

## REPORT OF ACTIVITIES OF THE 2013-2014 FACULTY SENATE

Mary Jo Ondrechen, Secretary

The Secretary of the Faculty Senate is charged by the Faculty Handbook to make a report on the Senate's activities to the University faculty at the end of each academic year. Detailed minutes of each Faculty Senate meeting of the 2013-2014 academic year are available at: <http://www.facultysenate.neu.edu/meetings/20132014/>. The approved minutes of the Faculty Senate meetings found therein constitute the official record of the proceedings and resolutions of the Faculty Senate; this report is intended simply as a summary of some of the highlights of the work of the 2013-2014 Faculty Senate.

**Tenure and promotion procedures for faculty members holding joint appointments:** On October 23, 2013, the Senate approved a new module for the Faculty Handbook that outlines the tenure and promotion procedures for faculty members holding joint appointments in two or more departments or colleges.

**New Department of Bioengineering in the College of Engineering:** On October 23, 2013, the Senate gave its enthusiastic, unanimous support to the creation of the Department of Bioengineering in the College of Engineering. A search is underway for a Chair for the new department.

**Use of professional names:** This issue was raised last year and has finally been resolved. Previously faculty members could only be listed in the directory by their legal names. E-mail addresses were also based only on the legal name. This was not in the best professional interest of faculty members who use a different name professionally. (For instance, some women change their legal name at marriage but continue to use their maiden name professionally.) It was pointed out that editors, colleagues, and funding agency program directors only recognize the professional name and not the legal name. The Senate Agenda Committee worked with the administration to resolve the matter. On October 23, 2013, Provost Director announced to the Senate that faculty members may now use their preferred names and that resolution of the matter took longer than expected because of data structure issues.

**Research lab access for undergraduate students:** In previous meetings of the Faculty Senate and of the Senate Agenda Committee, some principal investigators pointed out that the policy regarding undergraduate student access to research labs was unnecessarily restrictive and ran counter to our strong commitment to undergraduate research. The Senate Agenda Committee spearheaded meetings with Environmental Health and Safety officers, principal investigators, and administrators. The matter has now been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.

**Revisiting the University-wide Core Curriculum:** The Senate Agenda Committee convened an *ad hoc* committee to evaluate both the requirements and the goals of the University-wide Core Curriculum. This committee submitted a white paper that served as the starting point for a Quasi Committee of the Whole discussion of the Core Curriculum at the Senate meeting of

January 29, 2014. This white paper proposes a different rationale for the Core, based on the concept of liberal education, and proposes new categories that are organized by types of knowledge rather than by broad disciplinary lines. There was general support for the concepts conveyed in the white paper and general agreement that the Core Curriculum needs to be revised. The *ad hoc* committee therefore is continuing its work and will submit a new Core Curriculum proposal for consideration by the 2014-2015 Faculty Senate.

**New Graduate Council By-Laws:** At the Senate meeting of February 12, 2014, the Senate approved revised, updated By-Laws for the Graduate Council. One significant change is that proposals for new graduate programs must be circulated to Deans, Associate Deans for Graduate Studies, and Council members at least 10 business days prior to the Graduate Council meeting at which the proposal will be considered. In previous Senate meetings, it was pointed out that potentially overlapping programs need to be identified before proposals come before the Senate. The revision to the Graduate Council By-Laws promotes the earlier identification of possible overlap with existing programs and of possible participation by additional units.

**New Faculty Senate By-Laws:** A number of updates and revisions to the Faculty Senate By-Laws were needed. The revised By-Laws contain the following substantive changes: 1) Full time, non-tenure track faculty members in colleges with Senate representation are now eligible to vote for Senators. However, only tenured or tenure-track faculty members may serve as Senators; 2) The list of Standing Committees of the Faculty Senate has been moved to a separate document. This enables the Senate to create or change Standing Committees as it sees fit without going through the long approval process of amending the By-Laws; 3) In the Standing Committees document, a new Committee on Full-Time Non-Tenure-Track Faculty has been created; 4) The provision to amend the By-Laws by an in-person meeting of two-thirds of the faculty has been eliminated, as this seems to be unrealistic. The provision to amend the By-Laws by ballot vote of the faculty remains. The revised By-Laws were approved by the Senate on February 26, 2014 and subsequently approved by vote of the faculty.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Jo Ondrechen, Secretary of the 2013-2014 Faculty Senate  
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