



# Northeastern University

## Office of the Faculty Senate

**TO:** Faculty Senate  
**FROM:** Secretary, Faculty Senate  
**SUBJECT:** Minutes, 21 October, 2020

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

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

Absent: (Professors) Dennerlein, Gonyeau, Lorette, Stowell, Su

**CALL TO ORDER:** 11:50 a.m.

The October 7, 2020 minutes were approved.

### I. SAC REPORT

Prof. Erdogmus reported that since the Sept. 7, 2020 Faculty Senate meeting, the Senate Agenda Committee (SAC) had met twice and completed kick-off meetings for the Senate's standing committees. The standing committee charges and members can be found on the Faculty Senate website.

Administrator evaluation surveys for deans/chairs under evaluation were sent to relevant faculty members. SAC continues to work on confirming presenters and topics for upcoming senate meetings.

SAC met with Provost Madigan & Sr. Vice Provost Deb Franko once. Topics of discussion included:

- Upcoming Faculty Handbook NTT Dismissal Module
- Remote work policy for Spring 2021
- Gathering information from faculty regarding caregiving impact on their work

SAC has requested help from senators to gather information from faculty on caregiving challenges. A survey template prepared by Bouve senators is available, if desired.

Faculty so far expressed concerns on expected edicts on faculty options for Spring 2021.

Faculty with caregiving responsibilities are feeling overwhelmed and vulnerable.

Simple solutions can help significantly such as increased schedule flexibility, reduced service expectation, and easier access to temporary parental leave. Care.com benefits are perceived as not helpful/useful in addressing challenges. There were reports of problems with Care.com service itself even before the pandemic.

Prof. Erdogmus reported that there were two curriculum inactivations: CPS – Liberal Studies, BS  
BCHS – Rehabilitation Studies, BS.

The Student Government Association voted on a resolution on October 19th, to make Tuesday, November 3rd, 2020 a campus-wide election holiday.

## II. PROVOST REPORT

In light of his presentation with Chancellor Henderson, Provost Madigan did not offer a report.

### QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Prof. David Smith revisited the question of faculty possibly using the Broad Institute to test their dependents. Provost Madigan said the issue is that Northeastern is currently not allowed to do this for insurance purposes. Northeastern operates a swabbing center on campus at Cabot and is currently not allowed to have non-affiliates in that center because it is considered a medical facility.

Chancellor Henderson agreed with Provost Madigan's response. Chancellor Henderson added these tests were medically licensed tests and a physician would have to order the tests for the individual. The Chancellor said they are currently looking at other options to expand their testing capability including partnering the Burlington facility with community health clinics.

The Provost added a comment around care giving and a couple of the topics mentioned in Prof. Erdogmus' SAC report. He said in general Care.com is well received adding he was sure not everyone finds it useful. He said it is not being utilized very heavily.

He said Care.com, is designed to assist with back-up care in an emergency. A problem with using that regularly, is that a person gets a different person potentially every time. Care.com also works as a kind of intermediary who will help a person find a more permanent nanny or babysitter. He said they are trying to see if they can weave that into the benefit.

Provost Madigan said that temporary leaves are obviously tricky for people who are teaching in regards to continuity for a class. In regards to service reductions, Provost Madigan said they have urged chairs to reduce service requirements as far as they can for faculty with extra care giving burdens at this time. (This request to chairs was referenced in a 9.10.20 email from the Office of the Provost.)

Prof. Ergun thanked the Provost's Office for all their efforts adding they are steps in the right direction. In regard to the caregiving situation, she has been working with the state since March on finding and matching caregivers and other medical staff. She said through this work she has learned there is a fundamental supply shortage of caregivers in the state. She added they do match people but the yield out of those matches is extremely low.

Prof. Poe seconded what Prof. Ergun said and added that Care.com gives a person a lot of false positives as far as matches. She also wanted to acknowledge the ongoing risk of bringing an outside minimum wage caretaker into a home – a risk to both parties, the caretaker and the person hiring the caretaker.

Prof. Poe also said the university should consider some type of policy to compensate faculty members who step in for colleagues to substitute teach for 2 or 3 weeks at a time.

Prof. Caracoglia said in regards to a temporary leave there may be some people in a situation where they need to require a long term, unpaid leave of absence for medical or family reasons. Currently, the University follows the guidelines of the state. So there is a total number of weeks per year that one could be away without incurring any problems in regards to one's position. He said this type of protection might not be well suited for faculty. The time period allocated by the state is a little less than one semester. If the University could consider to extend this benefit to allow faculty to take off a semester if there is a difficult emergency without the problem of losing their position especially for NTTF. And the University could benefit because with a whole semester, they can hire someone else to temporarily fill the position.

Sr. Vice Provost Franko said she wanted to remind everyone that there are many different types of leave. She said she believed that Prof. Caracoglia was referring to FLMA (Family and Medical Leave Act). There is also personal leave that faculty can apply for. She said there is information on the various leave policies at the NU Policies page <https://www.northeastern.edu/policies/>. The connection in Human Resources for any type of leave (other than sabbatical leave) is Mel Shea, Sr. Benefits Specialist: [ma.shea@northeastern.edu](mailto:ma.shea@northeastern.edu).

Sr. Vice Provost Franko also mentioned a new Facebook group, Northeastern University Faculty/Staff Micro-Schools Matchup that has been created to help alleviate one of the specific challenges faced by faculty and staff with school-age children. This peer support platform, initiated by Dean Poiger and assisted by Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Phil He is intended to assist with families connecting to one another to form micro-schools/pods and other collaborative childcare activities. Families will work out what form these collaborations will take. Announcement regarding this initiative is pending.

### **III. UNIVERSITY UPDATE with PROVOST MADIGAN and CHANCELLOR HENDERSON**

In their presentation Provost Madigan and Chancellor Henderson presented a joint look at the state of the University. The presentation noted strategic priorities, new appointments, Covid-19 related updates, and follow up and progress on diversity and inclusion. The complete presentation can be found on the Faculty Senate website.

#### **QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:**

Prof. Erdogan asked if faculty could get clear instructions on the cost and requirements for getting space in Portland, Silicon Valley or other locations for start-ups. Prof. Erdogan suggested a clear web page for faculty who want this information.

Provost Madigan said he would support this suggestion.

Prof. Erdogan also said since 2009 he has served on search committees, primarily in Electrical and Computer Engineering. In terms of increasing faculty diversity, in the last couple of years they started requiring all search committee members to get some training but there is no follow-up after that training. Making sure diversity objectives are considered is left to the few faculty members who really care about this. Prof. Erdogan asked what can be done to make sure that search committees get training and are paying attention to those objectives throughout the process. Provost Madigan said the training of people on committees is one part of this.

More generally, he said there are best practices on how to handle searches so searches are more likely to yield candidates from under-represented groups. The Provost's sense is that the University is not bad at this but there is a lot more that can be done and will be done as part of the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force.

The Provost said he didn't think this alone would get Northeastern to its goals. He said one idea was to focus to some extent resources and faculty hiring dollars on areas where the scholars are diverse. He acknowledged this is a hard problem and that all ideas are welcome. He added every major university is trying to do the same thing at the same time.

Prof. Wood noted that one best practice is to include a diversity and inclusion advocate on every search committee. He asked if that is something the University is considering. Provost Madigan said that at his previous university that is what they did and said it is one component of best practices.

Prof. Michael Mages said as this is a systemic problem, part of the challenge is creating a more diverse applicant pool which means aggressively recruiting a diverse population for our PhD students. He said as the University looks at hiring, it should also look at supporting that pool of applicants.

Provost Madigan agreed the pipeline is all important.

Prof. Poe asked now that NCH can offer degrees should we be thinking of joint programs with them.

Chancellor Henderson gave a resounding yes to this question. He added they wanted to be a little bit careful since it is a small institution. They want to be careful about traffic control.

Sr. Vice Provost Franko said the STRIDE committee (Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence) led by Dean Jackie Isaacs and supported by ADVANCE Office of Faculty Development is a requirement for search committee members every two years. There will also be 3 sessions of the Provost Diversity Forums this month. These have been advertised.

Prof. Smith asked what the Provost thought about the mix of faculty (T/TT, NTT, Research) going forward in light of strategic planning.

Provost Madigan said he didn't have rigid opinions around this. He said it is a great topic for the strategic planning exercise. What kind of mix of faculty lines do we want going forward?

Prof. Erdogmus said he supports increasing the number of research faculty.

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

Prof. McNabb read the following and Dean Loeffelholz seconded.

**BE IT RESOLVED That the University establish the Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies in the College of Professional Studies as approved by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee on 23 September 2020 (16-0-0).**

**QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:**

Prof. Erdogmus asked why this program was introduced to replace the inactivated BS in Liberal Studies.

Dean Loeffelholz said the College of Professional Studies has a general degree, formerly the inactivated degree the BS in Liberal Studies to enable students who come with a lot of credits that might be in a program that we don't have to complete their degree. You need to be able to allow a student to complete a generalist degree. It is one of NECHE's requirements of our accrediting agency the New England Commission on Higher Education that there be a general degree so that students don't lose their credits.

The vote was taken. The motion PASSED, 28-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.