



Northeastern University

Office of the Faculty Senate

TO: Faculty Senate
FROM: Secretary, FacultySenate
SUBJECT: Minutes, 22 July, 2020

Present: (Professors) Bart, Beighley, Board, Bormann, Caracoglia, Carr, Chai, Cisewski Dau, Dennerlein, Desnoyers, Erdogmus, Ergun, Goluch, Gonyeau, Gundavaram, Herlihy, Laboy, Lorette, Michael Mages, McNabb, Mountain, Mukerjee, Musselman, Poe, Smith, Spencer, Stephens, Wertheim, Wood, Zulick

Administrators: Madigan, Isaacs, Loeffelholz, Poiger, Ronkin, Sive

Absent: (Professors) Stowell, Vollmer
(Administrators) Gallagher

CALL TO ORDER: 12:05 p.m.

I. SAC REPORT

Prof. Erdogmus noted that the Office of the Faculty Senate will work remotely for the fall. Since the final April 22nd Senate meeting, he said 2019.2020 SAC and 2020.2021 SAC held 5 crossover meetings. The 2020.2021 SAC has held 3 weekly meetings. SAC held an Elected Senators meeting in June and met in July with Provost Madigan. Topics included the university's fall opening plans and issues around diversity.

II. OPENING REMARKS BY PROVOST MADIGAN

Saying he was happy to join the Faculty Senate meeting, Provost Madigan noted some highlights of the university's opening plans for the fall. He said there are a few dozen students currently testing the Student Hub app that brings together all aspects of the student experience including a dynamic scheduling platform. The university has hired and is training approximately 200 instructional assistants to help with the in-class portion of NUflex. The Provost and Chancellor continue to conduct Town Hall meetings. Provost Madigan pointed to the Covid-19 Reopening Northeastern website as a great source of information.

In other matters, the Provost recalled President Aoun's June 15th announcement on diversity and inclusion that laid out 8 or 9 areas in which the university is committed to making progress. The president has charged a group of 4 officers to enact these actions. This group includes Provost Madigan, Chancellor Henderson, SVP Tom Nedell, and SVP and General Counsel Ralph Martin. Work groups have been established for each of these areas with an immediate goal of coming up with concrete plans of how to achieve these goals and how to create metrics to measure progress.

Provost Madigan said the university will be starting a new strategic planning process and issues of diversity and inclusion will loom large in that. Noting it is not 2025 yet, the Provost said much has changed in our world since 2025 was established.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

- Prof. Gundavaram asked if there were any plans to study if pay inequities among faculty by race.
 - Provost Madigan said while he was not currently aware of any, this would certainly be within the scope of the ongoing work on diversity and inclusion.
- Prof. Arnold Mages provided links to the Women’s Roller Derby Association. He thought it was an excellent site on planning around Covid-19 and that it had parallels to university activities.

Website: <https://resources.wftda.org/covid-19/wftda-covid-19-readiness-map/>.
 Website: <https://static.wftda.com/files/covid-19/WFTDA-COVID-Return-To-Play-Plan-v1.pdf>.

 - Provost Madigan encouraged faculty to forward examples of interesting sites they discover. He added they were working on a series of scenarios that might be helpful to faculty. For example, if an instructor walks into a classroom and there is a student not wearing a mask.
- Dean Sive requested that students be included in working and planning groups at all levels as far as possible to make sure there is student input on how the university moves forward.
 - Provost Madigan agreed with this sentiment.
- Prof. Desnoyers asked if students will be tested before classes start?
 - Provost Madigan said the current intention is that students will be tested on day of arrival on campus. There are still questions around what else we will do. The plan had been for students in the US to get a test before they leave home and then be tested when they arrive. This plan has gone awry because the national testing chains turnaround time is now too long to be useful. They are looking at alternatives.
- Prof. Carr asked if there are any plans for any returning students, especially international students, regarding any backlash or negative reaction to them coming to Boston or campus. She also asked if the Provost knew how many international student might be returning to Boston.
 - Provost Madigan said that they recently did a survey of the student body, and while he couldn’t recall the exact numbers, a high fraction of students intend to come back to campus. In regards to international students, a significant number of students are still in the country. For those abroad, the visa questions are complex.

In regards to the treatment of returning students, the Provost said in general the messaging the university will be rolling out will emphasize that we are in this as a

community, and there are expectations on every member of the community. He said we need to hold each other accountable for best practices related to COVID-19 and university policies and procedures.

There will be student ambassadors who, if they see someone not wearing a mask, will ask them to put on a mask. (If they do not have one, there will be various locations around campus where people can get a mask.)

- Prof. Beighley asked if a faculty member decides to opt-in for teaching, what are your thoughts on that faculty member teaching remotely once a week or once every other week?
 - Provost Madigan said a request for all remote is more limiting than having an arrangement for periodic campus presence, and the Provost wants common sense, flexible arrangements to be made at the local level.
- Prof. Caracoglia asked for more specifics on how the NUflex “helpers”/instructional assistants will be deployed and how they can aid in the instruction and setup. He also suggested that allowing faculty to become administrators of the computers in the classrooms, with some restrictions, might help solve issues around software installation.
 - Large classes and those classes in which faculty is teaching remotely will be prioritized to have this support.
- Prof. David Herlihy asked if the university will be creating model language for inclusion in syllabi regarding COVID-19?
 - Provost Madigan said this was an interesting idea. He said we should be explaining why we are wearing masks and keeping six feet apart. The Provost said he might take that idea to the Deans.
 - Dean Sive added she thought this was a terrific question. She said in the COS they would have group of students who could be ambassadors of some type who understand the etiology of the virus, explain viruses in general and who could talk about vaccine development. They could talk about the landscape of Covid using the science we know about. We could empower students to communicate about the viral science and health and safety protocols we need to follow.

Prof. Erdogmus presented the following and Prof. Carcoglia seconded.

SAC presents a motion to go into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Fall 2020 reopening plans of Northeastern University; and that this session’s debate in the committee shall cease at 1:20 PM ET.

The vote to accept the motion PASSED 29-0-0.

DISCUSSION CONTINUED:

- Prof. Mukerjee asked if there was sufficient capacity for the increased number of faculty and staff who will want to drive to campus?
 - The Provost said it would appear we have more than enough capacity.
 - Day pass will be \$15 instead \$23 for faculty and staff and \$8 for grad students. The Provost believe these rates will be available starting August 30th to Dec. 15th. (Many people will not want to use an annual parking pass if they will not be on campus every day etc.)
 - Prof. Franko said it doesn't appear as though permits are available to apply for right now. She has emailed the parking office to get information on when this will be available.
 - Update from DF: Masparc says that annual parking permits will be available “in early August.” Communication about parking will go out soon (7/24/20 or 7/27/20 likely).
 - Masparc website: <http://www.masparc.com/products/>.
 - These options involve a completely touchless system that uses license plate recognition.
 - Parking permit office told one faculty they will not be open for 2 more weeks. The provost will look more into this.

- Prof. Dau said there are still a lot of questions around what the teaching experience would look like and suggested it would be helpful to post a simulation video that can show where the mikes and cameras will be and general set up.
 - Prof. Franko said there will be both a demonstration classroom with the new technology as well as online training about the new classroom technology in early August through ITS. Right now, NUFlex training is available and details can be found at: nuflex.northeastern.edu and training.its.northeastern.edu.

- Prof. Caracoglia asked if faculty and staff be required to wear masks when they are alone in their office? What about a student alone in the lab/office?
 - Provost Madigan said no – not if a person is alone in a private space.

- Prof. Stevens agreed with Dean Sive’s suggestions around integrating student into more of the university’s planning and noted the sense of community that can build.

Prof. Stevens also noted there was probably room for improvement around communication from administration to our community as well as outside the campus community.

As some people don’t have a car, Prof. Stevens also said that incentivizing parking over other modes of transportation becomes an equity issue. Question about incentives that are not parking related, as some people do not have a car etc.

- The Provost said the administration is looking into providing incentive for blue bikes, but still discussing public transportation, as there are potential issues related to COVID-19.

- Prof. Dennerlein noted there is a lack of secure bike parking on campus. He said other institutions in Boston have secure bike cages strategically located throughout the campus.
 - Provost Madigan said he will look into this.
- Prof. Board encouraged all elected senators to work with their college leadership to develop a strong communication plan back to the college faculty and to be sounding boards and accurately represent the faculty from each college. She asked everyone to think about how we can strategically improve our communication going forward.
 - Provost Madigan heartily agreed to make sure that we have effective shared governance.
- Prof. Musselman asked when will requests to work remotely be answered? Or will this come from Deans?
 - Provost Madigan said the deadline for requesting to work remotely is August 15th. Deb Franko added that if faculty have requested to work remotely using "Option 1" which is a request to HRM, Shana Feggins will turn those around within one week of receiving back the medical documentation (if required). If faculty have requested using "Option 2" to their unit head, they should turn that around within a week or so.
- Prof. Erdogmus said some faculty have reached out to say that they are feeling pressure from their unit leads to be on the ground for the Fall semester teaching.
- Prof. Carr said she felt NTTF might also feel pressured to come to campus.
 - Provost Madigan said no one who feels uncomfortable should feel as though they need to come back to campus, and unit leaders should not be pressuring any faculty in this way. The Provost wants to hear about these types issues, so please reach out to the Provost and/or Deb Franko with these types of situations.
- Prof. Dennerlein said a clear communication across the board about this issue from the administration should be issued because we live in a state where workers have the right to refuse "dangerous work."
- Prof. Dennerlein posted the following link:
 - <http://masscosh.org/policy-advocacy/essential-worker-bill-rights-massachusetts>.
 - Provost Madigan said that he wants to go back and review the communications and rework if necessary. He said these power imbalances present a complicated issue, but university ombudsperson is in a position to really help with these issues.
 - University Ombuds: Diane Levin (d.levin@northeastern.edu).
- Prof. Musselman said she had been sent screen shots from the NEU parent group. Some parents have called an office on campus and have been told that "professors are

required to come back to work on campus, they do not have a choice to teach remotely. There will be exceptions for a few who have comorbidities/health conditions or illness" — so, some office on campus is telling parents this. This seems like a problem. The office they called was not identified in the communications she received.

- Prof. Poe added faculty are concerned that parents are receiving incorrect information.
 - Provost Madigan stated this is obviously misinformation, but will investigate further, but we do want all of the faculty to come back, as do the students, and likely, the faculty as well, as long as they feel that they can do so safely and effectively.
- Prof. Board: Regarding the communication:
 - Recommend regular communication within the college senators be it meetings or email.
 - Then suggest two ways to communicate to the college and units -
 - (1) email with specific info, links, etc. [For ex., send the link to the NU COVID sites, we don't need to state it all for them, it's there]
 - (2) A senate report should be a regular agenda item on both college and unit faculty meetings.
 - For the return communication, make it known how faculty can contact their senators besides at an open meeting. Most likely an email but maybe through another platform. And then follow up with them.
- Prof. Laboy asked what is the current thinking of the administration regarding the growing outbreaks at the national level and if there are conditions that may trigger NU changing plans and going online, on what timeline, etc? It would be comforting to know that there are contingency plans on how to avoid the chaos and disruption of this March (which at that time was understandably unavoidable).
 - Provost Madigan: monitoring the national and regional situation, and there are contingency plans in place if we need to shut down campus again. There are not currently quantitative measures at this time (ex. If the infection rate reaches X, NU will do Y).
 - Everyone will be tested every 5 days. This includes faculty and staff. (For faculty this will depend on their teaching rotation. Depending on that, it may be every 7 days.)
 - There is a challenge with dealing with students who are coming here from areas that have spiking rates of COVID-19, and those are still being worked on, but there is a plan for when students return to campus (I.e. testing on day 1 etc.).
 - Once students are here, we will be monitoring closely as the community of Boston as we do not live in a bubble as a university.
- Prof. Dennerlein asked is there a plan for quarantining for students from out of state?
 - Provost Madigan said there are no specific plans as of yet, and the university is awaiting state guidance.

- Prof. Laboy said the situation here in Boston is likely to change dramatically once students return, and there might be a spike here later in the fall, OR if a mandatory 14 day quarantine for students at the beginning of the semester may impact faculty planning for their courses if one was considering front loading aspects of a course that might require in person attendance for example.

Prof. Franko shared the policy from the June 30, 2020 communication from the Provost:

Published June 30, 2020

Dear Faculty and Staff,

Remote Work Requests

As we start planning for the fall, the university welcomes questions and requests from those who may have specific challenges related to returning to campus in the fall. Any reasonable request will be honored. The goal is that returning faculty and staff feel comfortable doing so.

[Faculty Request to Work Remotely Temporary Policy](#) – According to the policy, faculty members who may have specific challenges related to returning to campus in the fall should feel free to discuss with their unit head or associate dean for faculty prior to making a formal request. Please note that any information shared related to a request will be treated confidentially. Any such information will not be shared or considered in tenure and/or promotion or reappointment decisions.

The Senate adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Gonyeau, Secretary

Faculty Senate