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Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Faculty Senate

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Northeastern University

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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, 27 JANUARY

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

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

Absent (Professors) Balachandra, Born, Daynard, Karma, Rosengaus,

Provost Director convened the meeting at 11:52 AM

I. The minutes of 12 January were approved as amended.

II. Professor Morrison reported the following:

SAC met twice in regular sessions since the last Senate meeting and once with the Provost.

SAC has been asked to form a search committee for the Dean of the College of Criminal Justice. Staffing is underway.

The following Senate resolutions have been returned as noted:

0910-03: Revision of the Administrator Evaluation Process. Approved by Provost Director on 12/11/2009.

0910-04: Return to approved merit and equity process as stated in the current Faculty Handbook. "Informational, no action required" by Provost Director on 12/23/09.

0910-05: 2011 merit raise pool for faculty at 3% plus an additional 1% for equity adjustments as needed. "Informational, no action required" by Provost Director on 12/23/09.

0910-06: Update to the Faculty Matchmate Salary Study. "Informational, no action required" by Provost Director on 12/23/09.

The **Administrator Evaluation Oversight Committee** is now staffed as follows:

Professor Gerald Herman (CAS-History), Chair
Professor Sharon Bruns (CBA)
Professor Maria Isabel Meirelles (CAS-Art & Design)

III. The Provost's report is deferred until other Senate business is conducted.

IV. Questions.

Professor Herman questioned the search for a Dean of the College of Criminal Justice given that the College will be a School within the College of Social Sciences and Humanities. The Provost responded that the search is for a Dean of the College who will become the Dean of the School in July.

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

BE IT RESOLVED That, in conjunction with the restructuring of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Criminal Justice, approved by the Faculty Senate on 7 December 2009, the School of Criminal Justice be renamed the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice.

Professor Morrison reminded the Senate that, at the time the Senate voted on restructuring, a name change for Criminal Justice was mentioned by the Provost.

The floor recognized Dean Britt who reported that The College has discussed a change over a number of years and decided to defer such a change during restructuring. The proposed name better reflects what is currently of importance at the College and to incoming students and retains the historical name as well. The College faculty voted 18-1-2 for the change.

VOTE to change the name of the School of Criminal Justice to the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice: PASSED, 34—0—0

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

BE IT RESOLVED That Northeastern University eliminate the summer activities hour on Mondays, 11:45 AM-1:30 PM, as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee on 12 November 2009 and by the Student Government Association on 7 December 2009.

The Vice Provost explained that the present summer activities period precludes labs and studios associated with courses in the Monday timeslot. Summer activities typically occur in the late afternoon in order to include students on Co-op placements. She noted that the Student Government Association voted in favor of this proposal.

VOTE to eliminate the summer activities hour on Mondays: PASSED, 34—0—0

VII. Professor Waszczak read the following and it was seconded:

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate endorses the Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy Studies in the School of Pharmacy in the Bouvé College of Health Sciences as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee on 14 January 2010.

The floor was ceded to Dean Reynolds who reported that this is a "pass-through" degree (similar to that in the physical therapy program) whereby pharmacy students in the six-year clinical doctorate (Pharm.D.) program earn a BS degree as they progress from the fifth to the sixth year of the program. The BSPS will require no additional academic or financial resources because it is for existing pharmacy students only. In addition, the bachelors degree is better understood than the Pharm.D. degree as an undergraduate program, which is useful to students wishing to pursue graduate studies or additional professional degree programs. And finally, reported retention/graduation rates may improve because the BSPS program could be completed within the allowable six year period.

Professor Gaffney questioned the timing and Dean Reynolds responded that the proposal has been discussed for several years but the best arrangement was only recently agreed upon.

VOTE on the proposed Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy Studies: PASSED, 34-0-0

VII. The Provost reported on implementation of the academic plan as follows.

There are five key initiatives in the long-range plan:
- Enhance student outcomes via experiential learning
- Address global challenges

Enrich intellectual life
Strengthen urban engagement
Embrace global opportunities

These may be defined as education; student experience; research; and faculty within the infrastructure. Each of these may be addressed in the following manner: things causing us to change; our current state; our desired state; action steps; metrics.

The focus of this presentation will be on education, faculty and research wherein the Provost will highlight a few areas within each caption. *Overall,* drivers of change at the University are the expansion of knowledge, new fields of study, new understanding of how people learn (the Provost recommended that Senators read *"How People Learn"* which is published by National Academy Press), the increasing impact of globalization, and the increasing importance of Honors Programs to high achieving students.

The University's desired state is one with expanded undergraduate offerings, including dual degree programs; undergraduate programs delivered in a variety of formats i.e. face to face, online, and hybrids; and increasing retention and graduation rates.

Professor Mourant reported receiving negative feedback from online courses at the graduate level and wondered if they would be appropriate for undergraduates. The Provost agreed that online courses are not for everyone. However, certain online courses, particularly those through the College of Professional Studies are very popular and offer another level of flexibility.

The University's current state is as follows: The Honors programs focus on the first two years only; the curriculum assessment process is immature; the traditional lecture-based approach to education remains dominant; and retention and graduation rates have steadily increased in recent years.

Action steps include development of innovative high-quality undergraduate degree programs; expansion of online and hybrid course delivery; a redesign of honors programs; and continued increase in retention and graduation rates.

Metrics to gauge success will include rankings of undergraduate programs; the quality of applicants; student/faculty ratios; students' evaluations; job placement rates and median salaries; licensure rates; and national exam scores.

Focusing on **education (both undergraduate and Co-op)**, a few drivers of change are Co-op and increasing student interest in other modes of experiential learning; NU leadership in career development which is increasingly valuable in recruiting; the increasing impact of globalization; increasing interest in the 4-year Co-op option. Data from 2006-2009 shows that, collectively, the number of students graduating with three co-ops has dropped. Individually, the College of Engineering's three co-op/five year option is still predominant at 40% and may remain so. The College of Arts and Sciences has remained flat within all options.

Prof. Hafner inquired if the students who doing less than three co-op placements were doing so to graduate in four years or if these were students who have gotten into academic difficulties and need the extra time to catch up on their academic program to graduate in the usual five years. Prof. Chilvers inquired if these figures for the decrease in students taking three co-op placements make allowance for transfer students who would not be at the university long enough to complete three full co-op placements. The Vice Provost Powers-Lee said that she would look into the data to see if these numbers could be extracted.

NU's desired state under the education focus is the same as that within the overall desired state for the University, i.e. expanded undergraduate offers, a variety of formats, meaningful assessment strategies, etc.

The current state for education again reflects some of the same items as above and also includes limited synergy between research themes and unique undergraduate degree programs and limited interest in development of unique undergraduate degree programs.

Action steps include, among others, enhancement of the breadth of Co-op opportunities, both national and international and removal of barriers to increased participation in international Co-op.

Education metrics are the same as those listed for the overall academic plan (above).

Dean Luzzi expressed surprise that 'yield' is not included in metrics given that there exists compelling data from accepted students who made decisions to attend NU based on Co-op options. The Dean suspects an uptick of yield rates. The Provost responded that such data is most likely reported within the enrollment management section of the overall report which is not being presented today.

Graduate and professional education.

Drivers include changing market demands; new career opportunities; the replacement of the BA with the masters degree as the terminal degree; new technologies; emerging new fields of study.

The desired state includes more online graduate and professional programs; increasing tuition revenue; increasing enrollment; Ph.D. programs that are aligned with interdisciplinary research programs; and Ph.D. programs that attract top quality students and faculty.

The current state [of graduate and professional education] is a lag in NU's percentage of graduate students as compared to peers; few new programs being developed in the last five to seven years; limited opportunities for experiential learning; and barriers to faculty collaborations across programs.

Action steps include increasing graduate enrollment; development of new professional face-to-face and online programs; new interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs; and a streamlined application process.

Metrics are graduate applications, enrollment and yields; the quality of applicants to Ph.D. programs; the number of MS programs with experiential learning components; time to degree completion; number of academic placements; number of publications by students; and others.

Research.

Drivers of change: research creates branding and fund-raising opportunities; high quality research invigorates the undergraduate curriculum, and others.

Desired state: research programs being sustained through external funding; strategically hired faculty with the skills necessary to build research programs; ability to attract the best graduate students.

The current state of research includes barriers to interdisciplinary research programs; individual investigators and research programs have not leveraged external funding; faculty hiring has not been focused on research program development; technology commercialization is passive

Action steps include identifying potential areas of strength and forming teams of faculty to develop programs; expansion of undergraduate research opportunities including Co-op research with faculty; reorganization of technology commercialization to become an active component of the research process.

Dean Luzzi noted several upcoming research events:

Sustainability Research Retreat – January 29, 7:30am to 4:00pm, Stearns 431
Biomedical Imaging Retreat – February 4, 8:00am – 4:00pm, Curry Center Ballroom
NU Research Expo – March 24 – 11:00am to 2:30pm, Cabot Gym

Dean Zoloth noted in addition the Health Research Retreat on February 19.

The Provost added that these will assist faculty across the university in connecting with each other and creating teams which address important research.

Metrics include research expenditures (currently at $58M with the goal for next year at $65M); expenditures per square foot of space utilized; publications; number of invited and plenary talks at conferences; patents filed.

Faculty

Drivers of change: NU's reputation rests with faculty; high-quality applicants and parents consider faculty size, student/faculty ratios and academic reputation; faculty diversity needs to reflect student body; increasing pressures to maintain and diversity academic leadership; faculty retirement age.

The desired state: faculty quality exceeds expectations and raises NU's external reputation; NU becomes a destination for faculty from top institutions; increase in faculty honors received; the ratio of tenure-track faculty to full time faculty matches aspirant institutions; and others.

The current state of faculty reflects student/faculty ratios which are higher than peer institutions; too high a dependence on part-time faculty; little improvement in faculty diversity; recruitment of senior faculty is not consistently successful; and faculty workload is unevenly defined and observed across the institution.

Professor Waszczak questioned how departments are to fill curriculum gaps if faculty hired at the senior level cannot or will not teach foundational courses, particularly due to interdisciplinary hires.

The Provost responded that interdisciplinary hiring is not the major focus. Justification for hiring is sometimes simply because there is a strategic need for courses to be taught. Colleges must hire faculty that are outstanding researchers and educators. Some senior faculty hires should be expected to teach basic courses and the issue should be under discussion at the Colleges.

Professor Waszczak noted that raising the expectation to senior-level candidates to fill gaps works against hiring them. The Provost then responded that under those circumstances, they are not right for NU and added that many senior faculty teach introductory courses at other institutions.

Returning to the presentation on faculty, the Provost provided the following action steps: to replace the estimated 150 faculty leaving the University over next five years; to increase faculty size by 150 new tenure lines; to implement ADVANCE programs for recruiting and mentoring women in STEM—SS fields; to recruit tenure-track faculty into major research themes; to enhance teaching via the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning; and others.

Vice Provost Loeffelholz reported that 40% of NU's current faculty members have been here less than ten years.

Metrics: numbers of tenured and tenure-track faculty; student-faculty ratios; faculty diversity; honors and awards; external rankings of programs.

The Provost ended his presentation with the hope that it would stimulate discussion among faculty. The plan has been under construction for more than a year and will be presented to the Board of Trustees in March.

Professor Kruger asked if there had been discussion about metrics for the quality of teaching. This has traditionally been dependent on student ratings and there is a need to expand the metrics used and to constantly improve the quality of instruction. The Provost agreed and added that metrics for how students learn are important as well.

Vice Provost Powers-Lee responded that gauging outcomes is absent from the NU Core which defines expectations but did not define outcomes. Several committees have worked on outcomes and have

proposed a template of metrics for piloting. These metrics become more real when departments are able identify their own metrics to suit their own student materials.

Professor Ross noted that course evaluation returns are at less than 40% and asked whether plans are underway to create incentives for online evaluations. He added that colleagues at other universities have reported 70% to 80% returns by not giving students who do not submit evaluations access to early grades.

Vice Provost Powers-Lee responded that teacher evaluations are a collaboration between students and faculty and in fall 2009 several measures were aimed at increasing participation. For instance, the open-ended questions were reduced to two from five; students worked to clarify automatic messages; students are also using social media to advertise for involvement. Two other measures have been institutionalized with no clear implications yet: the timing of surveys was altered and random prize incentives were put in place. Director of CIETL Prof. Kostia Bergman interviewed faculty who received a high level of participation (over 80%) to ascertain their methods. Some were in computer labs and were able to garner full participation; others sent personal emails; and a few forced students to complete the survey through incentives or threats.

Professor Thrush reported that a substantial number of CAS chairs indicated a great deal of concern regarding participation. It would appear that suggestions to require that evaluations are completed in order to receive a grade are reasonable. He also reported concern among chairs with regard to unedited student comments.

Professor Goodale recalled that the Senate was informed that student dissatisfaction would increase if student comments were not published. He wondered if evaluation reports for a course could be linked to the Banner registration system to increase the visibility of the TRACE system. Vice Provost Powers-Lee said that that feature was being explored. She noted, too, that the last four TCEP response percentages were in the 60% range, comparable with TRACE returns.

Professor Hafner recalled that the Senate chose to defer tying evaluations to the receipt of grades because TRACE was a new system. However, more and more universities do so and dissatisfaction does disappear. She suggested that the issue be brought before the Senate again for discussion and vote.

The Senate briefly discussed the infrastructure to support interdisciplinary work, student/faculty ratios, and the lack of faculty participation in long-range planning. The Provost explained the latter by noting that the Deans had been involved.

The Senate adjourned at 1:12 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen W. McKnight, Secretary
Faculty Senate