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Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 04/11/2012

Arun Bansil
Northeastern University

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Northeastern University
Office of the Faculty Senate

TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: ARUN BANSIL, SECRETARY, FACULTY SENATE
SUBJECT: MINUTES, 2011-2012 FACULTY SENATE MEETING OF 11 APRIL 2012

Present: (Professors) Adams, Alper, Alshawabkeh, Aroian, Aslam, Bannister, Bansil, Basagni, Daynard, Fitzgerald, Fountain, Fox, Gaffney, Hanson, Herman, Katula, Kruger, Muftu, Poriss, Rappaport, Sherman, Strasser, Strauss, Todorov, Yang, Young, Waszczak, Zgarrick

(Administrators) Costa, Director, Finkelstein, Fulmer, Gibson, Lane, Loeffelholz, Soyster, Spieler, Van Den Abbeele

Absent (Professors) Barberis

The Senate was convened at 11:48 AM.

- I. Professor Kruger reported that SAC met three times in regular session, once with Provost Director, once with President Aoun and the Senior Leadership Team. Professor Kruger also met once with the Provost.

Special commendation was noted for the work of the Administrator Evaluation Oversight Committee and the Evaluation Teams who completed all evaluations in record time: Professors Hanson, Chair, Barr, Muftu and Associate Deans Onan and Pantalone.

The following resolution was approved by the Provost:

1112-06 The staffing of Senate standing and ad hoc committees on a staggered basis, except in those instances where committee membership terms are specified by legislation.

Professor Kruger sent an email to faculty stating SAC intent to withdraw the resolution on the floor concerning the Faculty Handbook. This decision was informed by the Senate discussion as well as by discussions with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Provost where it became apparent that there existed a substantial lack of agreement on a crucial part of the process, which is "Under unusual and compelling circumstances..." Given the pivotal nature of the proposal, SAC will move to withdraw the resolution. Although understanding has not been reached, this should not detract from what has been accomplished to date. At beginning of last summer, shared governance was in jeopardy. SAC has since engaged in collegial and positive discussions with the Senior Leadership Team resulting in a better understanding of concerns, common ground, and areas where more work is necessary. Furthermore, SAC will continue to work with the SLT on possible revision of the Handbook process.

- II. Provost Director made no report.

III. Questions and discussion

Professor Peterfreund explained that there were no minutes for approval as an executive session precludes public distribution. The minutes will be available for review by the Senators at a later date.

Dean Soyster requested clarification of the motion on the table. Professor Peterfreund explained that the previous motion to postpone to time definite means that the resolution is on today's agenda.

Professor Gaffney requested a timeline for the Master Plan to which Provost Director responded that he will find out and communicate the answer.

- IV. Professor Kruger motioned to withdraw the postponed resolution and Professor Waszczak, the seconder, agreed. Dean Soyster objected and a vote ensued.

VOTE to withdraw the postponed resolution: PASSED, 23-4-8.

- V. Professor Poriss read the following and it was seconded:

BE IT RESOLVED That Northeastern University establish the Master of Fine Arts in Information Design and Visualization in the Department of Art and Design in the College of Arts, Media and Design, as approved by the Graduate Council on 17 January 2012.

The floor recognized Professor McDonald, Art + Design, who reported that this proposal capitalizes on increased reliance on visual information systems as a means of facilitating how information is stored, accessed, retrieved and analyzed. Concurrently, there is an increased interest and demand for graduate education in the design profession so that design practitioners may gain a deeper understanding of visual perception, human behavior and cognition, computational skills, design and research methodologies, etc.

This graduate degree will allow CAMD to build on existing faculty expertise and to offer Art + Design students the ability to reach across disciplines and enter interdisciplinary exchanges with those in the many allied fields working in data visualization. It also welcomes students from other undergraduate paths, offering the ability to acquire design skills in support of existing expertise. Currently, many top ranked design graduate programs in the US are located in art and design schools rather than universities, making Northeastern cutting-edge.

Professor Strauss asked if this course could be offered at a regional campus. Dean Costa affirmed that it could be offered in the future.

Professor Herman spoke in favor noting that the proposal was in fulfillment of the original objective stated in the creation of Multimedia Studies and the timing was opportune.

Professor Peterfreund spoke in favor but questioned the implications for studio and lab space which is presently under-resourced. Dean Costa reported that this issue is being addressed. Professor Peterfreund further noted the wise recognition of a niche market for

those interested in the MFA, a terminal degree which prepares students to teach at a university.

In response to Professor Katula's question concerning the availability of funding or assistantships for these students, Dean Costa reported that scholarships are being developed.

VOTE to approve the MFA in Information Design and Visualization: PASSED, 35-0-1

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

BE IT RESOLVED That the "Cinema Studies Program" be renamed the "Media and Screen Studies Program" in the College of Arts, Media and Design as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

Dean Costa reported that, with restructuring within the College, this program is more inclusive under a more relevant name.

The floor recognized Professor Robertson of Cinema Studies who noted that it is increasingly difficult to study cinema independently; a broader scope is required. 'Media' includes radio, television and film.

Professor Katula questioned whether a student can major in a program and several senators responded affirmatively.

The discussion digressed briefly to one of registrar requirements and approvals.

Dean Van Den Abbeele was puzzled as to why the term 'screen' was needed as the term 'media' would appear to encompass it. Professor Robertson explained that, within the industry, the term is distinguished from media and takes a broader perspective.

VOTE to rename 'Cinema Studies Program to the "Media and Screen Studies Program": PASSED unanimously, 35-0-0.

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

BE IT RESOLVED That the Media and Screen Studies Half Major Template be established in the College of Arts, Media and Design as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

Professor Herman noted that this proposal presents an important precedent in that it is offered in combination with any other half-major rather than only with a standing major. Dean Costa added that the proposal provides coherence between a restrictive process and curriculum development and emphasizes interdisciplinary work.

Professor Peterfreund expressed support noting that impending faculty transfers would sufficiently staff the courses.

VOTE to establish the Media and Screen Studies Half Major Template: PASSED unanimously 35-0-0.

VII. Professor Young read the following and it was seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate accept the report of the Committee for Financial Affairs on the Survey for Budget Priorities.

The floor recognized Professor Bolster who reported that the Committee had met with Provost Director and Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Nedell and learned that the University is financially sound. The survey was developed to capture faculty input into the areas of classroom technology, physical plant, student services and research support. Generally, the survey found that classrooms and technology are unevenly maintained and outdated; faculty office space, which impacts academic advising, is poor and underfunded; increased support is needed for the grant-writing process. Conclusions drawn are that faculty need resources to perform their jobs well; that concern for university support of research suggests that the University provide a summary of research support; that classrooms need attention (details of the classroom component were forwarded to Provost Director); and that classroom, lab space and office space concerns require an ongoing institutional response. The report requests that a person within the Provost's Office be designated to address these concerns. The Committee recognizes that the Provost has responded to similar issues brought up in last year's report.

Dean Gibson noted that decisions concerning classrooms must be made by the Deans therefore a point-person in the Provost's Office did not fully recognize implications of the new hybrid management budget system.

Professor Herman noted that there are few classrooms used by one college only and there should be a baseline of continuity across the University. Research space is as Dean Gibson suggests.

Dean Soyster suggested that future surveys contain more college-specific items and reiterated that the person responsible for remedying research problems within the college is the dean.

Vice Provost Loeffelholz noted that the University has made a yearly report to the Senate on investments in classroom technology.

Professor Daynard motioned for cloture and a vote ensued with more than two-thirds in favor.

VOTE to accept the report of the 2011-12 Financial Affairs Committee: PASSED, 35-0-1.

VIII. Professor Young read the following and Professor Hanson seconded.

WHEREAS problems with classrooms, lab space, offices and related academic facilities warrant an on-going institutional response at the operational level,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate requests that the Provost designate a specific person in the Provost's Office who will be responsible for remedying problems with campus academic and research facilities and for identifying problems through periodic surveys.

Professor Peterfreund proposed the following amendment which was seconded: *Be it resolved that the Senate requests that the Colleges and the Provost designate individuals in their respective units who will be ...*” He noted that responsibility lies in differing areas and the proposed amendment acknowledges the various stake-holders.

Dean Finkelstein, who found the report valuable, also noted the significant improvements that have been made and plans to continue further work. Nevertheless, he said the proposed resolution is unnecessary and oversteps the operational roles of offices.

Provost Director reported that much information on classrooms has been received and many changes have taken place and, while there are mechanisms for quick response, there must be immediate response. Information Systems is working on more user-friendly technology. He posited that the resolution is unnecessary, that resolutions are not always needed to fix problems, and that there is no controversy.

Professor Young noted that the existing mechanisms for maintenance are often cumbersome and time-consuming.

Professor Kruger suggested that the issues being discussed are complementary issues—changes for rapid response are good but there is also great value to periodic surveys to obtain important feedback. He supported Professor Peterfreund’s amendment.

Professor Gaffney supported the amendment noting the need for a faculty advocate.

Dean Gibson suggested that department chairs should take some responsibility for communication with the faculty. He said that surveys are very sensible but each college pays to use space so that the department chair followed by the dean should be the first points of contact.

Professor Herman reiterated that long-term issues that occur in many classrooms require University-wide solutions.

Several Deans spoke against the motion for reasons noted previously.

Professor Peterfreund withdrew the amendment and suggested that the Senate should practice ‘enlightened federalism’ whereby it is recognized that individual colleges might have their own solutions.

The Senate then discussed who should perform an annual survey: SAC, whoever is able to solve the problems, other constituencies. Provost Director noted that several committees, including a Classroom Advisory Committee, are addressing myriad issues and requested time to work on the matter without being bound by a resolution. He also suggested that FAC continue to conduct the survey.

Professor Herman then requested information about the classroom taskforce as he had been recruited to serve some time ago but had not been advised to attend any meetings. Vice Provost Ronkin was recognized and explained that he had been asked for volunteers by Director Brand of Facilities Administration. He was not aware that the Senate Office had sent names to Vice Provost Loeffelholz in November.

A motion to postpone the resolution pending a report from Provost Director in the fall was seconded.

VOTE to postpone to the fall semester: PASSED, 32-1-0

A move to adjourn was seconded. The Senate adjourned at 1:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Arun Bansil, Secretary,
Faculty Senate