



Northeastern University
Office of the Faculty Senate

TO: Faculty Senate
FROM: George Alverson, Secretary, Faculty Senate
SUBJECT: Minutes, 29 October 2014

Present: (Professors) Alverson, Bickmore, Caligiuri, Charles, Craig, Crittenden, Daynard, Devlin, Fitzgerald, Hajjar, Hanson, Howard, King, Kruger, Lerner, Nelson, McGushin, Piret, Rabrenovic, Strasser, Suciu, and Young

(Administrators) Ambrose, Aubry, Brodley, Courtney, Director, Fulmer, Gibson, Loeffelholz, Poiger, Ronkin

Absent: Professors Carrier, Cokely, De Ritis, Gouldstone, Leslie, Makriyannis, Metghalchi, Piret, Rappaport, and Dean Brodley

The Senate convened at 11:45 AM

- I. The minutes of 15 October were approved as written.
- II. Professor Daynard reported that SAC met once since the last Senate meeting and once with the Senior Leadership team.

The College of Social Sciences and Humanities has authorized two chair searches as follows. Both are external searches and staffing is underway.

Director of the School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs
Chair of the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures

The Senate Agenda Committee is pleased to report staffing of the committee to undertake an **external search for a Dean of the College of Art, Media and Design** as follows:

Elected members from the College:

Professor Suzanne Charles, Architecture
Professor Nathan Felde, A + D
Professor Dale Herbeck, Communication Studies
Professor Hilary Poriss, Committee chair - Music

Appointed members:

Professor Timothy Cresswell-CSSH, History
Dean Carla Brodley-CCIS
Professor Antonio Ocampo-Guzman-CAMD, Theater

Student members:

Danielle J. Desser, undergraduate student representative,
David H. Potter, graduate student representative,

There are many administrator evaluations to be undertaken this year. If you or faculty members you know are contacted to serve, please give serious consideration to the request. This is an important part of shared governance and service on the evaluation teams is much needed.

SAC met with the senior leadership team immediately following the 15 October Senate meeting where they repeated and elaborated upon concerns expressed at the Senate on benefits changes. They listened and the Provost was charged with responding to concerns. Administration rolled back cuts in life insurance and reinstated the same dental plan as last year. The senior leadership team also agreed that the consultative process was inadequate. Further discussions will include faculty.

- III. Provost Director reported that Professor Daynard was effective in articulating the issues of concern to the senior leadership team. He also noted that, while an attempt was made toward discussion, there is room for improvement. Benefits are the concern of all employees.

The Provost reported that [US News and World Reports](#) have begun ranking universities world-wide. They have ranked 500 universities at this point; Northeastern is 224. This is higher than George Washington University, Tulane, Syracuse, Boston College and others. Notre Dame University, Tufts and Miami are ranked higher than Northeastern.

- IV. Questions and discussion

Professor Kruger read the following statement from Professors of Economics Kwoka and Dickens.

While scheduling conflicts prevent both of us from attending the Faculty Senate today, we have asked that our views be made clear and thank the Senate for this opportunity.

We find both the substance of recent benefit changes, and the process by which they were introduced, startling and disappointing. Substantively the reduction in the University's contribution to our benefits package is large and particularly problematic for lower paid staff. Even at this late date it is unclear to us the extent to which faculty governance was respected. The differing and sometimes shifting explanations offered for the changes are also a cause for concern.

While we are encouraged by the recent revisions to the initial changes, we think that trust in the University's process requires an examination of both the substance and procedure of this decision by a committee of knowledgeable and independent faculty. We therefore strongly endorse the idea of the formation of a committee charged with reviewing these issues and reporting back to the Faculty Senate by February 1. We also believe that the effective date of the changes to health care benefits should be postponed until that report is delivered to and debated by the Senate.

*Bill Dickens
University Distinguished Professor*

*John Kwoka
Neal F. Finnegan Distinguished
Professor*

Professor Kruger inquired whether SAC was thinking about staffing and charging a committee to look into benefits. Professor Daynard responded that SAC is working toward a joint committee with administration. However, administration has not put postponement of the health insurance provisions on the table so it may not make sense to set up a committee under these circumstances.

Professor Kruger responded that concern about the rates and requirements under the Affordable Care Act expressed at the last Senate meeting would seem to offer a good motive to convene a committee.

Provost Director noted that administration had worked with consultants who predicted a rise in premiums of 6%. The question then became what options were available. The consultants developed the plan in order that the University may avoid the Cadillac tax levying huge penalties on rises in health care insurance. Individual choices will affect whether or not an employee will face increases. An employee could face a 10% increase but since the employee would have faced a 6% increase in any case, the difference is only 4%.

Professor Kruger reported that he sent a memorandum to Vice President Pendergast with copies to Professor Daynard and President Aoun wherein he compared 2014 and 2015 costs and found that the high deductible plan shows an increase of 10% (see [comparison](#)). He noted that the table provided is misleading. Provost Director requested that Professor Kruger provide his analysis and the Professor noted that he had already done so.

Professor Kruger then asked if the senior administrators were provided different health plans to which the Provost replied they were not.

Professor Green was recognized and opined that the entire discussion speaks to a lack of sunlight. He disagreed with Professor Daynard that a committee should not be convened if administration does not bring change to the table. At the last Senate meeting Vice President Pendergast said that she would provide data and that data needs to be forthcoming to the entire University community.

Dean Gibson stated that the Deans were presented with the proposed plans in June and did not realize how big an impact it would have. He continued that we now need to look forward.

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

***BE IT RESOLVED* That the name of the Department of Pharmacy Practice in the School of Pharmacy in the Bouvé College of Health Sciences be changed to the *Department of Pharmacy and Health Systems Sciences*.**

He explained that the department has evolved and that there are many similarly named departments. A task group discussed the implications and recommended the change which was then approved by the department and the College.

Professor Hanson noted that the enclosed statement indicates no organizational change and wondered if such change might be seen in the future. Professor Devlin responded that this is hard to predict but not at this point.

VOTE to approve the name change: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, 30-0-0.

VI. Professor Kruger read the following and it was seconded:

***BE IT RESOLVED* That the name of the Department of Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology in the Bouvé College of Health Sciences be changed to the *Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders*.**

The floor was yielded to the chair of the Department, Professor Mingolla, who reported that the department offers courses to more than just those planning careers in area. There is a move away from a focus on speech and language to include other senses and recent hires have rounded out the ability to offer additional areas. The professional programs will remain the same.

VOTE to approve the name change: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, 30-0-0.

The Senate adjourned at 12:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

George Alverson, Secretary
Faculty Senate