



Northeastern University Faculty Senate

TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: Secretary, Faculty Senate
SUBJECT: Minutes, February 1, 2023

Present: Professors: Avalon, Caracoglia, Carr, Chiou, Cisewski, Di Credico, Folmar, Godoy-Carter, Gonyeau, Hertz, Jaeggli, Kitagawa, Landsmark, Lin, Marano, McSherry, Molnar, Moore, Musselman, Rappaport, Rawson, Rolland, Sivak, Smith, Spencer, Strange, Toledano Laredo, Van Pelt

Administrators: Madigan, Hackney, Isaacs, Mynatt, Reid, Seshan
Absent: (Professors) Krishnamoorthy, Nieves, Oet, Vollmer, Willey

(Administrators) Wadia-Fascetti

CALL TO ORDER: 11:45 a.m.

I. SAC REPORT:

(The SAC report has been posted the Senate website.)

- Prof. Gonyeau noted that since the last senate meeting SAC has met twice and has met with the Provost once.
- The work of the Senate standing committees and search committees continues.
- There were 2 program inactivations in BCHS -- CAGS-COPS: Counseling Psychology, CAGS and CAGS-ABA: Applied Behavior Analysis, CAGS.
- Prof. Gonyeau reviewed the Senate Communication plan. This plan highlights the role of elected senators. In the first step of this plan, a faculty person would identify an issue to their senator. The faculty person would collect information, detail the nature of concern, note the involvement of college leadership. Elected senators who believe SAC should be involved would complete a Faculty Senate Form on the Senate website under Forms and Documents. SAC would determine with whom to share the information and if more information is needed. SAC/the Senate Office would follow up within 2 weeks.

II. PROVOST REPORT:

Provost Madigan said in regard to Dean searches, DMSB is close to an announcement. CSSH Dean search committee is up and running and reviewing terrific applicants.

The Provost said there is a huge amount of work going on in regards to Faculty searches.

In regards to tenure track and tenure appointments, there are over 70 approved FTEs, 310 first round screening interviews and 161 on campus interviews thus far. There is a similar amount of activity going on for teaching faculty, research faculty and so on. There are not that many offers out yet. The Provost thanked everyone for all their work. This is important for defining the work of the university.

The Provost noted a sensitive topic saying sadly from time to time, tragedies occur on our campuses. The university's response to tragedies on campus can sometimes seem mysterious in terms of what announcements they make.

Our overarching concerns is always the wishes of the family and what communications the family would like. 100% of the time we honor their wishes.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. Musselman asked when would the search for an English department chair get underway?

The Senate Office will check with the CSSH Dean's office on this matter.

Prof. Strange said on Khoury on the teaching track side the assistant level contract is only for 1 year. This is an issue for hiring. Can we look into a 3-year contract? In the network campuses, there aren't offices and are not a great place to come and work.

Provost Madigan said they are aware of the one year issue and are working on it. In regards to the network campuses, there is a lot of variation in regards to the kinds of facilities we have in different places. He is aware of these concerns.

Prof. Smith said that they had a system in Khoury that they changed because they were required to be in compliance with the university's system and so if there is some group working on that they should reach out to Prof. Smith as he worked on changing their by-laws. And he agreed that space at network campuses was a recruiting problem as well.

Provost Madigan noted that the 1 year, 3 year, 5 year provisions are in the Faculty Handbook and this would require a change to the Faculty Handbook. But we can do that.

Or, Prof. Smith suggested, change the Faculty Handbook so that colleges could have policies that are more generous than what is in the Faculty Handbook. If we wanted to have a baseline policy and then allow Khoury to do what they used to do in the past if they wanted to be more generous.

III. **PRESENTATION:**

COLE CAMPLESE

VP INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY and CIO.

Information Technology Services Update and Priorities

(The presentation has been posted to the Senate website. Below are some highlights.)

V.P. Campese said it has been a very busy year. There have been a lot of activity launching global campuses and with the acquisition of Mills. He noted that ITS has 6 peer lines of business including:

Academic Technologies & Research Computing, Infrastructure, Information Security, Global IT Operations, Enterprise Platforms and Business Intelligence, and Engagement and Customer Experience.

ITS has 240 full-time staff and utilizes a ton of students employing about 300 students on the Boston campus alone. Service is 24x7x365 due to the global campuses. His staff operates more like multinational fortune 500 company. Training and development is huge. There is a big emphasis on information security.

Some notable implementation highlights for FY23-27 include: replacing Banner finance; a massive network modernization program; this year emphasis on wireless replacing 6,000 wireless access points across the university.

Key driver for ITS includes – information security. The three vectors they see the most are ransomware, data breach, and socio-political events.

Some security statistics include 236,339 users, 11,710 managed devices. See about 6 million attacks a day.

The Digital University initiative has worked to transform the people, technology, and the way faculty and students use the technology. They are working towards the idea of frictionless technology and towards things like password less authentication. There is a whole team dedicated to Digital University that will go out and do consultations with people.

The Global Digital Platform is an idea that members of the Northeastern community – faculty, students or staff – should have their personalized view to drive engagement with the university. This is really a platform of platforms. It is a foundation that reaches into all those enterprise platforms and brings just the data that the individual needs at that moment to the surface. This will allow people to get their work done more quickly and more efficiently.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Prof. Landmark asked how soon will we be able to share this presentation with their faculty.

V.P. Campese said he will leave the presentation behind. There is nothing that is top secret or embargoed.

Prof. Caracoglia thanked Cole for all the work he does and all the assistants who are very proactive and come quickly if someone needs help. Would it be possible to use a chat feature in the classroom?

V.P. Campese said one thing they had done on the control panel there is a SOS button and that goes to the closest available instructional assistant.

Prof. Musselman asked if V.P. Campese could show us again how to get to the faculty and staff hub.

The hub is found at Me.northeastern.edu.

Prof. Musselman said she was in a global learning space and she is very happy with the space. The coordinating team has been in her classroom a lot sorting out wrinkles. She has noticed often the solution is simple. Could we have a quick troubleshooting sheet in those classrooms?

V.P. Campese said they had how-to-guides in the rooms at the start of the semester and Facilities came through and took them out. They moved them to digital. Cole will forward to the Senate Office a slide with links to essential sources. The Senate will also include on the Senate Newsletter.

Prof. Rolland said that duo authentication system doesn't always work when traveling abroad because a person might not have cell service. Is there another option?

V.P. Campese said DUO gives you 5 one-time codes that you can store in your wallet or phone

case.

Prof. Kitagawa had a question about research computing training on discovery. Could there be more regular training for students and faculty?

V.P. Campese will take this back to the Team. He added if you go to rc.northeastern.edu, there is documentation training and consultation links there. You can reach out to research computing team and they will do on demand training sessions.

PRESENTATION:

USAMA FAYYAD

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE INSTITUTE OF EXPERIENTIAL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Discussion of AI in the Classroom.

(The presentation has been posted to the Senate website. Below are some highlights.)

Chat GPT is a Chat interface running atop GPT-3. It stands for Generative Pre-trained Transformer model – 1TB of internet text data, works by predicting next token in a sequence. It is a neural network with 175 billion parameters. It is very expensive to train. As an example, doing a re-run to re-train it cost about \$3 million in terms of energy and computing cost.

It uses generative unsupervised training. It claims to do “meta learning” – learning about learning. It is predicting the next token in a sequence. Most capabilities of ChatGPT are not new and have been around since 2020. It is like auto-complete on steroids with prediction and concept graph.

There is a human in the loop (HITL). Some questions are answered about humans. Does raise issues of intelligence.

It's not free but a billion dollar business. GPT-3 can be specialized to contain certain domains.

Threats to Higher Ed include that it is unreliable; it does not always supply the correct information; it is not capable of critical thinking.

Higher Ed has been through transitions before and we will adapt to use these tools. GPT is another tool for our learners. Our assessments need to evolve. Emphasis on creative thinking and synthesis.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Prof. Spencer asked how easy is it to download this?

Prof. Fayyad said it is easy to download the output. You connect to ChatGPT site. You put in query box a prompt and get an answer. He said the recommended use by him would be to let people use it and then they can edit it. Let's figure out ways for students to add value.

Prof. Rappaport – how can someone who uses this make sure they are not plagiarizing anyone else.

Prof. Fayyad this is a big topic of discussion. This draws on a lot of stuff. Also applies to images. Could draw from materials written by others and draw from copyrighted documents. The tool doesn't tell you where it got it from – it doesn't know where it got it from.

Prof. Fayyad shared the example of a Wharton Professor who gave up and said he knew students were using it. He instead asked students to tell him how you prompted it and how you modified it. That might be good middle ground.

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Prof. Michelle Carr
Senate Secretary