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Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 02/09/2011

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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, 9 FEBRUARY 2011

Present: (Professors) Adams, Alper, Alshawabkeh, Barberis, Board, Bruns, Chilvers, De Ritis, Fox, Gaffney, Hafner, Hanson, Herman, karma, Kruger, Lane, Lifter, McKnight, Morrison, Poriss, Portz, Ramirez, Sherman, Sherwood, Suciu, Waszczak

(Administrators) Director, Falcon, Finkelstein, Loeffelholz, Moore, Powers-Lee, Spieler, Van Den Abbee, Zoloth

Absent (Professors) Basagni, Muftu, Strauss, Thrush

(Administrators) Lane

Provost Director convened the meeting at 11:49 AM

- I. The minutes of 26 January 2011 were approved as written.
- II. SAC has met twice since the last Senate meeting; SAC has met once with the Provost & once with the President; Professor Kruger has also met once with the Provost.

The following College of Science faculty members have been elected to the 2011-2012 Senate: Professors Arun Bansil, Terry Gaffney and Gordana Todorov. Professor Bansil was also elected to replace Professor Karma this spring.

The following Committees have been staffed and charged:

Search Committee for a Dean of Bouvé:

Elected members:

Professor Maura Iverson (Physical Therapy), Chair
Professor Judith Barr (Pharmacy Practice)
Professor Jessica Hoffman (Counseling & Applied Psychology)
Professor Susan Roberts (Nursing)

Appointed members:

Professor Mansoor Amiji, Pharmaceutical Sciences, BCHS
Professor Dana Brooks, ECE, COE
Dean Murray Gibson, COS

Student members:

Ms. Giselle Bonzi, Graduate Student, Bouvé
Mr. Steven, Munnely, Undergraduate Student, Bouvé

Professor Kruger reported having spoken with Provost Director concerning the importance of communication on searches which are a joint effort of the Senate and the Provost's office.

Senate Standing Committee for Enrollment and Admissions Policy

Members:

Professor Elizabeth A. Chilvers, CBA
Professor Malcolm D. Hill, CSSH
Professor Carey Noland, Chair, CAMD
Professor Gilead Tadmor, COE
Associate Vice Provost Elise J. Dallimore

Charge

Given that the educational needs of freshmen and seniors might differ in significant ways, and that the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSEE) data indicate that freshman year in particular might benefit from enhancement efforts, the Senate Agenda Committee requests that the committee initially focus its efforts on the freshman year. In collaboration with the Provost's Office, the deans, division of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, and the undergraduate Student Government Association, the Committee on Enrollment and Admissions Policy should undertake the following:

1. Clearly identify the components of a high quality educational experience for freshmen at Northeastern University;
2. Assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of the University's current freshman year educational experiences by using the results of National Survey of Student Engagement (NSEE) and other sources of data;
3. Make recommendations about enhancing the educational experiences that:
 - a. are consistent with the University's mission and academic plan;
 - b. build upon University's strengths;
 - c. improve areas of relative weakness pertaining to the educational experiences of freshman year;
 - d. take into consideration evidence-based instructional and educational practices for freshmen and young adult learners; and
 - e. address possible barriers to implementing policies and procedures in regard to enhancing the freshman educational experience.

The following resolutions have been approved by the Provost:

1011-05 Suspension of enrollments to the Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis

1011-06 Elimination of University Activities Periods

- III. Provost's Report. Provost Director reported that additional classrooms will be had at the YMCA and at Richards Hall; some temporary space will remain in the pool; the Blackman auditorium renovation will be completed soon; and four large conference rooms at Forsyth Institute Building are available to the University community. In addition, space will become open when moves to Forsyth Institute take place.
- IV. Questions and Discussion
Responding to questions concerning space, the Provost explained that Blackman will have new seating, new handicapped access, a new slope, sound, and lighting. The overall increase in classroom space is approximately a dozen.

Vice Provost Powers-Lee reported, in response to questions concerning pre-requisite checking, that the Registrar's Office is getting data ready for roll-out and test runs have been made. . The probability is high that the automatic prerequisite checking will be implemented for the fall since the numbers are improving. The Vice Provost will check further with the Registrar's Office.

- V. Professor Kruger moved to postpone the report from the Faculty Development Committee to 23 February and, as there were no objections, it was so moved.
- VI. Report and recommendations of the 2009-2010 Senate Committee for Research Policy Oversight (Professor McKnight)

The following amendment remains in debate:

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 read a statement signed by 19 members of the Mathematics Department faculty in favor of the amendment. Professor Gaffney pointed out that overhead return is often the only source of discretionary funding for PI's to support research needs, and the ability to fund a visitor or an extra trip without the administrative procedures of going to the Dean or a department committee for approval is greatly valued by PI's. A 10% overhead return rate gives more discretion to the PI's on ways to support their research. The process for changing the overhead return rate by collective decision of the Dean and college faculty based on open discussion of the direction of the college and the necessity for funding new initiatives is a good model for college governance.

Professor Kruger acknowledged the difficulties facing the deans who are accountable for balancing the budget. He spoke in favor of placing resources in the hands of those doing research. The University has been on an upward trajectory with ten percent indirect costs return for many years and the amendment maintains that percentage while at the same time offering flexibility. Other universities allocate 10% of the indirect cost to PI's.

Professor Morrison suggested that the second sentence of the amendment has no force without a date certain as "the future" is now.

Dean Finkelstein noted that any argument that that the Deans will not empower faculty is false and reiterated that the Senate need not be involved in Deans' decisions.

Professor Waszczak spoke in favor noting that the amount is not excessive and 90% of the overhead is returned to the deans.

Dean Zoloth, speaking against the amendment, expressed concern that, in reality, only 80% of research overhead costs are covered by the indirect cost rate. Deans do make decisions on ways to support research, including return to PI's. But he was uncomfortable with specifying the amount of return to be 10%, and was also concerned about the potential for shopping for overhead return rates on inter-college collaborative grants.

Several professors, recognized by the body, spoke in favor noting that IDC subsidizes such expenditures as workshops, new projects, visiting scientists, travel and recruiting, all of which benefit the University and University rankings.

Dean Van Den Abbeele noted the necessity of a Dean's ability to both support the successful principal investigators and to provide funding for new principal investigators.

Professor Herman called for cloture and there was no objection. Three Senators called for a ballot vote.

VOTE by ballot to accept the amendment: PASSED, 21-9-2

Professor Fox motioned to amend by addition of "until 30 July 2013" and Professor Bansil seconded. Professor Gaffney noted that the change to hybrid management will take longer than two years and, in fact, all motions passed should be reviewed as that takes place. Professor McKnight also spoke against as the amendment already allows the flexibility for each College to agree to whatever is appropriate.

A ballot vote was called for. VOTE to amend by addition of a date certain: FAILED, 6-24-1.

Professor Waszczak motioned to divide the resolutions and was seconded. VOTE to divide the resolutions: PASSED, 27-2-1

Professor Herman called the question, however, there was objection and a vote ensued. VOTE for cloture: PASSED, 27-1-2

The first paragraph, as amended, is as follows:

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.

VOTE to accept the first paragraph as amended: PASSED, 23-8-1

Professor McKnight read the following and it was seconded.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the specific allocation for newly generated indirect cost return be placed into lapsing account with a fixed expiration date of four years after the end of the grant or upon a date negotiated with the Dean of the College in which the principal investigator resides

Professor Waszczak noted that the burden of overseeing lapsing accounts is excessive, impractical and punitive as it implies separate accounts, budgets and controls. The IDC should be retained in a single, non-lapsing account.

Professor Bansil agreed, indicating that the likelihood that any money would not be used by PIs is nearly 0 and the lapsing accounts would necessitate a large increase in administrative oversight for faculty and staff.

Professor Hafner argued in favor in order that large accounts not be allowed to accumulate unspent in overhead return accounts which place a burden on the University.

Professor McKnight spoke in favor noting that it is an appropriate solution to encourage funds to be used in support of the research effort rather than put aside in accounts “for a rainy day.”

Several Senators indicated concern about the administrative burden of keeping track of lapsing funds from grants with different end dates.

Dean Zoloth pointed out that the RPOC had recognized a need for lapsing accounts to guarantee that funds be turned over into furthering the research effort.

Professor Ondrechen, who was recognized from the floor, noted that, although she was a member of RPOC, she did not favor lapsing accounts due to the administrative burden. Only a small number of individual PI's have significant unused funds in their overhead return accounts.

Dean Finkelstein pointed out that startup funds for new faculty members are usually given in three-year lapsing accounts to encourage spending to improve the chances of attracting additional funding,

Professor Morrison spoke against lapsing accounts and caps as it will encourage unwise, last-minute spending. Professor Fox wondered if a formula for returning a percentage of unspent IDC to the Deans would ameliorate the problem.

The floor was yielded to Professor Sridhar who noted that the number of very large accounts is likely few, spoke against lapsing accounts due to the administrative burden and the difficulty of determining how much is in an IDC at any given time.

Professor Kruger called for cloture. VOTE for cloture: PASSED, 23-7-2.

***BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED* that the specific allocation for newly generated indirect cost return be placed into lapsing account with a fixed expiration date of four years after the end of the grant or upon a date negotiated with the Dean of the College in which the principal investigator resides**

VOTE on the second paragraph: FAILED, 10-21-1

Objection to a motion to adjourn engendered a vote. VOTE to adjourn: PASSED, 13-12

The Senate adjourned at 1:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen W. McKnight, Secretary
Faculty Senate