



# Northeastern University

## Office of the Faculty Senate

**TO:** FACULTY SENATE  
**FROM:** Secretary, Faculty Senate  
**SUBJECT:** Minutes, January 15, 2020

**Present:** Professors: Bart, Bourns, Caracoglia, Carr, Chai, Dau, Dennerlein, Desnoyers, Dyal-Chand, Ergun, Erdogmus, Goluch, Gonyeau, Kevoe Feldman, Laboy, Lerner, McNabb, Mountain, Musselman, Mylott, Powers-Lee, Shapiro, Shefelbine, Spencer, Stephens, Wahl, Wertheim, Wood

**Administrators:** Bean, Hackney, Hudson, Loeffelholz, Sceppa, Ziemer

**Absent:** (Professors) Bormann, Cisewski, Hayward, Stowell, Vollmer  
(Administrators) Echambadi

**CALL TO ORDER:** 11: 45 a.m.

The minutes of 11.20.19 Faculty Senate meeting were approved.

### I. SAC REPORT

- Prof. Powers-Lee reported that since the last Senate meeting SAC has met six times. Two of the meetings included the Provost and two included the Senior Leadership Team. Topics included Faculty Handbook revision, campus space planning, follow-up on prior benefits resolutions and strategy for Northeastern 2025 implementation.
- Prof. Powers-Lee noted that the following Handbook Modules were approved at the December Board of Trustees meeting: Compensation, Full-Time Faculty Rights & Responsibilities, Full-Time Faculty Performance and Promotion.
- Prof. Powers-Lee noted that the following Modules were deleted (relevant content now covered in other parts of the Handbook): Clinical or Academic Specialists, Non-Tenure-Track Full-Time Lecturers, Professor of the Practice and Non-Tenure-Track Research Faculty.
- Prof. Powers-Lee reported that the University Teaching Award Selection Committee is fully staffed. Four faculty members that were appointed by SAC include: Amy Briesch (BCHS, 2019-21), Ben Lerner (Khoury, 2018-20), Mya Poe (CSSH, 2018-20), and Tova Sanders (CPS, 2019-21). Additional committee members include a graduate student, an undergraduate student and the Provost's designee.
- Curriculum Updates from the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUCC) include inactivation of CPS Lowell Institute School Programs: Computer Engineering Technology, Electrical Engineering Technology, and Mechanical Engineering Technology. (Rationale for inactivation decisions: low enrollments).

### II. PROVOST'S REPORT

The Provost reported that there had been a great pilot run this past fall by ITS and ITPC that explored moving from BlackBoard to Canvas as a learning support system. The pilot involved 42 faculty members, a substantial number of courses and hundreds of students. In a survey, all 42 faculty members said they would like to work with Canvas and 80% of the students surveyed said they preferred Canvas.

The Provost wanted the Senate to be aware of this discussion. He added he thought this was a good model of how we are engaging faculty in something that affects faculty lives on a daily basis.

The Provost indicated that David Luzzi has announced that he has signed two new people to strengthen Research Administration. One is a Vice Provost of Research Administration who will oversee all of the operations issues associated with the research program. This person is coming from North Carolina Chapel Hill and has a reputation as a strong communicator with faculty. Also, out of this search came another person who was head of Research Development at Cornell. There is excitement about the level of talent being brought in and David Luzzi deserves a lot of credit.

The Provost mentioned that at the last meeting he had announced the hiring of Hazel Sive as the new Dean of the College of Science. She comes from MIT Biology and will start on June 1, 2020. The Provost noted that Mike Pollastri has done a great job in the interim role and is heavily involved in the transition.

The Provost also added that the COE search is going very well. There is one candidate that we have seen multiple times who is well regarded. There is another candidate who joined the search late but is also exceptional. If we come out with either of these individuals, the Provost said, he will be very happy.

## **QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION**

There were no questions and no discussion regarding either report.

### **III. PRESENTATION BY THOMAS SHEAHAN, SR. VICE PROVOST CURRICULUM & PROGRAMS: *Update on Curriculum and Assessment Initiatives.***

The following are highlights and questions from the presentation.

Sr. Vice Provost Sheahan said he wanted to briefly update the senators about activities he has undertaken with respect to curriculum and assessment. In regard to governance and coordination, with the new graduate bylaws they have implemented a new mode of operating for the graduate council that has led to robust discussion about graduate courses and programs and to good collaborations across Colleges.

Sr. Vice Provost Sheahan noted that as activities with a number of campuses have increased, his office is working closely with a number of offices to form a working group to better facilitate and coordinate logistics when schools and colleges are thinking of how to deploy a program to campuses outside of Boston.

Sr. Vice Provost Sheahan discussed 3 important curriculum initiatives including expanded PlusOne combinations, increased combined majors and PhD off-ramps for students who do not pass their qualifying exam. They are in the process of finalizing a list of PlusOne options that colleges have agreed to and plan to place them on a website for students to easily explore programs that might be a fit for them.

Regarding assessment, Sr. Vice Provost Sheahan said his goal was to develop a university-wide assessment and continuous improvement culture and process.

After reviewing 2 possible technology platforms, they selected AEFIS. During Spring 2020 they will conduct a pilot, to develop best practices for a template of assessment so they can move forward with some sense of uniformity on how programmatic assessment takes place. Hiring of a Director for Institutional Assessment/Evaluation, who will report to the Senior Vice Provost for Curriculum and Programs, is also anticipated for Spring 2020.

Sr. Vice Provost Sheahan will also be working with the Senate and deans on re-formation of the Assessment Oversight Group.

## **QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION**

Provost Bean said that Enrollment Management predicts 36% of the students in the entering class next fall will be in combined degrees. This is a wave that is hitting us and one where we have gotten in slightly ahead of the market. This is going to become a big part of what Northeastern is. This is really resonating with our gen Z students.

The Provost also noted that previously there was no formal mechanism for him to carry out a preliminary review of new programs coming from colleges. Recently, an approval step has been added in CourseLeaf so that when a program proposal arrives from College A, the provost checks with other colleges who might have relevance to ensure cooperation before approving. The Provost noted that this has sped up the process and is working well.

In response to a question from Prof. Lerner around the issue of planning and timing for PlusOnes, Sr. Vice Provost Sheahan said students will have to plan early and it is incumbent upon us to provide information earlier. Prof. Lerner noted the importance of the role of advising in this process.

Dean Hudson said since they have been in discussion about introducing a number of PlusOnes, she has been talking with students and parents, and some are seeing PlusOnes as an alternative to combined majors.

Prof. Ergun noted that she serves on the Enrollment Admissions and Admissions Policy Committee (EAPC) and that one of their charges is to look at PlusOnes. She said she has heard from some colleges that giving too much information to students too early creates confusion. She also emphasized the importance of advising and that making information accessible and in an understandable format is important.

Provost Bean added that we really need to think about how much additional pressure we are putting on advisors. He said this is an important organizational and structural issue we need to address.

Prof. Wood asked in relation to integrated combined majors rather than ones that were pulled together, does that involve the creation of new courses or just more thoughtful combinations of existing courses?

Sr. Vice Provost Sheahan said his sense was that it was a more thoughtful combination. Dean Hudson added that in the CAMD process it was not adding new courses, but rather reorganizing combinations to allow students to have a more flexible path. Provost Bean added that typically in these combined majors coordination also involves bringing students from both majors together in capstone teams and in other venues for better integration to achieve more than the sum of parts.

Prof. Kevoe Feldman said we all have our required courses that we do not want to give up but with discussion and negotiation we can arrive at integrated programs and it is just like solving a puzzle. The students want this, and in the future more students will ask for this. It is not that hard, and it is possible.

Prof. Powers-Lee said it would be great if the assessments of combined majors were more based on a template. Could we have set(s) of overarching integration assessment criteria instead of coming up with different sets for each case individually? Shared templates would

also allow assessment of groups of combined majors that are individually too low in enrollments to allow meaningful assessment.

Prof. Desnoyers asked what does an assessment management platform do?

Sr. Vice Provost Sheahan responded that he finds it similar to BB or Canvas but for programs, where each program will have a page in that platform where learning outcomes for each program is listed and the tools/artifacts for assessing that outcome will be specified (e.g. exams, homeworks, etc). Since these will be integrated, a homework on BB will be captured by AEFIS so the student's work for that assignment gets attributed to a specific relevant learning outcome.

The Provost added that at Syracuse, he was part of a group reviewing such a process. This kind of process will give us indicators of program success before we enter an accreditation process e.g. for NECHE.

Sr. Vice Provost Sheahan said they are trying to form templates to make this more manageable. We want to have an institutional infrastructure to see how we are doing with assessment, but without interfering with existing processes that work for specific units (e.g. colleges).

Prof. Shefelbine said this sounds like enforcing something like ABET on everyone else.

Sr. Vice Provost Tom Sheahan said he wouldn't say enforce and he is not going to use ABET as an analogy. However, all these assessment processes use similar methods and instruments. We need rubrics to match instruments to outcomes for assessing student success. However, faculty review of the outcomes is critical. Tom Sheahan would like to establish something like a NU assessment week or a continuous process with which we regularly check if our students are learning what we thought they would learn.

Sr. Vice Provost Sheahan added that at end of 20/21 academic year, we could declare such an assessment week. In this process, people can look at what is in AEFIS, determine if our students achieve what we wanted them to do, and if they didn't, decide what we can do about it.

The Provost added that, while ABET has been around for engineering for a long time, NECHE is trying to do this university wide and these are relatively new for some fields. Tom's challenge is to help implement these processes for assessment, while respecting the differences in various fields.

Prof. Shapiro asked: "How do you intend to use these assessments? Will AEFIS play a role in course evaluations?" Sr. Vice Provost Sheahan responded that there would be no role for AEFIS in course evaluations. The focus of this is to try to document student learning for learning outlooks of that program.

The Provost added that NECHE will ask '*have you developed a culture of continuous improvement in your learning programs*' and this process is primarily to answer that question.

Sr. Vice Provost Sheahan added that the goal is to help everyone do this assessment in a robust fashion.

#### **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

**A.** Dean Leoffelholz read the following and Vice Chancellor Ziemer seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Administration in the College of Professional Studies as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee on 23 October 2019 (12-0-0).

Dean Loeffelholz said that this is renaming an existing program that has been active for some time. This new name aligns the program better to the market conditions. There were also updates to the curriculum to add some skills that are in high demand in this area, including Project Management.

VOTE on the Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Administration in CPS PASSED: 33-0-0.

## B. REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Prof. Wertheim presented the report.

Prof. Wertheim said the committee wanted to get this report to the Senate now before administration makes budget decisions. He added that he hopes when the presentation is made next year it will include data on FTNTTF. He added the University is making progress on securing this type of matchmate data, and the Financial Affairs Committee plans to report to the Senate when those FTNTTF data are available later in Spring 2020.

Prof. Wertheim said their recommendation is partially based on the fact that the university is in a strong financial position. The surplus for the past 4 years has been very strong. Based on the University's financial position and on the fact that our faculty compensation is at USNWR rank 51 whereas our overall ranking is 40, the committee recommends a raise pool above what has been the recent national average. They think this would help with the challenges of attracting and retaining faculty given the high cost of living for the Boston area.

Prof. Shapiro asked Prof. Wertheim when he said there was no data available for NTTF, if he meant internal Northeastern data or external data. Prof. Wertheim replied, 'external data'.

The Provost explained that in response to this issue, Northeastern went to the Colonial Group and asked them to participate in a comparative survey. This was a real challenge because everyone uses different titles for NTT faculty. This took a full year. Six universities agreed to map their titles to a standard list of titles to help compare NTT faculty salaries.

Prof. Carr asked if this report and the resolution only applies to the T/TT faculty. The Provost said the university has a single pool for all full-time faculty salaries. While this report only looks at data for T/TT faculty, the university sets this rate globally.

Prof. Gonyeau asked what the process is for this recommendation to be considered.

The Provost said the CFO puts a place holder and they start discussing. This is a more compelling background analysis than what he has seen in the past, even though the recommended numbers are similar. He also noted that tuition provides the vast majority of our resources and salary is the vast majority of our expenses. Therefore, he added, that any time we talk about this number, we are also talking about tuition increases. The budget has to balance out. He said the fact that we have a strong

balance sheet helps. The Provost noted it is also true that we have high aspirations for the long term to consider. This makes the topic a discussion between multiple offices – Provost’s Office, SLT, CFO, BoT.

Prof. Bourns asked how USNWR rankings use faculty salaries. Do they use T/TT and NTT faculty salaries or just T/TT salaries? Provost Bean said this is a good question, and that he did not know the answer immediately, but there are people who know.<sup>1</sup>

Prof. Dyal-Chand asked if the Colonial Group data includes administrator and staff salaries. The Provost noted that salary data is not part of the Colonial Group project.

Prof. Spencer asked whether the pools are separate for T/TT and NTT faculty. The Provost said there is a single increase rate for the total pool of full-time faculty.

Prof. Wertheim read the following and Prof. Gonyeau seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the recommended raise pool for merit and equity for FY 2021 is 4.0% of continuing salaries starting on July 1, 2020.

Harvey Shapiro asked if there was a value to adding the words “full-time faculty” before the word raise? The Provost offered a friendly amendment

Revised resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED That the recommended full-time faculty raise pool for merit and equity for FY 2021 is 4.0% of continuing salaries starting on July 1, 2020.

VOTE on the resolution PASSED: 31-0-2.

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Deniz Erdogmus  
Senate Secretary

<sup>1</sup> After the senate meeting, it was confirmed with the Associate Vice Provost of Institutional Research and Decision Support, Rana Glasgal, that US News uses T/TT faculty only. It mimics the AAUP faculty salary survey, and only includes the T/TT ranks from that survey.