

December 02, 2009

Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 12/02/2009

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Recommended Citation

McKnight, Stephen W., "Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 12/02/2009" (2009). *Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes*. Paper 111.
<http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20000101>

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Northeastern University
Office of the Faculty Senate

TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: STEPHEN W. MCKNIGHT, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
RE: MINUTES, 2009-10 FACULTY SENATE, 2 DECEMBER 2009

Present: (Professors) Alshawbkeh, Alverson, Balachandra, Board, Chilvers, De Ritis, Gaffney, Goodale, Hafner, Herman, Kruger, Lifter, McKnight, Mierelles, Morrison, Mourant, Muftu, Podlaha-Murphy, Portz, Price, Ross, T. Sherman, Sherwood, Thrush

(Administrators) Director, Falcon, Finkelstein, Loeffelholz, Luzzi, Moore, Ronkin, Spieler, Zoloth

Absent (Professors) Born, Daynard, Gatley, Karma, Rosengaus, D. Sherman,

(Administrators) Powers-Lee

Provost Director convened the meeting at 11:50 AM

- I. The minutes of 4 and 18 November were approved.
- II. Professor Morrison reported that the SAC had met once in regular session since the last Senate meeting.

The Search Committee for a Chair of the Psychology Department has been staffed as follows. An organizational meeting has been arranged.

Professor Nancy Kim, CAS-Psychology
Professor David DeSteno, CAS-Psychology
Professor Stephen Harkins (Chair), CAS-Psychology
Professor Fred C. Davis, CAS-Biology
Professor Dana H. Brooks, COE-Electrical and Computer

III. Report on Athletics

Director Roby offered to respond to any questions regarding the recent announcement cancelling the football program later in the meeting and began his report on the challenges facing student athletes. These are travel, fan participation, and class schedules.

Grade point averages remain good despite travel schedules due to the work of the Student Athlete Academic Support group and support by the faculty. Sixty percent of faculty members respond to Faculty Advisor Communications Tool (FACT) system information requests from the group and the goal is to exceed 80%. While student athletes are the same as other students, they do require fair treatment given difficult travel schedules. It is reasonable that faculty, student athletes, and the academic support group collaborate in order that student athletes may perform as the University asks of them.

Fan participation has progressed with hockey games averaging 2,500 fans. Basketball is the next challenge and appears to be gaining with 2,600 fans last evening. The stadium seating layout has been altered and fans seem to like it.

Following last year's report to the Senate on the impact of missed classes a faculty member suggested to Professor Wiseman (NU NCAA representative) that athletes be given the ability to download class materials for classes they missed. A program has been piloted which has been well received by the student athletes and supported and endorsed by faculty. Dean Moore, Vice Provost Powers-Lee, Vice President Mantella and EMSA, and Student Athlete Support Services have been instrumental in initiating this program.

Colonial Athletic Association "Player/Rookie of the Week" awards have been given to students in many sports as well as to several coaches. These and the greater number of teams which have had the opportunity to compete in post-season games attest to the gains in the quality of NU's teams over the last 4-5 years.

NU sponsored nineteen sports prior to the discontinuation of football which was the only sport not meeting requirements for a positive student athlete experience. Meeting those requirements would necessitate millions of dollars, a new venue, higher operating costs and an upgrade in coaching staff and their related salaries and recruiting budgets. The recommendation to discontinue the program was difficult but was not about the current money being invested; rather, it was about the additional resources that would be required to give a fair competitive experience to student athletes in football. Status quo under these circumstances was not an option. Director Roby opened the floor to questions.

On providing athletic fields nearer to campus for use by the University community, the Director noted that the idea is being considered in the long-term. Parsons Field in Brookline remains viable and well-used and will likely remain so. There are significant challenges in providing sizeable fields in an urban setting.

Professor Price expressed appreciation for the inside look into decision-making and was echoed by the Provost for the courageous decision to end football. A well planned and sensitive transition for student athletes and coaching staff is underway. The Provost urged Senators to attend games in order to experience the energy among students and see the upgrades that have been made at the arena.

IV. Professor Morrison read the following and it was seconded:

WHEREAS the administrator evaluation review procedures, adopted by resolutions of the Faculty Senate on October 21, 1991, and subsequently revised and amended, have promoted the values of shared university governance, that is, faculty participation and input into university decision-making, transparency in university administration, and leadership that is responsible and accountable to the constituencies that are administered; and

WHEREAS the 2008-09 *ad hoc* Senate Committee for Administrator Evaluation Reform (AERC), in its report to the Faculty Senate in April 2009, found that during the 2007-08 academic year 65 faculty members or roughly 10 percent of the tenured faculty were involved in this process; that the problem of number of faculty members involved is compounded by the frequency of the evaluations (currently university administrators are evaluated every three years); and that there were questions about the value of the administrators' evaluations to their supervisors' review of their performance in office and to the administrators' need for feedback to improve as a manager of a unit; and

WHEREAS the AERC concluded along with 64 percent of the Deans and Chairs surveyed for its report that the current procedures need to be streamlined;

BE IT RESOLVED That the Administrator Evaluation Policy be amended by substitution to be effective immediately.

In 2008-09 the Senate Agenda Committee charged the *Ad hoc* Committee for Administrator Evaluation Review (AERC) to assess the administrator evaluation process for efficiency and relevancy. Their report was submitted and accepted by the Senate at the end of last year but there was no time for specific resolutions. Senate Agenda Committee has now crafted resolutions in the spirit of the report for the Senate's review and vote.

The motion today is to amend by substitution the motions passed since 1991 which have been compiled into one document and provided in 'track changes' mode. It is the view of SAC that these amendments will lead to a more meaningful and comprehensive review of administrators while preserving the role of faculty.

Dean Spieler, a member of the *Ad hoc* Committee for Administrator Evaluation Review, noted that paragraph four is inconsistent with the report which calls for reviews every five years and paragraph 5 appears to retain prior language which was not discussed by the committee. She recommended not voting on paragraph five.

Professor Morrison responded that evaluation of the Provost is current procedure and SAC deemed it significant thus making the decision to retain that provision. As regards paragraph four, SAC is not bound to forward motions suggested by any Senate committee and, following much deliberation, concluded that this option is worthwhile. Professor Herman noted that, while non-academic administrator evaluations were discontinued when regular three-year evaluations of academic administrators significantly added to the workload, they were performed regularly prior to that time. Determination of who will be evaluated is in consultation with the associated Senior Vice President who also receives a report upon completion of the evaluation. Paragraph four merely continues past practice.

Professor Herman requested clarification on the role of SAC in reviewing administrator evaluations prior to their release and the role of the Administrator Evaluation Oversight Committee (AEOC) in reviewing final reports (paragraph 2B).

Professor Morrison responded that SAC had decided that a final review by SAC adds no value and has rarely discovered lapses in confidentiality. AEOC will continue their review of the final report and will authorize release following that review.

The Senate reviewed and discussed the current process which, in the view of some, provides only one component of what should be a more comprehensive review conducted by the Dean in the case of Chairs and by the Provost in the case of Deans. While the current process does, at times, include input from other chairs or from students, input from outside the University is rarely garnered. The current process was deemed time-consuming and ineffectual by the AERC which generally agreed that a comprehensive review should be undertaken by the direct supervisor with input from relevant faculty acquired by Senate evaluation teams.

Professor Herman explained that the original process was meant to be part of more comprehensive review but the AEOC experienced difficulties in providing their reports in time to impact that review. Resources and faculty issues determine how broad or narrow the evaluation

will be. Professor Herman was supportive of the idea that faculty input will play a role in a larger evaluation which will include dimensions of service within and outside of Northeastern. Professor Herman offered a friendly amendment to add "*for additional review*" to paragraph 2B to clarify review of the final report. This was accepted by Professor Morrison.

Professor Kruger spoke in favor of this more comprehensive approach noting that, while much responsibility shifts to the Provost's Office, the procedure continues to require collaboration with faculty and maintains faculty interests. He pointed out, too, that SAC retains the ability to evaluate administrators by surveying faculty at its own discretion. He pointed out that the low response rate is concerning and should be researched as there is information available on boosting those rates.

Professor McKnight spoke against the motion. As a chair of AEOC he found the process effective. Partnership with the Provost's Office is maintained by their appointment of two members of the evaluation team. The recommendation marginalizes faculty input by introducing the potential to be dismissed and not included in the broader evaluation. Secondly, accountability is a most important part of present process whereby any relevant faculty member can read the evaluation which then becomes a matter of record. Should a pattern of poor administration emerge, it is known and recorded. There is no guarantee that the broader evaluation will be available for viewing. Finally, faculty who served on evaluation teams found it educational in terms of how other departments operate. The proposed procedure is a step away from the good partnership experienced between faculty and administration.

Several Senators discussed whether the proposal relegates the Senate to merely a compiler of data and how issues of concern stemming from the evaluation would be addressed, which the AERC did not discuss. It was concluded that there is potential for the evaluation team to go beyond a simple survey.

Professor Gaffney proposed a motion to amend paragraph 2B by removing verbiage within parentheses which reads "*(two if the administrator's unit is small, such as a department, or three if the unit is larger, such as a college)*" in order to provide flexibility. Departments vary widely in size and it might be appropriate to have a larger committee in evaluating a large department. The motion was seconded.

Following brief discussion of the size of evaluation teams and the complexity of some departments it was generally agreed that flexibility in the size of evaluation teams is already provided in the proposed procedure.

VOTE to strike wording in parentheses in paragraph 2B: PASSED, 16-13-8.

The Senate then turned to a vote on the original motion with friendly amendment accepted.

VOTE to adopt new procedures for faculty review of administrators: PASSED, 24-2-5

The Senate adjourned at 1:04 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen W. McKnight, Secretary
Faculty Senate