inevitable.

Dean Zoloth added that much discussion has taken place between legal and Bouvé about clinical placements, specifically in the areas that Professors Herman and Reynolds mention. The issue is that, under Massachusetts law, people who work with vulnerable populations in institutions that are funded must validate that no criminal records are held. It is state law but it is happening all over the US. On the 10-day issue, the Provost is exactly correct.

Professor Peterfreund indicated that this conversation should not be taken to mean that we should not continue to educate the Board to abandon its risk-adverseness position. The mindset on liability and risk issues which cause the lawyers to go back and forth also causes long delays and may prevent our taking advantage of bargains such as the computers NU was unable to purchase several years ago for this very reason.

Provost Abdelal agreed that there is no such thing as zero risk. On another issue, the Office of Institutional Research has completed the salary matchmate process. The report includes ten matchmates with reasonable similarities in mix of programs, levels of accomplishment, maturity and so on, for each department across the University with applied cost of living differential based on a model that Professor Morrison was instrumental in building. That model determines the gap for teaching faculty in each department to the matchmate data and ends up at \$1.26m. The information has been shared with the Senate Committee on Financial Affairs and the University Fiscal Advisory Committee. The Vice President of Human Resources Management did the same study for staff and presented that data to the University Fiscal Advisory Committee.

Professor Sherman asked if NU should get Lloyds of London-type insurance to handle risk. The Provost responded that it was a great idea but could be prohibitively expensive.

IV. Resolution to change the name of the Department of Cardiopulmonary and Exercise Science. Professor Sanchez moved the following resolution and the motion was seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approve the name change of the Department of Cardiopulmonary and Exercise Sciences to the Department of Health Sciences as approved by the faculty of the Bouvé College of Health Sciences.

The floor was yielded to Professor William (Jay) Gillespie, Chair of the Department of Cardiopulmonary Sciences. Professor Gillespie explained that the resolution was initiated in the department and the vote was unanimously in favor of the change (8-0-0). The College faculty vote was 33-7-17. The change reflects the changing nature of the programs within the departments. The baccalaureate degree in health sciences was initially developed about 3 years ago from within the department. It was then moved outside the department, further developed and broadened in scope, and repositioned as a more broad-based interdisciplinary, generic health sciences grouping – and really pre-graduate program – between the colleges. Several faculty members in the department teach courses within the program. Students take required courses in the basic sciences as well as in health policy and health management, ethics, race, ethnicity, health promotion, community and public health. So far the experience has been that most students have chosen pre-med as a minor while others have focused on community and public health. The Health Science program was approved by the Senate in 2004 and now, 1-1/2 years later there are 60 students in the pipeline. It's now been determined that the Program needs a department to assume responsibility for scheduling courses, faculty budgeting, mentoring, advising, and so forth. The College approved it being housed back in the department. At the same time, the department has seen the elimination of several undergraduate programs – the last classes to graduate from the programs in respiratory therapy and exercise physiology will be in 2007 and 2009 respectively. As these downsize there remain six full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty who have interest in shifting the resources of the department to the increasing demands of the Health Science Program and the name, Department of Health Sciences, more broadly defines the remaining programs.

Professor Bruns asked if there were any budget implications as it appears to be less a name change and more like the elimination of one department and the starting of another using some of the resources of the first. Professor Gillespie responded that one could look at it that way but there are more faculty than needed to support the existing programs and the department is encompassing several programs rather than closing and reopening. For this reason he envisions the budget staying somewhat the same.

Dean Zoloth added that he thought there were no budgetary implications associated with this change.

Professor Powers-Lee asked why the College vote was not more enthusiastic. Professor Gillespie did not know and was unwilling to speculate.

Professor Futrelle asked if a Department of Health Sciences in the College of Health Sciences might cause confusion. Professor Gillespie explained that the title more broadly defines the department and the programs within it, emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of the programs which are available across the College. He added that it is not unprecedented and cited the following examples: BU's BS in Health Sciences in Sargent College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences; Ithaca College's BS in Health Sciences in School of Health Sciences and Human Performance; U. Berkeley's BS in Public Health in the School of Public Health; Georgetown's BS in Health Studies in the Department of Health Studies; and Brown's BS in Community Health in the Dept. of Public and Community Health.

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

Vote: PASSED, 29-0-0.

V. University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUCC) – Amendment to Undergraduate Residency Policy. Professor Herman moved the following resolution and the motion was accepted.

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approve amended language to the “Graduation Requirements” in the Undergraduate Catalog as approved by the UUCC on 10 November 2005.

The floor was yielded to Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Malcolm Hill. He explained that the current residency requirement in the undergraduate catalog says that students should be at NU for 32 of their last 40 semester hours. It's a clear statement but within it there is wide latitude in some areas of the University. The Provost's office asked the UUCC to reevaluate the statement of residency which resulted in a new way of saying it. Once a student matriculates, the expectation is that, with certain specific exceptions, all coursework should be completed at NU. The UUCC was concerned to retain the existing College-level approval authority for petitions to take a course at other accredited institutions with certain specifics, and the Senate Committee on Academic Policy (APC) added other considerations to the new wording, i.e. if a student is failing a course and needs to catch up or maintain progress toward graduation. APC also added verbiage to allow College-level approvals if faculty members in a major felt that a student would benefit by taking a course at another institution. Vice Provost Hill stated that the Committees would like an implementation date of fall 2006 for all students with the clear expectation that commitments made by Colleges to students during this academic year will be honored.

Professor Herman noted that the footnote should not be on handout. He added that some students had already reached agreements based on coop participation so there was discussion back and forth on the implementation date. This changes the way NU thinks about undergraduate education and takes the entire education as a whole by stating that the starting expectation for NU students is that undergraduate courses will be taken at NU and anything else is an exception. APC recognized there are consortium and partnership arrangements with other institutions and obviously want those to happen. And there are other specific situations where flexibility is needed.

Professor Peterfreund indicated support and added that NU needs to address the problems with summer offerings. The summer curriculum needs to be more robust; and making it so may be a Senate Calendar Committee issue. He expressed concern about enforceability. If the catalog is a contract and students have begun their education under different terms, the change may not

happen as quickly as the UUCG hopes. It may not be enforceable until the entering class of 2010 or 2011. Professor Peterfreund asked Professor Herman for input.

Professor Herman said that it is enforceable with sufficient notification and that operating regulations are, in fact, changed during the course of the students' tenure.

Special Assistant to the President Kay Onan suggested being more specific about this being an undergraduate requirement. She gave the example that the President's office receives 1-2 calls a year from graduate students requesting they receive 'honors' because they are mistakenly reading the Undergraduate Catalog. Professor Herman had no objection but pointed out that the requirement is published in the Undergraduate Catalog and not the Graduate Catalog. Dr. Onan followed up to say that when the information is read on-line it can become confusing as one loses sight of the undergraduate catalog banner. The Provost suggested that the President's Office might wish to write to whoever is in charge of the web and ask about putting a marker on each page.

Professor Alper asked if the "a" in last sentence where the change reads "a course at another institution" means that only one course can be approved. Professor Herman responded that it is meant to be inclusive but each course must be petitioned separately. Professor Alper then pointed out that "their" in the same paragraph should be changed. Professor Peterfreund indicated that it had been changed to "his/her" at one time.

Professor Peterfreund, in responding to Dr. Onan's point, suggested that the word "*undergraduates*" might replace "*students*" in the sentence reading "Graduation with honors and selection as the class marshal (spring commencement only) are reserved for students who have completed 60 semester hours in residence." This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Professor Reynolds asked for clarification that a faculty member would review requests or if an advisor could approve a course being taken outside of Northeastern. Professor Herman responded that, in many departments, the recommendation actually begins with the faculty member while in some Colleges that is not necessarily the case. He added, too, that the Registrar has been cataloging course equivalencies which are approved by the department chair.

Professor Bruns acknowledged that we are changing the culture and reducing the students' flexibility, but that sometimes flexibility is needed since we are a coop institution. Professor Herman pointed out that the Academic Policies Committee (APC) had discussed this and the word "important" was used for just that reason — to retain some flexibility.

Professor Futrelle said that the APC was sensitive to the issue of students finding inexpensive courses off campus which decreases income to NU and that they will sometimes "shop" advisors until their petition is signed. APC wishes to prevent that by explicitly including the Colleges in the process using whatever mechanism they deem appropriate.

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

Vote: PASSED, 25-0-0.

Adjourned: 1:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart A. Peterfreund, Senate Secretary