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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes : 02/13/2008

Sharon M. Bruns
Northeastern University

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TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: SHARON M. BRUNS, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
RE: MINUTES, 2007-08 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 13 FEBRUARY

Present: (Professors) Bosso, Bruns, Chilvers, Cokely, Fox, Galligan, Glod, Herman, Hill, Jackson, Kane, Lewis, Massey, McKnight, Morrison, Portz, Sherman, Starr, Tolley, Touran, Vaughn, Waszczak, Zaremba
(Administrators) Abdelal, Falcon, Greene, Hopey, Loeffelholz, Luzzi, Moore, Powers-Lee, Stellar, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Daynard, Hafner, Hall, Reucroft, Robinson-Wood, Sanchez, Welch

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 11:57 AM.

I. The minutes of 30 January were accepted as written.

II. SAC report. Professor Glod reported the following:

SAC met twice in regular session and once with the NEASC Standard III Group.

The following SPCS Graduate Certificates were approved by the Graduate Council:

Graduate Certificate in Music Industry Management
Graduate Certificate in Conflict Resolution Studies
Graduate Certificate in Distance Learning
Graduate Certificate in Workforce Development

The Search Committee for a Chair of the Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering has been staffed as follows. This is an external search. The first meeting is being arranged.

Elected Members:
Professor Ali Touran
Professor Sara J. Wadia-Fascetti
Professor Irvine W. Wei

Appointed Members:
Professor Malcolm Hill (CAS-Earth & Environmental Sciences)
Professor Michael B. Silevitch (COE-Electrical & Computer)

Professor Glod noted that SAC had reviewed the Tenure & Promotion Guidelines available on the Provost's website. SAC also generally agreed with the Deans' recommendations about external reviewers and proposed several modifications, which were accepted. Faculty should note that the guidelines call for six to eight external letters that are "arms length" and the T&P committee selects final reviewers. SAC suggested that the guidelines be revised into two documents: one for the T&P committees and one for the candidates.

Professor Vaughn reminded the Senate that the definition of 'arms length' can be different in certain fields, particularly those like physics where large numbers of co-authors work on datasets. During the following discussion, it was noted these special circumstances can be explained adequately in the dossiers.

Executive Vice Provost Powers-Lee added that SAC and others have worked together to revise the Tenure Clock Extension Policy (which was passed by the Senate in 2006) and it has now been approved by the Board of Trustees. The Deans will forward the final language to the unit heads.

III. Provost's report.

Provost Abdelal distributed and commended a recent announcement from the President emphasizing the University's commitment to continued faculty hiring. He accentuated three areas of hiring: College-based hiring (with the concurrence of the Provost's Office); the Academic Investment Plan (AIP); and the Interdisciplinary Faculty Initiative (IFI). Many IFI hires will be at the Associate Professor level to address the low numbers of young associate professors resulting from fewer hires being made before the AIP was instituted. Choosing to use IFI slots to hire at this level is also in response to recommendations from the Senate Committee for Financial Affairs and the Senate Agenda Committee.

Executive Vice Provost Powers-Lee added that the announcement publicizes a growth in the number of IFI hires and in the number (30 to 50) and quality of faculty ranks. It is intended to be an acknowledgement of how much has been done to address the strategic goals of the academic plan, which are enumerated in the bulleted items of the announcement. She added, too, that IFI hires allow those units without Ph.D. programs to partner with those which do have doctoral programs..

IV. Questions.

Professor Bruns noted that when SAC recently examined the composition of tenured and tenure-track faculty in order to conduct senate elections, SAC noted that those numbers have remained generally static over the past few years. She asked how successful the AIP has been and if NU has lost significant numbers of faculty which would serve to offset the hires.

The Provost detailed four reasons for this: the Colleges do not hire when there are no strong candidates which has resulted in 26 funded but as yet unfilled positions; the AIP provides for a number of clinical faculty appointments (over 20) to address programmatic needs in Bouvé which do not appear on the tenured/tenure-track roster; the Colleges have occasionally reallocated an open position, i.e. have opted not to fill it; and lastly, there is not necessarily a one-to-one replacement for a retiring faculty member. In addition, a fair number of faculty members have transferred to SPCS and are no longer counted in the day Colleges.

Professor Glod noted that data since 2002 indicates that the University has netted approximately 36 tenure-track faculty members; according to the Provost, another 26 remain open; and approximately 24 non-tenure-track faculty have been added. In 1990 31% of the faculty was tenure-track; in 2006 this was 17%. (NOTE: this information is available at http://www.facultysenate.neu.edu/about_faculty/documents/documents/GlodSlides.pdf) Professor Glod expressed concern that not enough is being done to fund, attract, and maintain the buildup of the professoriate, especially tenure-track faculty at Northeastern.

In response to Professor Touran's query, Executive Vice Provost Powers-Lee reported that eight IFI hires were made last year and a significant number are in process.

Professor Portz said he had the impression that the boundaries between IFI and AIP hires were being de-emphasized and the pool of monies being used more generally. He also expressed concern that, while interdisciplinary hiring is a great opportunity for the University, it may not be addressing the needs of the individual units. The Provost responded that boundaries between the two hiring categories are flexible depending on the circumstances and the needs of the units involved. Several IFI hires have addressed department needs by being anchored to programmatic need.

IV. Special Senate Faculty Development Committee on Merit report and resolutions. Resolution #1 remains on the floor for debate.

WHEREAS the Faculty Development Committee has been charged with examining merit procedures across the University and to consider the extent to which unit-based practices should be standardized; AND

WHEREAS, while there are arguments for local control, certain principles and practices should be common to all units;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED That the following be implemented by academic units in time for the spring 2009 raise pool and be adopted for addition to the Faculty Handbook:

FDC resolution #1:

Assessments pertaining to merit should reflect individual faculty workloads, which in turn should be arranged consistent with the University workload policy.

(a) Units vary considerably in terms of progress toward developing an approved workload policy. Units should finalize their workload policies so as to rationalize their merit processes.
(b) Merit reviews should separately assess teaching, research/scholarship, and service, and combine the assessments into an overall weighted outcome/score based on the individualized workload.

Professor Vaughn stated that, according to the report, one-third to one-half of responders are not happy with the merit process. He noted that annual merit reviews are cumbersome and frequently cause damage to faculty morale that is greater than any positive effects the university could hope to achieve by a rigorous review process. This is because of the small size of the merit pool which doesn't allow for large differences based on performance. There better ways of recognizing merit and of providing fair and equitable salaries.

Professor Sherman reiterated that the Committee was not charged to define a process. Such processes are currently left to units and should remain there. The Committee was charged to determine whether faculty members were aware of the process within their unit and happy with the manner in which it is being applied. The resolution asks the units to honor what is already on the books or commit to working out a fair way of disbursing funds, i.e. to establish criteria and follow those criteria.

Professor Vaughn pointed out that merit is based on a cumulative body of work over time. He noted, too, that annual merit reviews should cause salaries to rise on a curve but this does not happen.

The Provost agreed that merit cannot be captured by looking at one year at a time but he supports the concept of performing an annual merit review as well as an overall performance-based review in relation to the market. Both are needed for compensation that responds to merit and performance.

Professor Fox suggested a system whereby faculty members receive a cost-of-living increase each year with a performance evaluation every three to five years.

Following debate on whether the language is meant to be a guideline or mandatory policy, a friendly amendment was made to change the word “should” to “shall” in three instances in resolution #1. Professor Sherman accepted.

Following discussion of the importance of discretion among the units, Professor Herman noted that the resolution is merely a clarification of what is presently written in the [current] Faculty Handbook in order to guarantee that it is carried out. He noted, too, that operational requirements in the Handbook do not specify an annual review and such a review could take place every three or five years, according to whatever makes sense for the unit.

It was clarified that faculty should be evaluated pursuant to their actual workload, as specified in the current workload policy which is in effect (although not printed in the current Faculty Handbook). This means that faculty who have higher teaching loads should have more weight attributed to their teaching responsibilities in merit reviews; also that those with higher research expectations should have more weight in this area and that senior faculty doing significant service should have more weight attached in this area. It was noted that even though this policy exists in the current Faculty Handbook, there was evidence it might not be known by all units.

Professor Fox explained that The Committee discussed local discretion versus broad standards at every step of the process and sought to standardize only those areas that should be maintained University-wide, such as timely feedback and the appeals process.

Professor Glod motioned for a vote and, there being no objection, the Senate voted on the resolution as amended.

As amended, the resolution is as follows:

> **WHEREAS the Faculty Development Committee has been charged with examining merit procedures across the University and to consider the extent to which unit-based practices should be standardized; AND**
>
> **WHEREAS, while there are arguments for local control, certain principles and practices should be common to all units;**
>
> **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED That the following be implemented by academic units in time for the spring 2009 raise pool and be adopted for addition to the Faculty Handbook:**
>
> *FDC resolution #1:*
>
> > **Assessments pertaining to merit *shall* reflect individual faculty workloads, which in turn should be arranged consistent with the University workload policy.**
> >
> > **(a) Units vary considerably in terms of progress toward developing an approved workload policy. Units *shall* finalize their workload policies so as to rationalize their merit processes.**
> > **(b) Merit reviews *shall* separately assess teaching, research/scholarship, and service, and combine the assessments into an overall weighted outcome/score based on the individualized workload.**

<u>Vote on FDC Resolution #1, as amended: *PASSED,* 31-0-0</u>

Professor Herman moved to postpone the remaining FDC resolutions in order that The Committee may provide documentation showing what is being changed in the current Faculty Handbook. This was seconded. Professor Bruns noted that there are several handbooks which might address the issue and each should be addressed in the documentation. The current handbook has been significantly revised twice in the last seven years without the revisions being accepted by University administration. At present, a reconciliation of differences is taking place to produce a new handbook. This should be part of the documentation.

Professor Fox noted that Resolutions #2 and 4 are not addressed in the Faculty Handbook. Professor Glod added that the FDC had been charged to look at both the present Handbook and the proposed Handbook and should be trusted to have done their work. She spoke against the motion to postpone.

Vote to postpone FDC resolutions #2-7 to await documentation: *PASSED,* 18-9-4.

V. Proposed Master of Science in International Business (approved by the Graduate Council on 1/10/2008, vote: 7-0-0). Professor Bruns read the following resolution and it was seconded.

> **BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate approve the Master of Science in International Business in the College of Business Administration as approved by the Graduate Council on 10 January 2008.**

Professor Bruns reported that the proposal was passed by the faculty of the College of Business Administration in December and dovetails with the success of the undergraduate Bachelor of Science in International Business. Dean Moore pointed out that it also offers business minors throughout NU to opt for an accelerated masters program. In response to a question, he noted that there is a language competency requirement but no language course requirement. It is a one-year masters program which uses existing resources and should prove to be very popular.

Professor Herman expressed his hope that CBA will be flexible in accepting CAS courses in order to accommodate acceptance into the program. Dean Moore replied that CBA would be happy to accept CAS courses as electives which meet the goals of the program.

Vote to accept the proposed Master of Science in International Business: PASSED, 31-0-0.

Professor Hill extended thanks to Acting Dean of Libraries Wakeling for the addition of the “Web of Science” research tool to library offerings. The Senate offered a round of appreciative applause.

The meeting adjourned at 1:11 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Bruns, Secretary
Faculty Senate