

February 14, 2007

## Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 02/14/2007

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*Northeastern University*

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TO: FACULTY SENATE  
FROM: STUART S. PETERFREUND, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE  
RE: MINUTES, 2006-07 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 14 FEBRUARY

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Present: (Professors) Alper, Bosso, Bruns, Cokely, Daynard, Fox, Gilbert, Glod, Hafner, Hansberry, Herman, Hill, Janikian, McKnight, Meador, Peterfreund, Reynolds, Robinson-Wood, Sanchez, Sherman, Starr, Strauss, Touran, Wallin, Welch, Willey, Zaremba  
(Administrators) Abdelal, Finkelstein, Moore, Putnam, Stellar, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Hall, Kane, Krishnamoorthy, Reucroft,  
(Administrators) Falcon, Hopey, Metghalchi, Sridhar,

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 11:56 AM.

- I. The minutes of 17 and 23 January were approved as posted.
- II. SAC report. Professor Glod reported that invitations to the Inauguration Ceremony and luncheon have been sent. Anyone who has not yet received one should contact Ms. Linda Bekerian in the President's Office.

The Senate Agenda Committee met three times in regular session since the last Senate meeting. Professor Mukerjee of Chemistry & Chemical Biology was selected as the 2007 Klein Lecturer. The lecture will be held on Thursday, 29 March from 3-4:00 PM in WVF020. It is entitled "**Finally Unplugged: The New Revolution in Energy Conversion.**"

Strategic Planning Keynotes are scheduled as follows:

Fundamental and Translational Research - February 15, 3pm at 10 Behrakis  
Dr. Erich Bloch

Creative, Aesthetic and Ethical Dimensions - February 21, 3 pm at Raytheon  
Dr. David Wessel

Urban and Global Dimensions - February 22, 3 pm at the Alumni Pavillion Room  
Dr. James Duderstadt

Experiential Learning - February 28, 3 pm at the CSC Ballroom  
Dr. Etienne Wenger

Notable achievements at NEU. *The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) annual awards for excellence in institutional communication:*

In the category of Special Purpose Communications:

GOLD to Northeastern University's NU Link. Submitted by Robert Davison, Director of Creative Services

GOLD to Northeastern University's Synthesis, Fall 2005 (a review of research projects across disciplines). Submitted by Robert Davison

SILVER to Northeastern University's A Decade of Progress, A Platform for the Future (summary of accomplishments under most recent president and campaign). Submitted by Robert Davison.

In the category of Websites:

SILVER to Northeastern University. Submitted by Robert Davison.

III. Provost's report. Provost Abdelal reported that the strategic planning process is proceeding. There are four teams working; conversations or discussions have been scheduled with national speakers; a website is up. The plan builds on many discussions that are taking place among faculty members and other members of the University community. Feedback is welcomed and the co-chairs take comments submitted via the web very seriously. It is a very participatory process and the Provost encouraged the Senators to be a part of it.

IV. The Provost opened the floor to questions.

Professor Peterfreund noted that Professor Rantoul was profiled in a very flattering article in the 9 February *Chronicle of Higher Education*, where his photographs were described as a new way of envisioning American landscape.

Professor Alper asked where programs that were part of Center for Effective University Teaching (CEUT) may be found, specifically teaching assistant workshops. The Provost explained that CEUT is being combined with the Center for Educational Technology. Vice Provost Powers-Lee reported that teaching assistant workshops are being handled by the Center for STEM Education, and there will be a workshop in the spring. Announcements were sent in the fall. Further services, such as videotaping and counseling, may be arranged on an individual basis by calling the CEUT office.

Professor Willey requested clarification of the date by which a faculty member could expect to know if s/he would be teaching during the summer, as well as clarification of whether the summer rate of 1/6 salary for a 4-credit course still applies. He also asked whether more funding will be made available to department chairs and deans. The Provost noted that summer teaching would be addressed during the budget presentation and that the timing of the notification is a departmental decision. A faculty member can request clarification from the college Dean if it is not forthcoming from the department, and then from the Provost if all else fails.

The Provost and Professor Glod reiterated that the Senate had adopted a rate of 1/6 salary for a 4-credit hour course for full-time professorial teaching faculty as identified in the Faculty Handbook. Other full-time faculty members teach at the stipend rate.

The Provost confirmed for Professor Strauss that over 30,000 undergraduate applications had been received. Professor Peterfreund added that Northeastern University is now the 24<sup>th</sup> most selected university in the country.

V. Budget presentation by Provost Abdelal: "Opportunities without Boundaries". The Provost began by explaining that the title refers to disciplinary, departmental and college boundaries; the lack of boundaries between classroom and workplace learning; and the boundaries constituting the university, the urban community, and the global community. This budget has been forwarded to the Board of Trustees by University Administration and will be reviewed on March 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The tuition increase of 5.3% is lower than increases at peer institutions. In addition to the usual discount, Northeastern is investing \$4.1M in financial aid for freshmen and upperclassman. This increased investment will result in an enhanced discount rate—for example, the rate will increase from 32% to 35% for freshmen. Prior to the past three years, there was no additional financial aid beyond what was initially promised.

As was the case last year, \$3M is being reallocated from among the Senior Vice Presidents as the result of increased administrative efficiency. The College Deans have been informed of their share and they, too, will review their efficiency levels.

The net new recurring revenue is approximately \$26M for 2008. A large part (\$16.3M) is allocated to salaries and fringe benefits for all employees in order to remain competitive. Last year's raises were effective in January so monies for one-half of the year were not in the recurring budget and \$2.95M will be used to regularize the raises that were approved last year but effective in January. \$9.6M for salary increases is allocated as follows: \$8M will go toward salary raises this year, providing a 3% merit pool for all employees of the University; 1% or \$961K is earmarked for the performance-based market pool for faculty; .5% or \$609K is allocated to the performance-based market pool for staff. Various fringe benefits—including an estimated 10% increase in the cost of healthcare—are \$2.7M; and estimated increases in contracted personnel are budgeted at \$1.1M.

In response to a question concerning regularizing the raises, the Provost explained that the monies distributed in January were not part of the recurring budget but will be in the future.

Professor Strauss asked who falls into the "staff" category, to which Chief of Staff Putnam responded that it includes all regular employees, staff and professional, except for instructional faculty. The overall merit pool of 3% applies to every category of the University; the 1% applies to tenured and tenure-track faculty; and the .5% is administrative staff, including those who may hold a professorial rank but whose primary role is that of administrator. Senior Vice Presidents, Deans, and the Provost are a separate pool whose increases are determined by the Board of Trustees. There are roughly 600 people in category *b* and 2,000 in *c*. The increase per capita in *b* is substantially larger than in *c*.

Returning to the presentation, the Provost explained that base market adjustments are determined by matchmates following a process whereby each department identifies those matchmates with the same profile of productivity and maturity. That information is approved by the college dean. Data from Office of Institutional Research is also available. Each department will be provided with specific information regarding average salary by rank for the matchmate departments. Faculty members will have the opportunity to make a case for a market adjustment to their chair. The chairs then make recommendations to the dean and the deans to the Provost's Office. The Provost's Office is dedicated to insuring that recommendations are based on assessments of performance identified by teaching, service, and research in the context of market or matchmate data. Performance-based market adjustments are an ongoing process. Matchmate data provide incentives to departments to strengthen their profiles.

Professor Peterfreund pointed out a grey area in the second bullet and wondered if a faculty member's request dies in the department if the chair does not agree. The Provost replied that, if a chair does not agree, the faculty member should make a case to the dean and, if still not satisfied, to the Provost.

In response to Professor Wallin, the Provost explained that market-based adjustments are adjusted for cost of living. There is a process for how to adjust the matchmate for cost of living that was developed four and a half years ago.

Responding to further questions, the Provost said that deans can recommend salaries that exceed matchmates for starting Assistant Professors. However, by definition, the matchmates are based on what the department does; what programs it offers. It is incumbent on the department to decide who should be a matchmate and changes can be made. There is, therefore, no reason for the department average to be higher than the average for its matchmates, although individual faculty, of course, could

be higher. The matchmates are peers, not an aspirant list. The profile of the department would need to increase for the matchmates to increase.

Professor Fox asked how many departments had difficulty finding matchmates. Provost Abdelal replied that only four or five departments fall into that category.

Professor Bruns inquired whether the Provost's Office is holding back funds for appeals and the Provost responded that 20% is being held back.

Returning to the presentation, there is \$6M for academic priorities, which includes \$4M for 28 new faculty positions (12 of which will be at higher ranks); \$.6M for operational departmental budgets to support teaching and learning; \$.5M for health insurance for graduate teaching assistants; \$.2M to increase summer offerings; and \$.6M in start-up funding for replacement faculty.

Responding to Professor Fox, the Provost reported that there is at present no answer for costing a full line of summer courses. First, the Colleges vary in terms of full-time faculty participation in summer teaching. Law has the highest participation and CBA and Bouvé have richer offerings by full-time faculty than COE and CAS. He suggested that, rather than thinking of the summer budget as funded only when the Provost's Office appears with money, we might think about converting faculty positions to summer money.

Professor Herman offered that a culture change is also required, especially regarding transferring credits from other institutions, which cause a loss of income. Provost Abdelal agreed and stated that his office has received, from the Registrar, a list of courses that students most commonly take elsewhere and is working on offering those courses. Vice Provost Powers-Lee added that there are only a few courses (mostly sciences) where multiple students transfer credits and a number were already being offered. A culture change is indeed needed so that students recognize what we already offer.

Provost Abdelal continued the budget presentation, explaining that the budget includes building depreciation for the academic portion of Building F; the President's residence and insurance; additional admissions staff primarily for the recruitment of international students; a small amount to the legal office; debt service on bonds for major construction/rehab; and new financial and student data/registration systems.

Non-recurring revenue, such as that generated by accepting more than 2800 students, will be used for one-time expenditures from a Presidential reserve. Senior leadership is working with the President to more clearly identify a renovation budget and we can expect approximately \$.5M for the renovation of labs and offices and \$3.5M for one-time startup equipment for new faculty.

The budget also includes an assumed 2% increase in graduate revenue. From monies exceeding that 2%, 30% will be allocated to departments that contributed to increasing graduate revenue. This February, \$400K will be distributed to those departments. Our goals are to increase graduate revenue and increase retention.

Twenty new graduate assistantships will be allocated to the Colleges based on enrollment growth. In addition, 25 University Graduate Fellowships at \$5K each will be available in order to attract high-caliber applicants on the Ph.D. track. This means 25 Fellowships each year for the next five years for a total of 125 Fellowships.

Professor Alper expressed concern that new classrooms were not discussed in the budget. Provost Abdelal noted that Dockser will have twelve new classrooms which will free up other classrooms

currently used by Law School overflow. He assured the Senate that enhancement of academic facilities is a high priority.

VII. 2006-07 Senate Committee for Faculty Development Report on the Teacher Course Evaluation Program. Professor Sherman moved the following resolution and it was seconded.

**BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate accept the 2006-2007 Faculty Development Committee (FDC) recommendation to replace the Teacher Course Evaluation Program (TCEP) with the Teacher Rating and Course Evaluation (TRACE), as contained in the FDC report of February 2007, no later than the 2008-09 academic year.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the teacher/course evaluations be administered online.**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the Senate Agenda Committee appoint an ad hoc committee charged with gathering a compendium of best practices and desirable features of online evaluation programs elsewhere for the implementation of TRACE, based on that compendium.**

Professor Sherman, chair of the 2007-08 Senate Special Committee Faculty Development, thanked the many people who worked on this proposal, including last year's Committee, significant student input, Professor Qualters and this year's Committee.

He explained that the framework includes two terms: formative and summative assessment. No one is opposed to formative assessment, that is, what kind of information will help the instructor teach better. Summative assessment is what the institution wants to know for the purpose of tenure and promotion, salary increases, etc; and what the students want to know in choosing courses. Summative assessment has been controversial. The Committee's goal has been to bring these together in a way not currently done in the present Teacher Course Evaluation (TCE), which is primarily a summative instrument. The National Research Council, in addition to a groundswell of people nationwide, recommends a more formative assessment. There are, therefore, a number of questions that may be categorized either way. For instance, questions #1-8 on instructor effectiveness can be read both ways while #9 is not formative.

Professor Sherman continued that he expected heated debate, particularly regarding the question of online evaluations. However, he expects a move toward collegiality of practice.

The meeting adjourned at 1:26 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart S. Peterfreund, Secretary  
Faculty Senate