



Northeastern University

Office of the Faculty Senate

TO: Faculty Senate
FROM: Secretary, Faculty Senate
SUBJECT: Minutes, 2 December, 2020

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

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

Absent: (Professors) Bormann, Dennerlein, Ergun, Gonyeau, Vollmer
(Administrators)

CALL TO ORDER: 11:45 a.m.

The November 18, 2020 minutes were approved.

I. SAC REPORT

Prof. Erdogmus reported that since the last Senate meeting SAC met twice for usual business and worked offline with elected senators and senate committee members on potential resolution proposals for the December 2 senate meeting.

In addition to email communications, SAC met with Provost Madigan & Sr. Vice Provost Deb Franko once. Topics of discussion included:

- Ongoing resolution drafting efforts of senators/committees.
- Progress on gathering institutional data for senate committees.
- How Faculty Senate and SAC can help with strategic planning.

SAC has provided a list of faculty interested in strategic planning committees along with SAC recommendations to Provost Madigan.

Prof. Erdogmus reminded all that the Klein Lectureship nominations were due by December 7, 2020.

II. PROVOST REPORT

Provost Madigan reported that the strategic planning process is underway. Six working groups have been established with two leads for each group. The issues for these groups include University clusters; global; communities; educational products and offerings; operations and technology; and learning. Right now the Provost's Office is receiving nominations on members for these groups and fine tuning charges.

The hope is to build on the previous strategic plan. This will be open and inclusive process including faculty, staff, students, employment partners, alums and community members.

In regards to the timeframe, the expectation is that groups complete their work by April. The goal is to complete this work in this academic year.

The Provost also provided an update on the testing front. Similar to Boston and MA, there has been an increase in the positive test rate in the last few weeks.

The Provost said there is not an immediate concern, but they are monitoring the situation closely.

The expectation is there will be a Thanksgiving bump. He added they assume over next few weeks, the campus population will reduce and then all eyes are on the spring.

The University is active in planning for the vaccine. He added the University does have freezers capable of these very cold temperatures.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

- Prof. Musselman raised a return-to-work question. She said staff in her office had received an email stating their return to work requests had been declined after consultation with their direct supervisor. Prof. Musselman added the direct supervisors said they were not asked. This seemed to run counter to earlier statements that people would not be pressured to return to campus.

Provost Madigan said he didn't know enough about how this message went out. The Provost said he would look into the matter.

Sr. Vice Provost Franko added there was a whole procedure for direct supervisors to be asked that question. She said any staff person who is asked to come back to campus can request to work remotely in same as way as faculty.

- Prof. Erdogmus followed up on this topic but from the PhD student perspective. He said PhD students are concerned that the process to continue to work remotely while maintaining PhD Teaching Assistantships was stricter than last time. He asked if faculty can assure their PhD students that same process as before will apply?

The Provost said it would be the same process as the fall but he would like to see the message that went out to them.

- Prof. Mukerjee asked for a clarification on this in the context of Research Assistantships and P.I.'s since most P.I.'s are on the clock in terms of deliverables.

Provost Madigan said this isn't any different than the fall. He said it was his understanding people were able to work out arrangements and that the number of PhD students who asked to work remotely was small.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Vice Provost Ronkin read the following and Prof. Board seconded.

BE IT RESOLVED That the proposed Graduate Council Bylaws replace the current Graduate Council Bylaws (dated July 31, 2019) as edited and recommended by the Graduate Associate Deans and Network.

Vice Provost Ronkin acknowledged Tom Sheahan Sr. Vice Provost for Curriculum and Programs, and chair of the Graduate Council who highlighted seven changes to the bylaws (most were practices that the Graduate Council had been following but were not documented):

- Allow for an acting chair to serve in the place of the chair of the Graduate Council if the chair can't be there. (p.2)
- Allow at least 1 course (3 sem. Hours or 4 quarter hours) to be transferred in that would count towards graduate certificate. (p.7)
- Articulation agreements that involve graduate programs. This came up because the University is in the process of signing some agreements with the Rioux Institute and just signed one with the University of Maine. (p.8)
- Suggestion to limit how many times students can retake graduate courses. (p.9)
- A new section added about PlusOne degree combinations. Highlights include limiting how many courses could be shared between undergraduate and graduate programs. Also, students not in a PlusOne while an undergraduate can't turn around and use any graduate courses towards a masters later on. Students who were in a PlusOne but did not finish for any reason, now have three academic years to finish their program. (p.12)
- Added language to include what is known as a Dissertation in practice which is common in CPS. (p.13)
- Assoc. Deans wanted some guard rails around PhD students taking courses outside their program. Students would have to get approval from their primary advisor and their home college graduate office for these courses. If a student wants an MA in topic outside their program, they have to apply to and be accepted into that masters. (p.16)

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

- Prof. Erdogmus asked for the 3 or 4 transfer credits to MA or certificate degrees, what is the total number of credits required for a certificate?

Vice Provost Sheahan said it is typically 4 courses. Usually limited to about a 1/4 of the credential.

- Prof. Erdogmus wanted to clarify that a student who wanted to earn a MA degree in their field of study on the way to a PhD would not be impacted by some of the noted changes.

Vice Provost Sheahan said no. It is intended for students pursuing a credential outside that home department.

- Prof. Wood asked if the approval from the advisor in the home college has to come prior to completing 1/3, does that 1/3 also apply to being accepted into the major offering the credential?

Vice Provost Sheahan said it did. It was prefacing that list of items, prior to completing more than 1/3 of credits, before they get approval of advisor and apply to and are accepted into that major that is providing that offering.

He added if that language was not clear they could add a step 1 or 2 if additional delineation of the steps was appropriate. That could be a friendly amendment.

- Prof. Zulick asked if the language could be updated to include quarter hours to include CPS Graduate programs? She added there has been some confusion in bringing PlusOnes from the semester to quarter hour conversion.

Vice Provost Sheahan said they tried to include quarter hours where they thought it was appropriate for the section being discussed. He added Prof. Zulick was asking a good question about the conversion and that this was a good question for Linda Allen (University Registrar). He said he can always look back and make sure we are always mentioning the quarter hour conversion as well wherever there are semester hours.

- Prof. Desnoyers asked if the limit on retaking classes could be petitioned to the college?

Vice Provost Sheahan said yes. Any exception to the bylaws are always open to petition. Petitions are appropriate for that.

There were no further questions.

Vice Provost Sheahan suggested that if there was concurrence that he review and clarify the language pointed out by Prof. Wood and following Prof. Zulick's suggestion fixing anywhere the quarter hours are not also delineated, and that these be seen as friendly amendments, they we will subsequently fix he would go with a vote today to move forward.

Prof. Erdogmus moved to accept the changes including the pending ones that will come back for review. Vice Chancellor Gallagher seconded.

VOTE on the proposed Graduate Council Bylaws to replace the current Graduate Council Bylaws (dated July 31, 2019) **PASSED: 29-0-0.**

- B. Prof. Board read the following and Prof. Erdogmus seconded.

WHEREAS the 2020 calendar year has created extraordinary circumstances affecting all faculty's teaching, service and research/ scholarship/creative activity,

WHEREAS irregularities due to introduction of NUFlex, complete transition to Canvas, and continuing pandemic circumstances impacting life and work conditions of faculty and students have resulted in significant disruption to teaching and learning conditions,

WHEREAS the Faculty Senate passed 2019-20 Resolutions 25 and 28 & 2020-21 Resolution 1 related to these circumstances,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate recommends that the Provost's Office, in collaboration with the Faculty Development Committee, prepare guidelines specifying

special considerations regarding the 2020 merit and annual review cycle, and disseminate to the deans, chairs, unit heads, and merit committees.

Prof. Board recognized Prof. Tova Sanders, co-chair of the FDC. Prof. Sanders said part of FDC's overall charge was to look at faculty impact with regards to Covid and make some recommendations in regards to promotion. The goal of this resolution is to work with the Provost Office to come up with some concrete recommendations to forward to the various parties involved to consider with regards to merit. Prof. Board added these will not replace any department / unit processes, procedures or policies. Hoping these guidelines add to them in terms of some explanations.

The Provost added from his and Sr. Vice Provost Franko's point of view, they are happy to do this.

VOTE on the Provost's Office, in collaboration with the Faculty Development Committee, prepare guidelines specifying special considerations regarding the 2020 merit and annual review cycle **PASSED: 27-0-0.**

IV. MAUREEN O'SHEA, DIRECTOR, INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION – Update on Assessment

The Assessment powerpoint presentation can be found on the Faculty Senate website.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

- Prof. Poe asked who owns the data from AEFIS?
Are faculty notified or is that data scraped?
How do we think about the differential use of that data on Teaching Professors?
If we are going to be using that whole AEFIS system that goes from outcomes down to rubrics that means that people need to be using common rubrics in classrooms so that we have comparative data sets.

Director O'Shea said a lot of this is a work in progress. She welcomes faculty input. She said the only place that she sees the use of common rubrics is where they are doing the NuPath assessment. They have not developed the rubrics yet for the writing intensive. With the differences in diversity, they really developed a rubric that is very close to the learning goals.

She said the intention is that they are relying on faculty judgement. Faculty who are participating in this assessment process, assess their own students' work. This is true in program assessment as well as in the NUPath core curriculum assessment.

In terms of equity and students, once we get this up for next year, she does want to have a statement somewhere in the catalog saying this is how their work is being utilized and invite them to participate in committees and looking at the use of this work.

- Prof. Poe added when we get down to the point that we have student level data, having some group of people who can think through data ethics would be important. And having student involvement in that as well.

In terms of who owns, the data Director O'Shea said that at this point the faculty in each program own their data. This will be exported to a data warehouse and we will have to review those guidelines and make sure it is something everyone is comfortable with. .

- Prof. Mages asked if there are their plans to use this assessment data in evaluation procedures at all?

Director O'Shea said that this is a different lense than grades of looking at student achievement. She added this is not a course evaluation or faculty evaluation. This information will be at the program level.

- Provost Herlihy asked if the idea is that faculty would include these articulated outcomes on their syllabi so students will all be on the same page about that?

Director O'Shea said she thought this was a great idea. This is something each college and program could consider. CPS is developing a syllabus template for their faculty that would include the student outcomes at the course and program level.

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Michael Gonyeau, Senate Secretary