



Northeastern University Faculty Senate

TO: FACULTY SENATE
FROM: Secretary, Faculty Senate
SUBJECT: Minutes, March 13, 2024

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

Administrators: Madigan, Abowd, Amidon, Isaacs, Pollastri, Sceppa, Wadia-Fascetti.

Absent: (Professors) Jaeggli, Krishnamoorthy, Lowrey, Rappaport, Rejtar, Smith, Walker J., Walker L., West
(Administrators)

CALL TO ORDER: 11:45 a.m.

- I. **SAC REPORT:** (SAC Report has been posted to Senate website.)
Prof. Landsmark said that since the 2_28_24 Senate meeting SAC has met twice and has has met with Provost Office once. SAC will soon launch the annual call for volunteers to serve on senate standing and ad hoc committees. Keep an eye out for the email: Call For Senate Committee Volunteers.
- II. **PROVOST REPORT:**
Provost Madigan noted that while Northeastern University is an accredited institution of higher education by the New England Commission of Higher Education, the university also has a number of accreditors that are subject specific. This past week there were site visits on on our campus for the the School of Nursing and the D'Amore-McKim School of Business and and both of those went extremely well. Provost Madigan thanked everyone that was involved.

Provost Madigan said he has started a project to develop a an AI strategy for the university. He is creating a task force. There will be 4 different working groups and that are forming right now. The four areas are AI in teaching and learning, AI in research, AI in the business of running the university and the 4th one will be on responsible AI. He said this is just getting going and there will be lots of opportunities to be involved.

In a related topic, in the first week in April, there will be an AI in action week with all kinds of events on campus for students, faculty and staff. You will be hearing more about that and thanks to everyone who has stepped up to help with this.

The Provost mentioned the ongoing Mental Health Matters series for faculty that is led by Sr. Vice Provost Deb Franko. There was a session on March 12th in which over 150 faculty and staff attended. He thanked Sr. Vice Provost Franko for all her work and noted the ongoing series has been very well received.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. Mellette said it was great to hear about the AI task force and asked the Provost if he could say a bit about the composition of this task force. He said he asked as a member of the writing program, where

spearheaded by Kelly Garneau, Director of First Year Writing at the university, they have been doing this work for a while. They would love to be involved.

Provost Madigan said it would be great to have them involved. Right now the leads for each group are basically trying to figure out how they're going to pull the groups together.

The Provost asked anyone who would like to be involved to send him an email and he'll make sure that the interest is transmitted to the group a faculty person is most interested in.

Prof. Landmark asked the Provost when the university can expect some reports from these groups?

Provost Madigan said they were hoping for the end of the semester. He said they hope to have a preliminary set of recommendations that are complimentary to the academic plan by that time.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON SHARED GOVERNANCE (PROF. DARCELLE LAHR)

(The report and the accompanying presentation are posted to the senate website.)

Prof. Lahr, chair of the Shared Governance Committee, noted that by way of review, SAC convened an ad hoc committee on Shared Governance at the end of last year in response to a number of long-term faculty concerns that the Ombuds office had shared with the senate. The overall charge is to provide recommendations for ways that can address these longstanding concerns.

These concerns have been broken down into three three main sub charges.

- First, addressing issues related to the effectiveness, the accountability and the behavior of senior leadership. And concerns regarding the ethics of administrators use of power.
- Secondly, addressing the the lack of trust, fear of retaliation, and feelings of a lack of psychological safety that faculty have expressed regarding their relationships with senior leaders.
- Third, addressing the trauma and the dissatisfaction that faculty have communicated regarding feelings of continuing lack of clarity regarding the one faculty model and faculty reports of repeated breaches of standards of conduct by faculty leadership.

The committee recognized that one critical theme running through all the subcategories was the continuing concern regarding potential salary inequities.

The committee has taken up this issue under subcharge #3 and this is the work that Prof. Lahr offers an update on today. Specifically, the committee focused on the repeated requests by faculty for transparency and access to salary information to ensure equitable compensation within the campus departments, colleges, and across the Northeastern network.

In order to undertake this investigation, they issued a voluntary faculty salary equity survey on January 25th that ran until February 5th. They issued 2160 surveys to Northeastern full time faculty. They received 825 responses, of which 742 provided usable numerical data in their salary responses.

The annual salary within which the responses fell ranged from \$40,000 to what was marked as above \$200,000.

The committee asked for responses in \$20,000 increments along that continuum and the salary analysis methodology that they used was based on assigning midpoint values to the salary ranges so that they could then base their calculations on average salaries, which they felt gave them the most meaningful results given the data the committee had. But of course there's also error built in given the data that the committee had.

But based on this, the committee identified salary percentiles at at a minimum \$50,000 up to maximum salary of \$220,000 and that \$220,000 was what the committee assigned to respondents who indicated in their responses that their average annual salary was above \$200,000.

There are many time intensive analyses that the committee would have liked to have been able to carry out with the data that they had. The committee would have preferred a more robust respondent pool in which they could have based the committee's analysis, but the committee recognized that the intention here can't be to try to burden Senate colleagues with taking on the responsibility of conducting the kind of comprehensive, painstakingly detailed collection and evaluation of salary data that this particular issue deserves.

Instead, the committee's goal was to generate baseline data on which they can start to build evidence to demonstrate the validity of these long standing concerns that have been expressed by the faculty regarding the existence of inequities in Northeastern's faculty compensation.

So given these data contained in the report, the ad hoc committee felt that there was sufficient evidence of potential gender pay inequities to warrant further investigation.

The committee presented this summary data to the elected senators on February 21st and together they agreed to request further action from the Provost Office.

SAC met with the Provost Office Wednesday, March 16 to discuss the results and requested the appointment of an independent consultant to delve more formally into the faculty salary data with a specific eye toward determining whether systemic salary inequities in fact do exist.

Not only with respect to the actual salaries, but also in the equity review process itself. As of Friday, March 8, the Provost has agreed that a thorough review of current salary equity review procedures is in order, and that may include bringing in an outside consultant to support ensuring that our equity goals are prioritized in the assessment.

Also, the Provost has shared with SAC that Northeastern is currently undertaking a self-evaluation of its pay practices in light of the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act of 2018, and that act requires that workers of different genders doing comparable work be paid equivalently.

And the reason that Northeastern is undertaking this self-evaluation is because if an employee does file a claim against an organization under this act, if the organization can demonstrate good faith, reasonable progress toward trying to eliminate any prohibited gender based wage differences that might have been uncovered during a self-evaluation, the organization can protect itself against legal liabilities through affirmative defense.

The committee is pleased to learn that this self evaluation is underway. And so along with any additional salary equity process reviews that occur with the Provost office, SAC is also planning to

monitor the progress of this equal pay evaluation and any results that might emerge from this evaluation as well.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. Toledano Laredo said he seemed to remember that the scope of this study that this outside consultant would undertake would also include the competitiveness of our salaries with comparable institutions. So there are two distinct directions – 1 the equity direction and then somewhat separate the competitive aspect.

Prof. Lahr said that was SAC's request when they spoke to the Provost. She asked the Provost to share his thoughts on this matter.

Provost Madigan said there are two separate things going on here. One is equity and there is a process in the Faculty Handbook by which we review salary equity issues across the colleges on a cadence. Darcelle is referring to a review of the equity process that should be led by the Senate.

A separate line of activity is the the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act exercise that we do periodically to assess if we have any gender based inequities. This is a Massachusetts process and so it's confined to campuses in Massachusetts right now.

Prof. Landsmark asked when those analyses might be completed?

Provost Madigan said analyses are ongoing and it would probably be this semester.

Prof. Toledano Laredo said he might have missed it but he was talking about a third direction – the competitiveness of Northeastern salaries to comparable institutions. He said he wasn't sure that fell under equity.

Provost Madigan said this is part of the equity process as laid out in the Faculty Handbook. The process involves comparisons with other institutions.

Prof. DiBattista asked if they could have a little bit more information about what the consultant is going to do in this case. What kinds of questions do they ask? Who do they talk to?

Prof. Lahr said that their request was that we bring in a consultant that would be guided by SAC and the committee in terms of what it would be looking for to represent the faculty's needs. That particular request was not approved in the way that we had asked it. Prof. Lahr said she hasn't had a specific conversation with the Provost since SAC's conversation last week and so she doesn't have a specific answer right now.

Prof. DiBattista said she asked because this seems like an issue which needs an enormous amount of care.

Prof. Landsmark asked the Provost if he had an update.

Provost Madigan said the salary equity process came from the Senate. It is in the Faculty Handbook. It is entirely appropriate for the Senate to review it and address concerns and improve it. As part of the process, does the Senate need outside help like an expert consultant? The Provost said he is open to that but let's discuss and see how the Senate would want to do the work.

Prof. Landmark said SAC would look into that.

Prof. Toledano Laredo asked what was the timeframe for this study? When would it start?

Prof. Lahr said the way that we had put it forward was that we would want to have the process well underway by fall 2024. As the committee makes progress and reaches milestones, they will report out.

Prof. Toledano Laredo said so the logic is that rather than setting a hard deadline for a final report there would be regular updates and then faculty could ask follow-up questions. That sounds like a great plan.

Prof. Lahr said that's the way that she has been approaching this particular issue because the committee seems learn things as they go along.

**B. REPORT OF THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION COLLABORATION COMMITTEE
PROF. SHANNON ALPERT AND DEAN DAN COHEN).**

(The Committee report and presentation have been posted to the Senate website.)

Prof. Shannon Alpert, committee chair, reviewed the committee's charges and work. Some highlights include that anyone with a Husky card can access the library in Oakland. The collection at present includes Performing and Fine Arts, Women's studies, Ethical studies, and California history. There are incredible special collections, including Fine press and Artists', books and Early Printed books. There are music archives and a Mills College archive. She has heard from CAMD colleagues that there are some amazing resources there and they can't wait to get out to the West Coast to take a look at them.

In terms of results from the fall 2023 faculty survey, the committee intentionally issued a very broad question in order to gather some qualitative data on how the libraries are accessed and to give the committee information for years to come in terms of how we can better support the libraries as faculty.

In terms of respondent demographics, about 64% of respondents were full-time, NTT. About 82% were based in Boston. About 7% were based in Oakland.

The key takeaways were that the libraries are primarily used for class visits and assisting students at all levels with research projects. The libraries were also frequently used for faculty research and access to journals and databases.

The committee learned most survey respondents were either highly passionate about the importance of the libraries and reported frequent engagement or had never engaged with the librarians at all.

Prof. Alpert encouraged all faculty to become more engaged with the library and shared a number of contacts that can be found on the committee's presentation.

Prof. Alpert also asked senators to share library information in their next newsletter. She encouraged faculty to stay connected to subject librarians who tend to have very discrete distribution lists, so people opt into those distribution lists. Faculty will get updates and newsletters that will keep them informed.

Dean Dan Cohen thanked the committee for their work during the year. He noted that Snell Library continues to undergo renovations. The renovation is based on tremendous feedback from faculty and students about the need for light, airy spaces, better acoustics, and different kinds of spaces. He

encouraged faculty to go to the 4th floor of Snell where there is now a fully silent study room.

Once the third floor opens, there will be space for faculty research. They have about a dozen grant funded projects from four or five different colleges who will be cohabitating with some common shared space. And throughout the building, the library will be highlighting and promoting new faculty research.

The renovation is about six months away from completion. There will be a grand new entrance on the north side of our building and a new coffee shop. There will be a new event space.

Dean Cohen noted that the library has gone largely digital because they need to beam their resources to all the campuses globally. They now have over 1.6 million ebooks and over 200,000 electronic journals.

He added the library really consists of librarians with tremendous expertise across many different subject domains. He added he thinks Northeastern's library is the only one he knows of with a dedicated entrepreneurship librarian and they will get a second one.

The library has made tremendous strides in providing new ways for faculty members to publish for free in quality Open Access journals or journals that will make your articles Open Access formally for a fee that is called an APC or Article Processing Charge. Over the last year, Northeastern has found ways to get transformative agreements with about 20 different publishing houses.

If faculty go to library.northeastern.edu, they can find a dedicated page on Open Access publishing.

The library also has an AI working group and just licensed their first AI tool. They are pioneering the use of scholarly AI or AI that instead of being trained on tweets and Reddit posts, is trained on millions of scholarly articles and data sets.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Prof. Toledano Laredo asked regarding open access agreements, is it the case that the cost of making a certain article Open Access is greatly reduced if it goes to a Northeastern agreement or is it reduced to zero.

Dean Cohen said most of these agreements are simply reduced to zero. If faculty google Open Access Publishing Northeastern Library they will get a page with a list of agreements. Right now they are working on a number of other agreements.

C. REPORT OF THE ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSIONS POLICY COMMITTEE

PROF. JENNY VAN AMBURGH

(The report can be found on the Faculty Senate website.)

D. Prof. Ingemi read the following resolution:

RESOLUTION #1:

WHEREAS combined majors across colleges represent a large and increasing percentage of the undergraduate student population and students pursuing combined majors should not face unnecessary impediments due to college and department boundaries.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate recommend that the Office of the Chancellor and the

Office of the Provost work with Administrative Advisory Group and Associate Deans across colleges to implement these steps for clear communication and equitable combined major student access:

- Clarify and communicate implications of 'home college' choice and provide advising junctures to change as desired in consultation with Academic Advisors.
- Provide student access (in person or virtually) on a regular basis to informational, welcome, and community events in both degree areas, especially across colleges.
- Provide students access to Co-op Advisors and major-specific co-op preparation and workshops (e.g. portfolio preparation, technical interview preparation, etc.) pertinent to both degree areas, regardless of the students' home college and initial co-op preparation area (consider virtual modules or co-op class access across colleges).
- Provide students information about, and access to, department and college-organized awards and scholarships for both degree areas of their combined major.
- Ensure that Global Scholars students who are considering a combined major are clearly advised about choosing a home college and about the implications of that choice for their degree path.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

There were no questions.

The vote on the resolution PASSED: 26-0-2.

E. Prof. Ingemi read the following resolution

RESOLUTION #2:

WHERE AS Mills College and most competitor institutions offered tuition exchange and the increase in contract admissions which suggests that benefited faculty/staff will not have full access to the tuition benefit

BE IT RESOLVED that the University adopt a tuition remission policy to be 100% tuition for undergraduate (UG) and graduate (G) courses in UG Day Boston, Mills at Northeastern, London and CPS including NUI and Global Scholars, and develop an option to apply for tuition exchange or other scholarship to cover a percentage of the tuition at other accredited institutions (as was done at Mills College). Additionally, create a pathway for scholarships to increase tuition coverage for Dialogues of Civilization and traditional study abroad programs.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

After a number of questions and concerns around this resolution and in consideration of time, the committee co-chair, Prof. Van Amburgh, said the committee would re-write the resolution and bring that back to the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Prof. Yingzi Lin