



**Northeastern University**  
*Office of the Faculty Senate*

**TO: Faculty Senate**  
**FROM: George Alverson, Secretary, Faculty Senate**  
**SUBJECT: Minutes, 12 November 2014**

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Present: (Professors) Alverson, Bickmore, Caligiuri, Charles, Craig, Crittenden, Daynard, Devlin, Fitzgerald, Gouldstone, Hajjar, Hanson, Howard, King, Kruger, Lerner, Leslie, Makriyannis, Metghalchi, Nelson, McGushin, Rabrenovic, Rappaport, Strasser, Suciu, Young

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

Absent: Professors Carrier, Cokely, De Ritis, Piret, and Dean Brodley

The Senate convened at 11:45 AM.

- I. The minutes of 29 October were approved as amended.
- II. Professor Daynard reported that the Financial Affairs Committee (FAC) will be charged with looking into health benefits and that the Provost has agreed to collaborate. Many emails from faculty have paid particular attention to benefits for the least well-paid employees at the University.

The search committee for a chair of the Department of Journalism in the College of Arts, Media, and Design has been convened as follows:

*Elected members:*

Professor Charles Fountain  
Professor Laurel Leff  
Professor Alan Schroeder

*Appointed members:*

Professor William Fowler-CSSH, History  
Professor Ann McDonald-CAMD, Art + Design

The search committee for a chair of the Department of Health Sciences in the Bouvé College of Health Sciences has been **re**-convened as follows:

*Elected members:*

Professor Matthew Goodwin  
Professor Helen Suh  
Professor Molnar

*Appointed members:*

Professor Phil Brown-CSSH-Sociology & Anthropology  
Professor Jack Dennerlein-BCHS, Physical Therapy

III. Questions and discussion

Professor Devlin inquired about the Committee for Full-time non-tenure-track Faculty and Professor Daynard responded that the committee is chaired by Laurie Gardinier. She indicated that the committee is close to presenting a report and recommendations.

IV. Presentation on hiring underrepresented minorities by Vice Provost for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion Armendariz

Vice Provost Armendariz reported that core areas of focus are: recruitment and retention of underrepresented minority and women faculty, staff, and students; fostering an inclusive and respectful campus climate; and ensuring compliance with applicable federal and state equal opportunity laws (Title IX).

Current representation of male and female full time faculty is 55% male and 32% female which has changed little over the past three years.

Tenured/tenure-track faculty representation is 20.6% minority faculty; 8.8% underrepresented minority faculty which is slight improvement over the past three years.

Full-time non-tenure-track faculty shows 13.9% overall minority faculty and 8.4% underrepresented minorities; graduate student representation shows an increase of 2% in minorities over the past three years; staff is at 22% with underrepresented minorities at 16.5%.

Northeastern trails UMass-Boston and Harvard in hiring minority faculty, female faculty, and in graduate student representation. Staff representation is aligned with the national average.

In order to gain recognition as a leader, the Vice Provost recommends partnering with college faculty and staff, coordinating targeted conference attendance, improving outreach and follow-up, and identifying pipeline programs and institutions. The Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion partners with Human Resource Management and the colleges to address staff diversity recruitment efforts and to identify and address institutional barriers to recruitment and retention. One barrier is data tracking and reporting.

Federal funding requires compliance with EEO/Affirmative Action mandates and the Feds are increasing audits at universities. New mandates are pending which pertain to disabled persons and veterans. Northeastern is ensuring compliance with current and pending EEO/AA requirements with veteran and disability self-identification and by tracking of outreach efforts.

Title IX pertains to sexual discrimination including harassment and a hostile environment. There are heightened requirements which include an increase in prohibited offenses, new training requirements, mandatory reporting, and enhanced federal enforcement.

The current campus climate shows fragmentation of existing diversity and inclusion efforts and a need for further understanding of diversity and inclusion and the link to success. Action steps include support of efforts across campus and development of new—and support of existing—education and awareness efforts, such as social justice week, Do It! Grants, NU Dream, and LGBT out at work conference

Future directions are to reduce isolation of effort, maintain momentum, continue to move beyond planning to doing, and focus on evaluation of diversity efforts.

Professor Daynard noted that the Senate Agenda Committee is particularly concerned about how to increase numbers of underrepresented minority (URM) faculty that are here and that are retained. Current best practices are not working well as regards faculty and Professor Daynard asked how the University can make a dramatic leap forward. Vice Provost Armendariz responded that faculty must reach out and interact with URM faculty members and encourage them to apply. Studies show they do not generally apply without intercession.

Professor Lerner suggested that there be a strategy to hire URM faculty who are working on issues of diversity. The Vice Provost again stressed that this requires the support of faculty and consensus on how to proceed. Among URM graduates there is no name recognition of Northeastern and many look at future faculty fellowship programs. It would be an asset to bring large conferences to Boston.

The Senate discussed losing good candidates, creating a pipeline, and an activity whereby professors volunteer to meet young people to generate interest. Vice Provost Armendariz noted that many such programs are out there already and some are being hosted in Boston. Northeastern University must figure out how to tap into such programs.

Professor Leslie suggested that the web page could do better job of signaling interest. The search for URM faculty must be more visible and more coordinated.

- V. Professor Strasser read the following and it was seconded.

**BE IT RESOLVED that the University establish the BFA in Games in the College of Art, Media and Design as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee on 9 October 2014 (8-0-2).**

Dean Ronkin reported that the CAMD faculty unanimously approved the proposal. The current program combines a major with CCIS and includes strong focus on computer design. This proposal will focus on artistic design. Professor of Practice Susan Gold was recognized and added that the proposal provides the venue for independent game designers and addresses radical changes in the industry. The proposal attempts to address many aspects and focuses on adding and complimenting what is already being offered.

Professor Lerner offered to consult on the curriculum as regards writing-intensive courses to insure unity.

VOTE to approve establishment of the BFA in Games: PASSED, 34-0-0.

- VI. Professor Leslie read the following and it was seconded.

**BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate asks the administration to continue University contributions of 70% to each of the employee health care plans to allow time for appropriate consultation between the Faculty Senate and the administration.**

Professor Leslie reported that the resolution represents compromises and ongoing discussions with the Provost's Office wherein progress has been made. While perfect harmony is a utopian concept, the principle is that faculty should be fully informed and involved. The Financial Affairs Committee will take up the issues with health insurance. This resolution provides time for the FAC to work.

Provost Director relinquished the gavel and commented that he is pleased that SAC has acknowledged that administration consulted with SAC on two occasions. This is not a negotiation between the Senate and the Provost's office. The benefits package is not just for tenured/tenure-track faculty. The Provost acknowledged that administration could have consulted further with SAC but that SAC could have asked questions at any time. In the end, comments were heard. It is the University leadership who has responsibility to negotiate with providers. NU hired a consultant and considered carefully how to proceed to serve entire University community. The result appeared to be the best alternative as University leadership has a responsibility to serve the interests of the entire University community. The Provost opined that it is counter-productive to pass this motion at this time and forward movement must continue with the realization that compromise is needed.

Professor Hanson responded that everyone recognizes the complexity. Negotiations were designed to reduce health care costs but placed additional financial burden on employees who must assume more costs. Going forward, there must be faculty and staff representation present at the table. SAC was not informed well enough. There is a need to have participation and communication between administration and concerned parties.

Professor Daynard noted the extraordinary success that negotiations with the Provost have produced. Health benefits must change by necessity which was not the case with dental benefits or life insurance coverage. Professor Daynard remains committed to the social compact. The Provost has been clear that this request will not happen and, if passed, will be an irritant to the relationship between faculty and administration. The charge to the Financial Affairs Committee is a commitment on the part of administration to do a better job of consulting. The [FAC](#) is comprised of Professors Wassall, Ballou, Faleye, Craig, and Stepanyants.

Professor Crittenden expressed appreciation for the comments of today and two weeks ago and noted that statistics which were promised two weeks ago have not been forthcoming. Senate inquiry represents those most vulnerable as well as faculty. Faculty is concerned with the success of the University. Points that were put forth on how NU compares to other universities were a "slap in the face." There are people willing to serve on the University benefits committee which has not met in many years; this has been an ongoing matter of angst for faculty and staff. Professor Crittenden hoped that this discussion opens up a look at broader issues for faculty and staff. In recognition of the complex issues, he will not support the motion.

Dean Fulmer reported that there is broader conversation as to what is happening throughout the country (see [Kaiser family foundation data](#).) Employers have reason to avoid high costs but money is going to insurance companies, which raises the question of why money is going to the wrong place.

Professor Kruger noted that rising benefits costs are a challenge for all institutions. Another serious concern is the impact on those who receive modest raises—the changes disproportionately affect staff. Another element is trust. Employees do not trust that administration has the best interests of employees at heart. How could [administration] not realize the ramifications of these changes? As well, the Senate lost faculty trust and that of staff who have no organized voice and envision the Faculty Senate as at least some voice. People are organizing and communicating and may take action outside the Senate which could hurt both the Senate and the University. Communication between administration and faculty and staff must be reestablished. What is meant by appropriate consultation? Professor Kruger proposed an amendment by addition as follows and it was seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the Faculty Senate asks the administration to continue University contributions of 70% to each of the employee health care plans to allow time for the Financial Affairs Committee to conduct a report on benefits.

Professor Young questioned the motivation of the resolution. Is the issue about faculty/administration communication or the health benefits package? The latter is very reasonable in the current environment.

VOTE on the proposed amendment: FAILED, 10-16-8.

The original motion remains on the floor.

Dean Poiger suggested that it would be useful for the University to report on how health care affects different strata at University. She suggested that employees should recognize that not all employers provide an enhanced plan. Because of the complex issues at stake, she cannot support resolution.

Professor Leslie noted that the motion attempts to keep things as close to what they have been in the past to prevent the bottom from falling out. The motion expressly avoids substantive change and attempts to apply pressure so that the conversation takes place now rather than in the future. The University is seeing substantial savings.

Vice Provost Loeffelholz noted that nothing was going to stay exactly the same; all rates would have increased by 6%. She noted that Harvard has completely eliminated any option for an enhanced plan.

Ms. Katherine Kelly was recognized and added that it is not outside reality to continue the same percentage for one year and expressed a willingness to contribute to the Affordable Care Act but not to Northeastern.

Professor Parekh noted the profound need for more communication on benefits negotiations and suggested an ombudsman to explain the changes in a step-by-step manner so that employees are not attempting to understand confusing materials at the last minute.

VOTE to continue University contributions of 70% to each health care plan: FAILED, 6-21-7

The Senate adjourned at 1:18 PM

Respectfully submitted,

George Alverson, Secretary  
Faculty Senate