



Northeastern University Faculty Senate

TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: Secretary, Faculty Senate
SUBJECT: Minutes, February 14, 2024

Present: Professors Adams, Alexis, Chen, Chiou, Diani, DiBattista, Di Credico, Godoy-Carter, Henderson, Herron, Homan, Ingemi, Kahn, Kitagawa, Krishnamoorthy, Lahr, Landsmark, Lin, Mellette, Molnar, Moore, Oet, Rappaport, Rawson, Rejtar, Rivera, Saczynski, Sivak, Smith, Strange, Toledano Laredo, Triest, Viola, Wang, West.

Administrators: Madigan, Isaacs, Pollastri, Sceppa.

Absent: (Professors) Folmar, Jaeggli, Lowrey, Shrivastava, Walker J., Walker L.
(Administrators) Wadia-Fascetti.

CALL TO ORDER: 11:45 a.m.

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

Prof. Landsmark noted that since the 1_31_24 Senate meeting, SAC has met twice and has met with the Provost Office once.

The Senate Agenda Committee encouraged all faculty to complete the Human Resources Benefits Survey that was emailed to all faculty and staff this week.

The Spring 2024 Faculty Salary Equity & Committee Questions Survey is now closed. Prof. Landsmark noted that the response rate was very good -- 825 responses. (There were 369 responses in spring 2023). Salary data access has been provided to approved SAC members for analysis. (*Members have signed a confidentiality agreement for data access.*) Summaries will be provided to appropriate Senate committees to support 2023-24 charges.

II. **PROVOST REPORT:**

Provost Madigan noted that the new CSSH Dean, Kellee Tsai, will soon be starting. Provost Madigan also thanked interim CSSH Dean Ron Sandler for all his work and noted he did a fantastic job.

The Provost said that Karl Reid, Chief Inclusion Officer, is moving to MIT in a similar role and that he has done wonderful work. Now every college has a DEI officer and training in place that didn't exist three years ago. The Provost and Chancellor Henderson are taking this moment to do a listening tour to see where things are and what work needs to be done in the future.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

There were no questions.

III. PRESENTATION:

PRESIDENT AOUN ANNUAL ADDRESS TO THE SENATE

(Below are some highlights from the President's presentation.)

President Aoun gave his assessment of the landscape of higher education in the United States. He said the system is in transition and as a whole is not doing well. It faces many challenges. One of the challenges is the enrollment cliff meaning there are fewer students going to college. Looking at where we are today compared to pre-Covid, there are 1.16 million less students going to college. In 2018, 69% of high school students were college bound now it is only 62%.

Over the last five to six years, only 36% of colleges and universities filled their seats and the impact is being felt by undergraduate liberal arts colleges. More and more colleges, unfortunately, are closing and the trend is going to continue.

We see on one side higher education is challenged and on the other side have the phenomena of almost winner take all. People are looking for value and value is based on brand and differentiation.

This year Northeastern received the largest number of applications of any private university -- 98,000 applications. That is due to the fact that Northeastern has the brand, the differentiation and the students are treated superbly well by the community.

Higher education is also facing a wave of bipartisan skepticism. The public at large is critical because the public is looking for outcomes and values and is much more demanding in respect to outcomes. They are looking for a return on their investment.

At the global level, the American higher education is viewed as the most desirable system but at the same time countries are being aggressive in wanting to recruit international students. England, Australia and Canada are very welcoming and are building on international appeal. They are saying to international students from day one, when you join university, you qualify for your green card. This is why you see an influx of graduate students there.

We in the United States haven't been very good at retaining the talent we are forming. We are educating them and asking them to go elsewhere.

If we look at what is happening at Northeastern, we see we are the leader in experiential education and Northeastern is very strong in terms of outcomes – MBAs, PhDs, MDs, etc. The fact that Northeastern received 98,000 applications is not an accident.

Northeastern's focus on Humanics and combined majors are differentiators that appeal to students. Students are also very interested on the graduate level of opportunities offered in Oakland and London. This is relevant because students want different experiences. London is providing us with a great opportunity. As far as we know, we are the only US university that has been granted the status of a UK university. That means that Northeastern can give dual degrees to its students. This mobility is very appealing to the students.

It is clear that the global university system is a differentiator. It is also allowing us to recruit faculty colleagues in different environments.

At the research level, we are seeing that our presence in different countries and continents is allowing us to have different research opportunities we would not ordinarily have. For example, the Provost is working diligently with colleagues in Ireland.

The system has been impactful in terms of professional education. If you look at professional education, that is where the demand and the growth is. What we are seeing is that the schools that have moved into lifelong learning realms are reaping the benefits. Khoury is the best example there.

The Northeastern 2025 strategic plan has focused on the impact of AI on higher education and society at large. When we did that, no other university was looking at this.

The President said he has asked the Provost to put a team together to continue our planning process and to launch a planning process focusing on the impact of AI on society at large and how AI is going to impact our operations. We need to move into this area to continue to be the pioneers.

Northeastern is extremely well positioned in this environment. We are growing at all levels. Northeastern is bucking the trends. We want to have sustainable growth and continue to build the quality of the university.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. Strange said as we talk about growth and hiring more faculty, people are feeling undervalued and dismissed regarding the physical space they need for their jobs. There is more shared space and more open floor plans. Sometimes there is a discrepancy between T/TT and N/TT Faculty. In the fall, where are we all going to sit? We are worried about how this is going to impact our jobs and our relationships with students. Can you talk about how we're prioritizing things like office space and morale and relationships as we continue to grow?

President Aoun said this is a very relevant point. In some ways, we haven't looked at how space is being utilized. We as faculty have traditionally each had an office. Now in EXP, the offices are hotel. We know we have many colleagues that aren't here on a daily basis.

He said he is inviting each school to take what you said and look at the space utilization because we have a paradoxical situation where we have space needs and at the same time space that is not being used efficiently.

The President thanked the senators for their engagement and their leadership.

IV. REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (PROFESSORS APOO KOTICHA AND NICOLE BOYSON).

(The committee's final report and presentation can be found on the Faculty Senate website.)

QUESTIONS:

Prof. Rappaport said in regards to slide 7 (of the presentation) that it looks like salaries for 2021/2022 were higher for professors and associate professors at Northeastern relative to the past year. Salaries dropped from 192 to 179?

Prof. Koticha said yes. We took the data from AAUP. We tried to actually investigate if there was a methodological change or what happened, or whether they're now suddenly including another

bunch of people in this group and we have no explanation for why the salaries went in 2023, for example, from 174 in 2020/2021 to 192 and back to 179. But we do, if we look at the averages from the previous one, we have seen a drop of that kind in a couple of other places.

Prof. Rappaport asked if it could be the incorporation of the other remote campuses?

Prof. Koticha said that's a possible explanation, yes.

Prof. Rappaport said of course, if you do that, then you mess up the Boston area cost of living modulation.

Prof. Koticha said that is fair.

Prof. Smith said there is a strong enough case with inflation and cost of living weighted appropriately that the resolution pertaining to salary increase is still strong.

Dean Abowd said looking at slide 4, the charge was to look at total compensation. This analysis doesn't seem to cover total compensation. You're only looking at salary.

Prof. Koticha said that FAC looked at other parts of compensation last year.

Prof. Strange asked does the resolution apply to all FT faculty?

Prof. Koticha said it applies to all.

Prof. Strange said last year there was a similar resolution with a similar number. How confident are we that this resolution will result in an actual cost of living increase?

Prof. Koticha said the ultimate decision is made by the administration.

Provost Madigan added that this is a complex process to make this decision. The Chief Financial Officer, the President, the Provost himself and others are all involved. And this annual FAC report is one very important input into the decision.

Prof. Teledano asked is there any way to make these senate resolutions regarding merit raises more binding. Maybe make a change to Faculty Handbook stating merit raises must meet cost of living increases.

Prof. Landsmark said it appears we are falling behind peer institutions in our own geographic area.

Provost Madigan said it is inconceivable that the salaries went down. He said he doesn't remember the merit number last year but that it was more than 2%. The salaries increased last year. So it makes no sense to me that that number could have gone down the way it did. There is a disconnect there.

(Toward the end of the meeting, Provost Madigan noted that there had been a mistake on the 2022 AAUP submission and that perhaps Prof. Koticha should touch base with Rana Glasgal, Vice Provost of Data and Analytics.)

A. **FINANCIAL AFFAIRS RESOLUTION:**

Prof. Koticha read the following:

RESOLUTION #1.

WHEREAS the annual raises awarded to faculty for the last several years have been well below the cost of living increases due to inflation, and

WHEREAS the faculty salaries at all levels are up to 20% below Boston area match mates based on AAUP salary data,

BE IT RESOLVED that the recommended raise pool for merit for FY 2025 be 8.4%, at a minimum, of continuing salaries starting on July 1, 2024, **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Provost develop a plan to align faculty salaries with Boston area match mates.

The vote on the resolution PASSED: 36-0-3.

B. **FINANCIAL AFFAIRS RESOLUTION.**

Prof. Boyson read the following:

RESOLUTION #2:

WHEREAS the 2022-2023 FAC report has provided [several resolutions](#) for the University to enhance the oversight of retirement plans, the fund menu, fees, and the quality of reporting to plan participants, and

WHEREAS University actions on the above-mentioned resolutions are still forthcoming,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Provost bring to the attention of the appropriate office the need for demonstrable progress on the resolutions concerning the retirement plan that were approved by the Senate in 2023.

The vote on the resolution PASSED: 34-0-2.

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Prof. Yingzi Lin, Senate Secretary