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## Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 10/04/2006

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TO: FACULTY SENATE  
FROM: STUART S. PETERFREUND, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE  
RE: MINUTES, 2006-07 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 4 OCTOBER

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Present: (Professors) Alper, Bosso, Bruns, Cokely, Daynard, Fox, Gilbert, Glod, Hafner, Hall, Hansberry, Herman, Janikian, Krishnamoorthy, Marshall, Meador, Peterfreund, Reynolds, Robinson, Sanchez, Sherman, Starr, Touran, Welch, Willey, Zaremba  
(Administrators) Abdelal, Falcon, Finkelstein, Hopey, Moore, Onan, Soyster, Stellar, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Kane, McKnight, Reucroft, Strauss  
(Administrators) Soyster

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 11:54 AM

A. **Minutes** of the 20 September Senate meeting were accepted as amended.

B. **SAC Report.** Professor Glod reminded the Senate body that President Aoun will join the Senate on 18 October from 11:45 AM to 12:45 PM. The Senators are encouraged to visit the President's website at [www.president.neu.edu/ideas](http://www.president.neu.edu/ideas) to submit issues of concern.

Professor Glod reported that the SAC met twice in regular session and once with Provost Abdelal. Remaining Senate committees are being staffed and SAC has been asked by the Provost to initiate an external search for a Chair of the Department of Health Sciences and an external search for a Dean of the College of Engineering. Staffing is underway.

In a meeting with the Provost on Tuesday, 3 October, SAC raised two issues: the apparent changes in tenure guidelines and the budgeting process. The former was discussed in depth as some revised guidelines had been circulated to the Deans and chairs of tenure & promotion committees. The meeting was productive and the Provost has agreed to postpone any changes for this round of tenure reviews and will consult with SAC, the Deans and the Tenure & Promotion Committees regarding any contemplated future changes.

A key issue addressed was the "arm's-length" standard for external reviewers contributing reviews to the tenure dossier. SAC agreed with the Provost that dossiers sent forward with letters that do not meet the "arm's-length" standard do not help the candidate, and SAC and the Provost came to a consensus on "arm's length" means. SAC and the Provost also agreed that the present policies will apply to this year's candidates but the Deans and tenure committees should be sure there are a minimum of five letters that rise to the standard of "arm's length."

In the matter of the University budgeting process, SAC expressed to the Provost its concern that the faculty continue to be involved in the budgeting process. SAC was informed that there will apparently be changes in the process. Professor Glod expressed the hope that SAC and the faculty can work with the Provost and the President, if this is the case.

C. **Provost's Report.**

The Provost also spoke to the issue of tenure & promotion guidelines, stating that he was prompted to send a clarification of tenure letter requirements because the dossiers submitted in the last few cycles have not contained a sufficient number of "arm's-length" letters. The letters are important as they are from specialists outside the University. He was pleased that consensus had been reached and explained that some departments had already adjusted their requirements. The Provost also made clear that the Deans should not submit a dossier without the required number of letters. He will work with Deans, who will work with the Departments to agree on a process with more clarity for the next cycle of tenure cases.

Regarding the budget, the Provost explained that he had shared with the SAC the results of his deliberations with the Deans to identify existing centers of excellence and those that might become so. With those and with

the academic investment plan—much of which was focused on making sure there is a critical mass of faculty for every department—and with the possibility of a limited number of senior hires, the budget was planned. A key goal is to have most of the University's teaching done by full-time faculty members that hold doctorates. Another, newer initiative is to make a number of senior hires in order to gain excellence and distinctiveness and to gain national recognition. These goals will be guided to a reasonable extent by what units are designated as centers of excellence. The Provost explained that he is working primarily with the Deans at this point to arrive at a hiring plan for fall 2007, and so the process must be completed quickly if the University is not to miss the hiring cycle currently in progress.

Discussions of the strategic plan will take place this year and will revolve around how we will gain excellence and distinction and how will we get there. This process will involve faculty at every level. The Provost had outlined to the SAC that the model is for him and Senior Planning Officer Mark Putnam to work with the SAC and the Fiscal Advisory Committee to hear the critical issues. This first phase will also take place with staff council and with students and will encompass exchanging and developing ideas. At the second phase a representative committee will be presented with a draft for comment. The process is different but preserves some of the key elements.

Responding to faculty concerns about the workload policy and how it is being implemented, Provost Abdelal noted that implementation is still in process. He is working with the Deans and will ask all Deans for a progress report in order to determine where that process stands. The Provost had not been aware of conflicts or of possible grievances. The Provost added his belief that equity for faculty means that total workload is equitable, not just part of it.

#### **D. Questions**

Professor Alper questioned why his class in the new F Building was seemingly taped and why he could not gain access to the taping equipment in order to turn it off. Professor Herman responded that SPCS has paid for video streaming equipment and has a staff that operates the equipment. The Provost said that he would look into it.

Professor Sherman asked if there is consideration being given to guidelines for reviewers in tenure cases. The Provost reiterated that there is no change in the guidelines for the present cycle. He pointed out that guidelines currently posted on the web define "arm's-length". He stressed that there is no change in the expectations, but that the process of meeting those expectations needs correction, and the next version of guidelines will indicate that "arm's-length" letters are required rather than suggested.

Professor Hafner wondered if it is possible for a referee to be proposed by the candidate but to have no other relationship. The Provost responded that the referee needs to be "arm's length" but could indeed be proposed by the candidate. Professor Touran pointed out that the College of Engineering assigned less significance to letters from sources recommended by the candidate.

Discussion ensued concerning this issue. The Provost indicated that the matter was for future consideration.

#### **E. 2005-06 Senate Committee on Financial Affairs Report.**

**Whereas the University Fiscal Advisory Committee should receive access to all relevant fiscally related information before annual operating budget recommendations are made,**

**BE IT RESOLVED That the University Fiscal Advisory Committee receive information about revenues and expenditures from auxiliary, independent and other operations that affect the University's operating budget.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the University Fiscal Advisory Committee receive information about proposed major expenditures for buildings and renovations.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That faculty be involved in an advisory capacity with respect to major building and renovation plans by means of either the University Fiscal Advisory Committee or a separate committee devoted to developing and reviewing such plans.**

The resolution contained in this report had previously been moved and was on the floor. In the absence of Professor Strauss, the mover, Professor Krishnamoorthy, another member of the Financial Affairs Committee and a Senator, consented to recognize non-Senators wishing to speak.

Professor Krishnamoorthy yielded the floor to Professor Kruger, chair of last year's Financial Affairs Committee, who recapped the changed process represented by the University Fiscal Advisory Committee (UFAC). The new process proved to be much more democratic and interactive than the old two-tiered process had been. However, the Financial Affairs Committee determined that further improvement could be made by the University providing complete information from two additional areas to provide greater transparency and a look at the bigger picture. Those areas are major building and renovation plans and revenue sources outside the academic area. The Senate Financial Affairs Committee would also like to see improvement in the paper documentation provided at UFAC as well as inclusion of another member of the Senate Financial Affairs Committee.

In response to a question from Professor Welch, Professor Kruger said that there was no reason given by last year's UFAC for not having the information requested.

Professor Alper proposed that, if the assumption is that the budget process has not been formalized and the UFAC may or may not continue to exist, a friendly amendment adding "or its successor" to the first resolution be added.

As the original mover of the resolution was not present, the Parliamentarian ruled that Professor Krishnamoorthy could accept the friendly amendment, and he did so.

Professor Bruns recalled that at one time the rationale for not furnishing budgetary information about auxiliary enterprises was that they were represented as being operated on a break-even basis, and so had no potential to affect the operating budget. At the same time, non-profit plant funds and debt service funds only hit the budget in their after-affects. The Provost added that the only cost that comes to the operating budget is that of overhead, which is prorated.

Professor Peterfreund said that the cost of energy very definitely impacted the CAS budget last year. In addition, if these numbers are indeed break-even, there should be no harm in sharing them.

The amended resolution reads as follows:

**Whereas the University Fiscal Advisory Committee should receive access to all relevant fiscally related information before annual operating budget recommendations are made,**

**BE IT RESOLVED That the University Fiscal Advisory Committee, or its successor, receive information about revenues and expenditures from auxiliary, independent and other operations that affect the University's operating budget.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the University Fiscal Advisory Committee receive information about proposed major expenditures for buildings and renovations.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That faculty be involved in an advisory capacity with respect to major building and renovation plans by means of either the University Fiscal Advisory Committee or a separate committee devoted to developing and reviewing such plans.**

There being no further discussion the Senate moved to vote.

Vote to approve the Senate Financial Affairs resolution as one resolution, amicably amended:  
PASSED, 31-0-0

**F. 2005-06 Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Library Policies and Operations Report & Resolutions.**  
Professor Willey moved the following resolution and it was seconded.

1. Library involvement for inclusion in academic initiatives

**WHEREAS there are many academic requests, needs, and expectations indirectly involving the library when new academic initiatives are initiated.**

**BE IT RESOLVED That academic initiatives, directly or indirectly involving library resources or library personnel, include consultation with the Dean of Libraries or his/her designee. This representative should be made aware of specific resources the initiative requires in terms of library resources and that the input from the library has been integrated into the final initiative that is moved through the University's policy and governance processes.**

Professor Willey introduced members of the 2005-06 Library Policy Oversight Committee and reviewed the improvements that had been made at the Library such as NE Express and IRis. He explained the need for library input into academic initiatives and yielded the floor to Dean Warro.

Dean Warro cited the increasingly relevant position of the library noting that that produced increasing demands. Using the recent changes being pursued in core curriculum as an example, he reiterated the need to include the library in future plans in order that it be prepared to respond.

Professor Peterfreund added that as NEU proceeds to identify centers of excellence and distinction and pursues senior faculty hires, it is critically important that they have adequate resources. The library must be involved in those discussions in order to strategize. The Provost expressed concern that this could significantly slow the process of program approval and of hiring.

Motion to vote on the resolution was made by Professor Marshall and was seconded. As objection was raised, a vote for two-thirds majority was taken on whether to close discussion.

Vote to closed discussion: FAILED, 6-19-2. Discussion continued.

Professor Daynard proposed a friendly amendment to change the wording to “**major academic initiatives, directly or indirectly involving significant additional library resources...**” Professor Willey accepted the amendment.

Professor Onan objected, saying that it may not always be clear that additional library resources may be needed when proposing a program. Professor Onan made a motion to amend by deletion and it was seconded. Debate ensued on the motion to delete the amendment.

There being no further discussion on the motion to delete the amendment, the Senate voted.

Vote to remove additional words in the friendly amendment: PASSED, 31-1-1.

Professor Herman pointed out that, in the College of Arts and Sciences, all new undergraduate program proposals require the review and approval by the Dean of Libraries or his designee. Dean Warro confirmed that this has been the practice for undergraduate programs and that he would like to see library participation in new program proposals such as the General Education proposal.

The Senators proceeded to discuss such issues as implementation of the proposal (Dean Warro assured the Senate that the library staff is constantly examining the viability of the offerings) and staffing of the instructional component (it is tight). Also discussed was the question of whether the Dean of the library would have authority to veto a program or a faculty hire if resources were not in place to support it. The Provost stated that such considerations would not occur.

The Provost stated that he thought that the resolution was not a good idea, as it would mean that the library would have to be consulted during the strategic planning process rather than being supplied with the necessary resources and being called upon to help implement the plan. Several Senators opined that resources should be considered in the planning process, and, in the past, library resource requirements had most commonly not been considered at all.

Professor Herman proposed a friendly amendment to change the wording to **“and that the input from the library is considered as the final initiative is moved...”** Professor Willey accepted the friendly amendment.

Professor Welch expressed support of the resolution, especially if it would enable online resources to improve. Professor Daynard then noted that the resolution would not allow the library to have veto power over academic initiatives, but that the library has been treated as a step-child. It is more logical and strategic to include thinking about library funding as part of the initiative and making sure the library is consulted.

Dean Finkelstein wondered who would make the determination on whether the initiative would need additional resources or not, and Professor Peterfreund responded that it could be a simple routing form to be sure the initiative at least crossed the desk of the library Dean.

Professor Bosso proposed a friendly amendment to change **“consultation”** to **“notification”**. Professor Willey accepted.

The Senate discussed whether this resolution could be a bureaucratic impediment and who would decide whether an allocation or reallocation of funds would take place. Dean Finkelstein expressed concern that the library would make these decisions.

Professor Zaremba proposed a friendly amendment to end the resolution after “terms of library resources” to eliminate the possibility of interpreting the resolution as implying the power to veto. Professor Bruns reminded the Senate that past guidelines had called for proposals to include a budget which should have entailed discussion with the library about the cost of potential resources. She suggested that initiatives again include budgets as they have not always done so in the recent past. Professor Fox then proposed a friendly amendment to eliminate the entire last sentence. Professor Willey accepted these.

Dean Warro objected to the amendments and reminded the Senate that the resolution is not about notification but about collaboration and consultation and that the library is not interested in veto power. Professor Daynard then proposed that the resolution had been weakened too far and reiterated that the point was not veto power but to require that the library be consulted on major initiatives and that, when a decision is made by the Provost or whomever, there be a realistic picture of what it will cost including library resources. Input from the library needs to be considered in any final decision.

Motion was made to amend the resolution by addition of the wording that has been removed by friendly amendment and it was seconded.

Professor Herman reminded the Senate that there are several possible outcomes. The worst is that the program does not go forward because the resources are not there; the second is that the University accommodates the needs; and the third is that the program proceeds knowing that the need exists.

A motion to adjourn was seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 1:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart S. Peterfreund, Secretary  
Faculty Senate