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Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 03/29/2006

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TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: STUART S. PETERFREUND, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
RE: MINUTES, 2005-06 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 29 March

Present: (Professors) Alper, Bobcean, Bruns, De Ritis, Futrelle, Glod, Hall, Hansberry, Herman, Janikian, Kane, Marshall, Melachrinoudis, McKnight, Morrison, Peterfreund, Powers-Lee, Reynolds, Robinson, Sanchez, Sherwood, Willey, Wiseman
(Administrators) Abdelal, Falcon, Finkelstein, Greene, Moore, Sridhar, Stellar, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Bannister, Krishnamoorthy, Ramirez, Reucroft, Ryan, Schaffer, Strauss
(Administrators) Onan, Soyster

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 11:53 a.m.

- I. Approval of the minutes. Minutes of 22 Feb were approved as posted. Minutes of 1 March were approved as amended.

Regarding the minutes of 1 March, p 6, ¶2, Provost Abdelal clarified that he meant to indicate, not that he was questioning *the Student Handbook* copyright policy specifically, but rather that he considers any other items in other handbooks relating to faculty that have not been approved by the Senate open for further scrutiny, discussion, and clarification.

- II. SAC report. Professor Glod reported

- A. Meetings. SAC met 3 times in regular session.

- B. Resolutions. President Freeland has responded to the following Senate resolutions:

- #2. UUCS Coop Eligibility for undergraduate students: approved

- #3. Financial Affairs Committee #1 on merit pool: informational, no action required

- #4. Financial Affairs Committee #2 on equity pool: informational, no action required

- #5. Financial Affairs Committee #3 on additional equity pool: informational, no action required

- C. Announcements/Updates

Professor Glod reminded the Senate that the Klein Lecture with Alain Karma will take place tomorrow, 30 March, at 3:00 p.m. in Shillman Hall.

Professor Glod reported being troubled by the apparent permanent closing of the Faculty Center. She placed a call to Senior Vice President Mucciolo to get a sense of what is going on and was told that the Faculty Center was open for special events, that it had been losing money, and that the Vice President had not heard of any faculty concerns relative to the closing. Professor Glod then raised the issue with the Senate Agenda Committee the members of which feel strongly that NU needs a functioning Faculty Center, but which is open to consideration of other sites. Professor Glod requested input from the Senate.

Professor Marshall said that he was told that 'special events' means groups of 50 or more, a condition that eliminates special faculty meetings, advisory board meetings, hiring committee lunches, and many other small but important functions. In response to Professor De Ritis's question as to whether Vice President Mucciolo has the unilateral authority to close the Faculty Center, Provost Abdelal said that the decision should not be that of the Senior Vice President's alone. The Provost said that he was not aware that a decision had been made to permanently close the Center and that he, too, had expressed to Senior Vice President Mucciolo that the

Faculty Center should be reopened. He told the Senate that a possible basis for the Senior Vice President not consulting anyone is that the Faculty Center is run as an auxiliary. The Provost reiterated that he does not support the premise that any University officer should take an action of this sort or magnitude without consultation.

The Senate discussed the matter and agreed that the Faculty Center is needed and should remain open.

Sense of the Senate Motion: Professor Herman moved the following resolution, and it was seconded. Whereas the top 100 universities around the country have a Faculty Center, and Northeastern University aspires to that group, be it resolved that it is the sense of the Faculty Senate that a fully functioning Faculty Center be reopened and retained and that the Faculty Senate be included in future decisions concerning that Faculty Center.

Vote to approve a Sense of the Senate resolution concerning the reopening of the Faculty Center: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, 28-0-0

III. Provost's Report. The Provost said that he thought it worthwhile to share how the Provost's office views budget priorities given that the budget presentation of last month viewed budget priorities from the University's standpoint.

The first priority is to continue hiring tenure-track faculty, as well as some tenured faculty. The second priority is to enhance operational budgets for academic units. The Provost has been working with several deans to initiate this at both the college and the department levels. The third priority is undergraduate research. Co-directors have been hired and will work toward securing external funding to support the initiative. Until then, we will invest from our own sources. The fourth priority will be to make incremental improvement in graduate assistantships, particularly where the level is less competitive than the market. Vice Provost Falcon is currently looking into the competitiveness of assistantship stipends. Another priority is investment in new master's programs where student demand is high and would support revenue-producing programs that would, in turn, support other academic initiatives. The final priority is to consolidate and enhance support for globalization. NU currently has a study abroad office in CAS and there is increasing interest from CBA, CJ and others. It is timely to consolidate and coordinate study abroad experiences for students and to make those experiences equally accessible by bringing the operation to the University level. This effort will be aligned with international partnerships that NU has been building around the globe. So there are really three efforts: study abroad (or international experiences); partnerships where faculty & students are involved in education and research, and particularly research at other universities; and joint programming with international partners. Patrick Plunkett in the Provost's office will lead the program which will be located in EII.

Professor Marshall referred to the higher education supplement printed by the *Times* in London which ranks about 200 international programs. BU is ranked; NU is not. Provost Abdelal indicated that he was aware of those rankings and noted that NU was ranked but much further down. He agreed it was worthwhile to look into their ranking system.

IV. 2005-06 *Ad Hoc* Committee for Information Technology Policy Report. Professor Anthony De Ritis moved the following resolution and it was seconded.

WHEREAS there are many requests, needs, and expectations with respect to making our registration, advising and curriculum oversight systems more efficient and effective,

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate support the recommendation of the Information Technology Policy Committee for the Registrar to make available student photos as a component of all course rosters

Professor De Ritis explained that NU already has the ability to do this. The process includes matching the database/master file of digital photos with the current enrollment data. The final product would be available via the myNEU portal and linked to the updated rosters that already exist there. He also explained that the Registrar's Office raised concerns related to FERPA (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), and consulted University Counsel who recently replied that the issue is very complicated and could impact a variety of potential situations.

Professor Robinson queried Professor De Ritis about the purpose and he replied that it was a faster way to learn the students' names. Professor Futrelle said that, as other universities who are doing this have presumably found it legally acceptable, perhaps someone should talk to them about legal implications. Professor Reynolds added that the School of Pharmacy has been providing students' pictures for several years, and it is tremendously helpful, especially with large classes. He suggested that Counsel specify their issues to the Senate.

Dean Finkelstein asked if the ITPC had attempted to prioritize their charges. Professor De Ritis, replying in the affirmative, explained that the Committee tried to analyze costs and benefits, and to seek implementation of those issues which provided extra benefits at little cost: those within the capabilities of the current system.

Professor Hall asked which other universities actually do this. He wondered whether it is misleading to indicate that many do, when we don't actually know. He also asked if, with a higher proportion of small sections, it is really a burden to get to know students quickly. Professor Hall indicated that he did not wish to use photos as he did not wish to put a face with the work until the first major project was handed in.

Professor De Ritis agreed that these were valid points but thought that if we know any university who does it, the legal issues are negligible. He added that, as a department chair with as many as 450 students, many of whom may not be in his own classes, this form of identification would be of great use.

Professor Sanchez asked what the students think and whether they could decline.

Professor De Ritis mentioned that the ITPC's student representative was for it. He stated that he thought that the point about declining to participate was valid.

Professor Herman suggested that University Counsel's office is not saying that photo-rosters are a bad idea, but that the manner in which they are implemented requires some investigation. Implementation will not be by printed roster, but by a download from myNEU. Counsel can begin to deal with the issues once it knows what we want done. We need to decide what delivery format is best for the teaching faculty. It may be possible, for instance, to obtain the class list with or without pictures if the faculty member prefers no pictures. These are process issues that should not interfere with our assertion about whether or not to do this.

Dean Greene said that there is a dearth of available information in many areas and expressed concern that this issue will push other more important issues off the table.

Professors Powers-Lee and Bruns indicated that they and a number of other faculty members take pictures of students for use in the classroom and students have never declined. They both find it very useful and report that the students have expressed gratitude for the effort put into learning

their names. Professor Bruns, responding to Professor Hall's point, expressed her opinion that a picture will not profile the student any more than having that student sitting directly in front of the instructor does.

Professor De Ritis, in responding to Dean Finkelstein, indicated that because this issue is of very low cost, the Committee viewed it as a good thing to do. It also directly responded to the Committee's charge. Finally, the third resolution does respond to larger issues.

Professor Peterfreund proposed responding to concerns by adding "optional" so that faculty who don't want pictures need not download them. Professor De Ritis accepted the friendly amendment. Professor Peterfreund continued that, while there are other very important computer-related issues, this is not unimportant, as it speaks to image, i.e., to what kind of University we are and how others view us. He expressed support of the resolution.

Professor Futrelle added that there are positive things about knowing who one's students are. Good four-year colleges promote their applicants' perception that faculty members know their students. He agreed that this is a good thing to do.

Dean Finkelstein noted that he asked if the Committee had prioritized the issues because the list will not be implemented immediately but over the course of time and it would help IS to know how faculty rate these issues. Professor De Ritis agreed and explained that the Committee noted that patches and fixes are not working and should be dealt with. Dean Greene then proposed a friendly amendment to insert Resolution #1 into Resolution #2 as he saw no reason for a separate resolution which could serve to deflect attention from the larger picture.

Professor Peterfreund noted as a point of order that unless the Dean wished to amend the first resolution, the second cannot be discussed at this point.

Dean Greene's motion to not pass Resolution #1 was not seconded.

Professor Herman noted that the order of the ITPC resolutions is the order of what is doable. Photos with rosters can be done now and will take little trouble. Resolution #2 is doable only with improvement in the system and access. Resolution #3 is what needs to be done to have a functional system. System 25 was purchased in 1974 and has been patched excessively. The ITPC resolutions should not be passed in a way that says we should not do anything if we cannot do everything, which is the danger of putting first the things that can be done immediately.

Provost Abdelal said that the cost of replacing the Registrar's system will be \$10-15M, plus much work to implement it correctly. It is an area of major need, and the Senate should be aware of the financial magnitude involved.

Professor Glod agreed, saying that she is sympathetic to Dean Greene's concerns but is supportive of the resolution. She suggested that we move on, allow University Counsel to address the outstanding issues, and discuss the remaining resolutions that may address these concerns.

Motion to close debate on ITPC Resolution #1 was seconded. There being no objection, the Senate turned to a vote.

As amended the Resolution reads:

WHEREAS there are many requests, needs, and expectations with respect to making our registration, advising and curriculum oversight systems more efficient and effective,

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate support the recommendation of the Information Technology Policy Committee for the Registrar to make available student photos as an optional component of all course rosters

Vote to approve ITPC Resolution #1: PASSED, 25-2-2

V. 2005-06 *Ad Hoc* Committee for Information Technology Policy Report. Professor Anthony De Ritis moved Resolution #2 and it was seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate support the recommendation of the Information Technology Policy Committee for the Registrar to make available electronic student rosters for graduate courses.

Professor De Ritis added that he was informed by the Registrar that this is expected to be rolled out in the fall in any case.

Professor Hall asked if this had already been done for undergraduate courses and Professor De Ritis confirmed that it had been.

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

Vote to approve ITPC Resolution #2: PASSED, 28-0-1

VI. 2005-06 *Ad Hoc* Committee for Information Technology Policy Report. Professor Anthony De Ritis moved the following resolution and it was seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate support the recommendation of the Information Technology Policy Committee, in conjunction with the Office of the Registrar, for replacement of the outdated Registrar's computer system with a state-of-the-art student information system that meets the needs and demands of Northeastern University students and faculty, including electronic checking of prerequisites, electronic grade submission and continuously updated electronic rosters.

Professor De Ritis explained that the Committee realized as it deliberated that the issues are very large and the University must make a considerable financial commitment. The Committee understands that it will take several years to implement even after buying a new system but felt that it is time to take action.

Professor Herman added that there is a system of data-warehousing on campus. He pointed out, too, that the current state of affairs is due in large part to the enormous amount of money and time (10 years) spent on the current HRM system which yielded extraordinarily few results. It is time for a comprehensive system. He proposed a friendly amendment to add the experiential mission of the students.

Professor Peterfreund then proposed a friendly amendment to clarify the wording as follows: "...students and faculty [*period*]. These needs and demands include..." Professor De Ritis accepted the friendly amendment. After some discussion on whether Professor Herman's friendly amendment had been accepted, Professor Peterfreund proposed another friendly amendment to include the following wording: "These needs and *demands include, but are not limited to ...*" Professor De Ritis agreed.

Provost Abdelal added that he would like to have query-based data-warehousing where users can run reports on student demographics, enrollment, timeline comparisons and others that are not available right now. Currently we must ask the Registrar for a report and then it is received in a week or two.

Professor Bruns noted that this resolution is very important, and we know the things that we want as faculty. But in reading a *NU News* article recently about student difficulties with registration, she notes that it is also important for them.

The Provost added that other institutions using homemade systems have been able to install phone-accessible registration that works perfectly for a much larger student population. It was also possible for a web-based query system to access data. He said that he has also seen new \$15M systems that have actually reduced capabilities. So the issue is also competence. A new system will not guarantee all of these solutions.

Dean Finkelstein expressed concern with way the resolution was being specified. A new system will be a long, complex process entailing many discussions in order to serve the needs of the students and faculty and to enable administrators to make important business decisions related to student enrollments. The Dean would rather wait on details in order to make a very strong statement that we need a new environment. A shorter, simpler statement might be more appropriate.

Professor Herman proposed a friendly amendment to add the term “administrators” and simply end the resolution at the *period* added by Professor Peterfreund. It would then read, “...meets the needs and demands of NU faculty, students, and administrators [end of resolution].” This amendment was accepted.

Vice Provost Sridhar clarified that the varying needs of students, faculty, and administrators would probably not be fulfilled from a single registration system. He noted that last year he worked with IS and the Registrar to use the data-warehouse which has been noted here. It provides enrollment data and instructors that administration can access. However, it is not dynamic but rather historical only. Some issues needed here are more dynamic. The Vice Provost suggested that some things being discussed here can be provided by the current system.

Professor McKnight moved to reinstate the language removed by friendly amendment on the grounds that there is power in saying something specific and concrete which is lost when those points are not said. The specific list of needs should be included even though there are others.

Professor De Ritis noted that the point is to make a strong statement to the four Senior Vice Presidents of the institution and maintained that he did not know how to respond to all the friendly amendments.

Professor Herman spoke against this last friendly amendment on the grounds that lists tend to be self-limiting. The amended resolution is the right place to start, because it is not possible to be comprehensive and, if we are not comprehensive, something will be left out.

Dean Finkelstein suggested that this resolution is not big enough in any case because there is strong resistance at the outset as it's been needed for so many years and hasn't happened. He indicated support for Professor Herman's point as whatever we say here will be supplemented with more persuasive arguments at other levels. It is a very complex issue.

Professor Futrelle agreed that there will be many high level discussions involving persuasion and arm-twisting and that the extra language is not needed. What is needed is a strong statement to start the project.

Professor Alper called the question and all previous questions. There were no objections.

Vote to reinsert the language listing the needs and demands following "include but not limited to...": FAILED, 14-16-1

As amended, the resolution reads:

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate support the recommendation of the Information Technology Policy Committee, in conjunction with the Office of the Registrar, for replacement of the outdated Registrar's computer system with a state-of-the-art student information system that meets the needs and demands of Northeastern University students, faculty and administrators.

Vote on ITPC Resolution #3 as amended: PASSED, 28-0-1

VII. 2005-06 Committee for Faculty Development Report. Professor Peterfreund moved the following resolution and it was seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approve the following revision of the May 23, 1994 resolution:

"... every unit shall carry out adequate, good faith teaching evaluations of all tenure/tenure track, term, and special appointment faculty whose appointments include teaching as part of the annual merit review, as part of the tenure evaluation process, and/or as part of the promotion evaluation process as applicable. The teaching evaluation results will be compiled by CEUT and sent in a timely manner to each instructor evaluated. A second copy of these results will be sent to the instructor's unit head, who will then see to it that those results are incorporated into the merit review process according to the Unit's procedures. For probationary faculty, adequate good-faith evaluation procedures will include annual evaluation by two or more means, one of which must include student teaching evaluations (the SGA evaluations). The other means could include:

- peer classroom visits;
- peer evaluations of class materials
- teaching portfolios
- evaluations by earlier graduates of the program
- other means appropriate to the discipline.

For tenured faculty, adequate good-faith teaching evaluations will include annual student teaching evaluations and, at least once every 3 to 5 years, evaluations by one or more additional means.

Written copies of the unit's procedures will be approved by the appropriate Dean and the Provost's office, and copies will be kept on file in the Provost's office.

(Revision of Resolution #2 on Teacher Course Evaluations, passed by the Senate on May 23, 1994)

The floor was yielded to Professor Wertheim, Chair of the 2005-06 Faculty Development Committee (FDC), who acknowledged and thanked its members: Dean Stellar; Professors Isaacs, Tracy Robinson, Sherwood, Sheahan; Dr. Qualters; Associate Provost Hill; SGA representative Mr. DeRamo and his replacement, Mr. Paradisio. Professor Wertheim presented the following context for the FDC's work. The FDC was asked to look at the entire issue of teacher/course evaluations (TCE), both the content and the process. Simultaneously, the SGA had same task. The original resolution establishing TCEs was passed by the Senate in 1985 and said that those evaluations should not be used in tenure and promotion issues. In 1994, a series of resolutions were passed to change that, making it clear that TCE information should be used as part of the annual review, merit, and tenure and promotion processes. The students have raised issues as to whether unit heads receive the evaluations or who looks at these and are they actually used. We said 'yes' but when we looked at the 1994 language, it is not clear that all faculty will have their teaching evaluated. It does state that faculty will be evaluated as part of the merit and tenure promotion processes but not all instructors are part of those. The FDC feels it was the intent of the 1994 resolutions that all courses and all instructors are to be evaluated. This, then, is one of the intentions of the revisions.

Another part of the language deals with access to evaluations. Earlier resolutions stated that the evaluations go directly to the faculty but not the unit head unless each unit individually voted to change that process. Over the years, a majority of units have voted that the evaluations be sent to unit heads, but not all units have done so. The FDC decided to close the language on this as well so that those responsible for the development and evaluation of faculty have access to the data.

The main part of the FDC's deliberations had to do with the actual content of the questionnaire and is of much greater concern to the Senate and the University. The Committee spent a significant amount of time examining the TCE and intends to write a report to be submitted to Dr. Donna Qualters at CEUT who is asked then to report back to next year's FDC by 1 December on CEUT's recommends for revision of the TCE.

Professor Morrison noted that he, as Department Chair, does not have access to TCEs and believes this is a good resolution although he can access www.ratemyprofessors.com for similar but less comprehensive information. Professor Morrison asked what is meant by a "timely manner" as his definition of timely is not what happens in the current process.

Professor Wertheim said that the Committee did not consider addressing the issue of timeliness. Dean Stellar added that the Committee was of the opinion that delivery of TCEs needed to be more timely and that Dr. Qualters indicated it was a resource issue. Professor Alper questioned whether the wording exempts graduate student instructors. Professor Wertheim replied that the Committee's intent was to include the universe. Professor Alper then clarified that graduate students who are teaching are meant to be included but perhaps the current wording does not include some of them.

A discussion took place on inclusion of graduate teaching assistants and the term "special appointment faculty" and whether or not they are included. Dr. Qualters clarified that anyone who is an "instructor of record" is evaluated.

Professor Peterfreund suggested the language "every unit shall carry out adequate good-faith teaching evaluations of all instructors of record" which exempts those who teach a bit but are mainly lab assistants who don't sign rosters or grade sheets and those who should not be evaluated in the same way as are instructors.

Professor Alper proposed the suggested language as a friendly amendment and it was accepted. Professor Peterfreund then noted that one of the concerns during discussions had to do with

whether by 'two copies' is meant two *printed* copies. He noted that it is perfectly appropriate to distribute by PDF or other electronic medium.

Dean Greene noted that the written comments are as important as the statistical data and that while an electronic copy is preferable, the written comments are received as well.

Returning to the issue of timeliness, Professor Reynolds, who sits on the advisory board of CEUT, said that the issue of how evaluations can be efficiently processed and distributed with very limited resources should be looked into. The Provost said that he interprets 'timely' to be the following term and there was some discussion.

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

As amended, the resolution reads:

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approve the following revision of the May 23, 1994 resolution:

"... every unit shall carry out adequate, good faith teaching evaluations of all instructors of record as part of the annual merit review, as part of the tenure evaluation process, and/or as part of the promotion evaluation process as applicable. The teaching evaluation results will be compiled by CEUT and sent in a timely manner to each instructor evaluated. A second copy of these results will be sent to the instructor's unit head, who will then see to it that those results are incorporated into the merit review process according to the Unit's procedures. For probationary faculty, adequate good-faith evaluation procedures will include annual evaluation by two or more means, one of which must include student teaching evaluations (the SGA evaluations). The other means could include:

- peer classroom visits;
- peer evaluations of class materials
- teaching portfolios
- evaluations by earlier graduates of the program
- other means appropriate to the discipline.

For tenured faculty, adequate good-faith teaching evaluations will include annual student teaching evaluations and, at least once every 3 to 5 years, evaluations by one or more additional means.

Written copies of the unit's procedures will be approved by the appropriate Dean and the Provost's office, and copies will be kept on file in the Provost's office.

(Revision of Resolution #2 on Teacher Course Evaluations, passed by the Senate on May 23, 1994)

Vote: PASSED, 28-0-1

Motion to adjourn was seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart S. Peterfreund, Secretary
Faculty Senate