



Northeastern University Faculty Senate

TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: Secretary, Faculty Senate
SUBJECT: Minutes, September 13, 2023

Present: Professors: Adams, Alexis, Baker, Chen, Chiou, Diani, DiBattista, Di Credico, Folmar, Henderson, Herron, Homan, Jaeggli, Kevoe Feldman, Kitagawa, Krishnamoorthy, Lahr, Landsmark, Lin, Lowrey, Mellette, Molnar, Moore, Oet, Rappaport, Rawson, Rejtar, Rivera, Rolland, Saczynski, Sivak, Smith, Strange, Toledano Laredo, Triest, Viola, Walker, West

Administrators: Madigan, Brown, Isaacs, Pollastri, Sceppa, Seshan, Wadia-Fascetti

Absent: (Professors) Kahn
(Administrators)

CALL TO ORDER: 11:50 a.m.

I. SAC REPORT:

- Prof. Landsmark noted that Prof. Debra Auguste had to step away from SAC and Prof. Jacques Alexis, CPS, was elected to join SAC.
- Prof. Landsmark also noted that the Senate standing committee membership has been finalized by SAC. Committee charges are being completed and will be distributed in the next few days.

II. PROVOST REPORT:

- Provost Madigan said there was a leadership retreat week before last with 250 people – mostly faculty. The primary focus of the day was the global university system.
- Oct. 3rd will be Founders Day to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the university.
- The university is growing quite rapidly throughout the global university system. Added almost 200 faculty last year and will probably hire even more this year. The College deans and the Provost have been working hard on what kind of faculty searches they are going to launch this year. Hiring season varies from discipline to discipline, college to college but a large number of searches will be getting underway. There were some challenges last year in terms of the mechanics of some of the search committees and how they operated. The Provost, Sr. Vice Provost Deb Franko and the deans have been working on making sure the process is more streamlined this year. The Provost thanked everyone in advance for all the work they are going to do in regards to faculty hiring.
- The EXP building is now open to the public. There will be a grand opening on October 16th.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. Godoy Carter had a question from some of the faculty in her department. In relation to faculty hiring, the role of chair is very important. What is the role of the dean in a chair search or appointment?

Provost Madigan the process for hiring chairs is as documented in the Faculty Handbook. The Dean is an advisor to the Provost in this process. The Provost appoints chairs and deans and as such the Dean advises the Provost. Sr. Vice Provost Franko said the process is clearly spelled out in the Faculty Handbook.

Prof. Chen asked how many people they planned to hire this year and secondly will there be any differences in the process?

Provost Madigan said the number will be similar to last year. He added it is not that precise because when they conduct searches, sometimes they succeed, sometimes they fail. And in terms of process, the main change is on tenure track and tenured hiring. We have made quite a few joint appointments in the last few years. Last year in that in many cases that decision was made way late in the process resulting in a certain amount of confusion.

This year we are going to make sure that decisions around the structure of a joint appointment will be made much earlier in the process certainly before the candidate comes to campus.

Sr. Vice Provost Franko added that they put together based on conversations with the deans some new guidance that was sent out to the assoc. deans for faculty and department chairs in the last week or so.

Prof. Rappaport addressed the increase in parking rates once again. This is something the faculty in his department are complaining about. Though it made sense to sell the garages and parking a few years ago, the cost seems to be born now by the faculty. What can be done about this?

Provost Madigan noted this has been an ongoing concern. As everyone knows, this is no longer under our control. The Provost will take this under advisement and discuss with some folks and see if they can come up with any strategy.

Prof. Baker had a question about the hiring process in light of the Supreme Court decision on student admissions and whether there are any changes in guidance and explicit focus on trying to achieve better diversity in faculty hiring. It guides us in our solicitation, discussion and decision making around candidates. Even though the Supreme Court did not directly address employment context many lawyers and law professors are worrying about the writing on the wall as to whether this will impact in the short- or long-term faculty hiring efforts.

Provost Madigan said this is very much on their minds. The Supreme Court ruling has nothing to do with faculty hiring. It has to do with student recruitment. Strictly speaking, it has no impact on how we hire faculty.

We are more concerned with where things are going. Provost Madigan asked Prof. Landsmark to ask Mary Strother, General Counsel, to give the senate a tutorial on the Supreme Court ruling. Its impact on admissions and likely changes or impacts down the road.

Prof. Landsmark said that SAC welcomed such a presentation.

Prof. Rawson had another question about faculty hiring. It seems last year and this year we are moving toward these large-scale searches particularly for tenure and tenure stream faculty. He was wondering how that is meeting up with the needs of particular departments and programs specifically in terms of retirements or when faculty leave.

What happens when the searches aren't necessarily aligned with some of the holes and gaps for coverage and curriculum?

Provost Madigan said as a general matter the faculty we hire should fulfill the needs we have. Actually, there are deans here who can chime in. There is a detailed conversation that goes on all summer between the Provost and the deans in terms of what those needs are.

We end up with a slate of faculty that is meant to move the university forward in strategic directions that are important to us and meet the needs that are driven by curriculum.

Dean Sceppa, BCHS, wanted to reiterate what the Provost said. She said they work very closely with the Provost office to determine the needs that they have to serve students well. It is a balance between the talent, strengths and the opportunities that they have. Rest assured, we don't leave teaching needs unmet.

Prof. Strange asked with all the new faculty that just joined where are we going to put them all? In Khoury, we have a space crunch right now. Are we one day going to all have open floor plans like some of the network campuses? Is the priority for individual offices?

Provost Madigan is acutely aware growth brings space needs with it. We have growing needs. We just opened EXP which is huge addition to our teaching and research space. We are actively looking at all kinds of possibilities at all of our locations. Here in Boston, we are looking at the Hurtig building which would be renovated. Further down the road, there are other buildings that could be renovated. We can look at leasing space. This is a primary focus of a large number of people.

Prof. Walker asked a question about Veterans Day. This year it is not a day Northeastern has off but public schools have Friday, Nov. 10th off. For a lot of faculty that teach on that day and that have caregiving responsibilities, it does create problems. The Northeastern parent group reached out to HRM to ask about this but they have not heard back.

Provost Madigan said he didn't know why it wasn't on the roster of days off but he would look into this.

Prof. Smith asked the Provost to say more about streamlining the hiring process in relation to joint hiring and the effort to avoid misalignment.

Provost Madigan said discussions about joint hires would occur much earlier in the process. No later than the airport interviews that we identify clearly is there a second college involved and they have to actively involved in the campus visits. Many of the authorized searches are tagged as potential joint hires.

Prof. Toledano Laredo asked the Provost to comment on the balance between disciplinary and interdisciplinary hiring. It seems to him in his own college/department – the College of Science/Dept. of Mathematics -- the balance has shifted very much. I'm wondering what room is there for disciplinary hires. In discussing how you and the deans decide what strategic hires to make, one has to make choices. In our department, we have a training grant worth \$2.3 million very much predicated on our disciplinary strength in the department and we are hoping to renew that. But we have been losing faculty in the fields related to that grant – one went to Yale, one to France. We have been unable in several years in a row to hire in relation to that grant.

Provost Madigan said from the point of view of the academic plan and the strategic direction of the university, we are emphasizing high impact interdisciplinary areas. That said, all of the hires are in the colleges and departments. They are all disciplinary experts that we are hiring; we are tilting towards faculty who are more inclined to do interdisciplinary work.

Provost Madigan asked Prof. Toledano Laredo to reach out to him to discuss the grant issue in more detail.

Sr. Vice Provost Franko added that of the 95 tenured or tenure track faculty we hired in the last academic year 48 of them had joint appointments. So there are a lot of them but it is not 90 of 95.

Dean Sive added that we well support the Math Department and the Provost has as well. Certainly, the appointments over the last 3 years have not all been joint appointments. In fact, most have just been in the math department. She said she know the professor is really enthusiastic about the pure math appointments and she thinks they have made lots that are just in the math department.

Prof. Triest asked if the hiring was going to be in thematic clusters this year and if so what will those clusters be?

Provost Madigan said yes. The tenure/tenure track searches are organized around themes. The Provost will share those themes with Prof. Triest and anyone else who wants to see them.

Prof. DiBattista in spring 2023 students were able to use wellness days to get an excused absence from class. Back in May, Madeleine Estabrook sent out a survey and Prof. DiBattista was wondering if there was any data from the survey that could be shared. She is wondering if the days are working in the way they are meant to work.

Provost Madigan said he will check into this and get back.

Prof. Kevoe Feldman said they recently got an email from their college that came from the Provost Office about managing student absences. Faculty may want to look at this. She also mentioned that there is now a Faculty Concern Form on the Senate website.

Prof. Henderson asked if there was anything to say about faculty hires in California and if there was anything to say about the Dean search for Mills.

Provost Madigan said in regards to the Dean search they will be following the Handbook process

and hopefully will get that underway soon.

In regards to Faculty hiring in Oakland, colleges are hiring mostly non-tenure track to serve the needs of the programs.

PRESENTATION:

**DEBRA L. FRANKO, PH.D., SENIOR VICE PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS,
PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY**

New Faces and New Initiatives from the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

(The presentation is posted to the senate website.)

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. Strange asked in relation to the Faculty Staff Advisory group about Mental Health, if they know of a faculty member who might be interested in joining this, what should they do?

Sr. Vice Provost Franko said they should send her a quick email.

Prof. Baker had a question about the Mental Health Matters initiative particularly around accommodations for students, faculty or staff with disabilities. He teaches disability law and said there is a well-known concept of universal access and design of physical spaces but there is no comparable perspective on universal design to accommodate neuro diversity or people who don't have the same skills in terms of interpersonal relations.

It is part of the university's responsibility to design a university that is more accepting and accommodating of people with mental illness. He is wondering if the Provost Office is recognizing this and taking on board some additional thinking on that.

Sr. Vice Provost Franko said that is exactly the kind of idea she is looking for. She added that she believed last year Sandra Shefelbine, COE, with others put together a series last year looking at disabilities.

Prof. Baker said his second question was around professional Faculty development. Given the University's new focus on trying to have actual social and justice impact in regards to the work the university does. He wonders if soliciting information from individual faculty perspectives is sufficient to capture faculty impact. What are we doing in professional development work, to also focus on what happens in the world with the research we do?

Provost Madigan said this was very interesting and he would like to reach out to Prof. Baker about this topic.

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Prof. Yingzi Lin, Senate Secretary