



Northeastern University

Office of the Faculty Senate

TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: Secretary, Faculty Senate
SUBJECT: Minutes, 22 April, 2020

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

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

Absent: (Professors) Erdogmus
(Administrators)

CALL TO ORDER: 11 a.m.

I. ROUTINE BUSINESS

A. The minutes of 4.1.20 Faculty Senate meeting were approved.

B. SAC REPORT

Prof. Powers-Lee said SAC has met three times since the last Senate meeting, with one meeting including the Provost. Topics included COVID-19 contingency planning, handbook revision, and transition plans for the 2020-2021 SAC.

We are in the process of staffing a search committee for the Dean of the School of Pharmacy. This is a broad search both inside and outside the University.

There is one informational curriculum update from the Graduate Council: inactivation of the MS in Data Analytics that had been offered by Bouve College of Health Sciences and Khoury College of Computer Sciences.

C. PROVOST'S REPORT (Provost Bean)

a. President's memo:

i. Deferred merit raises: not cancelled, but deferred

1. In '09-10 raises were deferred for context

b. Online teaching outreach: new people working with CATLR and ATS to help facilitate the move to online and improve quality of our offerings

c. Developing faculty list of those who are experts in online teaching and learning

- d. PhD student pool may be available to help in online teaching if they have been displaced from their research labs
 - i. Will be training these PhD students
- e. Fall: we do not know, but betting on having students on campus, but have strict density restrictions, which will impact classroom space and residence halls
 - i. Ex. May need flipped classroom model to have smaller breakout sessions
- f. Deposits are looking good, but we do anticipate that some students will defer for a semester or a year
 - i. Not sure about visas for international students, so not clear at this time

D. QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

- a. University finances at the close of this year?
 - i. Overall cost of Covid ~40 million dollars due to room and board fee loss
 - ii. Next year: a lot of unknowns:
 1. How many students will show up?
 2. Trying to bring in a larger than normal freshmen class, but not sure what will happen
- b. Decision re: Fall date to decide what we will do?
 - i. Current thinking is sometime in June, maybe July 1st, but have not set a specific date
- c. Faculty hiring is continuing from those approved last year, staff hiring is being conserved
- d. Promotion raises will happen on time, not being deferred
 - i. All decisions will be released May 1
- e. Parking reimbursement question:
 - i. Partial credits may be offered towards next year
 - ii. Contact: contact@masparc.com
 - iii. Information on the MasParc website: <https://www.masparc.com/faqs/>
- f. Tuition discounted in fall based on students not being able to take advantage of all that NU has to offer?
 - i. Administration is considering this option, along with many other scenarios
- g. International faculty hires and work visas?
 - i. Not sure as of the executive order from last week
- h. How to handle non-compliance issues with grants. Is there a centralized system for fielding and handling issues (this question comes from one of my faculty members)
 - i. Contact NUREs compliance office
- i. Does "essential" hiring include positions committed in grant funding?
 - i. Yes, as these salaries are on soft money that we need to spend, but may want to defer the hire until they can come and do the research
- j. Student fees will be prorated for summer
- k. Tenure delays:
 - i. There has been quite a bit of discussion among faculty (and angst among junior tenure track faculty) about the tenure-clock policy change. Could faculty senate be involved in future discussions about this? Faculty could be a valuable resource to consider the impacts of different options
 - ii. Admin will be lenient in the near future, and people farther in the future will still be able to apply and make a case for an extension

II. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Prof. Kevoe Feldman read the following and Prof. McNabb seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the University establish the Interdisciplinary PhD in Design and Media in the College of Arts Media and Design as approved by the Graduate Council on 8 April 2020 (17-0-0).

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

- CAMD's first PhD program
- All departments in CAMD have developed the program together

There being no further discussion, the vote was taken. The resolution PASSED: 38-0-0.

- B. Prof. Hayward read the following and Prof. Caracoglia seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that the proposed module entitled "Retirement" replace the current module entitled "Retirement."

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

The sentence "All full-time faculty members shall be granted emeritus recognition upon retirement from the University." was replaced by the new sentence "Full-time faculty members who are classified as university retirees shall be granted emeritus recognition upon retirement from the University." as a friendly amendment.

There being no further discussion, the vote was taken. The resolution PASSED: 33-0-0.

- C. Vice Chancellor Ziemer read the following and Prof. Musselman seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that, starting with Summer 1, 2020 and continuing through all subsequent terms in which the coronavirus crisis results in a transition to online instruction, five questions to evaluate the online student experience be added to the TRACE assessment. The questions to be presented at the beginning of the survey with a border that sets them apart and with the header "Questions to assess students' online experience" are as follows:

Questions to assess your online experience

Please answer these questions about your online experience using the following 1-5 scale (1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree):

1. Online course materials were organized to help me navigate through the course week by week.
2. Online interactions with my instructor created a sense of connection in the virtual classroom.
3. Online course interactions created a sense of community and connection to my classmates.
4. I had the necessary computer skills and technology to successfully complete the course.
5. Please comment on your experience of the online course environment in the open-ended text box.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

- This is about the unusual nature of our fast transition to online teaching and learning, so we want to obtain some feedback to identify strengths and opportunities from the student perspective to help us continue to refine our approach
- These questions will not be used for merit, tenure or promotion
- Capturing these data in TRACE seems to be the best mechanism to accomplish this
 - Response rates in a separate survey will likely be very low
- Should we be using the term “remote” instead of “online” learning?
 - Because this will be used in the summer term and future terms as necessary, we will be more deliberative and designing a true online experience
 - Students are less likely to see a distinction between remote vs. online, so SAC did not have an big issue with this
- Will responses be anonymized or linked to particular faculty?
 - Intent is not to be linked to a particular faculty
 - Will want to link to different platforms and technologies
- Have questions been piloted or a student focus group been utilized to refine the questions?
 - Pulled best practices from quality measures, but have not done focus groups with our student to vet these questions at this time
- The order of questions has an impact on the response rate, some concern about placing these questions before the rest of TRACE questions
 - Recommend putting these after TRACE versus before
 - Provost office and SAC discussed this, and wanted them to be at the beginning to encourage students to respond
 - Also, who will see the results?
 - Access to results will be the same as TRACE, and if <5 students respond, results will not be available
- Suggestion to add a statement to the preamble to state that these questions are not relevant to merit and/or promotion
 - Question re: if adding it to the TRACE is the right audience because the language would go to the students instead of faculty
 - Provost’s office will take this under advisement and work on how to communicate this information to faculty and administrators
- Multiple number of learning platforms and how will this impact student experience?
 - Minimize use of more than one platform
- Prof. Dyal-Chand proposed an amendment to the resolution. Prof. Bourns seconded.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that a notice will be shared with all faculty whose courses are evaluated through TRACE that these questions are for information-gathering purposes only and will not be included in the faculty member's promotion package or annual review.

There being no further discussion the vote was taken. The amendment PASSED: 31-0-0.

There being no further discussion of the amended motion, the vote was taken. The motion PASSED: 30-0-0.

- D. Prof. Durant presented the report of the Full-Time Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Committee. (The FTNTTFC report can be found on the Faculty Senate website.)

- Provost Bean thanked Prof. Durant for the report. He stated that he particularly liked the survey of the different processes. He added that many of the inconsistencies that the FDC noted in their report were inherited from the tenure process and that they will work on improving these issues. He added it was a good report with a lot of good information for people moving forward.

- E. Prof. Beauchamp presented the report of the Information Technology Policy Committee. (The ITPC report can be found on the Faculty Senate website.)

Provost Bean recommended, particularly in the area of the Humanities, the Social Sciences and computation make sure to look at what is happening in the renovation of Snell library. There will be an entire floor dedicated to the Humanics. Provost Bean noted Dean Dan Cohen has been working with IT on this matter.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

- a. D. Herlihy: Student and faculty remote access to learning software?
 - i. Question will be brought up with Cole Campese
 - b. S. Shefelbine: VirtualLab in COE allows remote access to student for engineering purposes. Could be a model for other colleges
- F. Prof. Wertheim presented the report of the Financial Affairs Committee (The FAC report can be found on the Faculty Senate website.)

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

- a. Neal Lerner: There's a federal cost reimbursement plan that other local institutions participate in, including MIT and Harvard: <http://www.transportation.harvard.edu/commuterchoice/bike/bike-commuter-benefit>. I've asked HRM about NU's participation, but was told nothing was planned.
 - b. Jennie Stephens: sustainability and resilience advisory team that worked: worked over the past year to develop ideas/suggestions on how better to integrate the strengths in our teaching/learning and research with the operations of the university. This group would like to speak to the senate and the senior leadership team
 - i. NU's climate action plan was last updated in 2010, so needs to be updated again
 - c. Provost Bean commented that it's obvious we should be working on transportation benefits, especially given the benefits that are provided by other area universities.
- G. Prof. Dyal-Chand presented a resolution to amend the agenda to include a new resolution and Prof. Carr seconded.

There being no discussion the vote was taken. The motion PASSED: 27-0-0.

Prof. Dyal-Chand moved that the resolution be adopted and Prof. Bourns seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED that most University food service and parking attendant staff were laid off effective in March due to the Covid-19 crisis. Some are ineligible for unemployment benefits and/or may experience difficulty accessing benefits due to the tremendous demands placed on the system. The Senate respectfully urges that the University, working on implementation with its contractors and the union, guarantee at least until the end of May 2020, that the laid off service employees will receive their normal earnings to the extent that government benefits fall short.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

- a. Prof. Dyal-Chand noted that the intention of the resolution is to ask the university to provide support to colleagues who are food service or parking attendant staff who for whatever reason are unable to access either unemployment funds and/or the emergency funds provided by the WeCares act or the state equivalent.
 - i. Provost Bean: I thought that all employees who have become unemployed due to COVID-19 are eligible to apply for unemployment and the CARES act?
 - ii. Prof. Klare: there may be a small number of employees that may not be able to take advantage or feel safe to take advantage of the resources
 - iii. Provost Bean: one concern is that if some employees are paid, then all employees may be ineligible for unemployment
 1. Food service workers and parking attendants are not NU employees, as they are employees of the contracted companies that the university works with

There being no further discussion of the motion, the vote was taken. The motion PASSED: 27-1-1.

The meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Michael Gonyeau
(Temporary) Senate Secretary