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Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 01/26/2011

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Northeastern University
Office of the Faculty Senate

TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: STEPHEN W. MCKNIGHT, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
RE: MINUTES, 2010-2011 FACULTY SENATE, 26 JANUARY 2011

Present: (Professors) Adams, Alper, Barberis, Basagni, Board, Bruns, Chilvers, De Ritis, Fox, Gaffney, Hafner, Hanson, Herman, Kruger, Lifter, McKnight, Morrison, Muftu, Poriss, Portz, Sherman, Sherwood, Strauss, Suciu, Thrush,

(Administrators) Director, Falcon, Finkelstein, Lane, Loeffelholz, Luzzi, Powers-Lee, Spieler, Van Den Abbeele, Zoloth

Absent (Professors) Alshawabkeh, Ramirez, Waszczak

Provost Director convened the meeting at 11:47 AM

- I. The minutes of 12/15/2010 were approved as amended.
- II. Professor Kruger reported that SAC has met three times since the last Senate meeting; Professor Kruger has met once with the Provost.

The following Senate resolutions have been returned to the Senate as follows:

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| 1011-2 | Resolution to modularize the Faculty Handbook (32-0-0): approved by the Provost 12/20/10. |
| 1011-3 | Resolution establishing the faculty merit increase at 4.5% for the fiscal year 2012: "Informational-no action required" by the Provost, 12/20/10. |

SAC has reserved 450 Dodge on the following dates/times for possible additional Senate meetings. As the business of the Senate proceeds SAC will assess the need for any or all of these meetings. As much as possible, please hold these dates on your calendars.

Thursday, 24 March, 3:00-4:30
Thursday, 31 March, 3:00-4:30
Thursday, 7 April, 3:00-4:30

SAC has been authorized to convene a search committee for a Dean of the College of Business Administration. Staffing is underway.

Professor DeRitis has been elected as a Faculty Senator by the College of Arts, Media, and Design to replace Professor Zaremba, who has taken a position of Associate Dean in the College.

- III. Provost Director called attention to the recent very positive article in the Chronicle of Higher Education regarding international programs at Northeastern. The Boston Globe also published an article regarding the substantial increase in undergraduate applications (exceeding 43,000) at Northeastern. Graduate programs showed a significant increase as well.

A University-wide honors convocation is planned on 21 April where awards to various faculty and staff will be presented.

Northeastern will again participate in a Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) survey of faculty. The University has participated several times in the past; the report provides important feedback about the faculty view of the institution as well a comparative analysis to other institutions. The Board of Trustees is very interested in the survey. The Provost urged Senators to advocate faculty members' participation.

IV. Questions & discussion

Professor Gaffney inquired whether the debt structure has been modified so that merit increases are not canceled in the future. The Provost explained that the debt structure is constantly being updated. There were many issues that impacted merit increases including endowment preservation which precluded endowment payout. The endowment payout was reinstated last year. Longer term concerns remain.

Dean Luzzi announced the NU Research Expo at Cabot Cage on April 6. Provost Director added that this annual happening will include the Faculty Works event – a celebration of faculty books published and other major works – this year in order to provide maximum visibility.

V. Professor Lifter read the following and it was seconded.

***BE IT RESOLVED* That the Faculty Senate approve the suspension of enrollments to the Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis as approved by the Graduate Council on 7 December 2010.**

Professor Lifter explained that the program was originally a collaboration which was subsequently moved to the Department of Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology. It is an offsite program with May Institute which is managed and delivered by May Institute for their employees and employees at other sites. At this time, the Director is stepping down and the Department cannot conveniently manage an off-site program.

VOTE to suspend enrollments to the Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis: PASSED, 31-0-0.

VI. Professor Bruns read the following and it was seconded.

***WHEREAS* enrollment growth at the graduate level, increased student co-curricular activities, increased number of smaller classes, and higher student retention rates have resulted in the over-utilization of existing classroom space;**

***BE IT RESOLVED* that the Wednesday student activity period, which occurs from 11:45 AM to 1:25 PM, and the Thursday student activity period, which occurs from 2:50 PM to 4:30 PM, be eliminated and replaced by semester course sequences for academic classes;**

***BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED* that whenever a conflict occurs between Faculty Senate meetings and a faculty senator's teaching schedule that suitable accommodations be sought in the senator's teaching schedule so that the faculty senator is able to attend Faculty Senate meetings.**

***BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED* that the University and colleges provide the support and resources to enable students to continue to participate in student groups that have used activity periods for meeting times.**

A similar resolution was passed by the Student Government Association and mirrors their request for support for mechanisms to encourage activities in the absence of a dedicated University-wide activities period. Professor Bruns yielded the floor to Ms. Linda Allen, Registrar.

Classrooms remain at an 89% utilization rate despite having increased the number by 50. A typical and comfortable utilization rate is about 67%. With the exception of a few new rooms in residence halls, in the next four to five year there is little opportunity to increase the number of classrooms. Classroom technology has been upgraded, but physical space is exhausted. Evenings are utilized by CPS and graduate programs and Saturday classes could not be sequenced. Elimination of activities periods would provide the opportunity for additional sequences.

Professor Herman noted that elimination of the activities hours will provide the ability to schedule 226 additional sections and will allow more flexibility for optimum teaching areas.

Professor Basagni, noting that College of Engineering students are not in favor of elimination as there is no other suitable time for activities bringing in external speakers from industry that can be attended by COE undergraduates including freshmen. Professor Basagni yielded the floor to Professor Kaeli, Director of Undergraduate Program, COE. Elimination will affect 10 student organizations at COE and over 400 students. Freshmen need to continue to connect with other COE students.

Professor Morrison spoke in favor but suggested a friendly amendment to clarify that accommodation for Senators should be made rather than the stronger wording intimating that accommodation must be made. Professor Kruger responded that more than a good faith effort must be made for Senators.

The Senate debated the possibility of eliminating one activities period, accommodating Colleges who wished to retain certain periods of time during which classes would not be scheduled, and setting aside certain classroom for student meetings. It was noted that teaching responsibilities must outweigh other issues.

Professor Herman noted that a survey of other universities indicated that there are no set-aside activities periods at those institutions. He noted that the Curry Student Center rooms are heavily used during activities periods, and studies have indicated that elimination of activities periods would contribute to more availability in the CSC. Colleges or departments could reserve selected sequences for their organizational and student activities.

In response to a question from Professor McKnight, Registrar Allen affirmed that the Registrar's Office is open to working with units to identify staggered sequences that departments and colleges might reserve with no scheduled classes.

Professor Chilvers proposed a friendly amendment to the second paragraph incorporating times and it was accepted by Professor Bruns.

Professor Adams inquired about long term plans for adding classroom space and the Provost responded in the affirmative. An update from Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance, Jack McCarthy will be forthcoming.

The amended resolution is as follows:

WHEREAS enrollment growth at the graduate level, increased student co-curricular activities, increased number of smaller classes, and higher student retention rates have resulted in the over-utilization of existing classroom space;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Wednesday student activity period, which occurs from 11:45 AM to 1:25 PM, and the Thursday student activity period, which occurs from 2:50 PM to 4:30 PM, be eliminated and replaced by semester course sequences for academic classes. The first new sequence would be Wednesday and Friday, 11:45 AM to 1:25 PM and the second new sequence would be Tuesday, 11:45 AM to 1:25 PM and Thursday 2:50 PM to 4:30 PM.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that whenever a conflict occurs between Faculty Senate meetings and a faculty senator's teaching schedule that suitable accommodations be sought in the senator's teaching schedule so that the faculty senator is able to attend Faculty Senate meetings.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University and colleges provide the support and resources to enable students to continue to participate in student groups that have used activity periods for meeting times.

VOTE to eliminate University activities periods: PASSED, 30-2-1

The Parliamentarian reminded the Senate that it is out of order to speak to an issue and to then subsequently yield the floor.

- VII. Report and recommendations for the 2009-2010 Senate Committee for Research Policy Oversight. Professor McKnight reminded the Senate that debate must ensue at the amendment made by Professor Gaffney which was seconded, as follows: *Be it resolved that the specific allocation for indirect costs return to the principal investigator be fixed at 10% of the indirect costs.*

Since amending an amendment is out of order, Professor Gaffney withdrew the amendment and Professor Strauss [seconder] agreed. Professor Gaffney then offered the following amendment: *Be it resolved that the specific allocation for indirect costs return to the principal investigator be fixed at 10% of the indirect cost. In the future, this rate may be revised to vary by College based upon discussions between the Dean and faculties of each College.*

Professor Gaffney said that the sentiment on floor of Senate the last time this motion was debated was that some issues could be corrected and the new hybrid management system could be incorporated. The RPOC report acknowledges many of uses of funds: the amount of overhead return must provide PI's an effective bridge between contracts and 10% is that amount. A fixed rate protects PIs against having to walk away from months of work if a Dean does not accept a rate. Ten percent fits with the philosophy of hybrid management by supporting those who garner significant outside funding. The amendment allows conversations between the dean and the faculty about flexibility and competing needs for the overhead funding such as startup funding for an unusual number of new faculty hires. .

Dean Zoloth noted that the amendment raises the question of differing rates and opens the scenario of shopping for the highest rates. He also expressed concern that the 10% rate may not work with the new College-centered hybrid budget model. Several Deans agreed.

Dean Finklestein noted that overhead return is merely one of several ways the colleges can support research, such as cost sharing and allocation of continued funding for students on grants that expire. The Dean suggested that a resolution allocating a specified amount across colleges in an intrusion by the Senate into the day-to-day management of how colleges are addressing these issues.

Professor Hanson noted that he is more comfortable with the monies being discussed in a collective fashion as decisions made by the deans alone could seem arbitrary.

Professor Luzzi raised the important issue of a "Sunset Clause" which addresses large amounts of discretionary monies being held in overhead return accounts which is not in the best interests of the University. Since the amendment speaks to flexibility, why not set the percentage within the Colleges.

Professor Morrison pointed out that overhead relates to real costs incurred by University and Colleges, and the average grant does not even get full overhead. Where will the Colleges get money to fulfill these necessary institutional functions?

Several senators argued in favor of the amendment due to the flexibility and reasonability of 10% as a starting point. Professor Hafner urged a university-wide rate in order that the issues not become unmanageable.

Other senators, noting that the hybrid management model contains many unknowns at this point, expressed concern about other methods of incentivizing research and spoke against the motion.

The floor was yielded to Professor Ondrechan who suggested that large accounts containing unused monies are unusual and that the overhead return is needed as seed money. Professor Lifter noted that many faculty members are in favor of 10%, particularly in the face of funding uncertainty.

Professor Fox offered a friendly amendment to add '*until June 30, 2013*' immediately following *Be it resolved that...*This was not accepted.

Professor Sherman asked for clarification that the 10% rate means 10% of indirect cost recovery. He expressed his opposition to indirect cost return to individual PI's and felt that each department should determine distribution of any distribution of overhead to incentivize research. In response to Professor Portz's question about where the other 90% of the overhead goes, the Provost responded that under the hybrid management system all the overhead goes to the College.

The Senate adjourned at 1:26 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen W. McKnight, Secretary
Faculty Senate