

February 23, 2011

## Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 02/23/2011

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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, 2010-2011 FACULTY SENATE, 23 FEBRUARY 2011**

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

(Administrators) Director, Falcon, Finkelstein, Loeffelholz, Lane, Powers-Lee, Spieler, Yener, Zoloth

Absent (Professors) Sherman, Strauss, Thrush

(Administrators) Dean Luzzi

Provost Director convened the meeting at 11:49 AM

- I. The minutes of 9 February 2011 were approved as amended.
- II. Professor Kruger reported that SAC met twice in regular session since the last Senate meeting and once with the Provost. Professor Kruger also met with Provost.

Professor Robert Young was elected by CBA faculty to replace Interim Dean Harry Lane on the Senate;

CIS faculty elected Professor Javed Aslam to the 2011-2012 Senate.

The following Senate resolutions were returned:

- 0910-09 BS in Pharmacy Studies. Provost approved 2/4/10; BOT approved 3/2010
- 0910-10 LL.M in School of Law. Provost approved; BOT approved 5/2010
- 0910-11 Name change to MS in Exercise Science. Provost approved; BOT approved 5/2010
- 0910-13 Bachelor of Landscape Architecture. Provost approved; BOT approved 5-2010
- 0910-14 Ph.D. in Information Assurance. Provost approved; BOT approved 5-2010

Progress is being made on the Faculty Handbook update by incorporating resolutions passed in the last decade and updating the language.

- III. Vice Provost Powers-Lee reported that the Banner prerequisite checking system will be enabled beginning with fall 2011 registration and will apply to all classes. Students will not be able to self-service register for courses for which they have not completed the prerequisites. Students who have appropriate permission to take a course without a prerequisite will be able to register by department override.
- IV. Questions and discussion.

In response to Professor Gaffney, the Provost offered to investigate the possibility of safety issues concerning ingress and egress at Ryder Hall during renovations. He also urged that where instances of safety are in question, a timely email is welcomed.

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

**WHEREAS** interdisciplinary research is being encouraged at the University,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Provost's Office develop clear inter-College guidelines for Indirect Cost Return involving interdisciplinary programs and proposals.

Professor McKnight explained that, given the passage of a previous resolution on overhead return, the proposal is relatively non-controversial and provides for development of guidelines for PIs with joint appointments, multiple PIs, and indirect cost shopping.

Following brief clarifications, the vote was taken.

Vote on development of guidelines for indirect cost return: PASSED, 25-0-3.

By unanimous agreement of the body, the discussion of the RPOC resolutions was postponed and Senior Vice President of Administration and Finance McCarthy commenced his presentation.

VI. Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance Jack McCarthy presented an update on the proposed new dormitory at the YMCA. The opportunity, which fulfills a city requirement that the University add 600+ residence hall beds, is presently undergoing complex negotiations with the outside partner, the YMCA, and the City of Boston. The permit for the use of leased space in the Forsyth Institute Building is somewhat dependent on fulfilling the commitment to create the living arrangements for an additional 600 students. To avoid taking on more debt, the University is working with an outside partner. The University reached an agreement in principle with the Grandmarc development company on October 22, and on December 14 received approval from the City to lease the Forsyth Institute Building.

Grandmarc will buy the rear of the YMCA and build a 17-story building offering both dormitory-style and apartment-style rooms, for which NU will sign a long-term lease. NU will buy the Hastings Wing of the YMCA and refurbish some additional classrooms there. The University will also have the first right offer to purchase of the 316 Huntington Ave property if the YMCA chooses to sell that property. Negotiations and design are still in progress. The preliminary design indicates 627 beds in dorm-style units on floors 2-12 and 94 beds in apartment-style units on floors 13-17. Three or four classrooms will be located in the basement. The goal is to demolish the existing site in June 2011 and complete development by fall 2013.

In response to questions, VP McCarthy indicated that studies are being undertaken on wind tunnel effects and the possible impact on the New England Conservatory and Mugar laboratories. Northeastern's admissions group has been actively involved in development of the dormitory space which will serve undergraduate students. Development of a new master plan will address graduate student housing, accommodation of newly hired faculty, and a broad view toward undertaking partnerships.

Senior Vice President McCarthy also noted that at least one large lease is ending at the Renaissance Park building which will be adapted for University use – possibly as faculty offices to accommodate the planned addition of 100+ faculty members.

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

**WHEREAS the Faculty Incentive Program has, in the opinion of the 2009-2010 RPOC, contributed to the recent growth of the research base at Northeastern University and has the support of RPOC members,**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Incentive Program be restored as a mechanism to encourage research activity and productivity, as well as to facilitate the hiring of highly productive research faculty.**

The body recognized Vice Provost Bernstein who explained that the Government Office of Management and Budget (OMB) prohibits the use of indirect cost returns for increases in faculty compensation rate.

Professor Lewis, member of the 2009-10 RPOC, noted that the Committee had unanimously adopted this proposal as a means for incentivizing successful PIs.

Professor Morrison spoke against the motion noting that such incentives would require use of University monies and recalling that the Senate had voted strongly against bonuses for faculty in the past.

Professor Barberis and Dean Spieler also spoke against based on fairness and the possibility of inequity based on disciplines.

In response to a question from the floor, Professor McKnight clarified that in 2009, the last year of the program, approximately 20-25 faculty members are affected and he estimated that the total dollar amount was between \$200,000 and \$500,000. He also clarified that the program was established by the prior Provost.

Professor Hanson spoke in favor as the monies are spent from the PI's overhead return and the PI can choose to take advantage or not.

Several Deans spoke against the program as rewarding only certain types of grants and, since overhead returns do not cover the true cost of research, the funding would ultimately come from general funds.

Provost Director confirmed that the University appears to have been non-compliant with OMB regulations under the program.

Professor Lifter spoke for extension of faculty incentives by means other than monetary.

Professor Ramirez suggested that the Senate should not vote on a measure that is unlawful, however Professor Gaffney, noting that incentive was paid from unrestricted funds in the past, suggested it was a grey area and the question was whether it effectively incentivized PI's.

Several Senators spoke against the motion, citing the availability of other incentives such as summer salaries and merit increases and better use of the monies such as a replacement for the Research and Scholarship Development Fund. The Provost noted that Vice Provost Bernstein had recently sent out a notification of a new University-sponsored research fund.

Vote to restore a Faculty Incentive Program: FAILED, 3-29-1

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

**WHEREAS** more of the externally funded University research is emanating from collaborations within research units distinct from academic departments and these research units often differ with respect to their size and complexity of operation,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Provost's Office develop clear definitions and criteria for research units such as laboratories, centers, and institutes;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the criteria for evaluating the viability of these research units be specified; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the viability of these research units be evaluated at a minimum of five-year intervals.

Professor Morrison noted that the Senate had passed provisions for center evaluations ten to fifteen years ago thus rendering this motion unnecessary.

Vote for evaluation criteria for research units: FAILED, 0-26-5.

The Provost indicated for the record that he took this vote only as a reflection that the legislation was redundant with previous Senate resolutions. He accepted the mandate for the Provost's Office to develop appropriate criteria, guidelines, and review processes for laboratories, centers, and research institutes and these will be forthcoming from his office.

- IX. Motion: Professor Barberis moved to accept the report of the Senate Committee for Faculty Development. After explanation from the Parliamentarian that this was a necessary step for any discussion and debate on the report, the motion was passed unanimously.
- X. Committee of the Whole: Report of the Senate Committee for Faculty Development

Motion. Professor Kruger moved to enter an 'as if in a committee of the whole'. There was no objection and it became so.

[The report of a committee of the whole do not become part of the minutes of the Senate meeting and are therefore appended.]

Motion. As time had run out, Professor Kruger moved that the committee of the whole conclude and that the Senate meeting adjourn.

Vote: PASSED by acclamation

The Senate adjourned at 1:24 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen W. McKnight, Secretary  
Faculty Senate

## **Report of the Committee of the Whole 23 February 2011**

Professor Barberis explained that the Senate Faculty Development Committee had been charged by the Senate Agenda Committee to address the issue of the Provost's Tenure Advisory Committee (PTAC). The Faculty Development Committee reviewed the Faculty Handbook, past Senate reports, the tenure dossier procedures, and other sources and concluded that the PTAC consists of the Provost, Vice Provosts, Deans and four faculty members and was instituted in 2008. Records of minutes of past Senate meetings indicate that no reports are produced and votes are taken but not reported. The PTAC is not reflected in the Faculty Handbook or in the model tenure dossier. The Committee concluded that the PTAC is an addition to the tenure process and must be viewed as an added layer.

Professor Barberis continued that the work of the PTAC is poorly understood and, while the Provost is free to seek consultation, introduction of voting at another level could lead to inconsistency. Questions concerning information which is disseminated at different levels, access by the candidate, the lack of Senate discussion, the appearance of non-transparency, and levels of confidentiality became evident. The possible involvement of faculty members on the PTAC at more than one level of the tenure process and the fact that the membership and discussions of the PTAC are not reflected in any report and cannot be appealed by the candidate were of significant concern to the Committee. The Committee therefore recommends consideration of the PTAC by the Senate as in the best interest of the University.

Professor Sanchez, FDC member, noted tenure and promotion committees at department and college levels are chosen in an open manner. The process itself is open and collegial and represents shared faculty governance. It is a contradiction to have another advisory committee. If this model is accepted, each dean and chair could form his or her own advisory committee. Professor Sanchez questioned the Senate Agenda Committee's standing to provide names to the Provost for the Advisory Committee. He urged that the PTAC be clearly part of the tenure process.

Professor Kruger noted that a critical question is when something crosses the line between an informal practice and a formal procedure. This PTAC appears to be on a critical slope where something informational is becoming a formal procedure. While previous provosts gathered input, this PTAC sets up a structure whereby nominations for membership are solicited from another committee (SAC) and a vote is taken. In addition, presentations by Deans have the earmark of formal procedures. There are also serious concerns about who sees the dossier and whether the candidate is informed. The tenure process at all other levels has documentation about who sees the candidates' dossier and what reports will be issued.

Professor Morrison clarified that SAC was informed by the Provost several years ago of his desire to form the Advisory Committee and was asked to nominate faculty to be chosen as members. SAC discussed the matter and submitted names which may be construed as implicit endorsement. Faculty names were submitted again last year. While one function of the Advisory Committee is to advise the Provost, another is the informational value to the Deans in learning the standards among the different Colleges. Professor Morrison spoke, too, to a former faculty PTAC member who described the process as a very positive experience.

Provost Director spoke to the importance of the tenure decision to the University and noted that each level of review adds value. The Provost must be prepared to answer questions about the candidates by the President and Board of Trustees. He noted the difficulty of making independent decisions and the narrow subset of input garnered by previous provosts from among vice provosts. He maintained that the new process is more transparent as the deans have a sense of how decisions are reached.

The Provost explained that the Advisory Committee consists of all the deans, all the vice provosts, and four members from the faculty as a whole – two chosen from a group nominated by SAC and two chosen by the Provost. The Committee meets for an entire day where all cases are presented and discussed; dossiers are available to all members. The Provost then asks each member of the Advisory Committee to indicate privately to the Provost whether they support or do not support promotion or tenure on a scale of 0-3, where 3 indicates strong support for tenure and 0 represents strongly against awarding tenure. The ratings are confidential but are signed so the Provost knows who supports the candidate and who does not, and the level of their enthusiasm or lack of enthusiasm. Only the Provost sees the vote which is then destroyed. Like Professor Morrison, he has had positive feedback from faculty participants.

Professor Board opined that the process has become formal and suggested that the Senate recommend that it become part of the Faculty Handbook so that candidates for tenure know what the process is.

Professor Peterfreund, speaking as chair of University Standing Appeals Committee on Tenure, noted that the USACT has sustained all negative decisions as the reasons were clearly stated. However, the USACT, to a person, has expressed concern about this highly formal Advisory Committee process which needs to be formalized or abandoned.

Professor Young noted that the matter of formalization has created a problem where the Advisory Committee's judgment is in question. The Committee should be disbanded as judgments are open to criticism.

Responding to a question concerning what is done at other universities, the Provost noted that some have a formal university-level committee while others have informal types of discussions.

Professor Bansil, noting that university-level committees can solicit their own input, said that the Advisory Committee should be informal or become part of procedure.

Dean Zoloth spoke to the difficulty of overcoming a certain narrowness of information with no wider viewpoint than that of the vice provosts. The Advisory Committee provides broadened reflection.

Professor Fox noted a need for a university-wide committee to address the need for comparative oversight.

Professor Portz agreed that the Advisory Committee appears to provide significant and positive benefits to the deans but was concerned about the candidate's right to review the PTAC report – as they do reports made at a other levels -- in order to provide openness. The Provost countered that he informs the candidate of his decision; however Professor Portz noted a certain level of formality when a committee is making a recommendation.

Professor Speiler noted that it is a useful process to both the deans and the Provost in terms of quality. It is, however, a formal process. She suggested it continue this year and that the Provost

provide a paper describing the process which the Senate may review and make a decision about formalizing the process in the Faculty Handbook.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen W. McKnight, Secretary  
Faculty Senate