

March 26, 2008

## Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 03/26/2008

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### Recommended Citation

Bruns, Sharon M., "Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 03/26/2008" (2008). *Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes*. Paper 105.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d1001567x>

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**TO: FACULTY SENATE**  
**FROM: SHARON M. BRUNS, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE**  
**RE: MINUTES, 2007-08 FACULTY SENATE MEETING, 26 MARCH**

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Present: (Professors) Bruns, Chilvers, Cokely, Daynard, Fox, Glod, Herman, Hill, Jackson, Kane, McKnight, Morrison, Robinson-Wood, Sherman, Starr, Suci, Tolley, Touran, Vaughn, Welch, Zaremba  
(Administrators) Abdelal, Falcon, Levine, Loeffelholz, Powers-Lee, Zoloth

Absent: (Professors) Bosso, Galligan, Hafner, Hall, Lewis, Portz, Sanchez, Waszczak  
(Administrators) Greene, Hopey, Luzzi, Moore

Provost Abdelal convened the meeting at 11:55 AM

- I. The minutes of 12 March were approved as written.
- II. Professor Glod reported that SAC met three times, once to work on the Faculty Handbook. A number of resolutions have been returned from the President's Office and we are still awaiting a number other.

- 0708-04 APC #1: acceptance of the 2006-07 APC report  
0708-05 APC #2: recommendation for a more comprehensive Academic Integrity Policy. Comment: *"I support the concern the faculty has expressed about this serious issue. I encourage the Senate to develop and refine its recommendations working with colleagues such as those in Student Affairs and in the Office of Legal Counsel."*  
0708-06 APC #3: recommendation for consistent University-wide reporting mechanisms and report utilization for all instances of academic integrity violations. Comment: *"I support the concern the faculty has expressed about this serious issue. I encourage the Senate to develop and refine its recommendations working with colleagues such as those in Student Affairs and in the Office of Legal Counsel."*  
0708-07 APC #4: recommendation to review the restorative justice concept. Comment: *"I support the exploration of best practices in resolving violations of the Academic Integrity policy and encourage the development of explicit actions."*  
0708-10 FAC #1: Merit increase of 5% for faculty.  
0708-11 FAC #2: Equity pool.  
0708-12: FAC #3: Continued collaboration between Administration and FAC as to process and priorities for equity distribution.  
0708-13 Integrated Student Academic Appeals Policy (Appeal of Final Grades).  
0708-14 Leadership Minor/ROTC proposal

All College elections for the 2008-09 Senate seats have been completed. The list of academic senators is below. The Organizational Meeting of the 2008-09 Senate is on 23 April at 10:00 AM in Raytheon, 240 EC.

*College of Arts and Sciences:*  
George O. Alverson  
Anthony P. De Ritis  
Gregory S. Goodale  
Marc N. Levine  
Maria Isabel Meirelles  
Emmett G. Price  
Rebeca B. Rosengaus  
Martin E. Ross

Thomas O. Sherman  
Alexandru I. Suciu

*College of Business Administration*  
Ramaiya Balachandra  
Jeffery A. Born

*Bouvé College of Health Sciences*  
Rhonda Board  
Louis J. Kruger  
Barbara Waszczak

*College of Engineering*  
Ronald Mourant  
Elizabeth J. Podlaha-Murphy

*College of Criminal Justice*  
Wallace Sherwood

*College of Law*  
Richard A. Daynard

On behalf of the Senate, Professor Glod also welcomed Professors Suciu and Levine, both from the Department of Mathematics, who have joined the Senate to replace Professors Massey and Reucroft.

SAC also met with President Aoun, Provost Abdelal, Executive Vice Provost Powers-Lee, and Senior Vice President McCarthy last week. The President elaborated upon his ideas at length regarding long-term goals, and specifically a proposal allowing junior faculty the possibility of a mini sabbatical or semester off following the third year review. SAC noted that the budget process was improved yet raised concerns regarding the need for increased transparency and inclusion with the faculty, including concerns relating to the Provost Search Committee. SAC pointed out that it is a committee of the Senate and the four months of no contact or information sets a concerning precedent. President Aoun responded that he would bring these concerns to the Search Committee. A meeting is now being arranged with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Provost Search Committee.

Finally, SAC met briefly with the President and Provost this morning wherein the President announced NU's new Interim Provost, Steven Zoloth. Professor Glod congratulated the Interim Provost and also announced that today is Provost Abdelal's last Senate meeting and relayed the following:

"It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with you [Provost Abdelal] on the Senate during the past three years. I have learned a tremendous amount about the University and its effective functioning. I will miss your leadership. Provost Abdelal has moved the academic mission of this University forward despite some tremendous obstacles at times."

Provost Abdelal received an extended round of applause and standing ovation from the senate members.

- III. Provost's report. The Provost expressed his gratitude for a "wonderful journey". He also expressed pleasure at the selection of Dean Zoloth to the position of Interim Provost stating that he had no reservations that Interim Provost Zoloth would continue to pursue excellence for NU.

Interim Provost Zoloth noted that he had served on the committee that brought Provost Abdalal to Northeastern University and had never regretted the decision to do so. He acknowledged the hard work by Executive Vice Provost Powers-Lee over the past few months and vowed to continue the work of the Provost's Office in the spirit of transparency and collegiality.

IV. Questions.

Professor Zaremba asked about the status of tenure cases. The Provost responded that dossiers are being reviewed by members of the Provost's Office assigned this task. The responsibility will pass to Interim Provost Zoloth on 1 April. He reiterated that continuity in consideration of the tenure cases is a paramount concern within the Provost's Office and the transition should have no effect on tenure cases.

In response to a question from Professor Vaughn concerning the tenure cases timeline, the Provost indicated that the Trustees review tenure cases at two meetings toward the end of April. There are 23 cases this year.

V. The following motion remains on the floor:

**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 #3*

**Units must have a clearly defined and timely appeals process in place. Faculty shall be informed of the outcome of their assessment and related merit score (though not the merit raise itself) at least one week prior to the point when recommendations to the Provost's Office for merit adjustments are submitted and finalized.**

Professor Sherman explained that the request for time certain is the new aspect of this request.

Several Senators agreed with Professor Cokely that the time frame should float rather than be anchored on necessary procedures that are outside the control of the chairs/unit heads.

Professor Herman suggested a friendly amendment to add "*no more than one week after the unit assessment process is completed*".

Vice Provost Falcon stated that there is no reason why departments cannot run the merit process, which is independent of the salary rate process, in January allowing faculty ample time to appeal the merit percentage exclusive of the entire increase amount, which is not generally known until much later.

Professor Cokely suggested that a date certain would be in order and Professor Zaremba proposed that a date of 28 February be added. Professor Sherman asked the body for input. Professor Herman noted that the resolution can stand without date certain presuming that resolution #7 is passed. Provost Abdelal, in response to a comment concerning the faculty grievance process, noted that faculty may appeal their merit increase at any point outside of the formal grievance procedures.

Professor Morrison reminded Senators that the point of the resolution is to allow an appeal and suggested the following wording "...prior to submission of departments/units results by the Dean."

Several Senators reiterated that the point of the resolution is to allow faculty members a window to appeal their merit increase despite the vagaries of the budget process. Debate continued concerning the timing. The amendment proposed by Professor Herman was accepted by Professor Sherman.

Professor Vaughn then proposed a clarifying friendly amendment: "At least one week prior to the point when unit recommendations are submitted for further review." This was seconded. Professor Bruns proposed the addition of "to the next level" prior to "for further review". Professor Daynard moved all previous questions and this was seconded.

VOTE on the amendment to add ... "at least one week prior to the point when recommendations are submitted to the next level for further review": PASSED, 23-0-2

The amended resolution is as follows:

**Units must have a clearly defined and timely appeals process in place. Faculty shall be informed of the outcome of their assessment and related merit score (though not the merit raise itself) at least one week prior to the point when unit recommendations are submitted to the next level for further review.**

VOTE on FDC resolution #3 regarding a timely appeal process for merit increases, as amended: PASSED, 26:0:1

VI. Professor Sherman read the following resolution (FDC resolution #4) and it was seconded:

**Faculty raises shall be distributed based on percentages, rather than dollars.**

Professor Sherman noted that the purpose of the resolution is to provide clear policies to further the goal of turning the merit increase procedure into a formative process rather than one filled with anxiety. Percentages are more relevant and clearer than dollar amounts.

Professor Fox spoke in favor of the motion, noting that the pool itself is based on percentages as well as staff raises which are based on performance regardless of base. Due to faculty rank, there is no equal pay for equal performance.

Debate ensued on percentage amounts versus dollar amounts with Professor Daynard noting that clarity is not an issue due to the timing of merit ratings. He opined that the proposal would provide senior faculty with larger increases at the expense of junior faculty. He also stated that Law School faculty members are very content with their system.

Professor McKnight proposed that the procedure should be silent on this as it depends on many factors, one of which is to encourage faculty at the assistant professor level.

In response, Professor Morrison pointed out that percentages are used everywhere for everything and that Senior faculty percentage of increases are larger because they earn more; however, this is offset by their increase being earned for far fewer years.

Dean Stellar agreed that the world operates in percentage increments. Departments which operate using fixed dollars disadvantage senior professors who appeal to his office for a market adjustment which then is taken from a finite pool. These faculty make compelling cases.

Vice Provost Falcon noted that the proposal removes the unit's freedom to determine what is best. At issue is the merit increase and looking at percentages moves the discussion farther away from merit.

Professor Fox countered that the Law faculty receive a larger merit pool than other Schools or Departments with same number of faculty due to their larger salaries which points to the system already utilizing percents for the merit pool.

Professor Tolley suggested that the resolution should read "Faculty raises shall be distributed based on percent of the faculty member's salary rather than dollars."

Following spirited debate on both sides of the issue, the question was called and, there being no objection, the vote ensued.

VOTE on FDC resolution #4 regarding use of percentages: FAILED, 11-12-2

VII. Professor Sherman read the following resolution and it was seconded.

**All faculty in a unit shall be advised of the average and range of merit scores in teaching, research/scholarship, and service as well as the weighted combination of the three performance areas.**

There being no debate or objection, the vote was taken.

VOTE on FDC resolution #5 regarding provision of information: PASSED, 24-0-2

VIII. Professor Sherman read the following and it was seconded:

**All faculty shall be given specific and timely written feedback in regard to the outcomes of their merit review that goes beyond merely providing a score. Feedback shall be consistent with an individual's workload priorities. At minimum, the feedback shall provide the basis for the merit scores in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. In addition, any area(s) of relative weakness shall be coupled with recommendations for improving performance in that area. Units are also encouraged to consider the implementation of feedback meetings with individual faculty for the purpose of clarifying the basis of the merit scores and the recommendations.**

Professor Sherman reported that the survey indicated a lack of timely feedback or, at the least, very uninformative feedback. He noted that the formative aspect is that NU faculty would like to improve their own performance and feedback helps that goal. Responding to a question concerning who

would provide feedback, Professor Sherman explained that, in his department, the chair provides feedback after consultation with the review committee.

The following friendly amendments were proposed for clarity and were accepted:

- "...*as appropriate to each person's workload*" following "...and service."
- The addition of "*research*" to "scholarship";
- The addition of "*by their evaluators*" following "specific and timely written feedback"

Professor Vaughn opined that the evaluation committees do not have the time to make additional reports and requiring such a report is unrealistic.

Professor Sherman explained that survey feedback on this issue was clear and consistent. Faculty felt uninformed about the meaning of the numbers without proper feedback and growth is not achievable under those circumstances. Professor Glod noted that one of the purposes of the merit increase is guidance and faculty members have clearly indicated a need for feedback and guidance. Professor Herman noted that the resolution will compel adherence to the current workload policy.

There being no further debate, the Senate voted. The amended resolution reads as follows:

**All faculty shall be given specific and timely written feedback *by their evaluators* in regard to the outcomes of their merit review that goes beyond merely providing a score. Feedback shall be consistent with an individual's workload priorities. At minimum, the feedback shall provide the basis for the merit scores in the areas of teaching, *research/scholarship*, and service, *as appropriate to each person's workload*. In addition, any area(s) of relative weakness shall be coupled with recommendations for improving performance in that area. Units are also encouraged to consider the implementation of feedback meetings with individual faculty for the purpose of clarifying the basis of the merit scores and the recommendations.**

VOTE on FDC resolution #6 for timely written feedback: PASSED, 25-1-0

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Bruns, Secretary  
Faculty Senate