



Northeastern University

Office of the Faculty Senate

TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: Secretary, Faculty Senate
SUBJECT: Minutes, 2 October, 2019

Present: Professors: Bart, Bormann, Bourns, Caracoglia, Carr, Chai, Cisewski, Dau, Desnoyers, Dyal-Chand, Ergun, Erdogmus, Goluch, Hayward, Kevoe Feldman, Laboy, Lerner, McNabb, Mountain, Musselman, Powers-Lee, Shapiro, Shefelbine, Spencer, Stephens, Stowell, Vollmer, Wahl, Wertheim, Wood

Administrators: Bean, Echambadi, Hackney, Loeffelholz, Sceppa

Absent: (Professors) Dennerlein, Gonyeau, Mylott
(Administrators) Hudson, Ziemer

CALL TO ORDER: 11:50 a.m.

(Due to the President's address and in consideration of time, the Provost Report and the remainder of the Senate Agenda Committee report were suspended. In addition, given discussion of the Provost Search, Provost Bean recused himself from participation in the initial part of the Senate proceedings.)

I. SAC REPORT

- Prof. Powers-Lee began the Senate Agenda Committee (SAC) report for the first meeting of the year by introducing the 2019.2020 members of the Senate Agenda Committee. Members include Professors Powers-Lee (SAC chair), Erdogmus (Secretary), Gonyeau, Hayward, McNabb and Wahl. She also noted that Prof. Rashmi Dyal-Chand will serve this year as Parliamentarian.
- Prof. Powers-Lee noted SAC's responsibilities include:
 - Arrange the agenda for all Senate meetings
 - Staff and provide charges to standing committees
 - Establish ad hoc committees for special studies
 - Provide a regular channel for consultation and communication between the faculty and administration
 - Meet at least once each year with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees
 - At each Senate meeting, present a report briefing the Senate on its activities
- Prof. Powers-Lee reported that since the last Senate meeting SAC has met fifteen times, with four meetings including the Provost and one including a group of deans. Topics included the Compensation module, revision of other Faculty Handbook modules, and charges/staffing for the Senate's standing committees and for search committees.
- Two of the SAC events were leadership retreats including university-wide participants

that were focused on action steps for implementation of the Northeastern 2025 plan.

- Prof. Powers-Lee began introducing the members of the 2019.2020 Standing Committees including the Financial Affairs Committee and the Enrollment and Admissions Policy Committee. (A complete listing of all Standing Committees, including charges and membership, can be found on the Faculty Senate website.)
- The remainder of the SAC report was suspended in consideration of time for the President's address.

II. PRESENTATION BY THE PRESIDENT

President Aoun's address to the Faculty Senate consisted of two parts. He first discussed the general climate of higher education and how it is impacting Northeastern University. He then discussed the status of the current search for a new Provost.

President Aoun said higher education is facing issues nationwide in terms of international students. At the PhD level there are real concerns especially in the STEM fields. Up to 73% of the students pursuing PhD studies in the United States are international students many of whom would like to stay in the United States. President Aoun noted that while this challenge will impact us all, Northeastern is well positioned with campuses in Toronto and London. He said the opportunity for Northeastern, is how can we work on these campuses in order to move them to a place where doctoral education and PhD studies can happen. President Aoun urged faculty to work with their units and share experiences to see what can be done.

He also addressed the increased scrutiny that universities are facing in regards to international collaborations. He cautioned faculty to work with their Deans, the Vice Provost for Research and the general counsel in regards to such collaborations.

In terms of research funding, President Aoun said the University is doing reasonably well. He said we haven't seen the decline that was projected. Last year Northeastern went well beyond the projected recovery in terms of research funding, reaching \$180 million which positions us, with respect to universities without a medical school, just below Princeton.

He noted that the interest for combined majors is exploding among students and that this fits extremely well with NU 2025 and Humanics. The President added that students were asking for help with 4-year graduation. They would like to do 2 co-ops in 4 years and, if they stay for a third co-op, they want to do a PlusOne. On behalf of our students, President Aoun encouraged faculty to work with students to ensure that this is a possibility.

President Aoun paused at this point to entertain any questions in regard to this overview.

Professor Erdogmus asked at the senior leadership level what were the thoughts on increasing the research faculty numbers throughout the university?

President Aoun responded that they were very much in favor of this adding they already have success through the Institutes and Burlington. He said we haven't done enough to increase the number of research faculty and joint appointments with industry around us and overseas.

The President then turned his attention to the Provost search. The President concluded his remarks

by saying there was no timetable regarding the search. They will keep searching until they find the right person.

II. CONTINUED BUSINESS

Prior to discussion, Provost Bean noted that the Compensation module had been distributed to all faculty on Sept. 28, 2019, two weeks in advance of this meeting. He added that comments from the Faculty Senate meeting of April 22, 2019 had been incorporated into the module. Also he said that he and Sr. Vice Provost, Deb Franko, and the Deans had worked on the module a number of times.

Prof. Sue Powers-Lee read the following and Prof. Rashmi Dyal-Chand seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the proposed module entitled “Compensation” replace the current module entitled “Compensation”.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Provost Bean summarized the two most discussed issues since last year. One was the issue of appeals. There are several areas within the systems of the merit increases and the equity increases where faculty can appeal the decisions. There were feelings in some camps that there were too many options. What broke the deadlock was the understanding that appeals and equity are not the same thing. Appeals are process oriented. Putting wording in the module that appeals are strictly about process brought a lot of people who were uncomfortable in line with the proposal.

The other issue was the equity process. Last year we moved from every year to every third year. While there is still some concern about this, Provost Bean said he thinks this is because we have used the word equity in inappropriate ways. The real pull here is to align what we really mean by the equity process. There are some that would claim that deans view the equity process as their share of the merit process. Which is why we wound up with high percentages of the pool going to the equity segment. Provost Bean said faculty didn't like this and it made no sense to him because it was not consistent with any objective sense of what equity was about. That is not what we mean by equity anymore. The new merit process that came out of the Handbook Committee is a layered process that begins with an anchor of input from the peer committee and layers on input from the Department Chair, the Dean and finally from the Provost's Office.

Equity also is not used to counter offers made from competing institutions. The Provost Office works with Deans in those instances. Provost Bean added this is not someone raising a protective class issue. By law, we would look at that immediately. Equity is finding those individual cases where small errors have been made and we need a process to put the person in the right place.

Provost Bean said right now he thinks we are as good as we are going to get. We will never get a document that everyone loves. Right now, the dislike on the Deans' side and the dislike on the faculty side are about balanced.

Prof. Lerner said a colleague in his college raised an issue that if equity occurs every 3 years for a college wouldn't it be the case that the total available equity pool would change year to year?

Provost Bean said that is not how they are going to run it. Because merit increases will be done so

well, there will only be a few successful equity challenges each year and so the administration is funding this centrally outside of the pool.

Prof. Vollmer also expressed some concern about the 3-year compression. Without the handbook talking about what the funding levels are going into a merit pool vs. an equity pool, you are asking us to hope that both pools are sufficient to address merit and cost of living as well as equity. He also said in the feedback he has received from faculty, the 3-year piece is toughest piece for everyone to resolve because they don't have faith the pool-sufficiency piece will be solved.

Provost Bean noted that between the three years, one of the challenges would be that there would not be up-to-date data. Analysis would all be qualitative. He added the movement to the 3 year timeframe was done by the Senate not the administration. Prof. Vollmer said it is a data driven process but the faculty often receive obscure data and we are asked to determine if we are outliers. Is there a mechanism in place to for a more data driven approach to identify outliers?

Provost Bean said that is what the dispersion plots are for. He also said he agreed that our history of what data we give to faculty to help them determine if they are an outlier has been insufficient. This module increases the floor of the amount of information every faculty member will get.

Prof. Bourns said she was concerned that a data driven approach did not work for NTTF.

Provost Bean said that in the presentation he and Chancellor Henderson will present to the Senate on Nov. 6, will show they are making progress in this area. They have 5 other colonial schools to pool all the non-tenure-track data in a way that there is a common set titles that we will map all our people into. For the next raise sequence, we will have that.

Prof. Kruger in the audience was recognized. He said this module was a consequential, complicated document. He said it was important for senators to understand all aspects of the module. Acknowledging everyone had biases, he said it was important a good system of checks and balances in our governance. He said there was improved clarity in the module. He had some concerns that some small changes in wording could have a large impact on the faculty voice in the merit process.

Prof. Dau said it might be useful for new senators to know what the issues were with the original document that the Senate is trying to fix.

Provost Bean said this had been discussed at multiple Senate meetings. He added that the issue that started this was that the current Compensation module was old and so unaligned with Northeastern that no college was following it. He added that was an example of no checks and balances. He said one of the reasons this had been so hard was that colleges had gone off in so many directions that to come up with one document that was agreeable to ever college has been a very difficult process.

He added the module had input from a lot of faculty members, the Handbook Committee, a lot of SACs, and the OGC. He also noted that the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act (MEPA) happening in the middle of this process delayed the module.

Prof. Powers-Lee added that transparency and appeals are the two biggest differences. She said now there is transparency at every step and there are additional appeal options.

Given the time, Provost Bean asked if there was a call to end discussion and vote on the module. Prof. Desnoyers called the question. Prof. Lerner seconded.

VOTE to end discussion and call the question PASSED: 18-5-3.

VOTE (by ballot) to approve the Compensation Module PASSED: 17-5-4.

The Senate adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deniz Erdogmus
Secretary, Faculty Senate