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Faculty Senate meeting minutes: 04/20/2011

Stephen W. McKnight
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, 20 APRIL 2011

Present: (Professors) Adams, Alper, Bansil, Board, Chilvers, Daynard, De Ritis, Fox, Gaffney, Hanson, Kruger, Lane, Lifter, McKnight, Morrison, Muftu, Poriss, Portz, Sherman, Strauss, Thrush, Waszczak, Young

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

Absent (Professors) Alshawabkeh, Barberis, Basagni, Bruns, Hafner, Herman, Sherwood, Suciu

Provost Director convened the meeting at 11:50 AM

- I. The minutes of 13 April were approved as written.
- II. SAC Report. Professor Kruger reported that SAC had met twice and once with the Provost since the last Senate meeting. SAC also had a productive meeting with Provost Director, Vice Provost Loeffelholz, and Professor Cokely, chair of the Senate Handbook Committee, resulting in resolutions pertaining to the modular Faculty Handbook. These will be presented to the Senate at the 27 April meeting.

CPS is planning to rename specializations to concentrations. The students may name a concentration but are not required to; the content of degrees has not changed. Current students may be grandfathered into concentrations if they meet credit requirements.

Professor Strauss expressed some possible confusion in using ‘concentration’ which is what some universities call their majors. Dean LaBrie assured the body that the change conforms to other universities; that the Registrar’s Office was consulted; and that majors and minors connote something else.

- III. Provost Report. Provost Director had no report to make and question time was deferred.

- IV. Professor Poriss read the following and it was seconded.

***BE IT RESOLVED* That the University establish the Master of Science in Music Industry Leadership in the College of Arts, Media and Design as approved by the Graduate Council on 18 January 2011.**

Professor De Ritis explained that the program will prepare students for leadership roles in the music industry and will attract mid-career music industry students seeking higher education in their field and desirous of navigating the professional world. Professor De Ritis worked with CBA to ensure compliance with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

Professor Alper noted that the Economics Department has focused on the study of industries, including two faculty members studying cultural industry, and encouraged proponents to develop research method courses with Economics.

In response to a question by Professor Young, Professor De Ritis confirmed that the degree poses no accreditation problems for the College of Business Administration.

Professor Muftu questioned the use of 'Master of Science' rather than 'Master of Administration' or another more appropriate title. Vice Provost Falcon explained that 'Master of Science' has been more prevalent of late in non-traditional science fields.

Professor Gaffney questioned the target audience and why they would choose the proposed degree over an MBA. Professor De Ritis explained that the program could attract those with an undergraduate degree in business looking to specialize in the arts. The degree is at the intersection of business and the arts. Professor Strauss suggested it might be called a Master of Arts, however Professor De Ritis stated that such a degree has a different goal.

VOTE to establish the Master of Science in Music Industry Leadership: PASSED, 27-0-1.

IV. Professor Strauss read the following and it was seconded.

***BE IT RESOLVED* That the Faculty Senate accept the interim report of the 2010-2011 Senate Standing committee for Academic Policy**

This was PASSED by acclamation.

There being no objection, the body moved to a Committee of the Whole.

Professor Strauss explained the charge to the Academic Policy Committee to assess the University's long range plan from a faculty perspective as well faculty awareness and buy-in. Some faculty members have indicated that they were unaware, or uninvolved, or unconcerned. The report presented is interim as a recently distributed faculty poll is not completed.

Professor Daynard noted three themes which the final report should address. First is a degree of skepticism about strategic investment; if the University is not investing in all parts of the academic program it is not doing education. According to this view, planning should not be done at all whether or not investment in certain parts of the academic arena affects other parts. If this is the view of the Committee it should be made explicit. Second, there appears to be an implication that the long-range plan investment has been at the expense of other parts of the academic program – resources in some parts of the University have been curtailed in order to support the three strategic priorities. If the final report suggests such a "reallocation of respect" it should be justified by data and, if it is indeed a problem, it should be addressed. Third is the process for strategic planning and the importance of faculty involvement, especially if sacrifice is expected in other areas of the academic program.

Professor Strauss noted the concerns but stated that they are mostly not relevant. . The Committee agreed with the importance of strategic assessment and of moving forward, however the latter will be more difficult without faculty buy-in. Reallocation, as well, is more openly accepted with faculty input.

Professor Kruger reiterated the importance of faculty input which can provide complementary perspectives. Given the discussion last week, collaboration on the LRP is an opportunity to dispel some of the dissatisfaction among faculty about lack of input in governance issues. The LRP contains many worthwhile ideas (adding tenured and tenure-track positions; mentoring junior faculty; building living/learning communities in the freshman year and, subsequently, in

others). There are also are major blind spots which is a good reason to engage faculty. Instruction is largely absent from the LRP, an oversight that would probably not have occurred with more faculty involvement. A core value of the institution should be continuous improvement of instruction. The LRP also does not include urban commitment which should be retained even with the new international focus.

Professor Gaffney agreed, stating that he doesn't have skepticism for strategic plans in general, but sees the need to have faculty involved in the planning process. He added that some faculty see an imbalance between interdisciplinary and core research. Several senators noted that the APC survey results are critical as the interim report seems lacking in data and includes broad statements. Professor Strauss explained that the Committee had been asked to submit an interim report. She also commented that, within the Department of Biology there has been a push to either make interdisciplinary hires or none at all which has created concern. Professor Gaffney noted the same perception within the Physics and the Math Departments but ceded that perceptions may not reflect actuality.

Dean Spieler noted that Law faculty members have been interdisciplinary for many years and that the deans should balance core needs against interdisciplinary functions. She noted, too, that, given the many presentations by the Provost and President, faculty are by now familiar with LRP. And finally, Dean Spieler stated that no one believes faculty should not be involved and attention should be turned to how to proceed.

Vice Provost Loeffelholz provided a baseline for the Committee that only one in six hires are formally divided across units. She also noted that there is a porous boundary between disciplinary and interdisciplinary study, and expressed her hope that faculty have interests that cross disciplinary boundaries. She also noted that some faculty have brought interdisciplinary interest forward and have received joint appointment.

Provost Director reported that the LRP was created in part to persuade the Board of Trustees to invest in ourselves, and the Trustees' positive response had resulted in the mandate to fund 150 new faculty lines. The LRP contains "white space" that requires filling in and that the Colleges are encouraged to fill out the plan. Individual faculty should bring their ideas forward as well, and the web-site is one way in which input may be collected. The three research themes presented in the LRP were never meant to be exhaustive. They were built on existing strengths but other themes and opportunities may be added. The Provost was in agreement that institutional movement cannot proceed without faculty involvement and any faculty unaware of the LRP need to be made aware. Professor Kruger echoed these sentiments and urged that administration and faculty find ways to collaborate such as surveys and focus groups. The Academic Policy Committee should present recommendations to garner ideas.

There being no objection, the Senate moved out of the committee of the whole.

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

***BE IT RESOLVED* That the Faculty Senate accept the final report of the 2010-2011 Senate Standing Committee for Financial Affairs.**

The body recognized Professor Bolster, Chair of the Financial Affairs Committee, who reported that FAC had conducted an open-ended survey of faculty opinion on budgetary priorities which garnered 180 responses. Classroom technology issues are still of concern to a majority of respondents. Last year the Provost assigned \$1,000,000 toward classroom technology improvements and the FAC hopes he will do so again. Other concerns centered on the Banner

interface, which is not seen as user-friendly; the quality of office space; and support for teaching assistants. FAC is aware that some of these decisions will fall to the college level under hybrid budget management.

Another charge to the committee was a review of the hybrid budget management plan. Professor Bolster pointed to a link at the Provost's website that faculty should visit which explains the rules, i.e. net revenue minus expenses minus a "tax" to the central administration equals surplus (or deficit). The primary revenue source for the academic responsibility centers is student tuition. The University "tax" is a 20% contribution for redistribution to units which need subsidies or to engender other academic initiatives.

Many faculty members have voiced concern about adopting a corporate model but it became clear during meetings with university administrators that universities are big corporations. The plan's advantage is that it should enhance transparency and that it gives a basis for financial decisions.

Professor Strauss noted an anxiety among faculty about the how the hybrid budget management system works. The APC has found that other universities have institutionalized an oversight committee consisting of 50% faculty to review allocations for appropriateness and fairness. It would appear that there is no such faculty input here. Professor Bolster found the idea of an oversight committee interesting and encouraged the Provost to share such information.

Professor Thrush noted that the expense structure varies among Colleges and questioned when the allocation system will balance so that it does not appear that some colleges are supporting others. Professor Bolster reported that FAC was assured that all responsibility centers are viable. Provost Director explained that Colleges will be 'held harmless' as the new system is implemented in order to ensure stability. As problems arise, they will be addressed. Much decision-making will now be done at the College level.

Professor Kruger asked if there are indicators of success and of unintended consequences which are questions he received from faculty members and could not answer. The Provost responded that the 20% tax rate will ensure that no unit will be completely on their own. Decisions will be monitored so as not to create stress points. The expectation is that the hybrid system will allow units to benefit from the success of new programs.

Professor Daynard asked how the intentional 20% tax engenders incentivization. The Provost reported that today every unit is in deficit but that the new system will reduce the subsidies over time. The system also provides a known cost structure so that all centers (such as the Libraries and IS) are aware and must live within their budgets.

Professor Portz pointed out the possible disturbing incentives whereby a College will receive only 50% of the tuition for teaching students from another college. At the undergrad level this could cause them to treat students in different ways: favoring their own and neglecting students from outside the College. There could also be incentive to counsel graduate students not to take a course at another college for same reason.

Provost Director responded that while these are valid concerns, service courses bring resources which are welcomed by the unit. . In addition there are central resources to allow adjustment to accommodate students who take classes outside of their college. Discussions continue among the Deans on refining these mechanisms.

The Provost confirmed that all space is charged at the same rate for now but more tiers could be added. He reiterated that initially the units will be held harmless, but the “rent” will encourage units to turn back space for budgetary compensation.

Dean Luzzi reported that the details of the hybrid model were developed in a committee with faculty representation, and all issues were voted on by the committee. As such, the development of the hybrid budget system was a good process of governance.

Professor Waszczak posited that the word *entrepreneurial* is discomfoting as applied to the academic institution and suggested a philosophical disconnect where, rather than strive to educate the students within the discipline, faculty are encouraged to spin off new programs for revenue generation.

The Provost noted that this is true of all higher education. Tuition income is provided by the undergraduates, and if the programs are outdated fewer students will enroll. The institution must provide a “product” to the “customer” which that customer is interested in purchasing. The University could decide to grow or not, but if we are going to grow the faculty by 150 new positions we need to have the funds to support this. Professor Fox added that quality matters and poor quality programs will not survive. Any expansion must maintain quality. Provost Director acknowledged the tension between traditional notions of entrepreneurship and how it applies to academia. Creative potential cannot be only about increasing revenue, and strategic goals must be kept in sight.

Professor Morrison noted that the role of the Faculty Senate is to make sure that program standards are maintained and to balance the potential revenue of new programs against the risk of “tarnishing the brand.”

Dean Finklestein attested to the challenge of generating income while staying within core educational beliefs and Dean Luzzi added that many core programs were once new academic initiatives and that a vibrant academic community will engender change.

In response to Professor Young’s note that there is a need for quality control that goes beyond financial numbers, the Provost agreed that the University must always strive for excellence.

The Senate adjourned at 1:23 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen W. McKnight, Secretary
Faculty Senate