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Northeastern University

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes : 02/27/2008

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TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: SHARON M. BRUNS, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
RE: MINUTES, 2007-08 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 27 FEBRUARY

Present: (Professors) Bruns, Chilvers, Cokely, Fox, Galligan, Glod, Hall, Herman, Jackson, Kane, Lewis, Massey, McKnight, Portz, Robinson-Wood, Sherman, Starr, Tolley, Touran, Vaughn, Waszczak, Welch, Zaremba
(Administrators) Abdelal, Falcon, Loeffelholz, Moore, Powers-Lee, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Bosso, Daynard, Hafner, Hill, Morrison, Reucroft, Sanchez
(Administrators) Greene, Hopey, Luzzi, Stellar

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 11:57 AM.

I. The minutes of 13 February were accepted as written.

II. Professor Glod reported the following:

SAC met twice in regular session since the last meeting of the Senate. The Senate meeting of 12 March will include a budget presentation by Senior Vice President McCarthy and Provost Abdelal. Many final reports from Senate committees are due in mid to late March which means that there is much work coming up.

III. Provost's Report.

Executive Vice Provost Powers-Lee reported the Unified Digital Campus (UDC) project is proceeding in the areas of finance, advancement and the Banner student management system. The Banner system has been reviewed and approved by School of Professional and Continuing Studies, the Graduate Council, the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and the Senate Agenda Committee for placement in fall 2009. Planning for this last stage of UDC should begin soon. The Registrars Office will work with the units toward implementation.

Provost Abdelal reiterated that he and Senior Vice President McCarthy will present the approved budget for the next fiscal year at the 12 March Senate meeting also noting that he and Executive Vice Provost Powers-Lee will meet with each Dean to discuss expectations, the Academic Investment Program and how the budgets translate to each College.

IV. Questions.

Professor Welch inquired about news from the Provost Search Committee to which Provost Abdelal replied that he preferred to keep "a certain distance," which amused the Senate. It was ascertained that no one had any news of the search.

Mr. Stephen Lavenberg, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Student Government Association, was recognized and, noting the high cost of textbooks, urged faculty to order textbooks by 10 March in order to hold down costs to students.

It was determined that, while earlier edition textbooks cannot be ordered, placing textbook orders early will sometimes result in a shipment of an earlier edition, thus trimming costs.

IV. Graduate Programs update. Note: The PowerPoint presentation for this update may be found at http://www.facultysenate.neu.edu/about_faculty/documents/documents/GradProgs22708.pdf

Vice Provost Falcon proposed to provide an overview in three parts: background, changes during the past four years, and the current state of Graduate Programs.

Graduate programs at Northeastern University are generally decentralized with each College containing its own graduate school. Provost's Office personnel has grown to four people working in the graduate area to set policy, oversee financial assistance, oversee program development, manage the paperless application system, and, increasingly, assist the Colleges with nationwide marketing and recruiting. Past obstacles were a decline in applications and enrollments, the lack of graduate presence on campus, and a lack of resources.

Academic goals for graduate education include realignment to operate and look more like peer universities and to strengthen recruitment, generate revenue to support progressive masters programs, improve the quality of masters students and improve the rate of Ph.D. degree completion.

Toward achieving those goals, a $500,000 budget has been established in the Provost's Office and a recruitment budget of $100,000 has been garnered from Enrollment Management & Student Affairs. In addition, regular meetings including all deans with graduate programs and all graduate school staffs have been launched for purposes of collaboration.

Aggressive marketing efforts for recruitment and for the growth of Northeastern's reputation have included targeted advertising and heavy investment in web-based advertising. Advertising outlets that were not yielding results were discontinued.

MS/MA programs have moved to rolling admissions and a scholarship program for top admits has been initiated. The Vice Provost has undertaken to determine capacity and the potential for growth in MS/MA programs and a process to monitor admissions has been instituted in the colleges. Regular information sessions and open houses are held throughout the academic year and a database has been established to track participation. A paperless admissions process is now in place with positive results.

The Vice Provost presented application results from fall 2005 to fall 2007, application data by college and graduate expenditures for 2003-07
http://www.facultysenate.neu.edu/about_faculty/documents/documents/GradProgs22708.pdf
Graduate programs returned $1.4M to the colleges last year and could return as much as $3M this year.

On Ph.D. programs, the University must attract and retain top quality students, increase admissions in some programs, and provide teaching support. Toward those goals, 100% health insurance coverage is now offered and efforts are underway to increase interdisciplinary research, overhaul the website to feature alumni and faculty for name awareness, provide competitive stipends, and increase the training, preparedness and placement of Ph.D. graduates in academic settings.

Vice Provost Falcon also updated the Senate on funding, specifically the success of the University Excellence Fellowship, which costs approximately $120,000; the Dissertation Writing Fellowship ($130,000 for the spring semester); and a $120,000 investment this spring to bring admitted and funded Ph.D. students to campus.

The floor was opened to questions.

Professor Herman asked for input on the following issues: Can the electronic systems for inquiries and for applicants be integrated into one system? Can enrollment figures for SPCS be made available? What is the current terminology for NUTAs? Will the Provost's Office be funding student travel to conferences? Will copyright language be added to the student handbooks?

The Vice Provost responded that the Graduate Handbook is being reviewed and will take copyright issues into consideration; he also agreed that there should be more funding for graduate students to attend conferences. NUTAs are transitioning for many reasons—A&S is calling them Graduate School Scholarships (GSS) but other colleges may be different; recruitment and admissions systems are co-existing due to the reports that are needed but the Banner system is being looked into as an option; SPCS retain their own application system and figures are not currently available although they can be obtained. Provost Abdelal added that SPCS should provide an annual report.

Professor Welch suggested that a figure of monies spent per graduate student be calculated in order to compare to what other quality graduate programs spend. He noted that he had requested the same last year but it was not forthcoming.

In response to Professor Vaughn, Vice Provost Falcon said that he is attempting to separate masters and Ph.D. programs. Currently they are tracked separately and have separate sources of support.

Professor Waszczak noted that the increase in graduate students in Bouvé has resulted in more students seeking positions in research labs than are available and suggested that the students are beginning to become angry. The Vice Provost agreed that the University must meet the needs of its present students and that graduate programs need a massive infusion of resources.

In response to Professor Robinson-Wood, Vice Provost Falcon noted that there is no set admissions deadline. The deadlines for various programs are shown on the website.

The Vice Provost introduced his staff: Dr. Mary Robbins (Special Assistant), Jerome Dean (Senior Research Analyst) and Shahram Haydari (Systems Manager). He also urged faculty and staff to attend the Graduate and Professional Student Awards ceremony on 17 March.

Provost Abdelal added that revenue-producing graduate enrollments were predicted to increase by 2% per year; however, the average over the last four years of the Academic Initiative Program has been 6-7%.

V. Professor Fox read the following resolution and it was seconded.

WHEREAS the Senate previously voted to switch from the TCE Program to TRACE to be administered on-line,

BE IT RESOLVED That the University move immediately to implement TRACE on-line using the *CoursEval*[3] interface for all undergraduate and graduate classes (except directed studies and similar special offerings), effective for the spring 2008 semester (with the exception of the School of Law and the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, both of which have a different academic calendar).

Professor Fox noted that experimental roll-outs during the fall semester had produced disappointing response rates but was sanguine that those rates would improve quickly. Difficulties were student awareness and several technical glitches that prevented access from some public machines. On the positive side, there were more written comments from the on-line version. Also, results are available almost immediately, the cost and logistics are less than the paper TCE, and the on-line TRACE implement is easily customized. Professor Fox encouraged the Senate to approve the move to electronic teacher evaluations.

Mr. Lavenberg, SGA, was recognized and also spoke in support of the electronic TRACE, noting that students had been waiting many years.

Professors Portz and Bruns expressed concern about the response rate issue, particularly as regards tenure-track faculty and suggested that sanctions for non-participation be levied sooner rather than later.

Several faculty members spoke in support of electronic evaluations and the Senate discussed anonymity, timeliness of feedback, and response rates.

The question was then called and, there being no objection, the Senate voted.

VOTE to implement electronic teacher evaluations to be effective for the spring 2008 semester: PASSED, 21-3-2

The Senate adjourned at 1:35 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Bruns, Secretary
Faculty Senate