

November 15, 2006

## Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 11/15/2006

Stuart S. Peterfreund  
*Northeastern University*

---

### Recommended Citation

Peterfreund, Stuart S., "Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 11/15/2006" (2006). *Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes*. Paper 87.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d10004002>

This work is available open access, hosted by Northeastern University.

TO: FACULTY SENATE  
FROM: STUART S. PETERFREUND, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE  
RE: MINUTES, 2006-07 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 15 NOVEMBER

---

Present: (Professors) Alper, Bosso, Bruns, Cokely, Daynard, Hafner, Hall, Gilbert, Glod, Hansberry, Herman, Hill, Kane, Marshall, Meador, McKnight, Peterfreund, Reucroft, Reynolds, Robinson Wood, Sanchez, Strauss, Touran, Wallin, Welch, Willey, Zaremba  
(Administrators) Abdelal, Falcon, Finkelstein, Hopey, Metghalchi, Onan, Stellar, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Fox, Janikian, Krishnamoorthy, Sherman, Starr  
(Administrators) Moore

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 11:56 AM.

I. The minutes of 1 November were accepted as posted.

## II. SAC report.

- A. **Meetings.** The Agenda Committee has met twice in regular session and once with Provost Abdelal since the last Senate meeting. The discussion with the Provost concerned Strategic Plan issues.
- B. **Search Committees.** The following, previously announced search committees have commenced meetings or will do so shortly:

### College of Engineering Dean Search Committee:

#### *Elected Members:*

Professor Daniel D. Burkey (Chemical Engineering)  
Professor Miriam E. Leeser (Electrical & Computer Engineering)  
Professor Ali Touran (Civil & Environmental Engineering)  
Associate Dean Yaman Yener (Graduate Programs, Engineering) (Chair)

#### *Appointed Members:*

Trustee George Chamillard  
Professor Barry L. Karger (Chemistry & Dir., Barnett Institute)  
Mr. Saul Kurlat (Alumnus)  
Dean Stephen R. Zoloth (Bouvé)

#### *Non-Voting Members:*

Ms. Jennifer Hardy (student)  
GSPA representative TBA

### Psychology Chair Search Committee:

#### *Elected Members:*

Professor Richard H. Gramzow (Psychology)  
Professor Joanne L. Miller (Psychology)  
Professor Neal J. Pearlmutter (Psychology)

#### *Appointed Members:*

Professor Carmen G. Armengol (Couns&ApplEduPsych)  
Professor Frederick C. Davis (Biology)

Speech, Language Pathology & Audiology Chair Search Committee:

*Elected Members:*

Professor Michael J. Epstein (Speech, Language Pathology & Audiology) (Chair)  
Professor Linda J. Ferrier (Speech, Language Pathology & Audiology)  
Professor Marjorie L. North (Speech, Language Pathology & Audiology)

*Appointed Members:*

Professor Dana H. Brooks (Electrical & Computer Engineering)  
Professor Emanuel J. Mason (Counseling & Applied Psychology)

School of Social Science, Urban Affairs and Public Policy

*Elected Members:*

Professor Joan Fitzgerald (Law, Policy & Society Program)  
Professor Thomas H. Koenig (Sociology & Anthropology)  
Professor John H. Portz (Political Science)

*Appointed Members:*

Professor Robert J. Kane (Criminal Justice)  
Professor George H. Thrush (Architecture)

**C. The Special Senate Committee for Enrollment and Admissions has been staffed and charged as follows:**

Membership:

Professor Bradley Lehman, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (Co-Chair)  
Professor S. James Matthews, Department of Pharmacy Practice (Co-Chair)  
Professor Christopher Bosso, Department of Political Science  
Professor Laura Green, Department of English  
Professor Vanessa Johnson, Department of Counseling & Applied Psychology  
Professor Peter Manning, College of Criminal Justice  
Professor Mitch Wand, College of Computer & Information Science  
Professor Jonathan Welch, Department of Finance & Insurance  
Vice Provost Luis Falcon, Office of the Provost

Charge:

The committee is asked to study the current graduate admissions process in the University and make recommendations for improvements in a) standards and guidelines for admissions, b) advertising and marketing for potential graduate students, and c) organization and structural changes that might lead to increased efficiency and effective-ness in graduate admissions. When appropriate, the committee should make comparisons with graduate programs at other top universities. The EAPC is asked to report their progress on these charges and present any resolutions for Senate action by March 31, 2007.

- D. The call for nominations for the Klein Lecturer has been sent to all faculty members. The submission deadline is 1 December.
- E. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate is November 29, 2006 at 450 Dodge.

Professor Glod referenced an email from President Aoun which expressed concern and intolerance for recent acts of racism. With the permission of Senate Chair, she yielded the floor to Professor Leonard Brown, African American Studies and Department of Music.

Professor Brown read the following statement.

I received a very racist anti-Black telephone message on my office telephone voice mail early Sunday morning, 9/24 at 12:17am. The call came in shortly after the completion of the 29<sup>th</sup> John Coltrane Memorial Concert, which was a celebration its 20<sup>th</sup> year at Northeastern and had a very Afro-centric theme. I first heard the racist message on Monday, September 25 when I checked voice mail. I immediately notified the Office of University Counsel who then notified the President's Office.

I can honestly say that this incident has made me reflect and question what daily life is like for Blacks on NU's campus, be they a professor, middle level administrator, food service personnel or student. It caused me to reflect on the precariousness of daily life for Blacks in the USA and how vulnerable we still are. It also caused me to reflect on the depth of racism in the USA and the belief by some that they can approach any Blacks with racist slurs, comments, and threats.

When President Aoun telephoned me at home on Tuesday, September 26, he said the University had to be better than the society and that racist acts such as this would not be tolerated.

As of this date, investigation by NU Police has not turned up any leads and, given that the event happened over seven weeks ago, I, the victim, am moving to get awareness and visibility of this disturbing occurrence. The fact that "the victim" has to take the initiative clearly shows the need for a thorough re-examination of university policies, procedures and accountability in matters of discrimination. So I see myself as a catalyst for positive change at NU.

I believe the President's acknowledgement last week of the occurrence and the seriousness of it was a good first step, but only a first step. His letter states that NU will be a leader, nationally and internationally, in combating racism and embracing diversity. The question is how this will be done, for we currently do not have the necessary systems with accountability in place. One important step would be to give the Office of Affirmative Action & Diversity the authority and resources necessary to take the lead, including a direct reporting line to the President.

For anti-racist initiatives to be effective, they must link across all areas of the University, including the faculty, and they have to be long term. I have four requests for the Faculty Senate:

1. To create a standing committee on combating and eliminating racism and other forms of discrimination at NU. This would include integrating anti racist and anti discrimination topics and content into the general education requirements as well as specific and focused endeavors in each college.
2. To work diligently with the Office of Affirmative Action & Diversity, residence life and other appropriate administrative offices to develop a comprehensive plan for integrating anti-racist and anti-discrimination education into our curricular offerings, across all disciplines and all colleges, undergraduate and graduate.
3. To endorse an initiative that would ensure the University's academic investment plan administered by the Provost will be used to recruit and retain faculty of color with specific focus

on domestic Black Americans and Latino/as. An examination of the current percentage of Black and Latino/a faculty across all colleges will show how far we have to go.

4. To work with Residence Life on integrating anti-racist and pro-diversity learning in residence halls and other appropriate spaces outside of the classroom.

Northeastern has a great opportunity to use this anti-Black racist occurrence to move into a leadership role on combating and eradicating racism and other forms of discrimination. The real question is do we have the belief, fortitude, vision, commitment, perseverance and guts to do it or will we settle for something less and hope this event fades away. It is my hope that we, the Northeastern University community, will become pro-active and diligently strive to become the anti-racism and anti-discrimination leader in higher education.

Peace,  
Leonard Brown  
Associate Professor of African American Studies & Music

Provost Abdelal declared an open forum.

In response to Professor Daynard's query, Vice President and University Counsel Lembo added that there had also been two incidents of graffiti--one anti-Muslim, one anti-gay—in the past two weeks. Vice President for Student Affairs Klotzbier added that there had been no other incidents in the previous three months and a number discussion groups aimed at raising the level of awareness of and respect for diversity were immediately instituted in the residence halls.

Responding to observations made by Professor Strauss, Professor Brown agreed that his recommendations to the Senate could be rewritten to be more inclusive and to address issues of racism and prejudice in general. He pointed out, however, that it was the purview of the Senate to take his personal experience and make of it whatever is deemed necessary.

Professor Bosso queried Provost Abdelal about plans to reverse the slippage in the recruitment and retention of faculty of color. Provost Abdelal asked Vice Provost Falcon to respond. He noted that Northeastern has lost a significant number of faculty of color to "better" institutions, and counter-offers made to distinguished Latino faculty, in particular, have failed to reverse the trend. He assured the Senate that efforts are being made to aggressively pursue faculty. The Provost added that retention of faculty from under-represented populations is exacerbated by aggressive recruiting efforts by institutions with more standing. Professor Hall added, citing from his own experiences, that the racial climate in the Boston area is not conducive to hiring Black Americans, and housing costs also work to undercut the University's competitive position in the job market. He suggested consideration of housing subsidies for newly hired faculty and asked that the minority faculty recruitment fund be augmented, noting that his salary continues to be drawn from that fund. He noted, too, that academic institutions in general tend to study crimes of race and injustice in places other than their own institution, and he called for an academic as well as an administrative focus on the University's struggle to implement diversity.

Professor Glod expressed gratitude to Professor Brown for his willingness to share his experience with the Faculty Senate. Addressing hiring practices, she agreed that the issues are broad and span more than ethnicity to include gender. Professor Glod recommended being mindful of how search committees are staffed and suggested, as well, that some of these matters be addressed in the various Senate committees, such as the General Education Implementation Committee and the Quality of Campus Life Committee which is partially focused on safety and security. Working with the Office for Diversity of Affirmative Action in educating the community is important, as is working together.

Dean and Director for Diversity and Affirmative Action Perkins recommended proactive thinking as to what Northeastern as a community needs to know and do. News agencies will refer to "Northeastern University," not to the individual. Northeastern needs to put forth both short-term and long-term strategies to educate and to be in the best position to respond to these acts. The Northeastern community needs to be safe to pursue its goals whether those are learning, teaching, or working. Dean Perkins suggested an exploration of the disparity of reactions to this incident whereby some populations were disgusted and hurt, but not surprised, and others were shocked. Provost Abdelal cautioned against making assumptions about who might have done this. The Northeastern University community must work as a whole to look at its environment, including students, faculty and staff.

Professor Strauss moved to recommend that the Office of Diversity and Affirmative Action report directly to the President and it was seconded. After discussion it was determined that this was already the case. Professor Strauss withdrew the motion.

Professor Levin addressed the Senate, as he had been invited to do. Levin lectures all over the country on hate incidents and crimes on campuses. He noted a dramatic increase in hate incidents throughout society and throughout the world, in part due to a reaction to the events of 9/11. People feel threatened and identify other racial and ethnic groups as the source of that feeling. Additionally, there are an unparalleled number of newcomers entering the country, thereby creating anti-immigrant sentiments which even extend to native-born persons of some ethnic groups, who are still seen as being outsiders or foreigners. There is something larger than what has happened at Northeastern going on, but there is still much that NU can do. Professor Levin suggested that, in addition to publicizing the incident at the Senate, the President of the Student Government Association to write strong letter to the *NU News*. These are important short-term messages calculated to indicate that we will not tolerate discrimination or intimidation on our campus. He cautioned, too, that 35% of these low-level incidents and/or crimes escalate, so it behooves members of the University community to remain vigilant and to report suspicious behavior to the appropriate authorities.

Dean Hopey spoke to building a diverse community in steps. He stated his belief that Northeastern has policies that hurt us as a community, such as a job-classification system that prevents advancement by staff or prevents recruiting and hiring outstanding staff; the lack of mentoring programs for employees; and the University's policy of not offering on-line courses to staff. He suggested the University give thought to how to create models and opportunities for people to advance.

Echoing Dean Hopey, Professor Herman suggested that the problems are community-wide and the solutions must be as well. University procedures impede, in small pernicious ways, the ability for staff to succeed and the problems need to be looked at the institutional level. Professor Herman recommended a Sense of Senate resolution requesting that President Aoun convene a University-wide committee to look at a strategy for addressing these problems and creating solutions.

The Senate then discussed the importance of owning these issues as a community and developing a stronger intellectual campus environment wherein focus is placed on common values rather than differences.

Professor Peterfreund read the following motion and it was seconded.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT, In response to recent and multiple occurrences of racism and acts of bigotry directed against one individual and several groups on the basis of racial,**

**religious, gender and sexual identities, the Northeastern University Faculty Senate deplores these instances.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT The Faculty Senate support Northeastern's efforts to bring the perpetrator or perpetrators to justice, and pledges to work collectively with administration, faculty, staff, and students to continue and strengthen the University's commitment to creating a climate that values and celebrates the diversity that must and should prevail in any setting which exists for the purpose of cultivating all forms and constructive uses of knowledge.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT The Faculty Senate urge President Aoun to form a special committee to study the impediments posed by University policies themselves to the advancement and success of all members of the Northeastern University community, especially women and under-represented populations, and to make recommendations for the removal of those impediments.**

Professor Tracy Robinson-Wood added that the University community must also look at issues of power and must help white students, faculty and staff to understand their white privilege; who are the incumbents in positions of power and why is it important?

Professor Daynard noted the importance of the resolution and that it be understood by anyone who reads it, including President Aoun. He praised the strong sense of the senate expressed by so many speakers today.

Following continued discussion on the merits of the resolution, and hearing no objection, the Senate turned to the vote.

Vote on the Senate condemnation of recent incidents of racism: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, 31-0-0.

Professor Brown expressed his appreciation for the Senate's deliberations, adding that the unfortunate incidents that had occurred recently could provide the opportunity for the Northeastern community to become leaders in the campaign against racism and discrimination in the United States.

A motion to adjourn was seconded. The Senate adjourned 1:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart S. Peterfreund, Secretary  
Faculty Senate