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Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 10/03/2007

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TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: SHARON M. BRUNS, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
RE: MINUTES, 2007-08 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 3 OCTOBER

Present: (Professors) Bosso, Bruns, Chilvers, Cokely, Daynard, Fox, Gilbert, Glod, Hafner, Hill, Jackson, Kane, Lewis, Massey, McKnight, Morrison, Portz, Robinson-Wood, Sanchez, Sherman, Starr, Tolley, Touran, Waszczak, Welch, Zaremba
(Administrators) Abdelal, Falcon, Hopey, Loeffelholz, Luzzi, Moore, Powers-Lee, Stellar, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Galligan, Hall, Herman, Reucroft
(Administrators) Greene

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 11:47 AM.

I. The minutes of 19 September were deferred.

II. SAC report. Professor Glod reported the following.

A. Announcements

- SAC met twice since the last Senate meeting.
- SAC met twice with President Aoun. Professor Glod met with President Aoun for one-half hour where he emphasized his willingness to participate in a collaborative process. He reiterated this sentiment in the meeting with SAC that followed. Professor Glod reported that she suggested that the Senate and Senate leadership be consulted early in major University decision-making and also that the SAC chair have a seat on the Senior Leadership Team, which the President agreed to consider. At the second meeting between SAC and the President, the focus was on the Provost Search Committee. The SAC is creating the Committee in consultation with the President.
- SAC unanimously voted that the search committee should write the advertisement and choose the search consultant, and that there should be opportunities for finalists to meet the Northeastern University community in open forums.
- The President will attend the 31 October meeting of the Senate.
- The Provost has asked SAC to convene 3 external search committees:
 - Chair of the Pharmacy Practice Department;
 - Dean of the School of Nursing;
 - Chair of the Dept of Counseling and Applied Psychology.

B. Update from the 2007-08 TRACE Implementation Committee. The Committee is currently:

- Pilot testing the value and feasibility of the TRACE format and an on-line portal called *CoursEval*.
- Designing and executing two experiments:
 - A randomized experiment for courses taught by the same instructor with students randomly assigned to either the online TCEP or TRACE. The goal is to test changes in question wording between forms.
 - A quasi-experiment matching multiple sections of the same courses taught by the same instructors to compare online vs. pencil-and-paper TRACE in order to assess differences in evaluations of the same professor using two methodologies.

C. The Senate Committee for Academic Policy (APC) is staffed and charged as follows:

Members:

Professor Rhonda Board, Chair, BCHS-Nursing
Professor Kathy M. Howlett, CAS-English
Professor Dennis Cokely, CAS-ASL
Professor David Massey, CAS-Mathematics
Professor William J. DeAngelis, CAS-Philosophy & Religion
Executive Vice Provost Susan Powers-Lee, Undergraduate Programs

Charge:

1. To review grade distributions at Northeastern and collect data regarding trends across units, adjunct, non-tenured, and tenured faculty, undergraduates, graduates, and semester/summer courses.
2. To review distribution of students graduating with honors and note trends over time.

Professor McKnight noted that there are two mechanisms for a Provost search, one of which allows the President to bring forth a candidate, and asked if the President has someone in mind. Professor Glod responded that President Aoun has requested a national search and has not indicated at this point whether he has a candidate to propose. SAC is proceeding with a collaborative approach.

Professor Fox thanked the TRACE Implementation Committee and urged the Colleges and Departments to submit their surveys.

III. Provost Abdelal reported the following:

- Guidelines for external reviewers. In view of the discussion in the Faculty Senate, at which numerous colleagues expressed their concerns regarding the "Guidelines for Selection of External Reviewers" that was communicated on 4/19/2007, the Provost has asked the deans to assume the responsibility in the current cycle (2007/2008) for oversight of the selection of external reviewers such that a sufficient number of arms-length reviewers with strong scholarly credentials are secured. Each college is expected to determine the best approach to achieve these goals in the various disciplines represented within the college.

For the next cycle (2008/2009), the Provost's Office, in collaboration with SAC, will constitute a working group that will be charged with developing broad University-wide guidelines, leaving specific approaches to be determined by the Colleges.

- Extending tuition waiver as benefit to online courses. The Senate resolution regarding applying this benefit to online courses has been approved by the President.

Strengthening research infrastructure. Vice Provost Sridhar is working with the deans to develop a distributed DSPA-liaised professional staff in support of pre- and post- awards, and is exploring improved grant management software. The Provost's Office and the Deans are working collaboratively with the Senior Vice Presidents and the Research Policy Oversight Committee on addressing challenges related to sponsored research that fall outside the preview of the Provost.

- ENHANCE. This program was established to support tenured faculty who do not have significant external funding for their research. In the current Academic Plan, \$400,000 has been allocated towards this goal. The call for proposals is being run in two cycles. There are 18 proposals in the first cycle and awards will be made by October 15. The deadline for the second cycle is January 10 with an award date of February 1.
- Departmental operational budgets. Funds were allocated to each College with the agreement and understanding that these funds will be specifically allocated for enhancing departmental operational budgets. Allocations: CAS, \$150,000; CBA, \$70,000; COE, \$70,000; Bouvé, \$70,000; CCIS, \$15,000; CCJ, \$15,000.
- Self-study teams for re-accreditation. Teams for the self-study are under construction. The SAC and the Deans have provided names for the various teams. Professor Onan is contacting nominees to secure their availability and readiness to serve on these important committees.

The self-study will address the eleven accreditation standards with a focus on aspects of the Academic Plan. The goal regarding the latter is to leverage the self-study to take stock of where Northeastern is relative to the

vision and the goals articulated in the Academic Plan and to explore the strategies to realize them. A parallel self-study will take place in each College and be articulated with the overall University Academic Plan.

IV. Questions.

Professor Lewis asked for clarification about whether ENHANCE funds were only available to those with no research funding. Provost Abdelal explained that ENHANCE funds are also available for those faculty who are not “significantly funded.” There is a panel of internal reviewers to evaluate proposals and they will work on defining “significant funding.”

Professor Daynard expressed thanks to the Provost for his responsiveness to the concerns raised at the last meeting regarding tenure-track guidelines.

Professor Welch inquired if progress had been made on a study comparing the funding of undergraduate programs to graduate programs, a study which was requested last year. Vice Provost Falcon reported that he is ready to make a presentation to the Senate on this subject.

Provost Abdelal noted that Professor Loeffelholz has been appointed to the President’s staff as liaison to Northeastern University faculty and welcomed her presence on the Faculty Senate.

V. Professor Glod read the following and it was seconded.

WHEREAS the Faculty Handbook, 2000-2001 Edition, declares in Section I.A.1. that, “The Teaching Faculty is represented by the Faculty Senate, which together with the Administration of the University, has the responsibility of maintaining and improving the academic standards of the University and making the functioning of the University more effective and harmonious.”; and

WHEREAS Northeastern University faculty members have raised significant concerns about faculty governance and participation in major University decisions and shaping the academic agenda; and

WHEREAS revisions and resolutions to the Faculty Handbook, passed by the Faculty Senate between fall 2002 through spring 2005, remain largely unresolved; and

WHEREAS the *Statement of the Faculty Senate* in the Faculty Handbook states that “...modification and revision of the *Handbook* do not constitute simple updating of factual material or changes to conform to applicable laws, we believe that collegiality requires continued consultation between the Faculty Senate, Provost and President in order to maintain the vitality of this document as the basis of University governance. It is the position of the Faculty Senate that substantive changes to this *Handbook* for which procedures are not already mandated by the *Handbook* itself should receive the approval of the Faculty Senate.”

BE IT RESOLVED That each unsigned resolution pertaining to the Faculty Handbook receive a response from Northeastern University administration by noting approval or listing specific issues in dispute by the end of the fall 2007 semester with the expectation that a Faculty Handbook be in place by the end of spring 2008 semester.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That, in the spirit of shared governance outlined in the current Handbook, we respectfully request that the President and Provost work with the Faculty Senate to ensure meaningful input and participation and greater transparency in the Northeastern University decision-making process to improve the functioning of the University.

Professor Glod noted that this resolution is intended to move beyond the prior Executive Session to address two specific concerns: that of consultation and shared governance, and the Faculty Handbook.

A motion to vote the resolutions separately was seconded.

VOTE to separate the resolutions on the floor: PASSED, 25-4-4.

There was considerable discussion of the history of the Faculty Handbook since 2000, including the two revisions, passed resolutions, and their present location in the administration (the Provost Office). The Provost suggested a six-person working group to review those areas that are at issue and expressed his belief that this could be accomplished in a reasonable timeframe. Professor Fox noted that, since resolutions revising the Faculty Handbook have been in limbo, misunderstandings have taken place, such as the status of the workload policy which the Senate approved but which is not in the current Handbook. There is a need for a living document.

Responding to Professor Daynard's query on how reasonable the resolution seemed to the Provost, the Provost expressed his agreement with the spirit of the resolution but stated that the fall deadline might not be realistic, but that he believed the issues could be resolved by the end of the spring semester. He noted that the Faculty Handbook will not go into effect until signed by the President and, in several cases, by the Board of Trustees.

Professor McKnight proposed a friendly amendment to remove "by the end of the fall 2007 semester" which was accepted, and urged the Senate to pass the motion as it seemed reasonable and was greatly needed.

The amended resolution reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED That each unsigned resolution pertaining to the Faculty Handbook receive a response from Northeastern University administration by noting approval or listing specific issues in dispute, with the expectation that a Faculty Handbook be in place by the end of spring 2008 semester.

There being no further discussion, the Senate moved to a vote.

VOTE to approve the resolution on the Faculty Handbook, as amended: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, 33-0-0.

The following resolution remained on the floor for debate:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That, in the spirit of shared governance outlined in the current Handbook, we respectfully request that the President and Provost work with the Faculty Senate to ensure meaningful input and participation and greater transparency in the Northeastern University decision-making process to improve the functioning of the University.

Professor Daynard noted the extraordinary level of response by University administration to issues raised at the last meeting. He also questioned the prudence of discussing these issues with the *Boston Globe* which ran an article in its Sunday edition. He moved to table the motion with the understanding that it can be removed from the table should a spirit of cooperation not be maintained. The motion was seconded and debate ensued.

Professor Fox noted that the *Globe* article could have been gleaned from the student newspaper, rather than from any information imparted by members of the Senate. He agreed that recent efforts by the administration to reach out to faculty are laudable, but reiterated the importance of articulating the principle of collaborative governance.

Dean Stellar suggested that the Senate should exhibit a spirit of generosity to the administration, in appreciation for its efforts to address concerns, and he supported the motion to table.

Professor Glod reminded the Senate that her style has been, and continues to be, transparency in governance. She pointed out that an Executive Session should **not** have been needed to focus University administration on the issues of concern regarding shared governance. She noted that faculty had continually expressed their concerns to her and to SAC, and she had communicated to the President and Provost these concerns on many occasions. She reminded the Senate as well that members had elected her to be the voice of the Senate.

Dean Hopey recommended that, as shared governance includes a more expansive group than merely the President and the Provost, the wording of the resolution should be broadened.

Following further debate, the motion to table the resolution was made and seconded.

VOTE to table the resolution concerning shared governance: FAILED, 10-19-4.

Professor Zaremba proposed a friendly amendment to remove the word "greater" from the resolution where it modified "transparency" in terms of university decision-making. This friendly amendment was accepted.

A friendly amendment to add the words "senior administration, including Deans", proposed by Dean Hopey, was accepted.

Professor Glod refused a friendly amendment to replace the word "improve" with "ensure".

Motion to close discussion was seconded.

VOTE to close debate: PASSED, 34-0-0.

As amended, the resolution reads:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That, in the spirit of shared governance outlined in the current Handbook, we respectfully request that the President, Provost and senior administration, including Deans, work with the Faculty Senate to ensure meaningful input and participation as well as transparency in the Northeastern University decision-making process to improve the functioning of the University.

VOTE on the resolution on shared governance, as amended: PASSED, 33-0-1

VI. Professor Bruns moved the following resolution to the floor and it was seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate accept the final report of the 2006-07 Senate Committee for Financial Affairs.

Professor Bruns explained that the 2006-07 Senate Committee for Financial Affairs (FAC) had been disappointed with the new process used last year for participation of the faculty in budgetary decision-making. She advised senators to read the report, which detailed issues that arose surrounding the role of FAC in budgetary processes last year. There seemed to be less information provided to FAC and less consultation in major decisions. FAC realized that the budgetary processes were seriously affected by the arrival of a new president. Rather than present resolutions to change those areas of the budget process deemed deficient, FAC decided to meet with the Provost, express their concerns, and look forward to a second year under the new president in hopes that there would be an improvement over the first year. If there are not significant improvements in faculty participation in budgetary processes in the next year, the 2007-2008 FAC is encouraged to introduce resolutions to improve the process.

Dean Moore noted that he believed that the issue of the definition of market/equity raises was not a problem. In response to Dean Moore's observation, Professors Bruns and Alper noted that in the past, equity funds have frequently been used to address imbalances in gender and race, and have not specifically been tied to strict merit considerations.

The Provost, after passing the gavel to Vice Chair Glod, commented for the record that, from the perspective of the Deans and the Provost, Faculty Handbook guidelines are being followed regarding distribution of market adjustments based on performance.

Professor Welch asked whether the 2006-07 FAC had addressed post-retirement health benefits for faculty and Professor Bruns responded that it had been addressed several years ago. She pointed out that the issue has been raised repeatedly in the ten years since those benefits were eliminated after the Financial

Accounting Standards Board required they be accrued as liabilities on the balance sheets of corporations and not-for-profit organizations.

Professor Morrison noted that a form of post-retirement health care does exist under certain conditions wherein both the University and the faculty member contribute.

Professor McKnight yielded the floor to Professor Kruger, chair of the 2007-08 FAC, who confirmed that this issue will be addressed in the spring semester. He reported, too, on productive meetings with Senior Vice President of Administration and Finance McCarthy on the issues of faculty roles in the budget process and input into new expenditures.

Professor Glod reminded the Senate that Professor Sherman is chairing a Special Faculty Development Committee to address the merit process issue and Professor Fox again encouraged faculty, Deans and Chairs to complete the survey regarding the merit procedures currently in place.

There being no further discussion, the Senate moved to vote.

VOTE to accept the final report of the 2006-07 Senate Committee for Financial Affairs: PASSED, 32-0-0.

VII. Executive Vice Provost Powers-Lee read the following and it was seconded:

BE IT RESOLVED That the Annual Progress-Toward-Tenure Review guidelines approved by the Faculty Senate on 14 April 2003 (30-0-1) be amended as proposed by the Office of the Provost.

The Vice Provost explained that the change is primarily to more fully guarantee the success of faculty on the tenure track. Professor Morrison disagreed, noting that the reason for the current wording, which states that the mid-tenure review can take place in the third or fourth year, was to maintain flexibility in those cases where review in the spring of the third year does not fit the needs of the department. He distributed a handout showing the average times between submission of journal articles and publication over time, noting that publishing in economics journals takes much longer than many other disciplines.

Vice Provost Falcon and Dean Zoloth expressed support of the resolution, stating that it provides timely feedback to the tenure-track faculty member. Provost Abdelal, after passing the gavel, said that national norms are for a third-year review to be formative and be performed by the same group of people who will later review the tenure case. He expressed consternation at evidence of summative reviews being conducted at the third year. Discussion of formative and summative reviews, annual reviews, reviews by chairs and by committees, and tenure review committees continued.

A motion to adjourn seconded; the Senate adjourned at 1:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Bruns, Secretary
Faculty Senate