



Northeastern University Faculty Senate

TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: Secretary, Faculty Senate
SUBJECT: Minutes, December 6, 2023

Present: Professors Adams, Alexis, Baker, Chen, Chiou, Diani, DiBattista, Di Credico, Folmar, Godoy-Carter, Henderson, Herron, Homan, Kevoe Feldman, Krishnamoorthy, Lahr, Landsmark, Lin, Mellette, Molnar, Moore, Oet, Rappaport, Rawson, Rejtar, Shrivastava, Sivak, Strange, Triest, Viola, Walker J., Walker L., West.

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

Absent: (Professors) Ingemi, Jaeggli, Kitagawa, Lowery, Rivera, Saczynski, Smith, Toledano Laredo.

CALL TO ORDER: 11:45 a.m.

I. **SAC REPORT:** (SAC Report has been posted to Senate website.)

Prof. Landsmark announced that there was an opportunity for a senator to join the Senate Agenda Committee (SAC) since SAC member, Prof. Heidi Kevoe Feldman would be on sabbatical in spring 2024.

Since the 11_15_23 Senate meeting, SAC has met twice and has met with the Provost once. There was an elected senators meeting on 11_29_23.

He noted there are a number of search committees underway including:

Dept. of Biology Chair, Dept. Of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Chair, Dept. of Electrical and Computer Engineering Chair, and Dean for Mills College at Northeastern University.

President Aoun has had to reschedule his annual address to the senate. It will now occur in spring 2024.

QUESTIONS:

There were no questions.

II. **PROVOST REPORT:**

Provost Madigan encouraged elected senators to run for the open SAC position. He added that having worked with SAC over the last 4 years, it is an opportunity to learn a tremendous amount about the university.

The Provost said there are a number of intercession courses going on. There are over 1000 enrollments, and they are not all for Taylor Swift. There is a huge array of courses.

Faculty continue to be hired at a good clip. There will be a lot of activity in the spring on all our campuses. This is a lot of work for all concerned but it is one of most important things we do together. The Provost thanked everyone in advance for their efforts.

The Provost noted that they have for years been talking about introducing academic credit into experiential learning. Exec. Vice Provost Tom Sheahan and his team have been working on this. The Provost will ask him to come to a future senate meeting and tell the senate about this. There is a pilot or two underway this spring. There is extensive faculty involvement in regards to assessing the quality of the work and clear learning objectives.

The Provost said there is a BOT meeting this week – Thursday, Dec. 7 the committees of the Board meet and Friday, Dec. 8 the whole Board meets. (The Board meets four times a year.) The theme of the BOT on Friday is research in the global university system.

It occurred to Provost Madigan, that he and David Luzzi should do their BOT presentation on research at a future senate meeting.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. Strange said her fellow faculty in Khoury were wondering about snow day policy for the year ahead. Last year on the Boston campus, there were a couple of days when the announcement came out at 7 a.m. that faculty could do their class online if they wanted. This timing can be challenging for faculty with kids in Boston Public Schools that will shut down in a snow emergency.

Provost Madigan said he has not been involved in any discussions about doing anything differently. The Provost asked Laney to send him an email with these concerns. He added there is a committee – someone from the Provost Office, someone from the Chancellor Office and various representatives from the university that meets often in the middle of the night to discuss whether to stay open or not.

Prof. Diani said earlier in semester we talked with the Provost about Wellness Days and the outcome of a survey Madeleine Estabrook, Sr. Vice Chancellor Student Life, did. Prof. Diani asked if there was any follow up on that and if Wellness Days were to continue in the spring.

Provost Madigan thinks Wellness Days will continue but there have been some modifications but he doesn't have the information at hand. He also noted that Sr. Vice Provost Deb Franko was not present today as she was at a conference.

Devyani Anand, student representative for undergraduate student government, said she is working closely with Sr. Vice Provost, Deb Franko on that program. Devyani said it is going to continue next year but the academic office in the Provost Office formed a committee to discuss the Wellness Days program during the spring semester. Devyani is meeting with Madeleine Estabrook this week to review some of the data from the surveys. If Sr. Vice Chancellor Estabrook is unable to come to the senate in the spring to review the data, Devyani will be happy to review some data with the senate.

Prof. Landsmark asked faculty if there are specific questions or issues that have arisen this semester?

Provost Madigan said some of the concerns were around classes that meet once a week.

Prof. Folmar said this past Friday there was a student sit-in in the Curry Student Center. The sit-in was scheduled alongside a ceremony for the Doctor of Physical Therapy program and a presentation day that we had in the student center.

We had a lot of concerns from students and parents during the ceremony. Are these things taken into consideration when events are scheduled on campus? Is there a policy around this?

Provost Madigan said that particular protest was organized by a group that was not an approved group. There have been other protests with official groups where the dialogue with the group has been much more productive and complete.

The Provost said that speech is protected but hate speech or threatening speech is not. And it is not okay to interrupt university business. In that particular case, some university business was disrupted. We have a student code of conduct that will be applied in this case. There were some rule violations.

Prof. Sivak returned to the topic of Wellness Days. He said he has heard anecdotally from faculty is that there seems to be an uptick in Wellness Days in weeks where there is already a holiday. He wonders if as a part of the modification of the program, Wellness Days not be allowed in a short week.

Devyani Anand, student representative for undergraduate student government, said that issue is something that has come up as well the fact that students have been taking Wellness Days for classes that only meet once a week. The issue is the system and coding for Wellness Days is not picking up on things like that. It is also not picking up on the fact students are not supposed to be able to take Wellness Days when they have an academic lab. A lot of these issues are being discussed with the coding team and how those modifications can be added.

Devyani said that if faculty have other concerns, they can email her at anand.de@northeastern.edu. She will bring those concerns to the Wellness Days committee.

III. PRESENTATION:

Karl Reid, Sr. Vice Provost & Chief Inclusion Officer.

Experience Belonging: Infusing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, And Belonging Into All Facets Of Northeastern's Global University System

(The presentation has been posted to the Senate website. Highlights are noted below.)

Sr. Vice Provost Reid said he wanted to share an update of some of the work that the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI).

First, he introduced Donathan Brown, Vice Provost Faculty Diversity, and asked him to give the senate an update on some of his activities. Vice Provost Brown said that working alongside colleagues in Academic Affairs this year, they engaged in a series of programs aimed cultivating and advancing belonging here at Northeastern. In Oct. & Nov., through the Provost's Faculty Diversity, Recruitment and Retention Forum, during each 90 minute gathering we covered topics ranging from recruitment to interviewing.

Throughout the fall semester, Vice Provost Brown held a series of 7 rotating office hours with Asian American, Latin X and African American cultural centers on campus in an effort to discuss ways to advance faculty diversity. He also serves on the Senate's Inclusion and Diversity Committee.

Sr. Vice Provost Reid introduced the various Team members of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI). He said he reports both to the Provost and the Chancellor. Because his office consists of only eight people, the office doesn't do a lot of programming but is a central coordinating hub.

He said when he joined Northeastern, the Provost told him that President Aoun's 2020 Action Plan "to address the scourge of systemic racism" could be considered Sr. Vice Provost Reid's job description. Sr. Vice Provost Reid said the points of this plan became the guiding principles of his work.

Early in his tenure, Karl Reid sat down with the Provost who was leading the effort to develop the 2030 academic plan, *Experience Unleashed*. The Provost had determined that diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging would be infused through every facet of the university.

One of the areas of thrust for the action plan was to improve university-wide accountability. For the first time in recent memory, Northeastern administered a diversity and equity climate survey called *Many Voices, One Northeastern*. The survey surfaced six groups that had belonging uncertainty and ODEI had meetings with those six groups and learned the lack of belonging should be a priority in this work. Belonging is an essential human need.

(The results of the climate survey are available on the ODEI website.)

The office hosted a series of listening sessions – in person and virtual -- with different identity groups and learned that there is a need for fostering a sense of inclusion and belonging. To do this, they need to improve university climate, retention, and community engagement. They need to secure new resources not just from the university but also outside agencies.

They have to identify and then close equity gaps. All this work is called "Experience Belonging."

Vice Provost Reid gave credit to Mike Davis, NUPD, who served on the committee around the Climate survey. Mike Davis suggested that every manager take ownership to develop their own response to the Climate survey as well as the call to action. When this was presented to the Sr. Leadership Team, President Aoun agreed with this approach.

They rolled out the Climate survey of 2022 to 140 of the top leaders across the university and asked them to develop strategies to address the results for their specific division. 40 plans were received. Vice Provost Reid's Office looked at all those plans.

The office introduced Racial and Cultural Literacy learning in 2021 that now every new faculty, staff and student that comes to Northeastern watches that video and the office tracks the compliance rates.

The office rolled out a new newsletter, Calypso, that is available to anyone.

The office launched the Inclusive Impact Innovation Fund earlier this year. They received 59 proposals and were only able to award five. They hosted our first symposium on Oct. 18. They will release the second round in the spring.

Vice Provost Reid encouraged faculty to engage with their office. At the end of the day, this work is for all of us.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. Lahr of Mills College at Northeastern said that they have had a Black Faculty and Staff Association for many years. We are only now finding that there is support provided by ODEI for affinity groups. How can the Black Faculty and Staff group at Mills receive support for the work they are doing? It seems as though, the affinity groups that are Boston-led have more access to information and support. As we grow as an institution, how can we make sure other affinity groups don't feel overlooked?

Vice Provost Reid said he met with many members of the Black Faculty and Staff Association. He said they prefer not to have 2 groups with the same name. We prefer to have kind of an integrated approach to support the affinity of these populations. You met with Regine Jean-Charles and Richard O'Bryant co-chair of the Black Faculty Staff Association. It was just two years ago that this Northeastern one was put in place. The Mills group has been around a lot longer. He said he knows Richard has traveled to Mills to begin to have discussions. Ultimately, this is not just an issue of BFSFA at Mills and Northeastern. This is an issue writ large. How do we move the kind of support for the cultural centers so it is more expansive and inclusive across the university system?

You had that discussion with both Richard O'Bryant and Regine Jean Charles but also Lisa Susser because we have a specific charter and a process for standing up affinity groups. And then we have community of practice among affinity group leaders. It makes sense to just integrate the leadership in Mills with the group that is operating out of here.

Prof. Lahr said the way we met Regine and Richard was that we introduced ourselves to them. Prof. Lahr said what she is offering is an experience that we might use in the future to allow for the conversations among these groups in a situation where one group doesn't have to go through back channels in order to introduce itself to another. We are all one institute.

It would be helpful as we go forward, to continue to have these types of conversations. There are things that we can lead in terms of the knowledge we have gained. There are things we can learn. Just to make sure we are integrated equally rather than the new folks feeling like they have to go and find a place to fit.

Sr. Vice Provost Reid said he agreed.

Prof. Baker, SOL, said he hopes the slides can be shared with all faculty. (NOTE: The slides have been posted to the Faculty Senate website.) He wanted to offer a couple of points regarding the presentation.

In regards to belonging, he would add the idea of critical belonging. He said one of things that affects disaffected groups is that they don't feel they can criticize what they know about Northeastern and have that criticism be welcome.

A lot of the focus of the presentation was of internal Northeastern community but we are also preparing our students for the world. How do we help to prepare our students to carry these lessons into the institutions they will join in the future?

Finally, Prof. Baker, said he thinks disability related issues, is an area where significant work is needed. He mentioned at a previous senate meeting that we need something closer to universal design.

Sr. Vice Provost Reid said he would like to follow up with both Prof. Baker and Prof. Lahr.

Prof. Landsmark asked how your work impacts on community engagement issues as we expand into other communities around the world that reflect very high levels of demographic diversity.

Sr. Vice Provost Reid said that was not included in this presentation due to time restrictions. He said it is important to elevate and amplify the work that others are doing as well. He knows the Burns Center is working on things.

He said he believes one of the things we lack as a university is a grand vision around community engagement. What would be the goals? What are things that are a priority to the community? Believe there is a place for NU to have a discussion around that. With eight people, I can't do this but we are working with people who have their hand in this space.

Prof. Moore said one of their challenges has been funding community engaged teaching and research. She said she learned a lot from Beca Berkey and being a service learning fellow about mutually beneficial if not transformative partnerships and the sustainability of those partnerships. She said our colleagues in Mills have done this for a long time and have been successful. We have talked about the idea of affinity groups around this topic. But how can we connect all the people who are already doing this?

Vice Provost Reid said this is important to the President. Early on the President did sit down and say we need a strategy, a plan. It is important to the university how we show up in true partnerships. Mills has done a lot of wonderful things but there are still challenges with their relationship with Oakland. How do we do this well?

It has to be something that is not in an academic cycle. It has to be a 5 or 10 year vision. He is having conversations with colleagues in the Boston area looking at wealth gaps. What can they in the next ten years to close these wealth gaps in the Boston Metropolitan area particularly in Dorchester and Roxbury? The City of Charlotte has announced a \$200 million fund to close racial equity gaps and that is largely funded by outside organizations. There are models out there. It is just a matter of Northeastern leveraging the existing assets we have.

Tracy Corley at Arlington campus in VA said this community engagement work is work she has been doing for over a decade in different communities around the world. She wanted to lift up the work of the Social Impact Lab that has put up some strong principles around this.

When we think about community engaged work, need to realize that there is a spectrum of engagement. There are also different ways to define community. Whenever you are thinking about bringing people together, we can't have a set playbook for the university because every community has its own needs. She said stepping back from being a leader in this to being a facilitator in this should inform how this idea moves forward.

The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Prof. Yingzi Lin, Senate Secretary